



SHADY SIDE ACADEMY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

May 2022

Dear Entering Form I Students:

We are thrilled to have you all in English next year as you continue your journey through Shady Side Academy. Last year in English, you explored the complexities of identity with Mrs. Onest. In Form I, we will build on this ongoing discussion through our study of empathy. Empathy, the ability to share and understand the feelings of others, is one of humanity's greatest strengths. Literature is inherently empathetic; it allows us to step into another person's shoes and experience his or her life first-hand. As we read together next year, we will delve into the importance of empathy and the conditions under which it is encouraged or diminished.

With the topic of empathy in mind, we invite you to read our summer reading all-form title, *The Seventh Most Important Thing* by Shelley Pearsall. This moving historical fiction novel, based loosely on the story of artist James Hampton, explores issues of redemption, friendship, and family. We hope that you enjoy it as much as we do. **Since our first unit of the school year will center around *The Seventh Most Important Thing*, we encourage you to purchase a copy and read it carefully towards the end of the summer so that it is fresh in your mind and easily accessible.**

In addition to *The Seventh Most Important Thing*, you will have the chance to choose three interesting new titles from the [summer reading list](#). Please be sure to make your selections from at least two different genres; this is an opportunity to savor a genre you love as well as explore uncharted literary waters. It is not necessary to bring copies of your choice summer reading books to school; feel free to borrow your three selections from the library or read them digitally. In order to showcase your insightful reading of your three choice selections, **you will be completing an [assignment](#) for each choice book this summer. Please be ready to submit these assignments at the start of the school year.** We look forward to reviewing these artifacts of your literary acumen and creativity.

Additionally, we encourage you to consult websites such as Amazon.com or Goodreads.com, which offer summaries, reviews, and sample pages. The website www.commonsemmedia.org might also be helpful in determining a book's suitability.

It is our sincerest hope that these titles entertain you during slow, balmy summer days and open your hearts and minds to the lives of others. Be well and read with great relish. We look forward to meeting all of you in August.

Warmly,

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[Form I Summer Reading List](#)
[Form I Summer Reading Annotated List](#)
[Form I Summer Reading Assignment](#)