



## Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

**Book Title:** *Uglies*

**Author:** Scott Westerfeld

**Interest Level:** 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Lexile:** 770L

**Length:** 443 pages

**Guide developed by:** Julia James

### **Summary**

Tally Youngblood is three short months away from her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, the year that everyone in Tally's world receives an operation that turns them from ugly to pretty. The Pretties live a life of beauty and pleasure, with supermodel looks and all-night parties. Tally's best friend, Shay, will turn 16 on the same day, but Shay doesn't want to turn pretty. When Shay runs away before her birthday, Tally is forced by the authorities to make a difficult decision; find Shay and the other runaways, or stay ugly forever. Tally learns that her pretty world is not so pretty after all when the truth about how the operation alters people's brains to make them more compliant is revealed. Tally must choose between betraying her friend in order to become pretty and being true to herself.

### **Conceptual Connections**

**Conceptual Lens:** beauty

**Other Key Concepts:** individuality; choices; friendship

#### **Essential Understandings:**

- Individuality is critical to well-being.
- True beauty comes from within.
- Friendship often involves making difficult and meaningful choices.

#### **Essential Questions:**

- In what ways does individuality contribute to a person's well-being?
- Why does true beauty come from within?
- What choices do individuals make in order to maintain friendships?

## **Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)**

### **Introductory Activity/Hook**

This activity is appropriate for a group of girls, not a mixed group. Girls will not speak freely about body image and cultural expectations of beauty if boys are part of the group. Give students several minutes to make a list of all the characteristics that are considered to be beautiful by our culture. Discuss the lists as a class. Ask the students if they believe these characteristics are valued around the world or if they are unique to our American culture. Ask them to justify their answers with examples. Ask students if they think these characteristics are common to all generations or unique to our modern culture. Again, ask for examples. For instance, students might note that movie stars such as Marilyn Monroe were typically twenty pounds heavier than today's female movie stars. Show students paintings of nude women from famous works of art, depicting Venus, and representing the artists' interpretation of beauty which have been photoshopped to represent what our modern culture considers beautiful. Discuss the different paintings and what they indicate about societal views of beauty. <http://www.annautopiagiordano.it/venus-ita.html>

### **Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions**

#### ***Identification:***

- What is Tally's conflict at the beginning of the book?
- What changes for Tally when she meets Shay?
- How does Shay differ from Tally in how she feels about herself?
- What happens when Tally gets to the Smoke?
- What happens to cause Tally to change how she feels about the operation?
- How does Tally's friendship with Shay affect her summer?

#### ***Catharsis:***

- Does Tally's view of her ugliness reflect her feelings about the kind of person she is?
- How does the language used in the book to describe people (Littlies, Ugliers, Pretties, etc.) affect how you feel about these different characters?

#### ***Insight:***

- How important is your appearance to you?
- Do you ever feel that your sense of value or importance (or lack of value or importance) is based on your appearance?
- Have you ever known anyone who was physically attractive but not a very nice person? How did this affect your feelings about this person's appearance?
- Have you ever found yourself judging someone's character based on their appearance?
- Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? How did it make you feel? Were you able to work it out?
- How can focusing on other people help you to feel better about yourself?

### **Universalization/Follow up Activity**

At the end of the book, Tally writes a letter to herself before she undergoes the pretty operation so she will understand what has been done to her brain and seek the cure. Imagine you are the one who is going to have the pretty operation and you want your pretty self to know what has happened to you. What do you say to yourself about who you really are? How do you convince your pretty self to reverse the effects of an operation that makes you beautiful, cheerful, and fun-loving, that makes your life carefree and filled with ease? Write a letter to yourself and explain the truth about the brain-altering lesions that make you compliant and submissive. Remind your pretty self about your identity, the things that, while not perfect, make you the person you really are.

## Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

### **Before Group Discussion** (Activities for students to complete independently)

**A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions** related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

#### **Knowledge Questions**

- Who are the main characters?
- What do uglies like to spend their time doing?
- Other than appearance, how are pretties different from uglies?
- What does Tally like about living in the Smoke?
- What does Tally learn about the operation from David's parents?

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- Why do the people in Tally's society believe equality is more important than individuality?
- Why do you think children go from being littlies to uglies when they are twelve years old?
- Why does Tally change her mind about the operation?
- Why doesn't Shay want to have the pretty operation?
- Why does Tally agree to go back and have the pretty operation?

**B. Vocabulary Study:** Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel. The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

#### **Vocabulary Words**

- symmetrical
- notoriously
- lesions
- dehydrated
- rendezvous
- vintage
- propagate
- monoculture

The following vocabulary words are unique to the book and must be defined according to their context. Students will find a passage where each of the words is used and define it based on how it is used in the passage.

- uglies (p.13, p.25, p.28)
- pretties (p.7, p.37, p.38)
- rusties (p.62, p.63)
- hoverboard (p.30)
- bogus (p.18, p.124, p.382)
- bubbly (p.123, p.124, p.125, p.386)

**Group Discussion:** Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

**Higher-Level Questions** (using Bloom's categories):

**1. Application:**

- Tally promises Shay she will tell no one about the Smoke. When she is taken to Special circumstances on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday instead of given the operation, she is given a choice. Betray Shay and the Smoke or stay ugly forever. What would you have done in Tally's place?
- If you could, would you have the pretty operation, knowing what you know about the brain lesions?
- There is a saying, "Beauty is only skin deep." What does this mean? Do you agree with this statement?

**2. Analysis:**

- When Tally comes into close contact with a pretty, she explains her feelings. "There was something magic in their large and perfect eyes, something that made you want to pay attention to whatever they said, to protect them from any danger, to make them happy. They were so...pretty." Do you think this is a natural way to feel? Have you ever felt this way?
- Tally compares herself to the orchids which were taking over and destroying vast areas of land. She says, "Like walking poison, she killed everything...Tally Youngblood was a weed. And, unlike the orchids, she wasn't even a pretty one." What is Tally saying about herself? Is this a fair assessment?

**3. Evaluation;**

- What does this story tell you about loyalty and betrayal?
- What does this story tell you about body image issues for teenagers?
- Who is a better friend in the story, Tally or Shay?

**4. Synthesis:**

- What could Tally have done differently to solve her dilemma?
- What would have happened if Tally had run away with Shay?

**After Group Discussion:** Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

**A. Connections to the Curriculum:** Students will make connections to a curriculum area (math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Science/Health-** The pretty operation consists of extensive plastic surgery. Students will research a type of plastic surgery common in our society, both positives and negatives.
- **Language Arts-** Write an essay, comparing and contrasting the Tally who lives in Uglyville with the Tally who lives and works in the Smoke.
- **Art-** In the opening sentence, Tally, watching the sunset against the skyline of New Pretty Town, says, "The early summer sky was the color of cat vomit." Later when Tally experiences her first real sunrise in the wild, it amazes her. Students will create their own representation of the sunrise or sunset in New Pretty Town and the Wild.

- **Careers-** In the book, the citizens of Tally's city create it after the Rusty civilization fails. Students will research city planning and what it takes to become a city planner.
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama-** Students will work in pairs to write a conversation in which one is a pretty and one is an ugly. They must use vocabulary from the book.
- **Social Studies-** The reason for the pretty operation is to create a society where everyone is equal and possesses the characteristics which society agrees are physically desirable. Students will research how plastic surgery was used in Nazi Germany in their obsessive pursuit of physical perfection. How can the Nazi desire to create a "pure" population be compared to the mandatory pretty operation and its ultimate purpose, creating a master race?

**B. Creative Reading:** Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher):

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story