

FULL List of Book Options- For Rising ECMCS 7th and 8th Graders Summer Reading Project

Category 1: MEMOIRS/NON-FICTION

(Nonfiction story of an INDIVIDUAL- i.e. memoir, autobiography, biography)

***The book should be focused on an **individual**, not a historical event as a whole. For example, a book about Michael Jordan would work, but a book about the Chicago Bulls would not.*

Must complete **ONE** total book in this category.

Title	Author	Brief Description	Common Sense Media Suggested Age
42 Is Not Just a Number: The Odyssey of Jackie Robinson, American Hero Hardcover	Doreen Rappaport	Baseball, basketball, football — no matter the game, Jackie Robinson excelled. His talents would have landed another man a career in pro sports, but such opportunities were closed to athletes like Jackie for one reason: his skin was the wrong color. Jackie faced cruel and sometimes violent hatred and discrimination, but he proved himself again and again, exhibiting courage, determination, restraint, and a phenomenal ability to play the game.	8+
A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier	Ishmael Beah	At just twelve years old, Ishmael Beah’s life is thrown upside down. An attack on his village leads him to be an orphan, and he is thrust into a world of danger. Struggling to survive, he is pushed into a life of violence and chaos. How will he get out? Will he be able to forget his past and move on? This book is great for anyone wanting to read a story of redemption.	12-16+
Becoming Muhammed Ali- Young Reader's Edition	James Patterson and Kwame Alexander	This fast-moving tale of Muhammed Ali’s upbringing is great for anyone who loves fighting words, fancy footwork, and quick wit. The story focuses on a group of friends who are united in more ways than one!	10+
Born a Crime- Young Reader's Edition	Trevor Noah	Trevor Noah’s childhood was anything but ordinary. Growing up in apartheid-era South Africa, he was literally “born a crime” due to his parents’ interracial relationship. His wild, funny, and sometimes unbelievable stories always push the boundaries, and you will love this memoir if you are excited by hard-learned lessons about survival, resilience, and self-identity.	11+
Boys on the Boat- Young Reader's Edition	Daniel James Brown	In 1936, the Olympics were held in Berlin, Germany. As the Nazi regime was rising, this University of Washington Rowing team must challenge those powerful foes. However, their own personal struggles are just as grand. Read this novel if you are interested in teamwork, perseverance, and unity in the face of adversity.	10+
Chasing Space- Young Reader's Edition	Leland Melvin	This book chronicles the unique journey of being drafted into the NFL to becoming an astronaut. It highlights his perseverance and the importance of community, determination, and grace. You	8+

		might want to pick this book up if you enjoy reading about a jack of all trades who never backs down.	
Every Falling Star: The True Story of How I Survived and Escaped North Korea	Sungju Lee and Susan Elizabeth McClelland	This gripping autobiographical account of a teenage boy in North Korea is an authentic view of the “inside” of North Korea. The reality of the life of ordinary citizens is grim. The severe political constraints have isolated citizens from the world. Students will gain a better understanding both of why some North Korean people support the regime as well as why others try to escape.	13+
March Forward, Girl	Melba Pattillo Beals	Combined with emotive drawings and photos, this memoir paints a vivid picture of Melba Pattillo Beals, one of the Little Rock Nine. Frustrated by the laws that kept African-Americans separate but very much unequal to whites, she had questions. Why couldn't she drink from a "whites only" fountain? Why couldn't she feel safe beyond home—or even within the walls of church? Adults all told her: Hold your tongue. Be patient. Know your place. But Beals had the heart of a fighter—and the knowledge that her true place was a free one.	11+
Path to the Stars: My Journey from Girl Scout to Rocket Scientist- Young Reader's Edition	Sylvia Acevedo	A meningitis outbreak in their underprivileged neighborhood left Sylvia Acevedo's family forever altered. As she struggled in the aftermath of loss, young Sylvia's life transformed when she joined the Girl Scouts, where she learned how to take control of her world and nourished her love of numbers and science. You might want to read this book if you are interested in diseases and science!	10+
Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina	Michaela DePrince & Elaine DePrince	Michaela DePrince was known as girl Number 27 at the orphanage, where she was abandoned at a young age and tormented as a “devil child” for a skin condition that makes her skin appear spotted. This is the extraordinary memoir of an orphan who danced her way from war-torn Sierra Leone to ballet stardom.	12+
The Diary of Anne Frank	Anne Frank	This classic diary portrays one of the world's most devastating incidents. It's a true diary of a girl trapped in a world where simply living is a crime. While this is one of our more difficult reads, it is absolutely one of the best and most important.	11+
The Woman in the Moon- Young Reader's Edition	Richard Maurer	This stunning biography of Margaret Hamilton, the computer engineer who helped Apollo 11 and mankind get from the Earth to the moon, is great for anyone whose interested in the stars and the people who helped get us there. You might want to read this novel if you've ever felt overlooked.	10+
They Called Us Enemy (Graphic Novel)	George Takei	A historical graphic novel by famed actor, George Takei. This tale of Japanese Internment during WWII is sure to elicit questions about the past and present. This memoir is a must-read for anyone whose ever questioned authority.	12+
Unbroken- Young Reader's Edition	Laura Hillenbrand	Resilience and perseverance are examined in this novel set during WWII. Surviving a plane crash is not enough; Louis Zamperini has to live 47 days at sea and two years in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Read this novel if you like seeing the true limits of human hardship.	12+

Category 2: COMING-OF-AGE/FICTION

A novel telling the story of an **imagined character** (even if it is set in realistic history) that tells the story of an individual growing up.

***This could take place in middle school years, or it could be a book that spans the main character's entire life, with a large portion emphasizing growing up.*

Must complete **ONE** total book in this category.

Title	Author	Brief Description	Common Sense Media Suggested Age
A Night Divided	Jennifer A. Nielsen	This sharp-eyed Cold War stunner has high intrigue, family drama. If you've ever felt split off from family or like you've been left behind, this novel set in East Germany might be for you!	9+
A Wolf called Wander	Rosanne Parry	If you are looking for a "tail" that is a little more instinctual, you might look no further than this exciting, vivid fictionalized autobiography of a famed wolf.	9+
Akata Witch	Nnedimma Nkemdili	This imaginative story of U.S. albino girl living in Nigeria is as spellbinding as the juju magic the narrator discovers. Tasked with finding a murderous serial killer, Sunny and her friends enjoy extraordinary adventures in this mysterious and fun novel.	12+
Amal Unbound	Aisha Saeed	This compelling story of girl in Pakistan forced to be a servant is great for anyone who cares about injustice and ancestry. Forced into her situation to help her family, the narrator is plunged into a harsh world with complex social situations. Can Amal find a way to work with other servants to challenge the powerful family she works for, or will her stubborn attitude prevent her from gaining the freedom she desires?	10+
Amina's Voice	Hena Khan	Amina, a Pakistani-American Muslim, has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in?	8+
And Then, BOOM!	Lisa Fipps	This harrowing, hopeful tale of tween dealing with poverty is a must read for anyone who thinks about homelessness and insecurity. The narrator, Joe Oak, must navigate all these challenges and more as he struggles to accept help from other sources. If you are an independently minded individual, you might learn a thing or two from reading this great book.	10+

Attack of the Black Rectangles	Amy Sarig King	deals with themes of censorship, family and personal growth. It follows what happens after main character Mac and his friends discover that someone has blacked out words and phrases in the books about the Holocaust in their sixth grade classroom.	11+
Brown Girl Dreaming	Jacqueline Woodson	Brown Girl Dreaming tells the story of the author's early childhood life growing up as an African American girl in the 1960s and depicts the events that led her to become a writer. Focuses on themes of identity, family, resilience, and the impact of racism and societal change during a time of immense change.	10+
Code Talker	Joseph Bruchac	A Navajo man recounts how Navajo speakers were recruited by the US military to use their language to create an unbreakable code during World War II, ultimately aiding in the war effort. If you've ever been discouraged and asked to hide your talents, you might find this novel worth reading.	12+
El Deafo	Cece Bell	This graphic novel focuses on the misfortunes of Cece, a young girl who loses her hearing after being diagnosed with a major illness. The incident, however, also unlocks a magical superpower and readers will follow along as a narrator struggles to embrace her differences.	9+
Eleven	Tom Rogers	Normally, birthdays are a celebratory day. But when Alex Douglas' birthday falls on the same day as one of the largest tragedies in American history, he struggles with unexpected changes and overcoming sadness and embracing maturity.	9+
Fish in a Tree	Lynda Mullaly Hunt	Ally has dyslexia, but she's always been able to hide it until her father's newest deployment forces her to stay at one school. Will the support and kindness of her new friends and teacher change her ways, or will Ally continue to act out in an effort to mask her difficulties?	10+
Ghost	Jason Reynolds	Castle "Ghost" Cranshaw, a troubled seventh-grader struggling to cope with a traumatic past, who finds purpose and a sense of belonging through joining the Defenders track team, learning to harness his natural talent and overcome his fears.	10+
Inside Out and Back Again	Thanhha Lai	The Vietnam War comes alive in this inspiring story of an immigrant's new life in the U.S. The novel follows a young girl as she is displaced from her home and is forced to take a roundabout journey. If you have ever been homesick, you might consider this amazing novel!	10+
Kareem Between	Shifa Saltagi Safadi	Stuck between two worlds and unsure of which one he really wants to be part of, this tale of a Syrian boy living in America challenges readers to better understand empathy, friendship, and desire. This is a great read for anyone who has ever felt conflicted or in a bind between friends.	8+
Number the Stars	Lois Lowry	This stirring tale of a girl who smuggled Jews to safety in WWII is perfect for anyone who likes risk-taking. The story highlights themes of bravery, sacrifice, and resilience as the Johansens risk everything to protect their neighbors from Nazi persecution.	9+
Operation Redwood	S. Terrel French	When Julian Carter-Li intercepts an angry e-mail message meant for his high-powered uncle, it sets him on the course to stop an	8+

		environmental crime! His uncle's company plans to cut down some of the oldest and last California redwood trees, and its up to Julian, and a ragtag group of friends, to figure out a way to stop them.	
Out of My Mind	Sharon Draper	Melody, born with cerebral palsy, has never been able to communicate to her loving family all the thoughts that run through her mind. The story reveals Melody's inner thoughts and her frustration at not being able to control her body -- she has to have someone feed her and help her go to the bathroom -- despite the fact that she has a photographic memory. This novel follows Melody's road to acceptance. If you think some differences are just too big to surmount, you might be interested in reading this great book!	10+
Shooting the Moon	Frances O'Roark Dowell	Amie, an army brat, initially embraces her brother TJ's enlistment in the Vietnam War, but her perspective shifts dramatically as she sees the reality of war through his undeveloped photos, leading her to question her father's ideals and the nature of conflict. You might read this book if you consider yourself someone who hates war and violence.	10+
Starfish	Lisa Fipps	Ellie has always loved herself, but she finds it hard to maintain that positive attitude after her 11th birthday. She struggles with her weight and self-perception in this moving, witty novel. If you are interested in self-advocacy, body image, or the power of kindness, this novel might be right for you!	10+
Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers	Celia C. Pérez	Four young girls have their lives become connected over the course of one unforgettable summer in Sabal Palms, Florida. Thanks to a mysterious invitation, the girls form an incredible friendship and bond over their mission to stop using an old hat made from bird feathers. It'll take teamwork, courage, and perseverance for these young activists to raise awareness about animal rights and bring social change to their community.	9+
The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate	Jaqueline Kelly	In the summer 1899, Calpurnia Tate is almost 12 years old, and a new friendship with her grandfather sparks her interest in the natural world. Over the next few months, Callie has to deal with personal struggles, life lessons, and new technology. She may have the benefits of an upper-crust family, but she also faces the universal truth of growing up: Everything is changing.	10+
The Lost Year	Katherine Marsh	Set in alternating timelines that connect living through the COVID pandemic to the 1930s and the US to the USSR, Katherine Marsh's latest novel sheds fresh light on the Holodomor—the horrific famine that killed millions of Ukrainians, which the Soviet government covered up for decades. Inspired by Marsh's own family history, <i>The Lost Year</i> is an incredibly timely, page-turning story of family, survival, and sacrifice.	10+
The Night Diary	Veera Hiranandani	Nisha is a twelve-year-old girl who lives with her twin brother, her father, and her grandmother in India in 1947. When the family must leave their home for their own safety, they embark	10+

		on a long and dangerous journey towards freedom and a new life. Readers will follow along this narrative by peering inside Nisha's personal diary.	
The Secret Language of Birds	Lynne Kelly	Nina is used to feeling like the odd one out, both at school and in her large family. While trying to fit in at summer camp, she discovers two majestic birds have built a nest in the marsh behind an abandoned infirmary. They appear to be whooping cranes, but that's impossible—all of Nina's resources tell her that those rare birds haven't nested in Texas for over a hundred years. As Nina works with wildlife officials to figure out the mystery, she learns to spread her own wings in a way you'll never forget.	8+
The Unsung Hero of Birdsong USA	Brenda Woods	The moving story of the friendship between a young white boy and a Black WWII veteran who has recently returned to the unwelcoming Jim Crow South. 12 year old Gabriel lives in Birdsong, USA, where everything is perfect...Until he befriends Meriwether, an elderly auto mechanic who drove a tank in the Army's all-Black 761st Tank Battalion in WWII. Meriwether is proud of his service, but has to keep it a secret because talking about it could be dangerous.	10+
Thirst	Varsha Bajaj	Minni, a 12-year-old girl living in a poor Mumbai neighborhood, as she witnesses water theft and struggles for access to this precious resource, while also working for a wealthy family where water is abundant.	9+
This is Just a Test	Madelyn Rosenberg and Wendy Wan-Long Shang	It's autumn 1983 in northern Virginia, and seventh-grader David Horowitz, who is Chinese and Jewish, is busy preparing for Jan. 21, 1984: when he's "being bar mitzvahed in front of about a zillion people." But that's only if he lives that long, considering that after watching The Day After, he's worried about what will happen if there's a nuclear fallout with Russia. Some days, surviving nuclear war feels like the least of David's problems...	8-12
Unsettled	Reem Faruqi	When her family moves from Pakistan to Peachtree City, all Nurah wants is to blend in, yet her accent, floral-print dresses, and tea-colored skin make her feel excluded. However, her athletic skills and desire to outshine her star athlete brother lead to major conflict. Read this novel if you love competing with your siblings or if you love reading about betrayals.	8+
War Horse	Michael Morpurgo	Joey, a red-bay colt, is sold to an English farmer, whose son, Albert, raises the horse and teaches him to work their family farm. After World War I breaks out, Albert's father sells Joey to the army in order to pay the mortgage on his farm. Joey is forced to carry riders into battle, and pull artillery and carts full of wounded soldiers. As Joey struggles to survive, Albert never stops hoping they will be reunited.	10+