

ECMCS Rising 7th and 8th Grade

Due the 2nd day of school- Wednesday, August 13, 2025

What You Need to Know About Summer Reading 2025-2026

This summer, all rising 7th and 8th graders will read **TWO books** and complete **FOUR written responses**—two for each book. The reading will support next year's big theme: **The Individual**—with books that explore identity, personal growth, and resilience.

STEP 1: Choose Your 2 Books from the approved lists

1 Memoir/Nonfiction book: **Title=** _____

1 Coming-of-Age Novel: **Title=** _____

What to Turn In: FOUR Written Responses

4 total Written Responses

- **For EACH book**, you will need to fully complete **2 Written Tasks** from the 4 options.
 - Book 1, Response 1
 - Book 1, Response 2
 - Book 2, Response 1
 - Book 2, Response 2
- All work should be done in complete sentences (*with the exception of the text message between characters task*).
- At the top of each Written Task you include the following:
 - Your first and last name
 - The Option Letter you've selected (A, B, C, or D)

Printed (or hand written) and turned in on the 2nd day of school (Weds, Aug 13, 2025)

Complete filling out this checklist- FRONT and BACK

Do Not Use AI or Summaries

- We want *your* thinking, not ChatGPT's! If it's copied or AI-generated, you'll have to redo the whole thing with new books.

Info about Grading:

- This project = **your first Major grade** in ELA.
- **Many other assignments and Seminars in 1st Semester will build on Summer Reading.**
 - **Your Seminar on the first Friday will rely on this assignment's completion.** Since there is no late grade accepted for Seminar preparation, you **MUST** have turned in your Summer Reading assignment in order to participate.
- It also kicks off our yearlong theme: **The Individual—Identity, Growth, and Voice.**
- Any score lower than a C/70% will need to be redone.
- Students should not research the books, but complete the assignment based on their own reading and interpretation. Work will be evaluated on originality and depth of thought.

Student Self Review Rubric - Summer Reading

Directions: Fill this out over the summer. You will turn this in as the cover page to your Summer Reading Project.

Area of work	Y/N			
I completed reading 2 books (reading them cover to cover) FROM THE APPROVED LIST	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Memoir/Nonfiction book <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Coming-of-Age/Fiction book			
I completed all FOUR required written tasks total	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 for Book 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 for Book 2			
My project CLEARLY shows I deeply read and engaged with the books through some or all of the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Using textual evidence or zooming into specific moments. (The moments discussed are nuanced/specific and not just the highlights or big overview summary moments. The way writer discusses the scenes shows multiple details that would only be known through reading the book itself, not just a summary) <input type="checkbox"/> The writer connects personally and thoroughly explains the connections <input type="checkbox"/> The writer responds with depth (not just surface-level connections or questions) <input type="checkbox"/> The writer's response shows complex understanding of the book's themes, characters, plot, author's intentions, settings, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> The connections and explanations help their teacher better understand their thinking and interactions with the book 	Book 1, Written Response 1	Book 1, Written Response 2	Book 2, Written Response 1	Book 2, Written Response 2
Each Written Response thoroughly follows all of the directions for that type of response (A, B, C, or D). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All steps completed to a high quality <input type="checkbox"/> Written communication is clear, organized, and clearly proofread <input type="checkbox"/> I adapted my writing style and voice to fit the writing style (Ex: using text messages for the Text Message option, but writing in full paragraphs for the Letter to the Author). <input type="checkbox"/> Shows effort and care, going beyond the minimum requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> Project shows originality and creativity 	Book 1, Written Response 1	Book 1, Written Response 2	Book 2, Written Response 1	Book 2, Written Response 2

I certify that I have read the above books in a way where I thoughtfully engaged with the stories and characters, preparing to discuss the books and my reading experiences with my peers and teachers. I understand work I turn in that appears to be passing off AI or other's work as my own is plagiarism. All of the writing submitted here represents my own ideas and work.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Written Response Options

Option A: Letter to the Author

Directions: Write a personal letter to the author of your memoir.

Step 1: Briefly introduce yourself and why you are writing to them. Explain what their book meant to you. What scenes struck you deeply, or kept you on the edge of your seat, or were highly entertaining?

- Pick at least **TWO** key moments in the book that deeply resonated with you.
- Quote or summarize each moment (with page numbers).
- **Why did these moments stand out?** What about their experiences made you think, feel, or reflect?

Step 2: Describe a connection between their life and yours.

- Have you experienced something similar? Did their struggles, decisions, or emotions remind you of a time in your own life? If their life is very different from yours, explain what you learned from them and how it changed your perspective.

Step 3: Ask **TWO or more meaningful questions** about their experiences, choices, etc. (If they are no longer alive, reflect on what you wish you could ask them.)

Step 4: End the letter by writing a conclusion and thanking them for their time.

Option B: Text Message Convo with a Character

Directions: Engage in **TWO** meaningful, in-character text message exchanges with a protagonist or key character from your book.

Step 1: Choose TWO important scenes from the middle or end of the book.

- These should be **crucial turning points** where the character is making a major decision, facing a challenge, or experiencing emotional growth.
- For each scene, write an introduction to your text messages that includes **an explanation of what's happening at this moment in the story** and why you chose it for this task (why is it an important moment in the story?).

Step 2: For each of your selected scenes, write a **realistic text exchange** between yourself and the book's character.

- **Decide who you are in the story.** Are you a friend, sibling, parent, etc?
- **Write a minimum of 10 messages per scene.** Your messages should show a real conversation—not just one-sided advice.
 - *(The "texting" should be formatted like an actual text conversation and can use informal English truer to an actual text conversation)*
- **Stay true to the character's** personality, emotions, and way of speaking.
- **Your messages should engage with the character's struggle.** Are you warning them about a mistake? Encouraging them to take a risk? Trying to get them to see another perspective?

Step 3: After each conversation, write a **paragraph** explaining your choices:

- Why is this scene a key moment in the book?
- How did your conversation reflect the book's themes and character development?
- How does this activity show your understanding of the character?

Final Submission: For each of the TWO selected key scenes:

- An introduction to the text message conversation
- Full text conversations (a minimum of 10 exchanges).
- A reflection paragraph

Option C: Thematic Playlist

Directions: Create a **playlist with a minimum of 6 songs** representing key themes, emotions, & events in the book.

Step 1: Before selecting songs, take time to reflect on the book's **big picture**.

- What emotions did you feel while reading?
- What key moments stand out as the most powerful or transformative?

Step 2: Skim back through the book and **identify a minimum of 6 major scenes or turning points**. These will help guide your song choices.

- Choose a **minimum of 6 songs** that connect to moments, themes, or emotions in the book.
- Each song must have a **clear connection** to something specific in the book.
- **Write down the list of song titles and artists for each of the 6 or more selections.**

Step 3: For at least **FOUR of your selected songs**, complete the following these steps:

1. **Song Choice + Book Moment Pairing:** Explain what moment in the book you paired this song with and why. Include a direct quote or summarize a key passage (with a page number) for the scene and describe what is happening at that moment in the book. Fully explain the connections between the two- the song selection and how it pairs with the events and/or emotions of that moment in the story.
2. **Personal Connection:** Explain why you thought of this song. While the above explanations make connections between the book and the song, use this opportunity to share why you thought of this particular song and your own connection to it (How does this song make you feel? What does it remind you of? Would this song be a potential song in a scene from your own life? Why or why not?)
3. **(Repeat these steps for each at least FOUR songs in your list of 6-10 song selections.**

Step 4: Write a **final paragraph** reflecting on your playlist as a whole. How do these songs tell the emotional story of the book? If the author heard this playlist, what do you think they would say about your choices?

Option D: Character Growth & Personal Connection

Directions: Analyze how the main character **changes over the course of the book** and relate it to yourself.

Step 1: Identify **TWO key moments**—one from early in the book and one from near the end—that show how the protagonist has **changed**. Include **direct quotes** (with page numbers) and explain how these show what the character was like at that point in the book.

Step 2: Explain the change. What caused this shift in the character? What events happened in the story that led to this change?

**Extension (optional): Make a visual timeline to represent the character's changes over time.*

Step 3: Compare this transformation to your own life. Have you ever changed in a similar way? How did that affect you? Or if you experienced what the character experienced, do you think it would have affected you in the same way or differently? Why?

