

English 7

Summer Reading

The Gist: This summer, you will read two books in preparation for 7th grade English. (Obviously, if you enjoy reading and have the time, read more!) You will get to choose each of these books; however, one of them *must* be a book that **pushes you out of your comfort zone** or your typical reading preferences and at least one of the two books must be a fiction novel. Additionally, you'll let me know at the beginning of summer why you have chosen each of these books.

The Reasoning: While plenty of people think they don't like reading, I fully believe everyone can enjoy reading if they figure out what type(s) of books they prefer. Of course, there will be times you are assigned a book that you didn't choose and that you might not like; that very well may happen in my class! Your summer reading for 7th grade, though, is a chance to (1) actually choose what you read, (2) help you think about your reading preferences, and (3) practice finding something enjoyable and/or beneficial in reading a book you might not normally pick. Let's make summer reading a nice, additional component of your summer and not something you have to argue with your adults about. :)

Steps for Completing English 7 Summer Reading

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STEP ONE: CHOOSE YOUR BOOKS

At least one of your two books must be a fiction novel!

Book #1: Pick any book that **interests** you!

- If you don't consider yourself "a reader" yet or don't feel like you have a favorite genre...
 - Think about what TV shows and movies you like best. Those genres are probably a good place to start when thinking about book genres. Then start Googling (e.g., "Best middle grade/YA [insert genre here] books").
 - Ask for a recommendation. Have a friend who is always reading? Ask them! Ask an older sibling or cousin. Ask an adult who knows you well; you might not even want to read books intended for kids/young adults, but, if you do, plenty of adults (like me) enjoy reading YA. Ask our local librarians or bookshop employees.
 - Look at the book lists I have provided (at the end of this document) and Google titles until you come across one whose description interests you.
- Consider the Lexile/suggested grade level of the book.
 - Is it significantly beyond the 7th grade reading level? If so, maybe the challenge intrigues you! However, keep in mind that, if you are struggling after 30 or 40 pages, perhaps you should move on to another book or reach out to me for comprehension tips. Regardless of Lexile level, keep in mind that a higher age range can mean more mature and/or intense content.

- If it is significantly below the 7th grade reading level, be prepared to defend to me why it is still a worthwhile text for you to read this summer. If you get 30 or 40 pages in and find yourself bored, then it's probably too easy and not worthwhile for you.

Book #2: Pick a book that, in some way, **pushes** you beyond your comfort zone. This does not mean you should read a book that sounds utterly awful to you, though! Find a book that is a challenge or departure but still has something that intrigues you.

- You could choose a book that sounds interesting to you but seems like it will be a challenge to read (e.g., it's really long, it's above your grade level, it covers a topic you know nothing about).
- You could choose a book that is a genre you don't typically read or even a genre you don't really like. Even still, within that genre, try to find a plot or other text feature that compels you.

NOTE FOR BOTH BOOKS: For the work we will do with this book at the start of the school year, it will probably be best not to choose a book in the middle of a series (e.g. Book #2 or #3, etc., in a series); the first book of a series would be fine, though.

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STEP TWO: EMAIL MS. SIMPSON YOUR SELECTIONS

Before you start reading, send me an email (jennysimpson@seaburyacademy.org) telling me which books you plan to read and why you have chosen each book. Allow several days for me to respond.

Components of an Email

- #1: Salutation
- #2: Honorific + Name,
- #3: Greeting
- #4: Content/body
- #5: Sign-off

[#1] Dear [#2] Ms. Simpson,

[#3] This is where you would typically say hello or wish the recipient well. However, do not feel like you have to do that for me here since I'm forcing you to send the email. :)

[#4] Tell me which books you plan to read and why (i.e. how they meet the assignment requirements).

Truly/Sincerely/Best/Thank you,

Your Name

IMPORTANT NOTE RE: CHANGING BOOKS: If you change your mind about the book(s) you're going to read, it's no big deal. Just let me know! You probably shouldn't do this too many times or too late in the summer, though, as it may become stressful and frustrating. At some point, if you've changed books a lot, just stick with something in order to finish the summer reading assignment by the first day of class. Email me if you're struggling with this!

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STEP THREE: BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS YOUR BOOK

You need to have read both books by the first day of classes. Over the first few weeks of school, you will discuss your books in writing and orally. This may include writing a literary response (i.e., talking about literary devices, plot features, genre, theme, etc.) and/or a personal reaction to the texts. You will share insights both in whole-class activities and in small groups.

It would be best to annotate (either in the books or on sticky notes or notebook paper) while you read. I will not check these annotations, but taking notes can help you better digest what you're reading while you're reading and, if done well, make it easier for you to jog your memory and discuss key elements after you've finished reading (especially if significant time has passed).

While you should read carefully and think critically about what you read, *please please please* do not stress about the in-class work we will do for summer reading. I work hard to help you complete some serious work with these texts without making it nerve-wracking.

Resources for Selecting Books

- Your own TBR ("To Be Read") list if you keep one!
- See my note on asking for recommendations under "Step 1."

Sources for evaluating a text's reading level and/or contents:

- [Lexile Find a Book](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)
- [Goodreads](#)
- [School Library Journal](#)
- [LibraryThing](#)
- [Barnes & Noble](#)

Some "best of" book lists from relevant publishing/media sources:¹

- ★ [Lawrence Public Library TeenZone Book Lists](#)
- ★ [Science Library Journal's Best Middle Grade Books 2024](#)

¹ These books range in reading level and content. If you or your guardian want to be mindful of either of these, be sure to look into the book prior to reading it.

- ★ [Science Library Journal's Best Young Adult Books 2024](#)
- ★ [Kirkus Reviews Best Middle Grade Books of the Year \(2024\)](#)
- ★ [The New York Times Middle Grade Paperback Best Sellers](#)
- ★ [Publishers Weekly Best Middle Grade Books 2024](#)
- ★ [NPR Books We Love \(Young Adult\)](#)
- ★ [NPR Books We Love \(Kids' Books\)](#)
- ★ [GoodReads Middle Grade Novels Released in 2024](#) and [2025](#)

A list of some beloved and high-praised (mostly) contemporary middle grade and YA books I have accumulated over the last couple years:²

57 Bus by Dashka Slater

A Different Mirror for Young People: A History of Multicultural America by Ronald Takaki

A Good Kind of Trouble by Lisa Moore Ramee

A High Five for Glenn Burke by Phil Bildner

Ace of Spades by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé

Ain't Burned All the Bright by Jason Reynolds

All American Boys by Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds

All Boys Aren't Blue by George M. Johnson

A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park

Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed

Amil and the After by Veera Hiranandani

Amina's Voice by Hena Khan

Anger is a Gift by Mark Oshiro

A Place at the Table by Laura Shovan and Saadia Faruqi

Apple in the Middle by Dawn Quigley

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Saenz

A Very Large Expanse of Sea by Tahereh Mafi

Barely Missing Everything by Matt Mendez

Before the Ever by Jacqueline Woodson

Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre by Brandy Colbert

Blackout by Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk, and Nicola Yoon

Black Panther: The Young Prince by Ronald L. Smith

Blended by Sharon M. Draper

Booked by Kwame Alexander

Break to You by Neal Shusterman, Debra Young, and Michelle Knowlden

Bright Red Fruit by Safia Elhillo

Brother's Keeper by Julie Lee

Cemetery Boys by Aiden Thomas

Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

² **These books range in reading level and content. If you or your guardian want to be mindful of either of these, be sure to look into the book prior to reading it.**

Clean Getaway by Nic Stone
Code Name Verity by Elizabeth E. Wein
Counting by 7s by Holly Goldberg Sloan
Dancing at the Pity Party by Tyler Feder
Dear Justyce by Nic Stone
Dragonfruit by Makiia Lucier
Dragon Hoops by Gene Luen Yang
Dress Coded by Carrie Firestone
Dry by Jarod Shusterman and Neal Shusterman
Early Departures by Justin A. Reynolds
Elatsoe by Darcie Little Badger
El Deafo by Cece Bell
Fast Pitch by Nic Stone
Felix Ever After by Kacen Callender
Finding Junie Kim by Ellen Oh
Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley
Flamer by Mike Curato
Fledgling: The Keeper's Records of Revolution by S.K. Ali
From the Desk of Zoe Washington by Janae Marks
Front Desk by Kelly Yang
Full Cicada Moon Marilyn Hilton
Furia by Yamile Saied Mendez
Genesis Begins Again by Alicia D. Williams
Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes
Ghost by Jason Reynolds
Ghost Squad by Claribel A. Ortega
Gooseberry by Robin Gow
Hearts Unbroken by Cynthia Leitich Smith
Here to Stay by Sara Farizan
Home is Not a Country by Safia Elhillo
Hurricane Child by Kacen Callender
I Am Alfonso Jones by Tony Medina
I Can Make this Promise by Christine Day
If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth
I Love You So Mochi by Sarah Kuhn
Impossible Creatures by Katherine Rundell
Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
Internment by Samira Ahmed
In the Wild Light by Jeff Zentner
Into the Sun by Lisa Graff
Isaiah Dunn is My Hero by Kelly J. Baptist
It Came from the Trees by Ally Russell
Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World by Ashley Herring Blake

Jackpot by Nic Stone
Julieta and the Diamond Enigma by Luisana Duarte Armendariz
Just Mercy Adapted for Young Adults by Bryan Stevenson
Keeping Pace by Laurie Morrison
Keep It Together, Keiko Carter by Debbi M. Florence
Kira-Kira by Cynthia Kadohata
Legendborn by Tracy Deonn
Let Me Hear a Rhyme by Tiffany D. Jackson
Like a Love Story by Abdi Nazemian
Like Vanessa by Tami Charles
Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks by Jason Reynolds
Louder Than Hunger by John Schu
Love, Hate, & Other Filters by Samira Ahmed
Love from A to Z by S.K. Ali
Magic Fish by Trung Le Nguyen
Mani Semilla Finds Her Quetzal Voice by Anna Lapera
Max in the House of Spies: A Tale of World War II by Adam Gidwitz
May the Best Player Win by Kyla Zhao
Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina
Mid-Air by Alicia Williams
Monday's Not Coming by Tiffany D. Jackson
Mosquitoland by David Arnold
Not So Pure and Simple
Nyxia by Scott Reintgen
Odd One Out by Nic Stone
Once Upon an Eid by S.K. Ali
One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia
On the Bright Side by Anna Sortino
Ophie's Ghosts by Justina Ireland
Opposite of Always by Justin A. Reynolds
Other Words for Home by Jasmine Warga
Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper
Parachutes by Kelly Yang
Paradise on Fire by Jewell Parker Rhodes
Pashmina by Nidhi Chanani
Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay
Pet by Akwaeke Emezi
Playing a Part by Daria Wilke
Popcorn by Rob Harrell
Punching the Air by Yusef Salaam and Ibi Zoboi
Raybearer by Jordan Ifueko
Red, White, and Whole by Rajani LaRocca
Refugee by Alan Gratz

Sadie Courtney Summers
Sanctuary by Paola Mendoza
Scythe by Neal Shusterman
Shark Teeth by Sherry Wintson
Sing It Like Celia by Mónica Mancillas
Slay by Brittney Morris
Soft Place to Land by Janae Marks
Some Places More than Others by Renee Watson
Sparrow by Sarah Moon
Spin by Lamar Giles
Stand Up, Yumi Chung! By Jessica Kim
Starfish by Lisa Fipps
Storm Runner by J.C. Cervantes
Take Back the Block by Chrystal D. Giles
The Astonishing Color of After by Emily X.R. Pan
The Benefits of Being an Octopus by Ann Braden
The Bletchley Riddle by Ruta Sepetys and Steve Sheinkin
The Brothers Hawthorne by Jennifer Lynn Barnes
The Bridge Home by T.V. Padma
The Candle and the Flame by Nafiza Azad
The Canyon's Edge by Dusti Bowling
The Color of a Lie by Kim Johnson
The Cost of Knowing by Brittney Morris
The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora by Pablo Cartaya
The First Rule of Punk by Celia C. Perez
The Gilded Ones by Namina Forna
The Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
The Henna Wars by Adiba Jaigirdar
The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes
The Insiders by Mark Oshiro
The Last Day of Summer by Lamar Giles
The Last Dragon on Mars by Scott Reintgen
The Marrow Thieves by Cherie Dimaline
The Night Librarian: A Graphic Novel by Christopher Lincoln
The Only Black Girls in Town by Brandy Colbert
The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
The Princess and the Dressmaker by Jen Wang
The School for Invisible Boys by Shaun David Hutchinson
The Secret Library by Kekla Magoon
The Shape of Thunder by Jasmine Warga
The Songbird and the Rambutan Tree by Lucille Abendanon
The Stars Beneath Our Feet by David Barclay Moore

The Summer I Turned Pretty by Jenny Han
The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman by Gennifer Choldenko
They Both Die at the End by Adam Silvera
They Called Us Enemy by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, and Steven Scott
This Day Changes Everything by Edward Underhill
This Poison Heart by Kalynn Bayron
Time Bomb by Joelle Charbonneau
To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han
Towers Falling by Jewell Parker Rhodes
Trevor Noah Born a Crime by Trevor Noah
Tristan Strong Destroys the World by Kwame Mbalia
Ultraviolet by Aida Salazar
Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand
Under the Heron's Light by Randi Pink
Violets are Blue by Barabara Dee
Warrior on the Mound by Sandra W. Headen
We Are Big Time by Hena Khan and Safiya Zerrougui
We Are Not from Here by Jenny Torres Sanchez
Wednesday Wars by Gary D. Schmidt
We Dream of Space by Erin Entrada Kelly
When Stars Are Scattered by Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson
When You Trap a Tiger by Tae Keller
White Smoke by Tiffany D. Jackson
Why We Fly by Gilly Segal and Kimberly Jones
Wink by Rob Herrell
Wishtree by Katherine Applegate
You Should See Me in a Crown by Leah Johnson
Yusuf Azeem is Not a Hero by Saadia Faruqi