

# English 1R Summer Reading Assignment

## Books about Coming of Age

Please read at least one of the following recommended titles. In addition, read one other book of any genre of your **choice**. Upon returning next fall, please be prepared for an assessment which will demonstrate your ability to support and analyze your text.

**Some titles contain mature content, and as such, parents/guardians should review the choices with their children to determine the most appropriate choice.**

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### *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream - Davis, Jenkins, Hunt*

As teenagers from a rough part of Newark, New Jersey, Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt, and George Jenkins had nothing special going for them. Their first stroke of luck was testing into University High, one of Newark's three magnet high schools, and their second was finding each other. They were busy staying out of trouble (most of the time), and discovering the usual ways to skip class and do as little schoolwork as possible, when a recruitment presentation on Seton Hall University reignited George's childhood dream of becoming a dentist. The college was offering a tempting assistance package for minorities in its Pre Medical/Pre-Dental Plus Program. George convinced his two friends to go to college with him. They would help each other through. None of them would be allowed to drop out and be reabsorbed by the Newark streets. If the ordinary boys who made this pact could survive college and medical school by sticking together, then so can others.

### *All the Light We Cannot See - Anthony Doerr*

Marie-Laure lives in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where her father works. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure's reclusive great uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them they carry what might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous jewel. In a mining town in Germany, Werner Pfennig, an orphan, grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find that brings them news and stories from places they have never seen or imagined. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments and is enlisted to use his talent to track down the resistance. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

### *Mexican Whiteboy -Matt De La Pena*

Danny's tall and skinny. Even though he's not built, his arms are long enough to give his pitch a power so fierce any college scout would sign him on the spot. Ninety-five mile an hour fastball, but the boy's not even on a team. Every time he gets up on the mound he loses it.

But at his private school, they don't expect much else from him. Danny's brown. Half-Mexican brown. And growing up in San Diego that close to the border means everyone else knows exactly

who he is before he even opens his mouth. Before they find out he can't speak Spanish, and before they realize his mom has blond hair and blue eyes, they've got him pegged. But it works the other way too. And Danny's convinced it's his whiteness that sent his father back to Mexico.

That's why he's spending the summer with his dad's family. Only to find himself, he may just have to face the demons he refuses to see--the demons that are right in front of his face. And open up to a friendship he never saw coming.

Set in the alleys and on the ball fields of San Diego County, *Mexican Whiteboy* is a story of friendship, acceptance, and the struggle to find your identity in a world of definitions.

### ***We Were Liars*- E. Lockhart**

Cadence Sinclair Easton comes from an old-money family, headed by a patriarch who owns a private island off of Cape Cod. Each summer, the extended family gathers at the various houses on the island, and Cadence, her cousins Johnny and Mirren, and friend Gat (the four "Liars") have been inseparable since age eight. During their fifteenth summer, however, Cadence suffers a mysterious accident. She spends the next two years—and the course of the book—in a haze of amnesia, debilitating migraines, and painkillers, trying to piece together just what happened. Lockhart writes in a somewhat sparse style filled with metaphor and jumps from past to present and back again—rather fitting for a main character struggling with a sudden and unexplainable life change. The story, while lightly touching on issues of class and race, more fully focuses on dysfunctional family drama, a heart-wrenching romance between Cadence and Gat, and, ultimately, the suspense of what happened during that fateful summer. The ending is a stunner that will haunt readers for a long time to come.

### ***Goodbye Days*- Jeff Zentner**

What if you could spend one last day with someone you lost?

One day Carver Briggs had it all—three best friends, a supportive family, and a reputation as a talented writer at his high school, Nashville Academy for the Arts.

The next day he lost it all when he sent a simple text to his friend Mars, right before Mars, Eli, and Blake were killed in a car crash.

Now Carver can't stop blaming himself for the accident, and he's not the only one. Eli's twin sister is trying to freeze him out of school with her death-ray stare. And Mars's father, a powerful judge, is pressuring the district attorney to open a criminal investigation into Carver's actions.

Luckily, Carver has some unexpected allies: Eli's girlfriend, the only person to stand by him at school; Dr. Mendez, his new therapist; and Blake's grandmother, who asks Carver to spend a Goodbye Day with her to share their memories and say a proper goodbye to his friend.

Soon the other families are asking for a Goodbye Day with Carver, but he's unsure of their motives. Will they all be able to make peace with their losses, or will these Goodbye Days bring Carver one step closer to a complete breakdown or—even worse—prison?

### ***How I Live Now-Meg Rossoff***

*“Every war has turning points and every person too.”* Fifteen-year-old Daisy is sent from Manhattan to England to visit her aunt and cousins she’s never met: three boys near her age, and their little sister. Her aunt goes away on business soon after Daisy arrives. The next day bombs go off as London is attacked and occupied by an unnamed enemy.

As power fails, and systems fail, the farm becomes more isolated. Despite the war, it’s a kind of Eden, with no adults in charge and no rules, a place where Daisy’s uncanny bond with her cousins grows into something rare and extraordinary. But the war is everywhere, and Daisy and her cousins must lead each other into a world that is unknown in the scariest, most elemental way.

### ***Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir-Margarita Engle***

In this poetic memoir, which won the Pura Belpré Author Award, was a YALSA Nonfiction Finalist, and was named a Walter Dean Myers Award Honoree, acclaimed author Margarita Engle tells of growing up as a child of two cultures during the Cold War.

Margarita is a girl from two worlds. Her heart lies in Cuba, her mother’s tropical island country, a place so lush with vibrant life that it seems like a fairy tale kingdom. But most of the time she lives in Los Angeles, lonely in the noisy city and dreaming of the summers when she can take a plane through the enchanted air to her beloved island. Words and images are her constant companions, friendly and comforting when the children at school are not.

Then a revolution breaks out in Cuba. Margarita fears for her far-away family. When the hostility between Cuba and the United States erupts at the Bay of Pigs Invasion, Margarita’s worlds collide in the worst way possible. How can the two countries she loves hate each other so much? And will she ever get to visit her beautiful island again?

*Excerpts taken from Amazon.com or Goodreads.com*