

Hello Rising 9th Graders!

Ummm...it's summer. Why should I care about reading?

Literature is a journey. It can take you to other worlds, to the future, to a thousand years ago. You can become Starr Carter (from *The Hate U Give*) or Jay Li (from *The Painted Boy*), Xiomara Batista (from *The Poet X*) or Ron Weasley (from the *Harry Potter* series). It allows us to increase our empathy as we enter into others' experiences and reflect on the world around us. In short, reading literature helps to make us better humans. And if you haven't been able to read for pleasure recently, here's your chance!

I can get down with that. So what do I have to do for this summer reading assignment?

Well, you've already started! First, you'll read this letter. Second, you'll pick any TWO books from the attached list. Third, you'll jot a few notes and get ready to talk about and write about your books during the first week of school.

But how do I pick a book? Got any tips?

- **Choose books you find appealing.** There is no greater misery than plowing through a book you don't like.
- **Give it a chance.** Read at least a quarter of the book before you decide it's not for you. If after a quarter you're just not into it or it feels too tough to understand, you can abandon.
- **Annotate!** Take super short notes on the things you notice, on the connections to yourself or to other things you've experienced, or on things that resonate with you emotionally.
- **Think about mirrors and windows.** Books are both mirrors and windows. Mirrors are what we can see our reflection in and be reminded that our own lives matter. Windows give us a glimpse into someone else's existence. Perhaps push yourself a little bit to read both a mirror and window.
- **Read GoodReads.com!** Check out book suggestions from people your age.

What happens the first few days of school with all this summer reading?

The first few days of school, you will be expected to write about the books you read over the summer. This writing will also give your teacher a chance to see a snippet of your best writing at the beginning of the school year.

Cool. Good to know. Lastly, who wrote this letter?

Your 9th Grade English Teachers. We are excited to meet you and to hear about what literature you explored!

Realistic Fiction

Love, Hate & Other Filters* by Samira Ahmed: Maya is caught between her parents world of college and marrying an Indian, Muslim boy and her dream of film school when a terrorist attack changes everything.

Georgia Peaches and Other Forbidden Fruit* by Jaye Robin Brown: When Jo's radio evangelist father remarries and moves them to Rome, Georgia, he asks Jo to go back into the closet for her senior year.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky: Charlie, a freshman in high school, explores the dilemmas of growing up through a collection of letters he sends to an unknown receiver.

Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel* by Sara Farizan: Leila's Persian heritage already makes her different from her classmates, and if word got out that she liked girls, life would be twice as hard. But when a new girl shows up, Leila starts to take risks she never thought she would.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon: Despite his fear of people, an autistic boy decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secrets about his mother.

I'll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson: A story of first love, family, loss, and betrayal told from different points in time, and in separate voices, by twin artists Jude and Noah.

The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas: Starr moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer.

Realistic Fiction

Devils Within* by S. F. Henson: Nate gets a new start at a new school after killing his father, the leader of a white supremacist group, and struggles to navigate his new world where people of different races interact.

Dumplin'* by Julie Murphy: Willowdean proves she's "more than just a fat girl" while preparing to compete in the pageant her mother runs and navigating her feelings for a co-worker.

It's Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini: New York City teenager Craig Gilner succumbs to academic and social pressures at an elite high school and enters a psychiatric hospital after attempting suicide.

The Final Four* by Paul Volponi: Four players at the Final Four of the NCAA basketball tournament struggle with the pressures of tournament play and the expectations of society at large.

The Sun Is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon: Natasha is on the verge of being deported to Jamaica when she meets Korean-American good son Daniel who believes there is something extraordinary in store for them.

Exit, Pursued by a Bear* by E. K. Johnston: Hermoine returns back to school in her small town after being drugged and raped at cheerleading camp, dealing with the aftermath of rumors and her own lost memory.

Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng: Everyone has secrets in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and all unravel as the community splits over whether a white family should be allowed to adopt a Chinese-American baby.

The Serpent King* by Jeff Zentner: The son of an imprisoned Pentecostal preacher faces his persona demons as he and his friends try to make it through their senior year of high school in rural Tennessee.

Science Fiction / Fantasy

The Power* by Naomi Alderman: This story follows five people in the near future after teenage girls worldwide gain the power to electrically shock people, making them physically dominant over men.

A Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood: Set in the near future, America has become a puritanical theocracy, and Offred tells her story as a Handmaid under the new social order.

The Belles* by Dhonielle Clayton: In Orléans, the wealthy can pay to have their appearance changed at will by the Belles. Camellia, one of the new Belles, is starting to understand the dark secrets behind her powers.

Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline: Life in 2044 is spent in the virtual world OASIS. When Wade stumbles on a puzzle set up by the creator of OASIS, he starts to compete to claim a prize of massive fortune.

Dread Nation* by Justina Ireland: In this alternate history, where the Civil War ends with a zombie outbreak, Jane is graduating from a combat school where girls of color are trained to protect others from zombies.

Six of Crows* by Leigh Bardugo: In this heart-pounding fantasy, six outcasts attempt an impossible heist. They're the only thing that might stand between the world and destruction—if they don't kill each other first.

Historical Fiction

Dreamland Burning* by Jennifer Latham: Rowan finds a skeleton on her family's property. Investigating the murder leads to painful discoveries about the past during the firestorm leading up to the 1921 Tulsa race riot.

Under a Painted Sky* by Stacey Lee: In 1849, Chinese-American Samantha is on the run as a suspected murdered, dressed as a boy and following the Oregon Trail with runaway slave, Annamae.

Burn Baby Burn* by Meg Medina: It's the summer of 1977 in the Bronx—a summer of arson, the serial killer Son of Sam, and citywide blackouts. But Nora's just looking to get out of her house and away from her family.

You Bring the Distant Near* by Mitali Perkins: From 1965 through the present, five girls across three generations of an Indian-American family fend off and welcome challenges to their own traditions.

In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez: A fictionalized account of the life of four sisters in the Dominican Republic who were assassinated for their part in a plot to overthrow the Trujillo dictatorship.

Nonfiction / Memoir

Rapture Practice* by Aaron Hartzler: Aaron grew up in a family where he was taught that the Rapture could happen at any moment. But in his teens, he finds himself more attracted to his earthly life (and other boys).

Night* by Elie Wiesel: Elie Wiesel tells his story of being born in a Jewish ghetto in Hungary and then sent to the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald as a child.

I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai: Yousafzai describes her fight for girls' education under Taliban rule, the support she received from her parents, and how the Taliban retaliated against her by trying to kill her.

The Reason I Jump* by Naoki Higashida: Naoki Higashida, a 13-year-old autistic boy, demonstrates how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives, and responds by answering more than 50 questions.

Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates: In this National Book Award winner, Coates discusses our nation's history and current crisis of racism in the form of a letter to his teenage son.

Every Falling Star: The True Story of How I Survived and Escaped North Korea* by Sungju Lee: Lee's memoir of growing up in North Korea and fending for himself after his parents disappeared when he was 12.

*Starred titles are available for checkout online from Maret as e-books or audiobooks through Sora/OverDrive. <https://soraapp.com/library/maretschooldc>