Summer Reading 2026
Incoming Grade 9

Directions: Read **one text** from **each column**. Click the links to access the digital texts. Read them online or print copies. **NOTE:** Students must be logged into their **Park Ridge Google Accounts in order to access the links.**

From the **English Dept. Summer Reading webpage**, make sure to **complete ONE graphic organizer per text**.

Fiction (Select One)	Non-Fiction (Select One)	Poetry (Select One)
"Sometimes a Dream Needs a Push" by Walter Dean Myers	Jason Reynolds's 2018 Lesley University Commencement Speech	"The Border: A Double Sonnet" by Alberto Ríos
"The Medicine Bag" by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve	"Why I Love a Country that Once Betrayed Me" by George Takei	"East 149th Street (Symphony for a Black Girl)" by Teri Ellen Cross Davis
"Sol Painting, Inc." by Meg Medina	"How Autism Freed Me To Be Myself" by Rosie King	"The Journalist" by J. Patrick Lewis

Recommended Titles for Personal Summer Reading--Incoming Grade 9 (optional)

- ***Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish*** **by Pablo Cartaya (lexile 580)**
  Marcus Vega is six feet tall, 180 pounds, and the owner of a premature mustache. When you look like this and you're only in the eighth grade, you're both a threat and a target.
  After a fight at school leaves Marcus facing suspension, Marcus's mom decides it's time for a change of environment. She takes Marcus and his younger brother to Puerto Rico to spend a week with relatives they don't remember or have never met. But Marcus can't focus knowing that his father--who walked out of their lives ten years ago--is somewhere on the island.
- ***Speak*** **by Laurie Halse Anderson (lexile 690)**
  A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school.
- ***Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*** **by Wendy Mass (lexile 710)**
  Just before his thirteenth birthday, Jeremy Fink receives a keyless locked box--set aside by his father before his death five years earlier--that purportedly contains the meaning of life.

- ***The Crossover*** **by Kwame Alexander (lexile 750)**
  Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health.
- ***Everything Sad is Untrue: a true story*** **by Daniel Nayeri (lexile 800)**
  At the front of a middle school classroom in Oklahoma, a boy named Khosrou (whom everyone calls "Daniel") stands, trying to tell a story. His story. But no one believes a word he says. To them he is a dark-skinned, hairy-armed boy with a big butt whose lunch smells funny; who makes things up and talks about poop too much. Like Scheherazade in a hostile classroom, Daniel weaves a tale to save his own life: to stake his claim to the truth.
- ***Better Nate Than Ever*** **by Tim Fedelre (lexile 930)**
  An eighth-grader who dreams of performing in a Broadway musical concocts a plan to run away to New York and audition for the role of Elliot in the musical version of "E.T.".
- ***Farewell to Manzanar*** **by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston (lexile 1040)**
  During World War II a community called Manzanar was created in the high mountain desert country of California. Its purpose was to house thousands of Japanese Americans. Among them was the Wakatsuki family, who were ordered to leave their fishing business in Long Beach and take with them only the belongings they could carry. Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, who was seven years old when she arrived at Manzanar in 1942, recalls life in the camp through the eyes of the child she was.