

The Renaissance Charter School

Incoming 9th Grade Summer Reading Project 2025-2026

If you have any questions over the summer, please email:

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DUE DATE: Tuesday, September 9th, 2025 IN CLASS

Instructions:

All students entering the 9th grade are required to read **one** ELA book from the list below. After reading the book, complete and submit the assignment in class on **Tuesday, September 9, 2025**. This will count as your **first ELA project grade of the semester**.

Books are available through the [Queens Public Library](#), the [New York Public Library](#), the [Brooklyn Public Library](#), bookstores, and online vendors. It is your responsibility to obtain a copy and complete the work.

🚫 Plagiarism in any form will result in a zero and an incident report. Plagiarism is tracked throughout high school and may lead to semester failure or suspension if repeated. 🚫

Step 1: Choose One Book

Select **one novel** from the list below. As you read, **keep a handwritten journal** (see Step 2). After finishing the book, complete a **creative reflection letter** (see Step 3).

Book Options:

- *Clap When You Land* by Elizabeth Acevedo
 - *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz
 - *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
 - *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams
 - *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai
 - *Labyrinth Lost* by Zoraida Córdova
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Step 2: Reading Journal

Keep a reading journal with at least 5 entries total. You don't need to write every day, just occasionally as you read.

Each entry must include:

- **Date**
- **Page numbers read**
- **A short summary (2-3 sentences)**
- **Your thoughts/reactions (3-4 sentences)**
- **MUST BE HANDWRITTEN!**

Example prompts: What surprised you? What do you relate to? Do you agree with a character's decision? How would you feel in their shoes?

Step 3: Reflection Letter

Write a 1-page handwritten letter (200–300 words) to next year's 9th grade class explaining:

- What book you read and why you picked it
- What you liked (or didn't like) about it
- A character or moment that stood out to you
- What you learned or thought about differently because of the book
- Whether you'd recommend it to others and why

Format:

- Letter Starter: *Dear Future 9th Grader...*
 - Be honest, thoughtful, and clear
 - **MUST BE HANDWRITTEN!**
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Choices of Literature (Summaries from Goodreads):

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

In a novel-in-verse that brims with grief and love, National Book Award-winning and New York Times bestselling author Elizabeth Acevedo writes about the devastation of loss, the difficulty of forgiveness, and the bittersweet bonds that shape our lives.

Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this time, on the day his plane is supposed to land, Camino arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people...

In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father—her hero—has died in a plane crash.

Separated by distance—and by Papi's secrets—the two girls must face a new reality. And just when it seems they've lost everything of their father, they discover each other.

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

Dante can swim. Ari can't. Dante is articulate and confident. Ari struggles with words and suffers from self-doubt.

Dante loves poetry and art. Ari is haunted by thoughts of his older brother in prison.

It seems like Dante—open and unique—would be the last person to break through Ari's emotional walls.

But when they meet, a deep friendship forms that teaches them life's most important lessons.

Only by believing in each other—and the power of their bond—can they overcome the challenges ahead.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

Standing on the fringes of life... offers a unique perspective. But there comes a time to step onto the dance floor.

This haunting novel explores the tension between passivity and passion. Through letters written by a teenager named Charlie, readers are drawn into a coming-of-age journey filled with first dates, mixtapes, new friends, family drama, and self-discovery.

It's a story of trying to live—and trying to escape—wrapped in the wild, emotional ride of adolescence.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Seconds before Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is rescued by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* who has been posing as an out-of-work actor.

Together, they journey through space alongside a bizarre cast of characters:

- Zaphod Beeblebrox: two-headed, three-armed ex-hippie
- Trillian: Zaphod's girlfriend, whom Arthur once tried to pick up
- Marvin: a depressed, genius robot
- Veet Voojagig: obsessed with missing ballpoint pens

With wit, absurdity, and philosophical questions, this sci-fi comedy will keep you laughing—and thinking.

Don't forget to bring a towel!

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

"I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died, it was just after

midday.”

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced. At fifteen, she was shot in the head for speaking out about girls’ right to education.

Miraculously, she survived—and her story became a global symbol of peaceful protest. From a small town in Pakistan to the United Nations, Malala's story is one of courage, family, and the power of one girl’s voice.

Labyrinth Lost by Zoraida Córdova

“I was chosen by the Deos. Even gods make mistakes.”

Alex is a bruja, the most powerful witch in her generation—but she hates magic. At her Death Day celebration, she tries to rid herself of her powers. But the spell backfires, and her entire family vanishes.

Left alone, Alex must team up with a mysterious brujo named Nova, who might be her only chance to save them.

A magical, Latinx fantasy full of danger, identity, and self-discovery.