New Rochelle High School
10th Grade Summer Reading

Your tenth-grade English teachers look forward to meeting you next year! In preparation, this summer you will read **ONE** of the following books: *Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah, *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green, or *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo.

**All books are available for purchase through the English Department for $15 each. Let your teacher know if you would like to purchase a book.**

**Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah**

“Trevor Noah’s unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of The Daily Show began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents’ indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa’s tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.”


**Turtles All the Way Down by John Green**

“Sixteen-year-old Aza never intended to pursue the mystery of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there’s a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her best and most fearless friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Russell Pickett’s son, Davis. Aza is trying. She is trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and maybe even a good detective, while also living within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.”


**The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo**

“Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking.

But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, whom her family can never know about. With Mami’s determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself.

So when she is invited to join her school’s slam poetry club, she doesn’t know how she could ever attend without Mami finding out, much less speak her words out loud. But still, she can’t stop thinking about performing her poems. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.”

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During the first week of school, you will take a reading check on your summer reading selection: *Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah, *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green, or *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo. In addition, your class will meet in literature circles to discuss the books. (Please note that your summer reading packet plus the literature circle work will count as a 15-point homework assignment.)

In a literature circle, each student performs a different role. To prepare for these roles, we would like you to do the following: (You may do your work on this sheet or a separate piece of paper.)

5, 4, 3, 2, 1

5 Word Wizard

Select *five words* from the book that you do not know. For each word, write down the word, the context sentence, and the page number, and then do the following:

1. Based on the context or your prior knowledge, state what you think the word means.
2. Look up the dictionary definition and write it down. Were you right?
3. Where appropriate, include a synonym and antonym for the word.
4. Explain where you could see yourself using this word in the future.
Write **four questions** that will guide a thoughtful group discussion and keep the group on task. What were you wondering about while you were reading? Did you have questions about what was happening? What larger issues were raised in the book that the group should discuss?

For example, here are some questions you might want to ask about *Lord of the Flies* in a literature circle:

- Is Ralph a better leader than Jack and, if so, why?
- Do you agree with Golding’s statement that everyone has the potential for evil within them? If so, why?

Find **three connections**. These can be between the book and you and/or between the book and the wider world. This means connecting the reading to your own past experiences, to happenings in school or our community, to stories in the news, to historical events, or to other books. (Think text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text.)
Literary Luminary

Highlight two special sections or quotations in the text for your group to discuss. Summarize the passage or write the quotation (include page numbers), then explain why you selected each one.

Review

Write a one-paragraph review of the book. In your review, provide a rating on the scale of 1 to 5 stars, and support your opinion with examples from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.