



CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY
JEN HOULIHAN

SECONDARY INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISOR FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING

Summer 2020

Dear Current and Future Falcons:

As we close out the 2020-2021 school year, I can't help but reflect on how all of our students, families, teachers, staff, and leaders have adapted to a new way of learning during such a unique time in history – we are all primary sources and will carry forward lessons learned, challenges overcome, and silver linings to guide our future selves. Like any summer, this summer is a wonderful time to pick up a great book – reading can be incredibly therapeutic – losing ourselves in a story can feed our souls, mend our hearts, and fill our minds with ideas and wonder. Reading is also a clear avenue to a better, more just world – there are tremendous books available to us – both fiction and non-fiction – written by amazing authors of color, highlighting a path for all of us to gain entry or continue our personal journeys toward deeper understanding of our nation's history as it relates to institutionalized and systematic racism and how we can be a part of building a better America. It's time, and it's been time – falcons, Albany High could not have more faith than we do in all of you to be the change.

With that, the Albany High School English Department is pleased to share the 2020 Summer Reading website with all of you:

<http://albanyhighschoolsummerreading.weebly.com>

At this site, you will be able to view a carefully culled list of books across grade-levels, including the Top 10 recommendations of our wonderful librarians – Mrs. Abdul and Mrs. Majkut. Every book included was carefully chosen to take into consideration the varied interests of high school students. I feel confident that there is something on the list that you will enjoy. There are also some activities in which you can engage related to the reading you are doing.

The English Department at Albany High School recognizes the importance of reading, and writing in response to reading. That said, equity and access are two of our core values. Due to our inability to provide access to hard copies of books and the accompanying written assignment, as well as uncertainty related to the accessibility of public libraries, along with knowing our students may be facing challenges during these difficult times, we are waiving the summer reading requirement for this year*. We still hope our students will read voraciously, but we want to eliminate any pressure they may feel to complete an assignment to which they may not have access. That said, for any students who wish to engage in activities related to the reading they are doing, our journal log will remain active on the site, as will our resources for seniors who are working on their Common App essay. New this summer we also have our #ReadLikeAFalcon Summer Bingo activity for some added fun and adventure! We look forward to next summer when we can better support our students in completing this annual requirement.

For those who are able, there are many places you can acquire a book from the list we've provided. The Albany Public Library has branches throughout the city: <http://www.albanypubliclibrary.org/locations/>. Please see their website to learn how and when you can access their collections, along with information about virtual events they have planned to support summer reading. You can also purchase books from places such as Barnes and Noble, Amazon, or The Book House, located in Stuyvesant Plaza. Lastly, you

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can download the app <https://app.overdrive.com/> in order to read eBooks or listen to audiobooks. During school closure, OverDrive has drastically expanded access to their collections, and all students have accounts they can use to check out books; please see the weebly for directions.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to use the Questions tab on the weebly to connect with our school librarians and Megan Donohue, AHS Building Curriculum Team Leader for English. On behalf of the City School District of Albany and the AHS English Department, we wish you a wonderful, healthy, and safe summer full of new adventures and great books!

Sincerely,
Jen Houlihan
Secondary Instructional Supervisor for English Language Arts and Reading
City School District of Albany

*Please note that AP/IB courses still have required summer reading and accompanying assignments; that said, any students unable to access the assignment will be afforded either a time extension or exemption, based on individual circumstances. See the weebly for more direction.