

The Prout School

Summer Reading 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Prout School encourages students and families to continue reading during the summer months. Literacy research has shown that students often tend to experience the “summer slide” which is a slowing down in reading abilities, vocabulary, comprehension, and focus. This phenomenon is a tendency for students to lose some of the achievement gains they made the previous school year by not reading over the summer. This summer slide will frequently cause students to be less prepared for the academic expectations for the next school year. We want ALL students to have the same chance for academic success from the very first day of school!

Summer reading matters in other ways, too. “Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view”. (California Library Association) When parents/guardians are able to read the books their children have been assigned for summer reading, the experience can foster wonderful family discussions and build great reading memories. Familial modeling the importance of year-round reading will encourage teenagers in becoming lifelong readers.

This summer, the entire student body (along with teachers and administrators) will participate in a **Community Text Project**. The purpose of a community text (which is very often used at the college level), is to afford opportunities to begin important school-wide dialogue on critical societal issues, and for all Prout members to gain more recognition of, understanding towards, and empathy for the dignity of all human life. The summer reading will serve as a beginning of a yearlong initiative focusing on social justice: *The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society* (from Catholic Social Teaching –United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).

The community text for summer 2020, is George Orwell’s classical allegory, *Animal Farm*. After much discussion by department chairpersons, the book was selected because:

- although manageable readability for all grade levels, the book is embedded with extremely important societal concepts of class structure, discrimination, social justice, propaganda, community, work ethic, power;

- every content area teacher will plan instructional material aligning the novel with particular aspects of his/her curriculum;
- the initiative will emphasize the interconnectedness of all learning;
- issues raised in the book are those that, even in contemporary society, require readers to reflect on how each person has a share in making the global community a more just and equal world for everyone;
- reading and then discussing the book will create a forum in which students can explore the voices of the marginalized;
- the project will yield valuable collaboration among all content area teachers;
- the moral fable will function as an opening discourse on societal issues we are all grappling with;
- during the academic year, all seniors read Orwell's, *1984*, and *Animal Farm* will provide a valuable introduction to the author's narrative technique and cultural philosophy.

As *Animal Farm* is in the public domain, students are able to legally download the text at: <https://www.openrightslibrary.com/animal-farm-ebook/.....>
<https://www.animal.farm/animal-farm-pdf/> ----- or, it is readily available at libraries and on Amazon. Students should have some form of the text with them on the first full day of classes in the fall.

Reading is an important part of everyday life! The more our students read, the better readers they will be. If you have any questions pertaining to the summer reading, please feel free to contact Miss Mary Hoyt: mhoyt@theproutschool.org

PLEASE NOTE:

In addition to George Orwell's, *Animal Farm*, all IB English 11 students will also read and complete the assignment for: *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (Thomas C. Foster)