



On behalf of the English Department, I hope this message finds you and your family well. While we are having English class at home, we hope to bring activities that will give you a chance to read, think, write, and interact with your classmates.

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Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research, applying one or more grades 9-10 [or 11-12] Standards for Reading Literature or Reading Informational Text as needed. Writing [W] Standard 9

[MA DESE Prerequisite Content Standards](#)

Literacy Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Read to understand a concept and construct meaning
2. Write to generate a response to what one has read, viewed, or heard (writing)
3. Reason to identify, explain, and make a prediction based on a pattern (reasoning)

<https://www.bpsma.org/schools/brockton-high-school/about-us/mission-literacy-charts>

This week's learning plan:

1. Read "6 Ways College Might Look Different in the Fall" by Elissa Nardworny writing for NPR.org (May 5, 2020). Pick three ways that sound interesting and write a response using the piece as a model to write "3 Ways Brockton High School Might Look Different in the Fall". You should have a **minimum of three paragraphs**. If you read the article from the website, there is a short podcast to accompany the story: <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/05/848033805/6-ways-college-might-look-different-in-the-fall>
2. The second activity is brought to us by Jason Reynolds, the National Ambassador for Young Adult Literature. Each week he has a writing activity for the series "Write. Right. Rite." Thought we could try "Write. Right. Rite.: Your Hero Writes You a Response Letter". Compose the letter your hero writes back to you. What might your hero say? Jason Reynolds explains it in a 2-minute video here: <https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-9143/>

Ongoing learning opportunities

- KhanAcademy.com is available through your Clever login for SAT Practice.
- Vocabulary.com is great for quick daily practice to build your vocabulary.
- Sign up for an E-card for the library to borrow books from Hoopla.com and Overdrive.com: <http://brocktonpubliclibrary.org/images/documents/Ecards.pdf>

Note to students: Your English teacher is available to help you complete the activities. You may also have additional learning opportunities provided by your teacher. Please contact them with specific via email or during office hours:

[English Department Remote Office Hours](#)

Jason Reynolds: Grab the Mic Newsletter

 blogs.loc.gov/loc/2020/05/jason-reynolds-grab-the-mic-newsletter

By Neely Tucker

May 4,
2020



This is the May newsletter by Jason Reynolds, the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature.

When I was a kid, bedtime was bad times. Not because I didn't like pillows and sheets, or my Pound Puppy blanket. Wait, do you know what the Pound Puppies are? Were? Are? No? Okay, well, basically they were these little stuffed dogs, each one with a different set of spots, and different-colored floppy ears. But they all had sad eyes. Not sure why I loved them so much, but as soon as I finish writing this letter, I'm going to call my mother and ask her why she surrounded me with images of abandoned puppies, which you would think would be the reason bedtime was hard for me. But . . . nope. The reason I struggled so much to have a good night after saying goodnight was because I was afraid of the dark.

It's hard to describe what the dark felt like to me. But I'll try.

The dark was thick and it seemed to make the skin heavy on my bones.

The dark was empty and suddenly it felt like it could disappear me.

The dark was cold, even in the summer. Even with a blanket tucked under my chin.

The dark was silent. So silent that it made all the invisible things in my room seem loud.

The dark was . . . scary. There's no other way to say it.

So after I snuck out of my room and crawled into bed with my parents at least a thousand times (who am I kidding . . . five thousand times), my mother decided she would start leaving my bedroom door cracked, figuring a sliver of light is all I'd need to find slumber. But the hallway and kitchen were too loud. My older brother was testing out his stereo speakers, and my mother was on the phone joking around with her sisters, and there was no way I could sleep through all that. So she finally decided to get me a night light. A tiny little plug-in that provided the amount of glow a candle flame creates. Just enough to see my toys on the floor and to ensure they weren't moving on their own. Until I saw things moving across the wall. Big things. And whenever I would jump up to see what they were, they would attack. And whenever they would attack I would fight back, swinging at the air until frantically snatching the blanket over my head and hoping for morning.

This was an every-night thing.

Until I realized what was moving across the wall, was me. My shadow. And when I tried to fight it, it would fight me. Because it was me. My arms and legs kicking in bed, and the long shadow of those same arms and legs moving across the orange dim of my room.

Once I figured this out—okay, so . . . I have to be honest with you. I didn't figure this out. Seriously, I had no idea what was going on. I went crying to my older brother, and he told me what was happening. Told me how shadows worked, and then showed me how to make shapes with my hands to make shadow puppets on the walls.

A dog. A rabbit. A bird. All of which were described by my older brother as a “dog monster,” a “rabbit monster” and a “bird monster,” because that's the kind of big brother he was. But whenever I would climb into bed and make these “monsters” come to life on the walls of my room, they didn't scare me anymore. Because they were mine. And they were me. I was in control. I made them so I could talk to them, tell them how I felt, tell them to protect me from any moving toys while I slept, especially since the Pound Puppies apparently weren't going to do it.

Eventually my mother took the night light out of my room. Back to darkness. And at first, I would put my hands in the air and bend them into the shapes of animals. And even though I could no longer see them on the wall, I believed them to be there. And I still do.

I still know it's me who creates my fear, and me who creates the protectors that save me from it. The only difference is, 25 years later, those shadow puppets have left the wall and now live on the page.

For more information about Jason Reynolds, visit: loc.gov/engage.

Subscribe to the blog— it's free! — and the largest library in world history will send cool stories straight to your inbox.

6 Ways College Might Look Different In The Fall

[npr.org/2020/05/05/848033805/6-ways-college-might-look-different-in-the-fall](https://www.npr.org/2020/05/05/848033805/6-ways-college-might-look-different-in-the-fall)

Elissa Nadworny



Hanna Barczyk for NPR

What will happen on college campuses in the fall? It's a big question for families, students and the schools themselves.

A lot of what happens depends on factors outside the control of individual schools: Will there be more testing? Contact tracing? Enough physical space for distancing? Will the coronavirus have a second wave? Will any given state allow campuses to reopen?

For all of these questions, it's really too early to know the answers. But one thing is clear: Life, and learning for the nation's 20 million students in higher education, will be different.

"I don't think there's any scenario under which it's business as usual on American college campuses in the fall," says Nicholas Christakis, a sociologist and physician at Yale University.

So why are so many colleges announcing they will be back on campus in the fall?

In many cases, it's because they're still trying to woo students. A survey of college presidents found their most pressing concern right now is summer and fall enrollment. Even elite schools, typically more stable when it comes to enrollment, have reportedly been tapping their waitlists.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, it's worth looking at some of the ideas out there. With the help of Joshua Kim and Edward J. Maloney, professors and authors of the book *Learning Innovation and the Future of Higher Education*, here are some potential scenarios for reopening colleges and universities:

All virtual

Perhaps the most obvious option for the fall is to continue doing what they've been doing this spring. Colleges have signaled that they're planning for this option — even if it's a last resort. California State University, Fullerton, was one of the first to announce publicly it was planning for a fall semester online.

"Obviously we want to resume in-person teaching as soon as possible, but we also need to make sure that we're safe," says Ellen Treanor, who helps lead strategic communication at the school. Treanor says it made a lot of sense to assume the school would start online. "What would be the easier way to transition? It would be easier to transition beginning virtually and then transitioning in person," she said. "The faculty [needs] to be prepared."

With virtual classes, students can remain at home, although some colleges are exploring bringing them back to campus, where they could use the school's Wi-Fi to take online classes.

Delayed start

A delay in the semester would allow a school to wait it out until it was safer to reopen. One option is to push back a month or two, starting in October or November. Another idea is to push a normal start to January. In that case, the spring semester would become the fall semester, and potentially students could stay on campus through next summer to make up the spring semester. [Boston University floated a version](#) of this January start date when it announced a number of plans it was exploring.

One downside to a late start is what students will do in the meantime, especially those who don't have financial stability and rely on campus or the university to be a safe and stable home.

Some online, some face-to-face

This would be a hybrid model, with a combination of virtual and in-person classes. It may be a good choice for campuses that don't have enough classrooms to allow adjusting face-to-face teaching to the requirements of social distancing.

"You might have some of the larger classes being taught online simply because it's harder to imagine a 150- or 350-person classroom," says Maloney, who leads the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship at Georgetown University. "So you might see that class split up into multiple sections." For large, entry-level classes, colleges may have a lecture component online and then meet in smaller groups in person.

Of course, shifting larger classes online may not be enough, by itself, to alleviate the health concerns of having students on campus. [Early research from Cornell University](#) found that eliminating very large classes still left the small world network of the campus intact.

Shortened blocks

In block scheduling, students take just one course at a time for a shorter duration, typically three or four weeks. Colorado College, a liberal arts school south of Denver, has been using this model for 50 years. The college adopted this style of classes because "it allows [students] to take a deep dive and really focus in unique ways on the single subject," says Alan Townsend, the provost there. In a typical year, the school offers eight blocks.

In addition to its intensity, block scheduling is attractive right now because it allows flexibility. Colleges that use it have the opportunity to change the way classes look every three weeks — since there are multiple start and stop points. (With a semester, you have only a single start and then, often 16 weeks later, an end.)

"It's easier for us to now think creatively for next year," Townsend says. "Different students can make different choices. That's really hard to do with a semester-based system, but the blocks allow us to do that a little bit more flexibly."

The school is also entertaining the idea of sending faculty abroad to teach a block for international students who might not be able to enter the U.S, or adding summer blocks to give students even more opportunities to take classes.

Only some on campus

Some colleges have suggested bringing only freshmen back to campus and having upperclassmen either delay their start, or be online and remote.

The idea centers on research that shows just how important a student's first year of college is as a predictor of graduation. Adapting to campus can be a challenge, so this would allow first-year students to get comfortable and have extra support on campus.

Since upperclassmen are already familiar with how campus and classes work, the theory goes, they can more easily adapt to an online environment. Other versions of this approach would have students who have housing needs come back to campus first, and then, over time, phase in other groups of students.

All these options seek to keep the population density of the campus lower while still maintaining some face-to-face interactions.

On campus, with some changes

Social distancing, improved testing and contact tracing could help colleges reopen their campuses.

"Every school is trying to figure out a way to have students come back and do whatever we can while also protecting public health," says *Learning Innovation* co-author Joshua Kim, director of online programs and strategy at Dartmouth College.

"At the same time, we know that, however that works, things will be different. It's probably unlikely that we'll be able to cram students together in large, packed lecture halls or put doubles and triples in residence halls or have big events."

To follow social distancing, professors are measuring their classrooms, calculating how many students could fit in the space if they were 6 feet apart. Deans are planning out how students could enter and exit the classrooms safely.

But it's not just the classrooms that pose a challenge. For residential colleges, it's the dorms.

"Whether or not students are actually learning in the classroom, it's incredibly important for them to have an on-campus experience," Maloney says. So schools are thinking about how they can spread their students out, putting them in places where they normally wouldn't go.

Some ideas include housing students in offices that aren't being used, local hotel rooms or off-campus housing. Institutions are also reimagining campus events, like freshman orientation, since it's unlikely hundreds of students will be in a packed auditorium.

"Rethinking how we do everything we do at a university is part of the process," Maloney says.

