

# 8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

## Riverdale – English Language Arts

### Required Novel: *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson

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#### **Assignment Due Date**

Students must finish reading *Chains* by the **first week of school**. **Standard ELA students will take a comprehension test** on the novel during the second week of school. A **summer writing assignment** will be provided for enriched ELA students and is due Friday, August 8th.

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#### **About the Book**

*Chains* is the first book in the *Seeds of America* trilogy and tells the compelling story of Isabel, a young enslaved girl living in New York City at the start of the American Revolution. When Isabel and her sister are sold to a cruel Loyalist family, she begins to search for freedom and justice, navigating complex loyalties and moral choices during one of the most turbulent times in American history. This powerful narrative explores themes of freedom, resilience, identity, and courage.

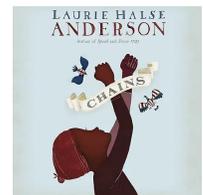
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#### **Where to buy**

You can find *Chains* at your local library or Friends of the Germantown Library Bookstore.

Purchase it online:

 [Buy on Amazon](#)



#### **Tips for Reading Success**

To help students engage with the book meaningfully, we recommend the following approach:

- **Divide the reading** into manageable sections (e.g., one chapter per day) to avoid rushing through it.
- **Take notes** on key characters, events, and themes. Pay special attention to Isabel's internal struggles and how she changes over the course of the novel.
- **Ask questions** while reading. For example:
  - What does freedom mean to Isabel?
  - How do different characters demonstrate loyalty or betrayal?

- What historical events are referenced, and how do they affect Isabel's life?
  - **Mark important passages** or keep a reading journal to reflect on significant moments or quotes.
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## **Goal**

This summer reading assignment helps students build vocabulary, improve reading comprehension, and prepare for discussions and writing in the fall. We believe *Chains* will provide students with both an engaging story and a rich context for exploring early American history and the complexities of human rights.

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**Thank you for encouraging your child to read this summer!**

If you have questions, feel free to contact Mrs. Eckenhoff.  
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**8th Grade English Teacher**

# CHAINS

## Enriched ELA 8 Mandatory Summer Writing

1

### SLAVERY DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR:

- Investigate the role of slavery during the Revolutionary War era.
- How does *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson depict the experiences of enslaved characters during this period?
- Analyze how historical events related to slavery are portrayed in the novel and evaluate their accuracy in relation to primary and secondary sources.

2

### BRIDEWELL PRISON:

- Explore the significance of Bridewell Prison during the Revolutionary War.
- Analyze how the novel portrays conditions in Bridewell and the experiences of characters who are imprisoned there.
- Compare these depictions with historical accounts of Bridewell and discuss the importance of accurately representing this aspect of history in a fictional narrative.

3

### MILITARY LEADERS AND BATTLES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR:

- Investigate the roles and leadership styles of military leaders or one of the battles during the Revolutionary War, choosing a figure from either side or a battle mentioned in *Chains*.
- Analyze how the novel portrays this leader and their actions or how the novel portrays the battle; compare these portrayals with historical accounts.
- Discuss the challenges and responsibilities faced by military leaders during this period and their significance in shaping the outcome of the war. If choosing a battle to research, discuss the importance of that battle in the course of the war. Did it have significant impacts on the outcome of the war? What are those impacts?

### CRITERIA:

MLA

- Write a 5 paragraph informational essay on ONE of the prompts. Essay should be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double-spaced.
- Essay should be written in MLA format with 3 sources listed in an alphabetized Works Cited page. One of your sources will be *Chains*. Include the MLA formatted page numbers, heading, title, and in-text citations.
- Essay is due on Friday, August 8. It will be graded on the TN 6-8 Informational Essay rubric. Revisions will be completed in class during the second week of school.

