



# BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH BOOKS

*a project of Human Rights Pen Pals*

## FAQs

### Everything you need to know about participating in the reading group!

#### 1. Can I join the book club now?

We want to get a cohesive group together to read each book, so please wait until we begin our next book to join. You can check our web page on the Human Rights Pen Pals website to see when that will be.

#### 2. Why do incarcerated pen pals need to remain anonymous?

California prisons have strict rules against “third party communication”-- prisoners communicating with each other through a third party. If we use names or personally identifying details, our reading group will likely be banned. We wish we could use our names and get to know each other as much as possible, but this is a constraint imposed by the prison system that we need to work around. Instead of your name, you can introduce yourself by discussing your interests or hobbies, your favorite books, or what you hope to get out of the reading group.

#### 3. How many questions should I answer from each chapter? Do my pen pal and I have to answer the same questions?

We have almost 50 people in our group, so feel free to answer questions sparingly. Try to answer 2-5 questions from each packet. You and your pen pal do NOT need to answer the same questions.

#### 4. What responsibilities do the inside pen pals have?

The inside pen pals are responsible for doing the reading, answering a couple questions of their choosing, and mailing their answers to their outside pen pal within 3 weeks of receiving the packet. If you and your pen pal both have access to email through Jpay, feel free to communicate this way instead of through the post.

#### 5. What responsibilities do outside pen pals have?

Outside pen pals have the same reading and writing responsibilities, and in addition will enter both sets of responses from their pen pal pair into a **google form**. It's important for this to happen as quickly as possible so as not to slow down the group unnecessarily.

#### 6. What if my address or my pen pal's address changes?

First of all, make sure you tell your pen pal about your new address! Secondly, please update the address in the form where you signed up for the reading group: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1cWHnaYbcsEpnh65q8ITm7bzqrVzaebZeEqxFNQjeFPs/edit?usp=sharing>

7. What if I don't have time to finish the reading before my responses are due?

We know that life is busy and unpredictable with work, school, family, and volunteer projects. In addition, pen pals in prison face the uncertainty of lockdowns, mail delays, and little to no control over their daily routine. We understand this, and ask that if you fall behind on the reading, to try to answer one or two questions from the early chapters (if you've read them) and send your responses in on schedule. If you need to sit out one month's responses, let your pen pal know as soon as possible. You can always catch up on reading in your own time, but if you wait to send in your responses, you could delay the group.

8. Where does the funding for BBtB come from?

This is a brand new grassroots project, not affiliated with a nonprofit, so our funding has come from individual donations from Human Rights Pen Pals, their friends, families, and supporters. In addition, most copies of "A People's History of the United States" were generously donated by customers at Greenlight Bookstore in Brooklyn, New York. If you or someone you know wants to donate, you can do so here: <https://humanrightspenpals.org/building-bridges-through-books/> by clicking on the "donate with paypal" link. Our funding goes to buying reading material, notepads, stamps, paper, postage, and envelopes.

9. I love being part of this group! How can I get more involved?

Wonderful! You can email [buildingbridgesthroughbooks@gmail.com](mailto:buildingbridgesthroughbooks@gmail.com) or write to us (Human Rights Pen Pals at [1301 Clay Street](#); PO Box 71378; Oakland, CA 94612) and say that you'd like to volunteer or join the leadership collective. If possible, let us know how much time you have to give per week or per month, what you're interested in helping with, and if you have any special skills or talents (like graphic design, web editing, writing, access to cheap or free printing, etc). For outside pen pals, volunteering to print and mail reading responses for one month is a huge help! Inside volunteers can help us with writing, editing reading questions, messaging, and getting the word out about our project.