

Black Boy

Curriculum Unit



Black Boy

Richard Wright

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Curriculum Unit Author

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Introduction

Richard Wright's search for identity and acceptance seemed to suffocate under the emotionally devastating elements of his society, such as alienation, isolation, and oppression. The black man of the South in the early twentieth century had to play the role of the dumb Negro—the ignorant, self-effacing, lowered-eyed individual who not only was forced to negate his self-worth but also was expected to accept white society's view: the black man is inferior.

Wright was sickened by the role of the black male in the southern world where he spent his boyhood and adolescence. He, although forced to play the role projected upon him for survival, knew that an escape to the Promised Land, the North, would one day release him from the social stigma of the American South. Unfortunately, Wright's social imprisonment followed him into the North. Shortly after arriving in Chicago, Wright secured a job in a delicatessen. Although he worked for a couple who treated him with respect, he could not accept their kindness—the chains of oppression which held him back in childhood were not removed once he reached the North.

Regrettably, although Wright experienced success in writing and acceptance as an artist, and as a man, his spirit never recovered, and he ever wandered in his alienation, both socially and emotionally.

Teacher Notes

Black Boy is a fascinating study of historical, literary, and personal change. How can the study of a black writer in America's post-Civil War and pre-Civil Rights era be complete without the analysis of important historical and social developments? Richard Wright began writing at the close of the Harlem Renaissance (or New Negro Movement), a literary explosion of important works of black artists. Common themes of the writers included identification with the working class, social alienation, folk themes, and an emphasis on the unique black experience or sub-culture in the United States.

Words, reading, expression, and books became powerful influences in Wright's life. Once Wright began to record his thoughts and create stories and poetry, he viewed a release for an energy he knew would not be accepted or understood by family or by the social climate of the South. In chapter 4, when Wright is found scribbling lines, he immediately folds away his paper and thrusts it in his pocket. Although always to feel psychologically different from those around him, Wright discovered at a young age that he must write!

Throughout this curriculum unit, students are given opportunities to explore and research the important developments which influenced, as well as subjugated, Wright. The power of the written word, the exhilarating discovery of an author whose voice echoes the state of one's own heart, the relief as a writer finds an audience in his expressions which had never before been understood: Wright's discoveries become the students' discoveries. For each of the ten lessons, a research activity is provided to broaden the view of the influences in Wright's life. These research activities cover a variety of topics, from the ancient poetry form of the haiku to the importance of the Harlem Renaissance. You might choose to alternate each lesson with a class period of research and discussion, allowing the formation of research teams, which, taking on various aspects of the topic, might inform or teach the results of team findings.

For each research topic, allow brief student presentations, assigning topics to individuals throughout the study of the novel, to provide further depth and insight. You may choose to allow the class to research all topics individually or in study teams. The goal of this curriculum unit is to provide depth and challenge to higher-level learners, as well as to provide a straightforward unit for all students. Answers to handouts will vary unless otherwise indicated.

Black Boy might well be viewed as historical autobiography. Who is able to exist and develop free from the social, political, and extremely negative influences in one's society? Certainly not Wright!

Reading assignments for *Black Boy* are as follows:

Chapters 1 and 2 will be read during Lesson 1

Chapters 3 and 4 in preparation for Lesson 2

Chapters 5 and 6 in preparation for Lesson 3

Chapters 7 and 8 in preparation for Lesson 4

Chapters 9 and 10 in preparation for Lesson 5

Chapters 11 and 12 in preparation for Lesson 6

Chapters 13 and 14 in preparation for Lesson 7

Chapters 15 and 16 in preparation for Lesson 8

Chapters 17 and 18 in preparation for Lesson 9

The remainder of *Black Boy* for Lesson 10

Please note that some editions of *Black Boy* end with chapter 14, where Wright decides to leave the South and go to Chicago. This unit covers all twenty chapters of the text. The following edition contains all chapters plus a chronology of Wright's life and additional notes.

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy (American Hunger): A Record of Childhood and Youth*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1993.

Lesson 1

The Power of Words

Objectives

- To become familiar with Richard Wright's early childhood
- To discuss Wright's earliest awareness of the power of words
- To have an opportunity for research and expression in the art of haiku

Notes to the Teacher

Even the beginning chapters of *Black Boy* reveal Wright's fascination with words. Although he found the power of negative words years before discovering the exhilaration of expression through writing, language became a mystery and a wonder for him.

In **Handout 1**, students analyze Wright's experience in the fire and his earliest frustration in not being able to express his restlessness, which led to the catastrophe, and his inability to verbalize his reasoning when later confronted.

Handout 2 examines the power of the *wrong* words spoken. Due to his surroundings, the common vulgarities of speech were without meaning to Wright; however, he quickly felt the weight of hatefully spoken words. In this handout, students write proverbs—brief statements of wisdom. To introduce a proverb, you may want to have a book of world proverbs, a book of quotations, proverbs from the Bible, or several witty statements from Benjamin Franklin or Mark Twain. Three or four proverbs might be written on the board or overhead before class, in order that students may notice them upon entering the classroom.

Handout 3 looks at the lovely imagery of the memories that Wright records. The brief statements, written as if Wright were taking the reader on a quick ride through his memories, pass quickly but leave their unique impressions. This handout allows students to take Wright's simply written phrases and rework them into haiku form. Students then create their own haiku.

Handout 4 challenges students to discover the roots and migration of the early poetic form of the haiku.

Finally, **Handout 5** provides students with the opportunity to research and report on the life of an important nineteenth-century African American—abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Due to the length of chapters 1 and 2, the first lesson might well be taught in two class periods. For day 1, **Handout 1** will be completed in a group/discussion setting and **Handout 2** will be introduced. At the close of the class period, the second chapter will be assigned. On day 2, **Handout 2** will be completed, **Handout 3** will be used, and the lesson will close with **Handouts 4** and **5**.

Procedure

Day 1

1. On an overhead or on the board, write the words *frustration* and *language*. Ask students to suggest how these terms might be related. Possible questions:
 - When is language frustrating?
 - When have you had difficulty expressing yourself?
 - What situations seem to be more difficult than others?

After allowing students a few minutes to share personal anecdotes, add the word *childhood* to the board. Ask two or three students to share a time from their childhood when they were particularly frustrated by their inadequate language skills.

2. Distribute **Handout 1**. Allow a student to read aloud the directions, as well as part A of the handout. Read chapter 1 of *Black Boy* orally.
3. Using **Handout 1** as an overhead or jotting answers on the board, ask students to provide answers for part A, including events before, during, and after the fire.

Suggested Responses:

1. *His grandmother was sick in the next room. He was to remain very quiet and he would get into trouble if he made noise. When he called to a bird that flew by the window, his mother scolded him for making noise. Terribly bored, he looked for something to burn. He decided that a broom would not be missed. After burning the broom, he wondered how the curtains would look if they burned. The curtains caught fire, as did the rest of the room. Richard went into the kitchen. Seeing that it, too, was filling with smoke, he went outside and hid under the house. He heard his mother calling him. His father found him under the house. His mother beat him so severely that he lost consciousness.*
2. *He said he was feeling worried, impatient, and angry at having to stay in the room and remain quiet. He wanted to be playing outside. He was terribly bored. He was angry because he felt neglected by his mother. Out of boredom, he burned straw from the broom. After watching the fire of the straw, he was curious how the curtains would burn. Terrified once they caught fire, he ran for the kitchen, but since the kitchen was also filling with smoke, he ran outside and hid under the house. While hiding, he wondered if the members of his family were on fire. He was afraid of a beating after hearing the tone of voice in which his mother called for him. He wanted to die or disappear. Once his father found his hiding place, he was terrified and wanted to run away, but he was caught and severely beaten by his mother.*
3. *Richard's frustration, before the fire, included his boredom and his feelings that his mother was neglecting him. He was unable to explain that he originally put things into the fire just to watch them burn. Later, he was unable to explain that it had never occurred to him that people might die in the fire, and that he set the curtains on fire only to watch them burn.*

4. Allow student reflection to answer part B of **Handout 1**, as they recall a foolish or dangerous incident from their own childhood. Allow students several minutes to recall and record their personal stories. Asking one or two students to share something with the class may help other students decide what to write.

After providing adequate time for student responses, allow a few volunteers to read from their handouts. Close this activity by questioning students as to the importance of being able to articulate one's reasons for behavior, as well as the allowance to do so.

5. Draw student attention to the first two pages of chapter 1. Have students read different recollections, as recorded by Wright. Ask students to comment on the senses that are being appealed to, for example, Wright's mention of burning hickory wood—appealing to the sense of smell; the wild geese in the sky—appealing to the senses of sight and sound. To prepare students for the activity in **Handout 3**, ask for volunteers who may want to create a very short poem based on images from these pages.
6. Assign the reading of chapter 2.

Day 2

7. Distribute **Handout 2**. Because of the vulgar nature of Wright's comment to his grandmother, focus instead on the danger of using words or expressions whose meaning is unknown or unclear, rather than on Wright's actual statements. How then, you may ask your students, are *chosen* words important in speaking? Ask students to explain the problems that this circumstance caused for Wright. What would have been avoided had he kept quiet?
8. In completing **Handout 2**, students may work in teams or as a class to record various proverbs on the board or overhead, or students may complete the assignment silently and individually. Once the handout is completed, record some student proverbs on the board or overhead. If there is room, allow each student to take his or her favorite proverb and write it on a bumper

sticker-sized piece of colored paper to display in the classroom.

9. Remind students of the closing activity from procedure 5. Students may wish to turn again to the first half of chapter 1, where Wright lists many images from his boyhood. After reading a few of the images, direct students to turn to where Wright again lists memories in chapter 2. Ask for suggestions of which of Wright's images might make for a brief poem.
 10. Distribute **Handout 3**. Walk students through the dynamics of the classical form of the haiku. To aid in student writing, make an outline on the board or overhead. Provide five slashes on the first line, seven on the second, and five on the third line to represent the syllables that make up the haiku. As students come up with suggestions, fill in their words, breaking each into syllables above the slash marks. Allow several students to create one haiku by taking only one or two words from each student. Challenge students to test the example on their handout by syllabifying each word. Create several haiku from the images listed in procedure 9.
 11. Allow students to compose their own haiku. Students may wish to illustrate their poems. If there is room, create a bulletin board to display the students' poems.
 12. For **Handout 4**, divide the class into six research teams. Assign one of the six points listed to each team. Encourage each team to develop a handout stating the results of its research. On an assigned day, provide time when each team might share its findings with the rest of the class.
 13. Distribute **Handout 5**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.
3. *Although it was never confirmed, Douglass suspected that his father was his owner, Aaron Anthony.*
 4. *At age 7, Douglass was sent to live with relatives of his master; Sophia Auld, violating the law prohibiting education of blacks, taught Douglass to read and write. However, her husband forced her to stop.*
 5. *It was a secret debating club; it refined speaking skills; members engaged in discussions that covered many issues. Douglass was a member; it provided him with one of his earliest opportunities to associate with free blacks.*
 6. *The organizer, William Lloyd Garrison, was so impressed by Douglass that he encouraged Douglass to continue to travel and lecture.*
 7. *one of the most influential women in the suffrage movement*
 8. *women's rights to personal and religious freedom; equality in marriage; with her own children; the right to possess property in her own name; to her own wages; equal opportunity and training in the professions and trades*
 9. *schools that Douglass led and that taught blacks to read and write*
 10. *an effort to force free blacks to leave the U.S. and form colonies abroad*
 11. *Recorder of Deeds in Washington, D.C.; minister to Haiti; he recruited blacks for the Union armies*
 12. *Narrative of the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave; Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
 13. *The North Star; Douglass' Monthly; New National Era*
14. Assign chapters 3 and 4 in preparation for Lesson 2.

Suggested Responses:

1. *1817, 1895*
2. *Frederick Augustus Bailey*

“FIRE!”

Part A.

Directions: From a third-person point of view, analyze the incident, the motives, and the frustrations that Richard Wright may have experienced surrounding the events of his grandmother’s fire.

1. Describe the incident from an objective point of view.
2. Describe the motives and emotions you feel that Wright experienced. Include Wright’s motive for setting the fire.
3. Focus on the frustration as Wright struggled with the ability (or opportunity) to explain his actions.

Part B.

Directions: After reading of Wright’s experience with the fire, think of a time in your early childhood when you felt angry, bored, restless, or trapped, as did Wright. Recall a foolish or dangerous episode in which you (or a sibling) were involved.

1. Describe the incident from an objective point of view. Record the facts as best you can remember, or ask an adult to provide additional details.
2. Describe the motives and emotions connected with that incident. What provoked you or a sibling to engage in the activity?
3. Focus on the frustration as you struggled with the ability (or opportunity) to explain your actions.

The Power of a Word

Directions: Richard Wright is severely punished after he casually makes a vulgar comment to his grandmother. Using a book of proverbs or phrases, find a few quotations that state the importance and power of a spoken word. Then create your own short statements of wisdom. For the following opposing forces, write a proverb that addresses the danger of the negative and stresses the effect of the positive.

Examples:

Cruelty is an angered lion, but kindness is a puppy.

A curse bruises the heart, while a compliment lightens it.

1. cruelty vs. kindness

2. curses vs. compliments

3. judgment vs. compassion

4. prejudice vs. acceptance

5. ignorance vs. education

6. aggression vs. peacefulness

Poetry of Life

Directions: In chapter 2, Richard Wright describes images that he remembers from his childhood. Notice the clarity of each image recorded in chapter 2, beginning with “There was the breathless, anxious fun. . . .” Using the classical form of the haiku, create two or three haiku using images from Wright’s bare descriptions.

Example:

“There was the greedy joy in the tangy taste of wild hickory nuts.”

(5 syllables) greedy, guilty joy

(7 syllables) wild hickory nuts, tangy

(5 syllables) taste left on my lips

Think of a favorite place, taste, feeling, or sight. Compose two or three haiku using these images.

Research—The Haiku

Directions: Richard Wright, as he began to develop an understanding of the power of language, experimented with poetic forms. Research the following points.

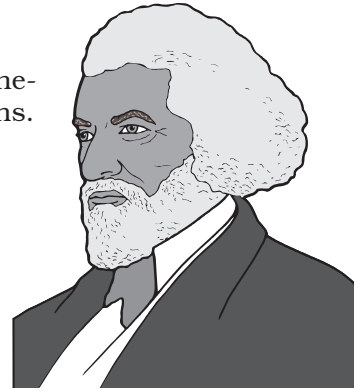
1. The origin of the haiku
2. How the haiku become popular outside of its native country
3. Common themes in the classic haiku
4. What American writers have contributed to the popularity of the haiku
5. Forms other than the classic form (3 lines—5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables) that exist
6. What poetic forms Wright published (providing a few examples of Wright's poems)

Biographical Sketch—Frederick Douglass

Directions: Investigate the life of Frederick Douglass, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Douglass's birth and death?
2. What was the name he was given at birth?
3. Who was Douglass's father?
4. How was Douglass first educated?
5. What was the East Baltimore Mental Improvement Society, and how was Douglass involved?



Significant People/Experiences

6. What was the result when he spoke at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society?
7. Who was Elizabeth Cady Stanton?
8. Douglass strongly supported women's rights and their Declaration of Sentiments. What were the six points of that declaration?

Significant Contributions

9. What were the Sabbath Schools?
10. Douglass felt strongly against the Maryland Colonization Society. What were the objectives of that society?
11. What government jobs did Douglass hold, and how did he participate in the war effort?

Published Works

12. Name Douglass's autobiographies.
13. What were three newspapers that Douglass founded?

Lesson 2

The Man Child

Objectives

- To examine chapters 3 and 4
- To analyze the effects of Richard Wright's aunt's and grandmother's treatment toward him in relation to his subsequent views of church
- To examine our ambassadorship within a given organization

Notes to the Teacher

Chapters 3 and 4 of *Black Boy* cover two important situations for Wright. **Handouts 6** and **7** challenge students' reading comprehension, as students record specific facts from Wright's life during his mother's first serious illness, as well as during his brief stay with his Uncle Clark. Undoubtedly, one of the most critical aspects of these chapters is the fact that Wright, although a boy, was placed in a very difficult position, as he felt that he must both care for his mother and, later, prove himself in a difficult situation while living with one of his uncles.

In **Handout 8**, students assess the influence that Wright's aunt and grandmother had in the (negative) impressions Wright developed toward the church. They also analyze their own influence in any organization with which they may be a member. This activity is a tool with which students might form a relationship between their behavior or attitude and the impression nonmembers develop of that particular group.

In **Handout 9**, students are encouraged to look at the church of Seventh-day Adventists, of which Wright's aunt and grandmother were members. They also investigate an unfamiliar religion, in addition to looking into their own beliefs. **Handout 10** provides students with an opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—Henry McNeal Turner.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 6**. Allow students to answer questions individually. Students should express original thoughts, rather than simply quote passages from the book for their answers. Once adequate time is given, discuss answers in a whole class setting. Allow for several answers for numbers 3 and 5. Ask students to share (if they wish) any personal stories about times when they were in a situation that seemed too difficult for a child. Due to the nature of the question, you may wish to preface the open discussion by mentioning circumstances such as a family illness, funeral, or hospital visits.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Wright brought lunches to the men working in the rail yard. His pay was a quarter a week. Wright carried wood to supply a stove in a cafe. He carried food trays to train passengers when trains were stopped at a station near where he lived. He delivered clothes for a shop that did ironing. He swept floors.*
2. *They stayed with her day and night, trying to bring her back to health; they fed Richard and his brother; cleaned their clothes; fed the Wrights.*
3. *Answers will vary, but the importance of the statement is the fact that too much responsibility was placed on Wright. In addition to the obvious emotional strain, Wright, being young and undernourished, could not physically handle the jobs his family so desperately needed him to hold. He had to make decisions based on what he felt would be best for his mother and brother.*
4. *He wanted to live with the relative who was geographically the nearest to his grandmother's home, where his mother was living.*
5.
 - a. *A child who, for whatever reason, did not have a home.*
 - b. *Answers will vary, but probably Wright felt that there was something wrong with him. Again, his*

inability to speak well and his timidity added to his frustration and isolation. Without the emotional security needed in his early years, he was not able to feel secure in new environments, and he felt like a burden and an outsider.

6. *He was to bring wood and coal into the house for the fireplaces; split kindling and build a fire in the kitchen stove; carry a pail of water into the house for cooking purposes.*
2. Distribute **Handout 7**. Divide students into discussion groups. Allow for three to five students per group. Ask groups to elect one student as scribe. Direct groups to discuss questions 1 and 2. Once they have agreed, or combined impressions, answers can be recorded by the scribe. A speaker from each discussion group can share the group's findings.
3. As a whole group, focus student attention to question 3 on **Handout 7**. Ask students to relate an experience from their own childhood where they had to make a difficult adjustment. In order to identify with Wright, suggest to students that they try to recall the added difficulty in not being able to express fully their feelings, again, because of a child's awkwardness in language skills. Have students state what might have made the situation easier, or share what *did* ease the difficulty. Depending on the openness of a particular class atmosphere, you may wish to allow time for several students to share their experience, or may wish to simply collect the handout to read privately.
4. For question 3 on **Handout 7**, provide construction paper to be folded in half (to resemble a book cover). Students are to compose a first-person narrative of the event and give it a title. The narrative should be only as long as the inside of their "book" allows. These finished student narratives might be shared with the class through oral or distributed reading, or a classroom display.

5. To prepare for **Handout 8**, choose a student to look up the word *ambassador* and to write the definition on the board. Ask another student to use a thesaurus and write two or three synonyms for *ambassador* under the definition. Allow students to explain the meaning of the word. Distribute **Handout 8**, page 1, once the class has a clear understanding of the term. Put students into groups; allow each group to select a scribe, or have each student complete his or her own handout. Provide ample time for students to peruse chapter 4 to complete all three categories. You may use this handout as an overhead or draw the categories on the board to record group responses. Flexibility in completing the categories is encouraged, as an episode which might best fit under *treatment* (since it reveals the character of one of the women) may be filed under *character*.

Suggested Responses:

1. Grandmother

Spoke—*Suggested that mother's illness was due to Wright's sinfulness; told him he was bad without finding out what had happened*

Treatment—*Saw him as an evil and dangerous presence in the house*

Character—*Unsympathetic; condemning; concerned with her reputation at church over her treatment of, or what might be best for, him*

2. Aunt Addie

Spoke—*without kindness, told him to shut up; screamed at him, refusing him the opportunity to explain himself*

Treatment—*Saw Wright as ungrateful; was cruel to him in school; encouraged other children to ostracize him for his lack of religious beliefs; unwilling to listen; untrusting of Wright; cruel, forceful (grabbing him by the collar in the classroom); abusive, his beating in the classroom was beyond discipline; wanted to beat him again after the problem in the classroom; (in Wright's eyes) was violent enough to use a knife on him if she*

could have gotten it out of his hands; never let him recite or go to the blackboard at school

Character—*Unable to admit weakness or faults; condemning, also unsympathetic; unforgiving; spiteful; cruel (she laughed when Wright was hurt on the playground)*

6. To prepare students for the second page of the handout, choose a few students to suggest a different way that Wright may have reacted toward his grandmother's church if her and Addie's treatment of him would have been different. Ask students to suggest the impact of their treatment toward him at home on his impressions of the church they attended.
7. Distribute page 2 of **Handout 8**. Ask students to jot down on the back of the handout any organization, club, school activity, church group, organized sport, or musical group to which they belong. (A student may even want to include family, since the student's behavior causes others to assume family practices rather than individual characteristics.) Let each student choose the organization that is most important to him or her. Students will benefit most if they complete this assignment at home, in order to allow reflection, input from other members of their particular group, or comments from a family member. (Students may even wish to ask a friend to share his or her personal impression of the student's involvement, based on what the friend has observed.) Designate a time when students may choose their own small groups to share their responses.
8. Distribute **Handout 9**. You may choose to assign the research to each individual student or to form research teams. In order to complete their forms, students might interview others in their class who practice different beliefs. Encourage library research as well. Provide an opportunity for individuals or research teams to share their findings on the Seventh-Day Adventists. Was Wright's limited view of the church a true representation?

9. Collect facts from all groups relating to the church with which Wright was familiar. Break up the categories listed on the handout. For other beliefs and findings, provide separate poster boards per organized religion researched. Organize teams according to religious organizations chosen (if possible). Spend some time discussing each display.

10. Distribute **Handout 10**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1833, 1915
2. Howard and Sarah Turner
3. No, both of his parents were free blacks.
4. He was an African king.
5. worked in cotton fields with slaves; apprenticed as a blacksmith
6. Whites, violating laws prohibiting the education of blacks, taught Turner to read and write.
7. worked as a clerk in a white law office
8. the lawyers continued in his education; the availability of law volumes in the offices which Turner read on his own
9. a. joined the Methodist Episcopal Church South; hired as an itinerant minister
b. was licensed to preach
c. was ordained Bishop
10. appointed first black chaplain to black troops
11. He was detailed to work in the Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia
12. 1868; 1870
13. Postmaster of Macon, Georgia; customs inspector; government detective

14. *Doctor of Literature by the University of Pennsylvania; Doctor of Divinity by Wilberforce*

15. *More than seventy missionaries were sent into former Confederate states; the African Methodist Episcopal Church was banned from the South for over thirty years; the goal was to bring blacks into the AME Church and to encourage black nationalism.*

16. *African Emigration, a movement for free blacks to establish colonies in Africa, was sometimes called the "Black Exodus." Turner favored it; he felt that church and society should be segregated.*

17. *introduced a bill giving women the vote; ordained a woman as a deacon in the AME Church (this decision was quickly overturned); founded the Women's Home and the Foreign Mission Society*

18. *Turner Theological Seminary*

11. *Instruct students to read chapters 5 and 6 of *Black Boy* in preparation for Lesson 3.*

Man/Child

Directions: Answer the following questions about chapter 3.

1. What were some of the jobs Richard Wright had while living with his mother?
2. Identify services that the neighbors were willing to do for Wright's mother.
3. Explain what you think Wright meant when he said, "Though I was a child, I could no longer feel as a child, could no longer react as a child."
4. What did Wright take into consideration in choosing a new home?
5. a. What was a "wrong one"?

b. Wright felt that his aunt considered him this way, but who do you think truly felt that Wright was wrong, his aunt, or himself?
6. What were Wright's daily chores while at his Uncle Clark's?

Ambassadors of Faith?

Part A.

Directions: Richard Wright's exposure to fundamental religion was through the example of two women in his life, his grandmother and his aunt. Gather information that would validate, in young Wright's mind, the culmination of negative views toward the church and churchgoing women due to their influences. Complete the chart with information from chapter 4.

Woman	How she spoke	How she treated Richard	Character or type she portrayed
1. Grandmother			
2. Aunt Addie			

Part B.

Directions: Define the word *ambassador*. Then think of an organization, extracurricular activity, church group, or other club with which you might be involved. Imagine that you were the representative, or ambassador, of that group to someone who knew nothing of your organization. What kind of ambassador would you be? Honestly evaluate your position and assess how you could improve the image of your organization.

What Do You Believe?

Directions: Gather information on Seventh-Day Adventists, your personal faith, and another faith of which you know little. Complete the chart with similarities and differences among the three religious groups.

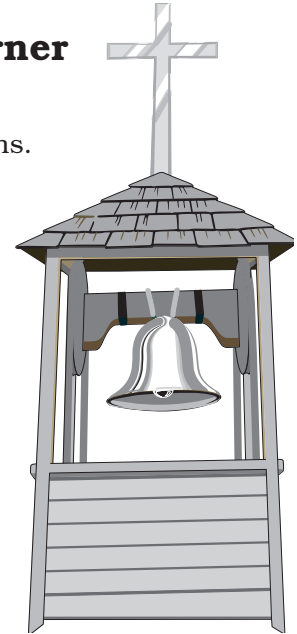
Topic	Seventh-Day Adventists	Your Faith	Another Faith
1. Book or scriptures used in services			
2. Day of worship			
3. Description of service			
4. Types of hymns or music			
5. Dress codes			
6. Congregational activities other than the day of worship			

Biographical Sketch—Henry McNeal Turner

Directions: Investigate the life of Henry McNeal Turner, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Turner's birth and death?
2. Who were Turner's parents?
3. Was either his mother or his father a slave?
4. What was unique about his great-grandfather?
5. As a boy, what jobs did Turner have?
6. How was Turner educated?



Significant People/Experiences

7. At 15, what job would prove to provide great education for Turner?
8. How did this affect his education specifically?
9. What were important landmarks in his career in the African Methodist Episcopal Church
 - a. at age 15?
 - b. at age 20?
 - c. in 1880?

Significant Contributions

10. What "first" was appointed to him by President Lincoln?
11. What assignment was he given by President Johnson?
12. What years was he elected to the state legislature?
13. What government jobs did Turner have under President Grant?
14. What honorary degrees were bestowed upon Turner?
15. In the African Methodist Episcopal Church, where did he send missionaries, why were they sent, and why were these missions secretive?
16. What was the "Black Exodus," and how did Turner feel about it?
17. What advancements did he propose for women while in legislature and in the AME Church?
18. In 1900, what institution was named for him?

Lesson 3

Book Fever

Objectives

- To explore the impact a book has had upon its reader's life
- To identify with the author by writing a first-person narrative

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson centers around a few important aspects of Richard Wright's life. First, he had a desire to read which became nearly an obsession for him. Through reading, and later through writing, Wright found the escape, expression, and identification with others that were lacking throughout most of his life. One of the few elements of kindness and concern for him was the carpenter's explanation to Wright of what he had been selling. This element provides students with an opportunity to discuss the importance of speaking of a difficulty when there is personal risk involved.

Handout 11 is designed to get students thinking about the first story or novel that had a personal impact upon them.

Handout 12 looks at the circumstances when the carpenter spoke to Wright. Before the carpenter spoke to him, others who were aware of the nature of the newspaper feared speaking to Wright, thinking that he was working for the Ku Klux Klan or that he was under some kind of bribe or agreement with whites. Those in Wright's neighborhood feared some retribution from the whites if they spoke to him, if indeed he was aware of what he was selling.

Many times, an empathy toward a character is developed when a student has a chance to imagine circumstances from the character's point of view. **Handout 13** challenges students to write a first-person account from a list of several episodes from chapters 5 and 6. By assuming Wright's identity, students must record feelings, frustrations, and facts.

Handout 14 is a personal research paper. As the love for reading and fascination with the power of the written word grows in importance to Wright, students are provided with the task of interviewing an adult member of

their family to ascertain the time when the love of reading was discovered by the interviewee. An individual may discover a family passion for reading, or the absence of that joy, depending on the emphasis that books had in the home.

Lastly, **Handout 15** provides students with an opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—Mary Ann Shadd.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 11**. Allow students to record their thoughts. This handout might best be used by setting a time on another day when students might share their answers. For some, a need to browse a collection of books may be necessary. For others, a search to discover the name of a nearly forgotten book may be required. If the majority of students in your class can remember their first most-loved book, allow for class time to share.

If time permits, you might want students to complete one of the following activities.

- Illustrate or use creative writing to highlight their favorite book further.
 - Create a book cover. The front of the jacket could be an illustration of a main event, setting, or character. The inside flap could contain a brief plot summary.
 - Write a first-person account by the main character, appealing to readers to read the book.
 - Create a book-of-the-month club flier that advertises several of the books students mentioned while working on **Handout 11**.
2. Distribute **Handout 12**. Provide time for students to complete questions 1–5 of the handout individually. Direct students to express their impressions in complete sentences. Once they have finished the questions, encourage discussion, paying particular attention to question 4. Draw

several responses, making a point to emphasize the unselfish and generous nature of the carpenter in speaking with Richard. Bait students, but patiently let them come to the conclusion that the carpenter made a difficult decision based on the right thing to do, rather than on the easy thing.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Because of racial antagonism toward blacks, many thought that Wright was being paid well by the Ku Klux Klan to sell the papers. They felt that, in his desire to escape the poverty of his circumstances, he had “sold out.”*
 2. *If Wright was selling for the Ku Klux, then repercussions would come down on anyone who Wright would report was giving him a hard time or trying to disrupt the sales of the newspaper. Simply, people were concerned for their own welfare, and they were fearful of possible violence done against them if they interfered with Wright’s job.*
 3. *The carpenter believed that Wright did not understand the nature of the newspaper. He also believed that if he explained the context of the articles, Wright would discontinue selling the papers. The carpenter felt that Wright should be given the benefit of the doubt before accusing him of encouraging what was damaging to his own race.*
 4. *If the fears were founded, then the carpenter certainly could have experienced problems from intimidation to physical violence to destruction of his property.*
 5. *The actions reveal that the carpenter was kind and willing to believe better of Wright. He also had pride in his race, believing that even though Wright certainly struggled miserably in poverty, he, too, would be sickened by a newspaper that degraded his people. He was also brave. He took a very real risk in opening Wright’s eyes. He was compassionate to speak to Wright, rather than just to tell him that he didn’t want the paper.*
3. Draw attention to question 6 of **Handout 12**. Either in writing or during discussion, give students an opportunity to discuss when they approached a difficult situation and to share times when they neglected to do what was right.
 4. Choose a student to tell the last time a word of encouragement was given to him or her. Ask a student who made the positive comment and how it affected him or her. Ask him or her to choose another student to ask the same questions. Allow this chain of questioning to go on for several minutes. Once several students have had the opportunity to respond, change the focus of the questions. Ask when the last negative comment was made to students. Again, have students detail the circumstances and the emotional reaction of the comments made. Allow this chain of questioning to reach several students.
 5. Distribute **Handout 13**. Select a student to read the directions from the handout. Ask a volunteer to provide a couple of first-person sentences from any of the incidents listed on the handout. Select another person to create a second example from a different event. Once the class has a clear understanding of the task, provide quiet, individual work time for students to complete the assignment.
 6. Remind students of the activity from **Handout 11**. Distribute **Handout 14**. Review directions orally. In order to prepare students adequately for the challenges of an interview, set up a mock interview, taking the role of the interviewer. As a student gives a long, or a very fast reply to a question, ask the subject to repeat what he or she just said. Repeat certain answers back, in order to demonstrate a desire to quote them correctly. Go through three or four interview questions. When reading handout directions, point out the option of using a recorder to tape the interview. Play some of the recorded interviews. If a newsletter computer program is available, select some to publish in a newsletter.

7. Distribute **Handout 15**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1823, 1893
2. *Shadd's father was an active abolitionist; the Shadd home was opened to the Underground Railroad.*
3. *She spent six years in Price's Boarding School in Pennsylvania.*
4. *organized a school for black youth*
5. *Shadd taught in schools in New York City and in Pennsylvania.*
6. *The law no longer protected runaway slaves once they reached free states; the law allowed bounty hunters to track down escaped slaves and return them to their owners; many blacks emigrated to Canada; Shadd's family emigrated as well.*
7. *Blacks were forced to live in segregated areas of towns or cities; few jobs were available; they had no access to white schools; they had difficulty traveling on public transportation.*

8. *values she had learned from her father: education, careful use of money, hard work, black independence, and self-respect*

9. *It was not segregated; Shadd was a desegregationist; Mary Bibb, wife of black separatist Henry Bibb, spoke against Shadd and her efforts.*

10. *Howard University, in the Law School, taking night classes; she wanted to set an example to blacks to motivate them to understand U.S. laws and how they affected their lives.*

11. *register to vote*

12. *Shadd was the first black female editor of a newspaper.*

13. *Provincial Freeman was Shadd's newspaper; "Self Reliance is the fine road to independence" was the paper's motto.*

14. *"Hints to the Colored People of the North"; "A Plea for Emigration"*

8. Instruct students to read chapters 7 and 8 in preparation for Lesson 4.

Richard's Feverish Reading

Directions: Richard Wright developed a fever, a hunger, to read. His job selling newspapers seemed unbelievably wonderful because he had such reading material at his fingertips! Complete the following.

1. What short story or novel has truly affected you? Provide information for the following categories:
 - a. Title and author's name

 - b. Setting

 - c. Main characters

 - d. Major conflict

 - e. Favorite character or episode

 - f. When it was read (or read to you)

2. Imagine that a friend asked you, "What's it about?" and "What did you think about it?" Write a critique of your chosen piece. Include a summary of the plot, as well as a subjective analysis.

The Quiet Carpenter

Directions: Richard Wright's job as a newspaper salesman came to an embarrassing end. Answer the following questions from chapter 5.

1. Why did people in the neighborhood think that Wright was selling the newspapers?
2. Why were they afraid to approach him?
3. What did the carpenter believe?
4. What risk did this man take in speaking to Wright?
5. What do you feel these actions reveal about the carpenter?
6. Sometimes, even though we know that we should speak to someone about something important, we find reasons not to do what needs to be done. Has there ever been a time a quiet carpenter approached you concerning a difficult situation? Were you ever in the role of the carpenter? Did you ever find an excuse not to speak to someone? Did you ever wish that someone would have said something in confidence to you?
7. Detail an incident that relates to Wright's experience.

A Page from Richard's Diary

Directions: Choose two of the following incidents from chapters 5 and 6. Imagine that you are Richard Wright, and summarize the events in first person. Include the circumstances (in your own words), your feelings, and what you wish you would have said. Include direct quotations as you were spoken to, or what you would have liked to have said.

1. Breaking the news to Uncle Tom
2. The plate of molasses
3. "You'll never be a writer"
4. Becoming a member of the church
5. Out in the yard with Uncle Tom

Research—My Favorite Book

Directions: Richard Wright, although thirty-six years old when he wrote *Black Boy*, clearly remembered the short stories, novels, and articles he read as a child. Reading and writing had a profound impact on his life as a young man.

Interview an adult family member or friend. The interview may be done in person, over the phone, or through e-mail. Feel free to ask questions that are not listed on this page. Put direct statements in quotation marks. Ask your subject to repeat important statements. You may choose to record the interview and fill in answers while listening to the tape.

Name:

Relation to you:

Occupation:

1. Did your family own a lot of books?
2. As a child, did anyone read to you?
3. What books or stories do you remember from your early childhood?
4. What was the first book you ever owned?
5. What books did you receive as gifts?
6. Did a member of your family often give books as gifts?
7. What was your favorite book as a young person?

Why? What did you enjoy about it?
8. What has been your favorite book as an adult?

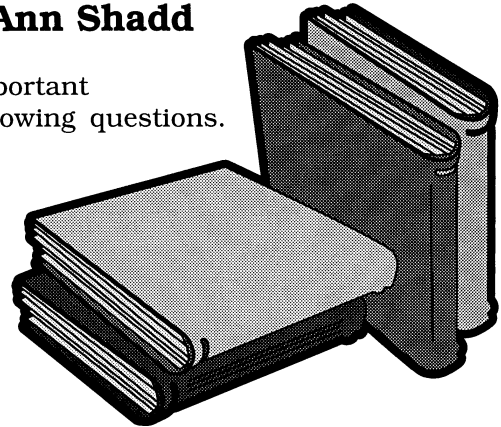
Why?
9. Do you read for recreation?
10. What types of reading material do you read in an average month?
11. As an adult, have you read to children?
12. In your opinion, what importance do books have?

Biographical Sketch—Mary Ann Shadd

Directions: Investigate the life of Mary Ann Shadd, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Shadd's birth and death?
2. Who was her father?
3. Where did she attend school?



Significant People/Experiences

4. What did Shadd do upon her return from Price?
5. How did she occupy herself between the years of 1839 and 1850?
6. What was the Fugitive Slave Law, and how did it affect black emigration in general, as well as Shadd's family specifically?
7. Although a significant population of blacks emigrated to Canada, what were the conditions of Canada's blacks during the 1860s and into the next decade?
8. What did Shadd feel were the keys to integration?
9. In Windsor, Shadd opened a private school. What was the controversy involved in that school, and who spoke out against Shadd and her efforts?
10. In what school did Shadd enroll when she was 46, and what was her motive in doing so?
11. In 1874, what did Shadd and sixty-three other women attempt to do in Washington, D.C.?

Significant Contributions

12. What was Shadd's "first" in the publishing world?
13. What was the *Provincial Freeman*, and what was its motto?

Published Works

14. Identify two pamphlets that Shadd published.

Lesson 4

Alienation

Objectives

- To look at the forces against Richard Wright, in regard to his success in writing
- To analyze Wright's deep sense of alienation

Notes to the Teacher

As Wright entered further into the “White World,” he realized how unprepared he was for the difficulties and contradictions that he had to endure to survive; yet, above all were the enduring desire to write and the tremendous accomplishment of Wright's first publication, his short story “The Voodoo of Hell's Half-Acre.” Unfortunately, Wright felt that he must undermine the desire to write, knowing that the encouragement to succeed will never be his.

Handout 16 looks at the possible reactions of those closest to Wright upon reading his short story. Students use their knowledge of important characters to compose a dialogue between Wright and one of four family members. The second half of the handout allows students to express some encouragement to young Wright, assuming the identity of a friend or relative familiar with Wright's struggles and frustrations.

An essay assignment is outlined in **Handout 17**. Probably the culmination of all of the negative circumstances in Wright's life gathered and formed the mountainous burden of alienation, from under whose shadow Wright never fully emerged. Examining several aspects from the novel, students are challenged to draw from the autobiography and assimilate those excerpts into an original essay.

At the close of Lesson 4, the reader is with Wright as he composes his valedictorian speech of 1925, a year in the midst of what was a great movement in the development of the black arts. **Handout 18** challenges students to explore the lives and works of four noted artists of that period. **Handout 19** provides students with the opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—Peter Humphries Clark.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 16**. Motivate students to discuss important family characters listed in part A. Ask students to assume how each individual might respond to Wright's success in having his short story published. Collect possible statements any of these family members might have made to Wright. Record quotations on the board or overhead, noting correct punctuation for quotations.
2. Give students time to complete part B, the letters of encouragement. Students can be put in pairs, one assuming the voice of Wright, the other taking on the role of the chosen family member. Allow students to respond in writing as if the two characters were talking to each other. Encourage students to complete a full dialogue between the characters.
3. Distribute **Handout 17**. Discuss the points provided on the handout. Draw attention to the format of the five-paragraph essay. Provide class time for students to develop their rough draft, if a formal paper is desired. Once first drafts are completed, put students into editing circles composed of three students. Allow each student to read his or her paper, reading slowly enough that the listening editors might make constructive comments to aid in the clarity of the paper. Each student should read his or her paper aloud twice in order to allow ample opportunity for suggestions.
4. Poll students in the class: How many have ever felt that they were experiencing something that no one else understood, only to find that someone else did indeed understand? Ask students how they feel Wright would have felt if he could have gotten his hands on literature from other black authors who had experienced the very things for which he struggled. Allow several students to express their views.

5. Distribute **Handout 18**. Assign research groups. For each group, leave the individual members to assign duties. Let all research groups gather information for questions 1–6.

You may choose to specialize, by selecting a different genre for each group to research. Designate a time when research results can be collected from all groups, as each might add details to enrich others' findings.

6. Distribute **Handout 19**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1829, 1925
2. explorer Major William Clark
3. Michael Clark (son of Major Clark) and Betty (Clark's mulatto slave)

4. *The man to whom Clark was apprenticed left for California the year Clark would have attained journeyman status; the new owner refused to hire blacks.*
5. *In New Orleans, Clark worked as a clerk in the municipal government.*
6. *Blacks could not attend schools; they could not vote; they were forced to pay taxes for white schools; black migration to Ohio required \$1500 dollars and two character references; interracial marriages were outlawed.*
7. *taught school in Cincinnati; acted as teacher/principal for the last few years*
8. *He trained generations of teachers; he developed segregated public schools.*
9. *Clark began publishing the Afro American with his son Herbert.*
7. Instruct students to read chapters 9 and 10 of *Black Boy* in preparation for Lesson 5.

Richard's "Voodoo"

Part A.

Directions: Imagine reading Richard Wright's short story. Now, assuming the identity of one of the following characters, write a letter to Wright. In this letter, react to the fact that Wright wrote a short story and wants to be a writer. Speak to Wright as you feel that character would respond, according to past behavior and attitude toward him, including your personal opinion of what he will, or will never, become as an adult.

- Aunt Addie
- Wright's Mother
- Grandmother
- Uncle Tom

Part B.

Directions: As a sympathetic reader, one knows how desperately Wright needed encouragement. Knowing what you do about his childhood, compose a letter as a friend, cousin, or as any other sympathetic presence.

Alienation

Directions: Write a five-paragraph essay addressing the aspects of alienation. Focus on any three aspects from the suggestions below.

- What others did not understand about Wright
- What he felt was different about himself
- His unwillingness to acquiesce in ways those around him did
- An unwillingness to be punished for crimes he did not commit
- Revulsion toward injustice
- An emotional need to discover what was wrong with him

Follow this outline as you write your essay.

Paragraph 1—Introduction

State the three points you are going to discuss.

Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4—Points 1, 2, and 3

Devote a paragraph to explaining each of your points. Validate your views by using quotations or making clear references to specific elements from *Black Boy*.

Paragraph 5—Conclusion

Restate the significance of your three points, and draw a conclusion from your interpretation.

Research—The Harlem Renaissance

Directions: When Richard Wright composed his valedictorian speech, the year was 1925—a year in the midst of a rebirth of art, drama, literature, and study coming out of the black community. Answer the following.

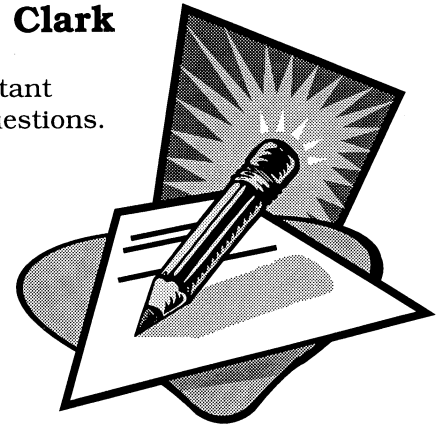
1. What other Renaissance was important in world history?
2. Why might this movement be called a “Renaissance”?
3. When was the Harlem Renaissance?
4. Where did this movement originate?
5. What were significant contributions in the following areas?
 - Drama
 - Fiction
 - Poetry
 - Non-fiction
6. Who were significant contributors in those fields?

Biographical Sketch—Peter Humphries Clark

Directions: Investigate the life of Peter Humphries Clark, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Clark's birth and death?
2. Who was Clark's famous grandfather?
3. Who were Clark's parents?



Significant People/Experiences

4. While an apprentice, why did Clark never attain journeyman status?
5. After moving to New Orleans, what work did he find?
6. What laws in Cincinnati during the 1800s were oppressive to Clark and generations of blacks?

Significant Contributions

7. Where did Clark spend the years between 1852 and 1886? What was he engaged in during all but five of those years?
8. What types of leadership and influence did Clark have in Cincinnati?

Published Works

9. What did Clark publish in Cincinnati, and with whom did he work?

Lesson 5

Crime's Own Punishment

Objectives

- To focus on the limitations of a white professional in the economic system
- To analyze the economic frustrations and social dangers Richard Wright experienced

Notes to the Teacher

Lesson 5, with the inclusion of the job at Mr. Crane's office, certainly would make it difficult for any student to argue against Wright's decision to steal. Wright felt that because he was unable to play to the white world, he was forced to make as much money in as short a period of time as possible to allow him to escape to the North—the Promised Land.

In **Handout 20**, the student is put into an unusual position, assuming the role of the antagonist. It should be interesting to note the percentage of students who will follow the pattern of the typical Southern white man, described by Wright. Although the handout leaves the student with the freedom to take any stance he or she desires, most will not back Mr. Crane but, instead, will try to make him understand that "We do things differently than y'all do up North."

Handout 21 asks students to evaluate the importance of four quotations from chapter 10. **Handout 22**, a research activity, encourages students to learn more about writers of the Harlem Renaissance and their works. Special emphasis should be placed on works that coincide with Wright's frustrations and experiences. **Handout 23** provides students with an opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

Procedure

1. Discuss the events of chapter 9. Possible discussion questions include the following:
 - What was most disturbing about Wright's job with the optician? Specifically, how was Crane different from other bosses that Wright had had in the past?

- Why do you think that the two assistants refused to train Wright? Do you think that they worried about Crane finding out what they were doing? Why or why not?
- What do you think was Crane's frustration? Why do you think that Wright cried the last day he spoke to Crane in his office?

2. Distribute **Handout 20**. Read the scenario to students. Without swaying the class, allow the directions to remain vague. Let each individual decide if he or she will follow in the footsteps of other Southern whites Wright had suffered under, or if, being in the position of a union leader, the student would make the "fair" decision. Allow each student to decide whether he or she will be a protagonist or an antagonist. Give students time to compose their letters. Once the handout has been completed, ask volunteers to read their Mr. Thrash letters.
3. Draw students' attention to the middle of chapter 10, where Wright details his dilemma with stealing. Give them a few minutes to reread the selection. Ask for a show of hands of how many feel that Wright had no choice but to steal. Ask some to consider if, due to his circumstances, it was not wrong. Discourage too much discussion. Allow students to consider their agreement or disagreement with Wright's final decision.
4. Distribute **Handout 21** while the students still have their books open to these pages. Instruct students to work individually to complete the assignment.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Wright was frustrated at the assumed thievery of blacks in the eyes of the whites. The society seemed openly to accept the dishonesty of the sniveling black man, while a black man who wished to be respectful and respected was seen as a threat and not to be trusted. Wright, who desired nothing more than a peaceful existence and the*

opportunity to make an honest living, was considered highly suspect because of his straightforwardness.

2. Wright had not really considered stealing as an option to him. Although he had known of many who regularly stole from those for whom they worked, he had not stolen. His objection was more of a social issue. Although stealing might put more food in his mouth or money in his pocket on that particular day, it would not change the social conditions under which he lived. He did not see it as a solution to the problem and, for that reason, saw it as futile.
3. Wright felt that he was too late in trying to learn how to play the role of the stupid negro who readily accepts his inferiority. Therefore, he saw his life in danger. He believed that, due to his inability to act the role, it would only be a matter of time before he got himself killed. Although still resisting stealing and living deceitfully, he recognized the danger of his attitude, which seemed to draw attention to itself. He was certain that he had to escape to the North in order to save his own life.
4. He had seen those people who made the laws, and he had seen how the whites who created the laws violated them, yet expected the blacks to follow them. As a result, he lost his sense of obligation to obey what the creators themselves regarded as insignificant. He saw the lawmaking community as lawless, unfair, unreasonable, and totally unable to protect him; they had done nothing to secure him rights, respect or a livelihood since he was old enough to realize what it meant to be black in the South.
5. Once **Handout 21** has been completed, set aside a time when students can read their responses. Be alert to differences of perspective. Guide students to listen respectfully and debate those issues that they see differently.

6. Distribute **Handout 22**. Discuss the guidelines as listed on the handout. Again, by dividing the class into research teams, each group might be able to focus more fully on a particular author. Provide each team with an opportunity to read a selection that it feels speaks for Wright. Allow time for teams to share biographical information on these influential writers.
7. Begin a collection of important Harlem Renaissance writers and selections. Create a display using information gathered for **Handout 22**. Collect photographs of the selected authors and include information about their most noted works.
8. Distribute **Handout 23**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1821, 1913; she died in Auburn, in a home for the elderly which she helped to found.
2. Both parents were slaves.
3. She was one of eleven children.
4. Moses
5. She never learned to read or write; she was never given a formal education.
6. her years as a field slave
7. An overseer, angry with another slave, threw a two-pound weight; Tubman allowed herself to be hit to protect the other slave.
8. seizures that would cause deep, sudden sleep
9. Upon the death of her master, she feared his "property" would be dispensed, and she ran to keep from being sold.
10. the Underground Railroad, a link of hiding places throughout the South and into the North; it led runaway slaves to the free states.

11. *Thomas Garrett and William Still*

12. *15 trips; 200 slaves*

13. *her sister and two nieces*

14. *Tubman worked under assignments as a spy and scout.*

15. *Tubman felt that a guardian angel accompanied her on her trips; she often sang Negro spirituals which had salvation messages, such as "Didn't My*

Lord Deliver Daniel" and "Go Down Moses"; she memorized large passages from the Bible and recited them, using quotations to encourage fearful slaves on their journeys.

16. *raising money for schooling for former slaves; helping the sick and disabled; collecting clothes for destitute children*

9. *Instruct students to read chapters 11 and 12 for Lesson 6.*

Mr. Crane the Optician

Directions: Mr. Crane was really the first individual to treat Richard Wright like a human being. Unfortunately, the two Southern men who worked for Crane sabotaged Wright's hopes in the trade.

Imagine that Crane has written to the Optician Assistant Union to complain of the actions of Pease and Reynolds, asking that they be removed from the union and that each lose his Optician Assistant License. The man in charge of union discipline, Mr. Thrash, writes in response to the charges against Crane's assistants. Compose Thrash's letter. Respond to specific violations as Crane may have listed them. Keep in mind that this is a business letter. Try to keep Thrash's letter professional, while allowing his personal reaction (or your view of it) to come through.

Compose the letter in three paragraphs.

Paragraph 1

Restate Crane's complaints. Include specific details from chapter 9.

Paragraph 2

Explain to Crane, a Northerner, how you view the situation. (You may wish to "set him straight" in understanding how things are done "down here.")

Paragraph 3

Answer the original request of Crane's letter by stating your decision and the reason for that decision.

Crime's Own Punishment

Directions: Richard Wright's economic prospects were grim. He felt that he was too late in trying to learn to play the game to placate the whites for whom he tried to work. In light of many pitiful experiences with "legal" jobs, analyze the following statements and explain their significance in view of Wright's dilemma, as found in chapter 10.

1. "But I, who stole nothing, who wanted to look them straight in the face, who wanted to talk and act like a man, inspired fear in them."
2. "My objections to stealing were not moral."
3. "Time was not on my side and I had to make some move."
4. ". . . I no longer felt bound by the laws which white and black were supposed to obey in common."

Research—Voices that Sound like Mine

Directions: During the Harlem Renaissance, many important writers made a name for themselves. Select one of the following writers and gather information about that person.

- Countee Cullen
- Gwendolyn Brooks
- LeRoi Jones
- Langston Hughes
- Zora Neale Hurston

1. Provide a brief biographical sketch of your chosen writer.
2. Create a bibliography of several of your chosen writer's most famous works.
3. Provide a selection from any work that coincides or agrees with Wright's frustrations or experiences.

Biographical Sketch—Harriet Tubman

Directions: Investigate the life of Harriet Tubman, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Tubman's birth and death? Explain what is interesting about the place where she died.
2. Were either of Tubman's parents slaves?
3. From how large a family did she come?



Significant People/Experiences

4. What was her nickname?
5. For all the influence Tubman's life had upon many people, what was the extent of her formal education?
6. What experiences were credited with her incredible physical stamina?
7. In the field, how was Tubman seriously injured?
8. How did that injury affect her for the remainder of her life?
9. What motivated Tubman to run to freedom?

Significant Contributions

10. With what method of transportation is Tubman associated? What was its function?
11. Who were her two greatest stationmasters?
12. In ten years, how many trips did she conduct, and how many slaves did she personally lead to freedom?
13. Who was her first rescuee?
14. What activities did she perform for the Union Army during the Civil War?
15. In what ways did her faith in God motivate and strengthen her?
16. How did Tubman spend her later years in service to others?

Lesson 6

A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss

Objectives

- To identify the emotional differences between the Moss household and Richard Wright's grandmother's home
- To create a dialogue to solve the problem of Wright's fight with Harrison

Notes to the Teacher

Lesson 6 draws attention to two opposing forces in Wright's life—the cruel treatment at the hands of white men with whom he worked and the awkward warmth which he received in the home of the Moss family. It is sad to note that although Wright was always distressed by his treatment, he seemed almost alarmed by the unprecedented warmth and concern that was shown to him by the Mosses.

Handout 24 asks students to analyze the differences between what Wright had become accustomed to and what he encountered at the Moss household.

Handout 25 provides a challenging opportunity to change the events described in chapter 12. Students write a dialogue, taking Wright, Olin, and Harrison through a mediation process. This provides an open forum for discussion and works as an effective tool in allowing students to dramatize their conclusions from the handout.

A timeline is introduced in **Handout 26**. This timeline provides a good opportunity for students to collaborate to collect facts and important dates from four main categories: Wright's personal life; important Civil Rights events; developments in African-American arts; major historical events. Students may then view Wright as a historical figure.

Handout 27 provides students with an opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—Nat Turner.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 24**. Allow students to complete part A as a class. Record student responses on an overhead or chalkboard. Encourage students to add to their own

opinions by including the comments of other students.

Suggested Responses:

1. *She said that people from Jackson tend to hang their heads down, and she intimated that they were not clear-speaking or able to voice their thoughts. She was surprised because he was well spoken and straightforward.*
 2. *Wright, as he was becoming an adult, was horrified by the roles that blacks took in the South. This was one of the major reasons he wanted to escape. Mrs. Moss's comment may have encouraged him to believe that not all black men must behave in such self-deprecating ways in order to survive.*
 3. *She was warmhearted and kind. She recognized Wright's hesitation in coming to the house, and he admired her manner of speaking. He appreciated her straightforward approach with him.*
2. Ask students the following discussion question: If Wright liked Mrs. Moss, what accounted for his feeling awkward in her home? How was his home atmosphere different?
 3. Direct student attention to part B of **Handout 24**. Read aloud the example to ensure that all students understand what is required of them. Give students silent writing time to complete the comparison/contrast between the two homes. Collect answers in a whole group setting. Tell students to add the descriptive terms of others to their own answers.

Suggested Responses:

Wright's Grandmother's Home

Overzealous—Wright slept through the all-night prayer meetings.

Secretive—Wright often did not discover important family matters until he heard his grandmother pray over them.

Hostile—Wright was clearly told that his presence in the house was unwelcome, resulting in emotional turmoil for others because of his sinfulness.

Rule-oriented—Wright’s grandmother had many rules which anyone living in the house had to follow from reading material to foods eaten.

Moss House

Open—Mrs. Moss welcomed Wright immediately, recognizing he needed somewhere to stay.

Verbal, straight forward—Mrs. Moss seemed to understand that Wright was under the impression that it was a house of prostitution. She immediately set him at ease.

Welcoming—Mrs. Moss wanted Wright to join them at meals.

Concerned for Wright’s needs (both emotional and physical)—Mrs. Moss seemed more than willing to allow Wright to become her son-in-law once she recognized that he had a “Christian heart”; they felt bad to discover that Wright had bought a can of beans to eat in his room

4. Poll students to come up with possible reasoning for the following questions: Why did Olin and Harrison’s supervisor want to see these two men fight? What reason did Harrison have in wanting to go through with the boxing match? What ways could Wright and Harrison have kept from fighting?
5. Before distributing **Handout 25**, ask a student to define the words *mediator* and *mediation* and write those definitions on the board. Ask another student, using a dictionary or thesaurus, to provide synonyms for both words. Briefly give students the opportunity to put these concepts in their own words to secure understanding.
6. Distribute **Handout 25**. Allow students to work individually, writing dialogue for all four characters involved, or draw students into groups of four, designating roles for students to assume. In this way, as each student responds, the others can record

his or her response. Allow individuals or teams to prepare their dialogues and discuss different ways that the mediation can be resolved.

7. Select acting teams to dramatize **Handout 25**. Students may assume the roles of the four characters involved in the mediation process. Allow each student to write his or her own responses as each speaks only when designated by the handout. Once the scripts are written, students may perform their dialogues for the rest of the class. Students will be able to appreciate the variations from the other dialogues and comment on the different approaches characters took in the mediation process, depending on how individual writers scripted their characters. Encourage students to use their scripts as a guide, but to converse freely, allowing some spontaneity in their performances.
8. Give each student a copy of **Handout 26**. Call on a student to read the four major points of the timeline. Allow students to work in groups to gather the information requested. Allow sufficient time to complete the timeline. Students may use poster-board to present their findings, including artwork related to the subject or perhaps color-coding the events according to the areas of concentration.
9. Distribute **Handout 27** and assign part A. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1800, 1831
2. *It is unknown who Turner’s father was; his mother was Nancy, an African arriving on a slave ship during the 1790s.*
3. *He ran off to freedom, and he was never heard from again.*
4. *He and his mother were sold.*
5. *Turner and his wife were sold; they were separated but purchased by neighboring masters.*

6. *He was sold.*
 7. *His master's widow remarried, giving Turner another master.*
 8. *The Black Prophet; he claimed to see visions, hear voices, talk with spirits, and heal the sick; he viewed visions as signs, particularly in regard to actions he was to take; he claimed he saw drops of blood on corn stalks, which he felt was the sign to initiate the slaughter of 1831.*
 9. *Turner led an attack on the whites; he wanted to conquer the state of Virginia from within; in less than forty-eight hours, fifty-five whites had been murdered.*
 10. *He hid for six weeks before he was captured; he was executed by hanging.*
10. For part B, allow students to choose their own sides, or divide the class into pro-slavery and abolitionist groups. You may want to allow a debate or mock trial once several articles are read. Encourage the abolitionists to do further research on the life of a slave, focusing on the physical and emotional hardships. The pro-slavery group could focus on the brutality of the rampage, find stories of survivors of the murder victims, or emphasize the characteristics that prompted Turner's nickname.

Give students time to research their sides further before writing their articles. Allow students to read from their articles. If the technology is available, create newspaper editorial pages for both groups. These editorials may be displayed throughout the room.
 11. Instruct students to read chapters 13 and 14 of in preparation for Lesson 7.

A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss

Part A.

Directions: Sadly, Richard Wright seemed to have more readily accepted the familiarity of hatred, rather than the awkward sensations of love and acceptance. Refer to chapter 11 and answer the following questions.

1. What comment did Mrs. Moss have about people from Jackson? Why was she surprised that Wright was from Jackson?
2. Why did her comment seem to put Wright at ease? How were his feelings similar?
3. Why did Wright like Mrs. Moss right away?

Part B.

Directions: Find descriptive words or phrases that describe the emotional atmosphere at Richard's grandmother's home, and the atmosphere at the Moss house. For each descriptive term, provide a brief example from the text to validate your word choices.

Wright's Grandmother's Home

The Moss Home

Overzealous—the all night prayer meetings that Wright slept through

Fighting By Proxy

Directions: Mr. Olin, Richard Wright's foreman, and Harrison's foreman wanted Wright and Harrison to fight. Why might these men be so anxious to see the two fight? Create a mediation hearing by imagining that an impartial witness is walking the involved parties through the process. Answer in dialogue, as if speaking for each individual.

Mediator: Mr. Olin, can you explain your part in the boxing match that is scheduled for this afternoon?

Olin:

Mediator: Mr. Wright, do you hear anything from Mr. Olin that you disagree with?

Wright:

Mediator: Mr. Olin, how do you respond to Mr. Wright's response?

Olin:

Mediator: Mr. Harrison, could you briefly explain the conversations Mr. Wright and you have had over the last several days?

Harrison:

Mediator: Mr. Harrison, have you had, or do you presently have, any reason to fight with Mr. Wright?

Harrison:

Mediator: Mr. Olin, would you like to respond to what you have heard from Mr. Wright and Mr. Harrison?

Olin:

Mediator: Mr. Wright, how would you like to see this situation resolved?

Wright:

Mediator: Mr. Harrison, how would you like to see it resolved?

Harrison:

Mediator: Mr. Olin, can you give any reason why you cannot respect these conditions?

Olin:

[The mediator composes a short contract of agreement that includes the statements from Harrison and Wright, stating how they desire the situation to be resolved, and any stipulations Olin might suggest. This agreement will be signed by all three parties.]

Mediator: According to your suggestions, these are the terms of the agreement.

[Mediator reads the terms of the agreement.]

Research—The Times of His Life

Create a timeline for the following categories to illustrate important historical, personal, literary, and social developments within Richard Wright's lifetime (1908–1960).

- Civil Rights Movements
- Historical Events
- Wright's Life
- Developments in African-American arts (The Harlem Renaissance)

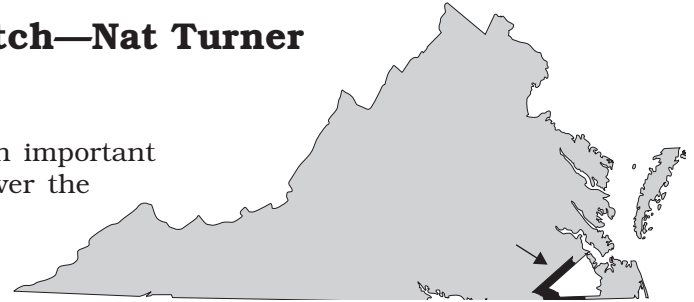
Biographical Sketch—Nat Turner

Part A.

Directions: Investigate the life of Nat Turner, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Turner's birth and death?
2. Were Turner's parents slaves?
3. What happened to Turner's father?



Virginia's Southampton County

Significant People/Experiences

4. What happened when Nat was nine years old?
5. What happened when Nat was twenty-two years old?
6. What happened when Nat was twenty-nine years old?
7. In 1830, how were circumstances again changed?
8. What was Turner's nickname, and what aspects of his nature prompted the name?
9. Describe what took place in August, 1831.
10. How long did it take to capture Turner, and what happened after he was captured?

Part B.

Directions: There were two major newspaper angles on this incident. The pro-slavery papers portrayed Turner as a fanatic, a mentally deranged lunatic. The abolitionist papers depicted him as a freedom fighter, one who revolted against inhuman conditions.

Choose a side and write an editorial expressing your viewpoint. If you write from an abolitionist standpoint, you may want to highlight the many times Turner was sold and the emotional impact that must have had on him. If you write from a pro-slavery position, you may want to make the most out of Turner's personality quirks.

Create a name for the newspaper for which you write.

Lesson 7

What in the World Is Going On?

Objectives

- To research important aspects of Richard Wright's new life in the North
- To explore themes of the literary school of Naturalism
- To gather facts about the city of Chicago

Notes to the Teacher

Lesson 7 concentrates on important changes for Wright. Not only did the North make an impact on his life, but also the city of Chicago itself is important. Ironically, for the very reasons that he desired to go North, he found the differences unsettling, and he found it nearly impossible to react in a natural way. For Lesson 7, you may wish to take students to a research center or library to work independently or in groups.

Since most handouts in this lesson deal with research topics, the class might be divided into three groups. For **Handout 28**, no more than three or four students are needed to gather information on Naturalism. The requirements of **Handout 29** could easily occupy as many students as there are points. Finally, strong readers and good researchers would best be suited for the task of **Handout 31**. Allow three or four students to work on the Mencken information. All three handouts could be completed simultaneously as each team gathers the information requested. Students might then report their findings to each other, in order that each student might benefit from the work of all three research teams.

Handout 30 provides reading comprehension questions, as students are asked to analyze chapter 14. However, students are challenged to perform higher level analysis as they record not simply what was said to Wright on his last day, but more importantly, what was implied in the questions and statements.

Handout 32 provides students with the opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American. This particular handout focuses on the life of Alexander Crummell.

Procedures

1. Distribute **Handout 28**. Provide students time to gather information from resource materials. Assign several students to focus on gathering information for this handout exclusively. Designate a time when these students may share their facts with the rest of the class.
2. Distribute **Handout 29**. Provide students time to gather information from resource materials. Assign a dozen students to focus on information for this handout exclusively. Designate a time when these students may share their facts with the rest of the class.
3. Redirect student attention to the responses Wright received as he was preparing to leave his job on his last day in the South. Have students open their books to chapter 14. Distribute **Handout 30**. Assign the questions, having students record their responses individually. Provide a time when students may, in a whole class setting, discuss and compare their responses.

Suggested Responses:

1. *No. To Wright, having the means, or being ready, involved having enough money for his mother, Aunt Maggie, his brother, and himself to leave, as well as to have the money needed to find a place to stay.*
2. *He realized that if he waited until he was ready, that he never would be. In his words, he had to gamble. He had to take the chance, so he and Aunt Maggie were to go first, and they would send for his brother and mother when they had the money.*
3. *Suddenly Wright's boss was looking at him more closely. He was obviously trying to figure out Wright's motive in leaving. Had Wright been hiding something? Was he different than the type of person he had shown himself to be at work? Had he been playing dumb in the eyes of his boss? Did he have hopes of living a different kind of life? The boss's main concern was figuring*

out Richard's reason to go North. Oddly, too, the white men with whom Wright came into contact seemed to be more comfortable with the "ignorant Negro" than the individual who might speak his mind. It was almost as if an unspoken understanding existed that the black man played his role while, at the same time, the white man knew it was just an act. Now that Wright's boss was confronted with the possibility that an intelligent, calculating man stood before him, he felt somewhat unnerved by the unknown Wright.

4. One of the first impressions would be the fear that Wright would try to speak with a white woman. The prevailing fear seemed to be that black men desired to go to the North in order to develop relationships with white women. The other prevailing questions or suspicions seemed to center around Wright wanting to be different from what he could be in the South. The white Southern man seemed to want to protect the black man from the negative influences of the North. In reality, there seemed to be a cruel desire to hinder any black man's escape to manhood in the North. Finally, there seemed to be a fear that the subjugation of the black man was precarious, yet had to be maintained. One more Southern black man migrating to the North meant one more Southern black man who would never again allow himself to be subjugated.
5. He had admiration and envy toward Wright. He admired him for being proactive, rather than simply complaining about his circumstances in the South. He decided on a game plan and followed through. Even when it seemed that he would not reach step one (having the money to go), he took the risk in spite of his fear. Probably facing his fear was what Shorty admired and hated. He openly admitted that, although he hated his life and felt that he would someday be killed, he would never take the initiative to get out, that he allowed what was familiar to keep him from stepping out into the unknown.

Ironically, the unknown could not have been worse, since he hated his life in the South.

4. Distribute **Handout 31**. Provide students time to gather information from resource materials. Assign a few students to focus on gathering information for this handout exclusively. Designate a time when these students may share their facts with the rest of the class.

If research teams are assigned to share information with the rest of the class, stipulate that each team must provide some type of handout to illustrate their findings. Students may wish to use illustrations, charts, displays, or overheads. Encourage students to develop their own methods of presenting their research to the class.

5. Distribute **Handout 32**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1819, 1898
2. *Charity, his mother, had been born free, as had the last several generations of her family. His father Boston had arrived on a slave ship, but had somehow acquired his freedom.*
3. *He attended the African Free School in New York City.*
4. *The building was destroyed by a mob of men hostile to the education of blacks.*
5. *He served as a lay missionary to a small black community in Rhode Island.*
6. 1844
7. *He studied at Queen's College in Cambridge, England. He graduated in 1853.*
8. *He felt that the racial atmosphere in England was free from racism.*
9. *an emigration movement encouraging blacks to set up colonies in Africa*

10. *He opposed colonization during the years he spent in the U.S. before going to England; it seems that the American Colonization Society was responsible in providing funds to get him and his family to Liberia.*
11. *He wanted to encourage skilled and educated blacks to return to the Fatherland and resettle in Africa. It seems that he had begun to think that black society would never thrive in the racially turbulent U.S.*
12. *He was strongly opposed; he felt that black men needed a college education in order to become leaders.*
13. *He went to Liberia as a missionary. He taught and lectured.*
14. *He wanted to escape the oppressive racism in the U.S., fulfill his leadership skills, encourage his African brothers, and expose Africans to Western culture and religion.*
15. *led St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., for nearly twenty years.*
16. *the American Negro Academy*
17. *"The Black Woman of the South: Her Neglects and Her Needs"*
18. *Thomas Clarkson*
6. *Instruct students to read chapters 15 and 16 in preparation for Lesson 8.*

Writing that Reflects the Times

Directions: After World War I, the common themes of fiction developed into a movement known as Naturalism. Answer the following questions.

1. Who were famous American Naturalist writers?
2. What are common themes found in Naturalism?
3. How did the American Civil War and World War I influence Naturalism?
4. What was the general atmosphere of the United States, optimistic or pessimistic?

The Windy City

Directions: To Richard Wright, Chicago was his Promised Land. Answer the following questions about Chicago during the late 1920s, when Wright finally reached the North.

1. What were the major newspapers?
2. What was the average wage for whites?
3. What was the average wage for blacks?
4. What were some popular books published in 1927?
5. What were some popular movies of the 1920s?
6. What was the city's population?
7. What was the ratio of whites to blacks?
8. What kind of job opportunities were there for blacks?
9. Was there segregation in Chicago?
10. What were some popular songs of the time? Who were some popular singers?
11. Who was the president of the United States in 1927?

Research—Who Was H. L. Mencken?

Directions: H. L. Mencken was a major influence on Richard Wright. Find out who this man was and what was significant and controversial about his writing. Provide information for the following:

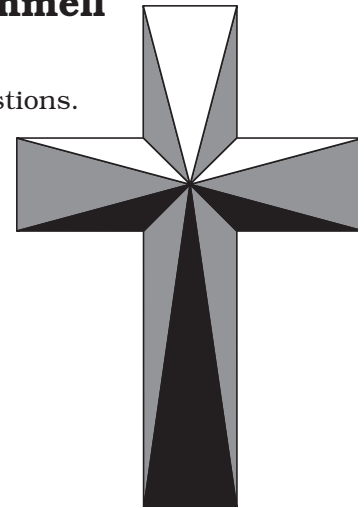
- Biographical data
- His major works
- Why did Southern newspapers condemn his writing?
- Does Mencken's writing contain common themes of Naturalism?
- What titles did Wright read?
- How was Wright able to get the books?

Biographical Sketch—Alexander Crummell

Directions: Investigate the life of Alexander Crummell, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Crummell's birth and death?
2. Were Crummell's parents slaves?
3. When did Crummell's education begin?
4. After completing high school, why did he spend only one year at Hayes Academy in New Hampshire?



Significant People/Experiences

5. While a theology student, how did Crummell serve his church?
6. When was Crummell ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church?
7. In 1847, where did Crummell study? When did he receive his degree?
8. What did Crummell feel was so wonderful about England?
9. What was *repatriation*?
10. What were Crummell's early views on repatriation, and how did they change?
11. During the American Civil War, what was Crummell's motivation in two speaking tours to the U.S.?
12. In his later years, when industrialization was growing in the U.S., how did Crummell feel about the establishment of black trade schools?

Significant Contributions

13. After completing his degree in England, where did Crummell spend his next twenty years? What did he do there?
14. As a missionary, what were his goals?
15. Upon his return to the U.S., what position did he hold?
16. What did Crummell establish in 1897?

Published Works

17. What speech sold thousands of copies?
18. About which English abolitionist did he publish works?

Lesson 8

Chicago

Objectives

- To introduce the poetic school of Imagism
- To compare Richard Wright’s reality against his desires, socially and psychologically

Notes to the Teacher

This is an important lesson, as Wright analyzes the differences between how he clearly saw himself, the social implications of his behavior, and what he desired for himself.

For **Handout 33**, a copy of Carl Sandburg’s poem “Chicago” is needed. You may want to display the poem, provide copies, or simply read the poem several times. The personification of the city provides an opportunity for students to imagine the mystery, fear, and jubilation of entering a new reality—life in the North.

Handout 34 allows students to evaluate the differences between what Wright wanted and who he was. They then engage in a creative writing activity that involves writing an advice column response to Wright, providing suggestions for making his desires become his reality.

The research presented to students in **Handout 35** of this lesson covers Imagism and several important Imagists. Students are also presented with the opportunity to create their own imagery. Two very short poems by William Carlos Williams would provide a wonderful and simple example of this type of poetry: *The Red Wheelbarrow* and *This is just to say*. The effect of the poems would not be lost upon students simply by hearing them, or they are quite short enough to write on the chalkboard, allowing students to look at them during the course of the lesson.

Handout 36 provides students with the opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—Mary Church Terrell.

Procedure

1. Ask a few students to give an example of personification. Be certain that students understand this poetic device before beginning the first handout activity.

2. Prepare students to listen actively to a poem. Students may wish to close their eyes and listen for images, or concentrate on pictures which the poem creates in their mind. Read aloud Sandburg’s “Chicago.”
3. Distribute **Handout 33**. Read the steps aloud. Ask for volunteers who, after listening to the poem for the first time, might be able to answer the first question. Allow students to jot down answers. Read, or ask a student to read, the poem a second time. Read slowly enough that students might be able to record answers to the second question as they listen.
4. Again, solicit answers from the class. Record student responses, encouraging students to add other answers to their own. Give a third reading of the poem. Provide time for students to respond to questions 3, 4, and 5. Once they have completed the assignment, again open the floor to discussion.
5. Tell students to open their books to the end of chapter 15, where Wright describes his social self. Distribute **Handout 34**. Allow groups of students to collect information for the two categories. Once students have completed the first part of the handout, elect a speaker from each group to give the results. Once the discussion has been completed, ask a volunteer to read the directions from the second half of the handout. Individually, students are to compose a reply to *Confused in Chicago*.

Suggested Responses:

Reality—Wright admits that he spoke very little; he showed very little verbal intonation; he never revealed his true feelings; he never shared what he read, or discussed books with anyone; he confided in no one; he was not open in facial expressions; he realized that he had become self-sufficient to a point where he kept himself separate from social interaction with others; he admits that he felt no real need for friends; he was fearful and felt that the only safe way to express his emotions was through writing.

Desire—*He wanted to feel a unity with others; he wanted to share the simplest emotions of life; he wished for a common memory to share with someone, which comes from having a common past; he wanted to enjoy social interactions with others.*

6. To introduce the topic of Imagism, read the two short poems of William Carlos Williams mentioned in the notes to the teacher.
7. Distribute **Handout 35**. Allow students an opportunity to share their findings for part A with the rest of the class. You may wish to divide the research into groups, assigning biographical information, poetic examples, and general information to separate teams. Authors may be given to two or three students to research together.
8. If time allows, assign the class to find one or two poems for each poet listed on **Handout 35**. Have a class poetry reading. Allow one student to give a brief biographical sketch for the poets listed, then give another student the opportunity to read a selection from that author's works.
9. Assign part B of **Handout 35**. Remind students that they are to compose their own selections. At this time, if you or students in the class wish to suggest other topics, tell students to add them to the list on the handout. Provide time when students may share their personal writing.
10. For the poetry generated from part B, provide a forum for students to read their original compositions. Students may wish to illustrate their poems and display them in the classroom.

11. Distribute **Handout 36**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1863, 1954
 2. *Although both former slaves, Terrell's parents were members of a wealthy, elite class of blacks. Terrell's father, Robert Reed Church, was a saloon keeper, banker, and real estate dealer. Louisa Ayers Church was a dressmaker and owner of a fashionable hair salon.*
 3. *six years old; a school in Yellow Springs, Ohio, which was associated with Antioch College*
 4. *Terrell's parents were very devoted to providing a secure education for their daughter; there were serious limitations to the educational opportunities where they lived.*
 5. *She attended high school in Oberlin, Ohio, and she attended preparatory school at Oberlin College in Ohio.*
 6. *taught for two years at Wilberforce, Ohio; taught in foreign language department at the Preparatory School for Colored Youth in Washington, D.C.*
 7. *Terrell was the first president of the National Association of Colored Women.*
 8. *She was a paid lecturer; she was involved in the women's suffrage and reform movement; she was a civic worker and organizer.*
 9. *While attending Oberlin College, she was on the editorial board and wrote for the school paper, The Oberlin Review.*
12. Instruct students to read chapters 17 and 18 in preparation for Lesson 9.

Carl Sandburg's "Chicago"

Directions: Listen as your teacher reads the poem. Then answer the following questions as directed.

1. How is personification used?
2. As you listen to the poem a second time, jot down some of the descriptions you hear.
3. For each of the descriptive images you have recorded, what type of person is Chicago? Provide a characterizing statement for each of the descriptions you recorded.
4. Which of these images might have been frightening or intimidating to Richard Wright? Why?
5. What images might have provided a sense of excitement and wonder?

Reality, Desire, and Change

Part A.

Directions: Near the end of chapter 15, Richard Wright expresses his personal reactions to circumstances and people around him. He admits the reality of who he is, while he also shares that he wants something different—a desire. As you analyze those aspects, consider, too, what change needs to take place within himself in order to make his desire a reality.

Read this section of the novel carefully. What characteristics about his behavior, actions, and attitude does Wright reveal about himself? What does he realize these actions communicate to others? Record these observations under *Reality*. Then focus on the same pages and under *Desire*, state what Wright wants socially and emotionally.

Reality	Desire

Part B.

Directions: Imagine that you are an advice columnist. A young man signs his letter “Confused in Chicago,” expressing the very points you have listed in part A. Write “Confused” a letter. Offer three or four suggestions which might help him bring his desire nearer to reality.

Dear Confused,

Research—Imagery

Part A.

Directions: Toward the end of chapter 15, Richard Wright talks about the power of words. Again, he expresses his desire to write in such a way that the emotional response is memorable instead of the actual words. Complete the following.

1. What was the poetic movement known as Imagism?
2. Find biographical data for the following people.
 - Amy Lowell
 - Marianne Moore
 - Wallace Stevens
 - Ezra Pound
 - William Carlos Williams
 - Conrad Aiken
 - T. S. Eliot
3. Show imagery in examples from at least two of the writers listed.
4. Provide the guidelines of Imagism, known as the *Imagist Manifesto*.

Part B.

Directions: Create several imagist poems. Focus on an image itself, without trying to create a statement. Think in terms of creating a “word painting.” Choose from the following topics:

Breakfast sausage

Sunrise

French fries

Rain

Sunburned skin

Poison ivy

School locker

Storm clouds

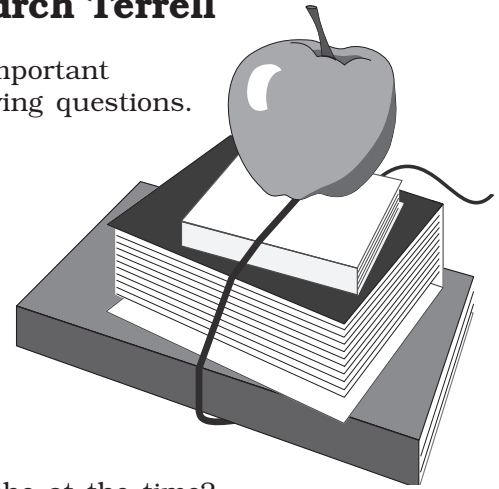
Angry child

Biographical Sketch—Mary Church Terrell

Directions: Investigate the life of Mary Church Terrell, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Terrell's birth and death?
2. Were Terrell's parents slaves?
What enterprises did they own?
3. What model school was Mary sent to, and how old was she at the time?
4. Why would her parents send such a young child away to school?
5. What further education did she receive?



Significant Contributions

6. How was Terrell involved in education?
7. What presidential seat did she hold?
8. Identify some other activities/interests of Terrell.

Published Works

9. Where was Terrell first published? What was the name of the paper? How did she come upon that opportunity?

Lesson 9

A Dangerous Camaraderie

Objectives

- To explore the powerful symbolic elements from hospital events
- To investigate Richard Wright's attraction to Communism and research its basic elements

Notes to the Teacher

Handout 37 and **Handout 38** demand creative, critical, and analytical thinking. **Handout 37** asks students to respond to Wright's experiences in the relief center. It was probably in this center that Communism began to make sense to him. Wright even observes here that, had those in charge understood the power of the conversations of these oppressed people, they probably would have put a stop to them.

The experiences from the hospital listed on **Handout 38** provide vivid and powerful symbolic images. This handout requires critical thinking in order to draw social and political implications from the seemingly straightforward images.

The research activity in this lesson, **Handout 39**, asks students to look into the birth and history of Communism. Students are also asked to answer comprehensive questions requiring them to analyze Wright's original attraction to this philosophy.

Handout 40 provides students with the opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—Martin R. Delany.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 37**. Allow students to answer part A individually. Once students have completed the handout, encourage group discussion.

Suggested Responses:

At first, Wright felt ashamed to be there. He even felt ashamed for the others who were gathered. He saw them, including himself, as people unable to provide for

themselves—social and economic outcasts. However, as more time passed, he noticed that people began to talk to others around them. He noticed that people were sharing their experiences. He felt that there was such a powerful connection among these people who had a shared experience of suffering, that had those in charge understood the dynamics of what was happening, they would have stopped it. He felt that treason was really a crime of the state. In Wright's opinion, the government was responsible for the need of its people to have a sense of unity and belonging. If their native culture would not welcome them, individuals who are outcasts are forced to find another identity. He felt that treason was really an oppressed people's natural reaction in answer to their need to belong.

2. Ask a few students to suggest what bits of conversation Wright may have overheard. Ask students to come up with topics people may have shared with one another. After reading the directions to part B of **Handout 37**, pair the class into conversation teams. Tell students to compose a conversation that Wright may have heard. Encourage students to discuss family, hometowns, and jobs that they had lost or, because of racial circumstances, were not able to maintain. Provide time when students might dramatize their efforts.
3. Distribute **Handout 38**. Have students open their books to chapter 18. Look together at the symbolic images listed on the handout. Reinforce the term *symbolism*. Allow students to provide examples from past reading where symbolism was used. Refocus attention to **Handout 38**. Depending on the ability of the class, divide the class into discussion groups of four and visit the groups as they discuss the implications of the symbols. If time permits, conduct a full class discussion.

Suggested Responses:

1. *The white girls represent physical beauty; their posture and the pace in their walk suggest that they have a future, a purpose, a place to be; they have significance in their job; they are educated; they carry a positive view of themselves.*

The black women walk behind the white girls, socially in subjugation; the pails of water and the fact that they walk after suggest that they do the dirty work for the white girls; they are unattractive and do not care about their looks; this suggests an apathy toward their lives; they are without education.

2. *They represent any oppressed people. The dogs are those who have been severed, or injured in society, socially or economically. They cry out, but with a voice no one hears; they are pathetic, as the only ones that see their anguish are in the same situation and are unable to help. Oppressed people are sometimes studied and viewed as experiments in survival, but they are not treated as a part of the significant population.*
3. *The underworld represents the lives that blacks and others who are oppressed live. The corridors, which they traveled in order to stay out of the way of the whites, represent their lives. Although they are often unseen, and they try to stay out of the way of “them,” nonetheless, they move in force and are an undercurrent which will eventually surface. Their lives, duties, and abilities are seen as less important than those who are upstairs, where there are windows (opportunities); and sunlight (hope); and can freely travel the upper corridors (economic mobility).*
4. *White men kept making a mess of the lives that others were trying to create for themselves. Wright saw his life as constantly stepped on. He viewed white society as carelessly destroying the efforts of black people and leaving them, again and again, trying to get out of the*

same circumstances they have been in all their lives—cleaning the same steps repeatedly.

5. *Wright experienced the antagonism that the white society dealt toward those who desired education. The doctors purposely kept the men in the dark. When the fight occurred and the cages were knocked over, the men’s inability to understand which animal went where actually worked against the doctors. The desire to oppress the education of a certain people actually backfired and resulted in ruination of the “educated” efforts.*
4. In relation to **Handout 38**, the comparison between the lines of white girls and black girls gives an interesting perspective on beauty. As a class, read Waring Cuney’s poem “No Images.” Discuss the perceptions of beauty in today’s culture. A collage of beauty from each decade, beginning around the twentieth century, would be an interesting project. Students could take a decade and exhibit examples of what was culturally viewed as attractive for that period.
5. Ask students to look again at the events at the relief center. Distribute **Handout 39**. As a class, discuss the first three questions. Allow students to record the impressions of other students.
6. Once the discussion is complete, assign individuals to research specific points found on **Handout 39**. Provide an opportunity for students to share their findings.
7. Distribute **Handout 40**. Alert students to the possibility of “Delany” being listed as “Delaney.” Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1812, 1885
2. His father was a free man.
3. Pennsylvania

4. *Harvard*
5. *medicine and science*
6. *He led the only exploration party of American-born blacks to Africa, hoping to establish leads and friendships with African tribes, to develop colonies.*
7. *practiced medicine*
8. *to urge him to form an army of blacks, led by blacks*
9. *appointed Delany major in the U.S. Colored Troops*
10. *Delany was the first black man to receive a commission of major.*
11. *customs inspector and trial judge, both in Charleston, South Carolina*
12. *Delany helped Frederick Douglass edit his paper, "The North Star."*
13. *"The Mystery"*
14. *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered and Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Race and Color*
8. *Instruct students to read the rest of the novel in preparation for Lesson 10.*

A Dangerous Camaraderie

Part A.

Directions: Record Richard Wright's impressions from the relief center. Consider the following questions, and respond in essay form.

- How did Wright feel as he first sat in the room?

- What did he notice take place after some time had passed?

- Why did he feel that the people working there would have stopped what was happening if they had known?

- What did he mean when he said that treason is a crime of the state?

Part B.

Directions: Wright was touched by the conversations, the shared lives. Create a brief conversation Wright may have overheard. Provide names for the people and include some personal background on the characters while presenting difficulties they are experiencing. Allow each person to speak at least five times.

Figuratively Speaking

Directions: For the following images from chapter 17, identify significant symbolic elements. What appear to be important aspects in the images? What do the images suggest or symbolize? How can the images represent Richard Wright or the social and economic conditions of his people?

1. The two lines of women walking down the corridor (Consider posture, clothing, attractiveness, and purpose.)
2. Dogs with severed vocal cords
3. The corridors of the hospital, what Wright refers to as the “underworld”
4. Men walking on the clean steps that Wright had scrubbed
5. The incident of the loosed animals from their cages (Consider the problems the men had in returning the animals; whom did the results ultimately affect; what would have aided the men in the first place.)

Research—Why Communism?

Directions: For many reasons, although with hesitation, Richard Wright was drawn to the philosophy of Communism. Consider the following questions as you complete your research.

1. In Communism, what social significance was offered to Wright which he had not found elsewhere?
2. What were significant emotional reactions Wright experienced when first exposed to Communism?
3. What sense of purpose did Communism give to Wright? (What did he feel he could do to further the cause)?

Research Topics

- a. Describe the birth of Communism.
- b. Who were important figures in establishing Communism?
- c. How did the philosophy reach the United States?
- d. What political problems did Americans involved in Communism experience?
- e. What was significant in the trials by Senator Joseph McCarthy (1950s)?
- f. What was *The John Reed Club*?
- g. Find out as many details as possible about the following magazines, including where they were published, the publisher, and what American writers were contributors.
 - *International Literature*
 - *New Masses*
 - *Anvil*

Biographical Sketch—Martin R. Delany



Directions: Investigate the life of Martin R. Delany, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Delany's birth and death?
2. Was Delany's father a slave?
3. Where did Delany's father take him to be educated?

Significant People/Experiences

4. What prestigious school did Delany attend?
5. What training did he receive there?
6. Delany strongly believed in emigration. What did he do in 1859?

Significant Contributions

7. What did Delany do in both Chicago and Canada?
8. For what reason did Delany wish to meet with President Lincoln during the American Civil War? What did Delany propose?
9. What did Lincoln do in response to that request?
10. What was significant in that commission?
11. After the Civil War, what jobs did Delany hold?

Published Works

12. With what famous former slave did Delany work on a newspaper? What was the name of the paper?
13. What was the name of Delany's newspaper?
14. What two books did Delany publish?

Lesson 10

Suspicion

Objectives

- To analyze Richard Wright's decision to sever ties with the Communist Party
- To illustrate and explain events in Wright's life through the creation of a storyboard

Notes to the Teacher

As students come to the close of *Black Boy*, they will discover the events that led to Wright's disenchantment with the Communist Party. **Handout 41** asks students specific reading comprehension questions and then provides an essay and discussion question.

Handout 42 allows students to illustrate important events in Wright's life. Students may choose one specific chapter and, through the six frames, tell the story from that particular chapter. Each student will need to articulately summarize events in order to prepare the reader for the following frame.

Handout 43 is the study of an important African American from the turn of the century. Only nine years old when his family became free, Booker T. Washington took a very different approach to educating his people, but with interesting similarities. Washington's readable autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, could easily be perused, as the chapters are clearly titled to represent specific accomplishments and developments in Washington's life.

Handout 44 provides students with the opportunity to research and report on an important nineteenth-century African American—John Mercer Langston.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 41**. Instruct students to answer part A individually. Bring the class together for a whole class discussion once part A has been completed.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Members paid their dues; members were given tasks; members interpreted world events.*

2. *People giggled; Wright noticed that even those he considered intelligent seemed to suppress laughter; some spoke to him in a manner he felt more patronizing than the way whites had spoken to him.*
3. *He was labelled an intellectual.*
4. *They noticed his shined shoes, his clean shirt, and the fact that he wore a tie. They said he talked like a book. His manner and speech seemed foreign to them.*
5. *They were ignorant; they did not have a desire to learn anything beyond what they already knew; they suspected anyone who asked new questions.*
6. *Loyalty was demonstrated by suffering physically, especially at the hands of the police.*
7. *He became suspicious of Wright. Ross was asking Wright some of the same questions Mr. Green had asked. Ross seemed now to question Wright's motives in writing the profile, and he wanted to know what Wright was going to do with the material.*
8. *When Wright and Harrison were talking, although they knew in their hearts that there was no reason to fight, the suspicion was heavy on their minds. Again, ironically, the two men who shared a lifestyle, who should have sided with one another, were more suspicious than the antagonist, with whom they felt no loyalty and held no common bonds.*
9. *From the time that he borrowed someone's library card and read on the sly, he fought and struggled to educate himself, feeling that one of the harshest punishments on blacks, especially in the South, was antagonism toward an uneducated man. Here, he was being held in a suspicious light by a group who seemed dedicated to educating the masses, those whom they viewed as oppressed, because he had educated himself.*

10. *He wanted to show others that they had support behind them; to be a voice for those who could not speak for themselves, or who could not reach those who needed to hear; to make known to the world those individuals profiled; to give a written witness to their lives and to the experiences these people had endured.*
11. *He found their lives tragic. He was engrossed in the passions and rhythm of their language. Several short stories were inspired by their lives.*
12. *No accommodations had been made for him; all of the New York Communists were white men.*
2. Discuss Wright's attitude toward Communism at the close of the book. Ask students:
- How did he feel the Party wasted its time?
- What aspects of the interpersonal dynamics within the Party seemed ironic to him?
- Once several students have had an opportunity to share their views, ask a volunteer to read part B of **Handout 41**.
3. Allow students to work in groups of three or four to gather specific facts. Ask students to include actual situations which led Wright to his final decision. Remind them to gather objective facts. Once students have several elements, put students to work on their interpretation of these facts, each with the group lists, but writing independently of discussion. Encourage students to take specific steps and interpret the weight of these events with Wright's emotional responses, which culminated in his final decision. Allow students to share responses.
4. Distribute **Handout 42**. Although outside class time will be needed to find photographs, graphics, or other illustrations, students can browse through the novel to find a chapter that holds particular interest for them. Allow students to jot down the series of events from a particular chapter. Direct students to summarize these events.
5. Using **Handout 42** as a guide, students may use poster board to copy the format of the handout. Allow several days for students to reproduce the format to illustrate events from their chosen chapter. Allow students to explain the events of their storyboard and display their work in the classroom. You might provide time for students to work in teams, completing one storyboard per every four to six students.
6. To introduce the topic of Booker T. Washington, read a selection from his autobiography. Choosing an anecdote from the earliest chapter describing how he lived may pique students' curiosity.
7. Distribute **Handout 43**. Provide copies of Washington's *Up From Slavery*, if possible, or allow students time in the school library or resource room to complete the questions. Again, research teams are encouraged, allowing a student to focus on two to four questions, resulting in richer results as each student has a minimum of topics to cover. Provide time for discussion.
8. Distribute **Handout 44**. Students may be permitted to give group presentations or to present facts individually. Due to the research required for this handout, students should be provided with classroom or library resources to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. 1829, 1897
2. *His father was Ralph Quarles, a white planter; his mother was Lucy Jane Langston, a freedwoman.*
3. *An inheritance was left to young Langston upon his father's death.*
4. *Friends of Quarles took Langston and raised him as their son in Chillicothe, Ohio.*
5. *A court hearing ruled that both the money left to Langston and the boy himself (a black youth raised by white guardians) could be in danger, and prohibited the couple from taking Langston out of the state.*

6. *in a white-only public school, when living in Chillicothe; private black schools; and at 14, Oberlin College*
7. *theology*
8. *a race riot*
9. *celebrations of emancipation held in the British West Indies*
10. *He was often a speaker.*
11. *the rescue of a captured fugitive slave; a large group of both blacks and whites poured into Wellington to rescue him from those who were planning to return him to the South.*
12. *the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society; to abolish slavery and to achieve black rights*
13. *his election as township clerk, making him the first black to be elected to public office in the U.S.*
14. *He gave funds and recruited two black men to accompany Brown.*
15. *recruited nearly 1,000 blacks for the U.S. Fifth Regiment*
16. *the National Equal Rights League*
17. *in a black carriage pulled by two white horses and driven by a coachman*
18. *From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol*

Suspicion

Part A.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What occurred, according to Richard Wright, at a Communist Party meeting?
2. What perplexing response did Wright receive when he gave a speech at the unit meeting?
3. How was Wright labeled by those at the meeting?
4. What did those present notice about Wright?
5. What discovery did Wright make about most black Communists?
6. How, according to the “quiet Communist,” was loyalty to the party demonstrated?
7. How did Ross’s demeanor change after speaking with Mr. Green?
8. How is Ross’s reaction reminiscent of when Wright and Harrison were being baited to fight by their bosses (chapter 12)?
9. What is ironic to Wright about being labeled an intellectual?
10. Originally, why did Wright want to develop the profiles?
11. What effect did the young men at the Boys’ Club have upon Wright?
12. What problem existed for Wright at the second conference in New York?

Part B.

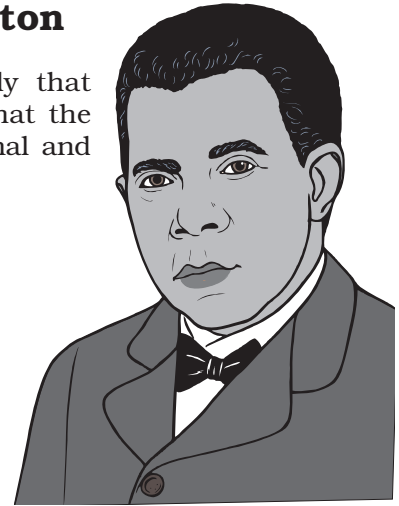
Directions: Identify, in a brief paragraph, some of the incidents from chapters 19 and 20 which led to Wright's decision to leave the Communist Party.

Storyboard

Directions: Choose any chapter from *Black Boy*. For each of the six frames, depict an important scene from Wright's life, using computer-generated graphics, photographs, or original illustrations. Include dialogue between major characters. In the space below each frame, provide an explanation of what each scene represents.

Research—Booker T. Washington

Directions: Booker T. Washington was a man who felt strongly that his people should be educated. He felt, as did Richard Wright, that the black community should strive to be unified in achieving educational and economic goals. Answer the following.



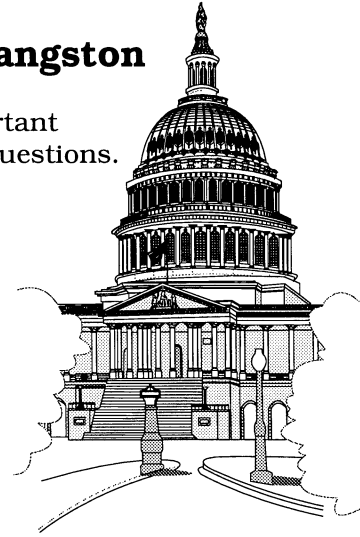
1. Provide a brief biographical sketch.
2. For what speeches was Washington famous?
3. What was his most celebrated speech? What was he asking for, from both his white and black audience?
4. Before he could be schooled, how did he view reading?
5. Where he was from, how was an educated person viewed?
6. How was he educated?
7. What was important to him as an educator?
8. As former slaves, what difficulties did blacks face once they were free?
9. How was Washington sympathetic toward the Southern whites?
10. What did he feel he wanted to do for his people?

Biographical Sketch—John Mercer Langston

Directions: Investigate the life of John Mercer Langston, an important nineteenth-century African American. Then answer the following questions.

Childhood/Early Education

1. What were the years of Langston's birth and death?
2. Who were Langston's parents?
3. From where did the money come for Langston's education and provisions?
4. After the deaths of his parents, where did Langston settle until age 99?
5. What prevented the couple from keeping the boy when they resettled in Missouri?
6. Where were some of the places Langston received education?
7. What were Langston's degrees in?



Significant People/Experiences

8. What terrifying event happened in Cincinnati shortly after he was relocated there in 1841?
9. What were the First of August celebrations? Where were they held?
10. What connection did Langston have with these?

Significant Contributions

11. What was the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue?
12. What did Langston and his brother establish in 1858? What were its goals?
13. What did his appointment in Brownhelm secure for him?
14. How did Langston show his support of John Brown's Harpers Ferry fiasco?
15. What impressive accomplishment did Langston do to show Union support?
16. What league elected Langston president in 1864?
17. In what manner did Langston ride to the Capitol while in Congress?

Published Works

18. What is the title of Langston's autobiography?

Assessment

Directions: Choose from the selections for writing. Include specific quotations from the novel to support and validate your opinion.

1. Agree or disagree with the following statement.

Alienation—Richard Wright, because of his background of cruelty and distrust, was not able to function in an organization, whether in his working relationships or the Communist party.

2. Had Wright been influenced by a strong person of encouragement, his outlook and emotional development might have been different. Take any major event from *Black Boy* which involved Aunt Addie or Wright's grandmother. Rewrite the scene, changing the character to that of a supportive, loving presence. Include dialogue.

3. Defend or negate the following statement.

Oppression—The Southern whites did not viciously intend to subjugate blacks. Believing that blacks were intellectually and morally inferior, they acted in ignorance rather than in cruelty.

Assessment Guide

1. Answers will vary, but look for the following proofs.

If a student is to agree with the statement, he or she might include Wright's difficulties in his jobs; with other blacks (particularly in the hospital and also in the final two chapters, with the actors and other writers); his inability to have friendships (the Moss family, the couple from the delicatessen); his inability to maintain a close relationship with any member of his immediate family; and his acquaintances, but not friendships, with other Communists.

If a student takes the other view, look for specific offenses against Wright, the violations of trust (Aunt Addie at school); distrust between those in his own community (Harrison of the boxing match); and vague insinuations and judgments from the Communists.

3. *Most likely, few students will wish to defend this statement. However, in order to evaluate those students who negate it, look for evidence in their selections to "prove" that it is false. A student should include the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, as emphasized when Wright announced at work that he was heading North; possibly the incident in the optician's office, when the men refused to train Wright, not because they felt that he was mentally incapable of learning, but because they preferred to keep him in a position of unskilled labor.*

However, the attitude of the doctors in the laboratory might be used for those who want to argue the point that racism was based on a fallacy in reasoning, rather than in cruelty and hatred.

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Black Boy

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Entire Unit

- | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RL.8.1 | Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. |
| RL.8.2 | Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. |
| RL.8.3 | Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. |
| RL.8.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. |
| RL.8.5 | Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. |
| RL.8.9 | Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new. |
| W.8.7 | Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. |
| SL.8.1 | Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. |
| SL.8.1a | Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. |
| L.8.1 | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. |
| L.8.5 | Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. |
| L.8.5a | Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context. |

- RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- RL.9-10.5 Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- RL.9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).
- W.9-10.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- SL.9-10.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- L.9-10.1a Use parallel structure.*
- L.9-10.5a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.

Source

Common Core State Standards (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)



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NOVEL/DRAMA



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