

Welcome to tenth grade English! Over the summer, we would like you to read a few short pieces and complete a few assignments to help you get ready for your tenth grade year.

## Readings:

“The Rose that Grew from Concrete”  
(poem by Tupac Shakur)

“What is your own big plan?”  
(excerpts from President Obama’s speech to students in Arlington, Virginia in 2009)

“The Good Samaritan”  
(short story by René Saldaña)

## Assignments to complete with the readings:

- ☒ Multiple choice and short answer questions for “The Rose that Grew from Concrete”
- ☒ Multiple choice and short answer questions for “What is your own big plan?”
- ☒ Short answer questions for “The Good Samaritan”

## Reading Log:

Anytime you read this summer, whether an online article, a newspaper, a magazine, a book, or a poem, record what you read in the reading log provided. The top reading logs (those with the most titles and number of minutes read) will be entered into a raffle for **prizes** at the beginning of the year!

[https://www.123rf.com/photo\\_14880463\\_illustration-of-a-relaxed-sun-reading-a-book.html](https://www.123rf.com/photo_14880463_illustration-of-a-relaxed-sun-reading-a-book.html)



“The Rose That Grew from Concrete”

By Tupac Shakur

1999

*Tupac Shakur (1971–1996) was an African American rapper, actor, poet, and activist. Shakur continues to be considered an influential rapper today and has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. As you read, take notes on how the speaker feels about the rose.*

All materials taken from file:///I:/Downloads/commonlit\_the-rose-that-grew-from-concrete\_student.pdf.

Did you hear about the rose that grew  
from a crack in the concrete?  
Proving nature’s laws wrong it  
learned to walk without having feet.  
Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,  
it learned to breathe fresh air.  
Long live the rose that grew from concrete  
when no one else ever cared.

**Text-Dependent Questions**

*Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer.*

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Which of the following identifies a main theme of the text?

- A. All living things need support from others in order to grow.
- B. We must learn and grow from our failures.
- C. People can overcome difficulties and succeed.
- D. Nature can overcome problems better than people.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which detail from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “Did you hear about the rose that grew” (Lines 1)
- B. “learned to walk without having feet.” (Line 4)
- C. “Long live the rose that grew from concrete” (Line 7)
- D. “when no one else ever cared.” (Line 8)

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. How does the speaker's point of view influence how the rose is described?

- A. Curious about the rose, the speaker asks several questions about it.**
- B. Believing that the rose is not real, the speaker exaggerates its qualities.**
- C. Feeling pity for the rose, the speaker lists all of the hardships it has faced.**
- D. Impressed by the rose, the speaker explains what makes it so admirable.**

*Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. In the context of the poem, how does an individual rise above hardship? Have you ever felt like a “rose that grew from concrete,” as described by Tupac Shakur? If so, what was the difficult situation that you faced, and how did you rise above it? If not, who is someone else you might describe as a “rose that grew from concrete”? What makes him or her similar to this Rose?

2. In the context of the poem, can we take full control over our own fate? Do you think it is necessary to get support from others, or can we succeed in difficult situations on our own, without others' help?

3. Why do you think dreams are important for the rose's survival? What dreams do you have for your own future? Are these dreams important to you? Why or why not?

*These are excerpts from the speech by President Barack Obama, Arlington, Virginia, September 8, 2009. You can read the whole speech at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/MediaResources/PreparedSchoolRemarks/>.*

### **“What is your own big plan?”**

... at the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, and the best schools in the world – and none of it will matter unless all of you fulfill your responsibilities. Unless you show up to those schools; pay attention to those teachers; listen to your parents, grandparents and other adults; and put in the hard work it takes to succeed.

And that’s what I want to focus on today: the responsibility each of you has for your education. I want to start with the responsibility you have to yourself. Every single one of you has something you’re good at. Every single one of you has something to offer. And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is. That’s the opportunity an education can provide. Maybe you could be a good writer – maybe even good enough to write a book or articles in a newspaper – but you might not know it until you write a paper for your English class. Maybe you could be an innovator or an inventor – maybe even good enough to come up with the next iPhone or a new medicine or vaccine – but you might not know it until you do a project for your science class. Maybe you could be a mayor or a Senator or a Supreme Court Justice, but you might not know that until you join student government or the debate team.

And no matter what you want to do with your life – I guarantee that you’ll need an education to do it. You want to be a doctor, or a teacher, or a police officer? You want to be a nurse or an architect, a lawyer or a member of our military? You’re going to need a good education for every single one of those careers. You can’t drop out of school and just drop into a good job. You’ve got to work for it and train for it and learn for it. ...

You’ll need the knowledge and problem-solving skills you learn in science and math to cure diseases like cancer and AIDS, and to develop new energy technologies and protect our environment. You’ll need the insights and critical thinking skills you gain in history and social studies to fight poverty and homelessness, crime and discrimination, and make our nation more fair and more free. You’ll need the creativity and ingenuity you develop in all your classes to build new companies that will create new jobs and boost our economy.

We need every single one of you to develop your talents, skills and intellect so you can help solve our most difficult problems. If you don’t do that – if you quit on school – you’re not just quitting on yourself, you’re quitting on your country. Now I know it’s not always easy to do well in school. I know a lot of you have challenges in your lives right now that can make it hard to focus on your schoolwork....Where you are right now doesn’t have to determine where you’ll end up. No

one's written your destiny for you. Here in America, you write your own destiny. You make your own future.

So today, I want to ask you, what's your contribution going to be? What problems are you going to solve? What discoveries will you make? What will a president who comes here in twenty or fifty or one hundred years say about what all of you did for this country?

Your families, your teachers, and I are doing everything we can to make sure you have the education you need to answer these questions. I'm working hard to fix up your classrooms and get you the books, equipment and computers you need to learn. But you've got to do your part too. So I expect you to get serious this year. I expect you to put your best effort into everything you do. I expect great things from each of you. So don't let us down – don't let your family or your country or yourself down. Make us all proud. I know you can do it.

Transcript taken from <http://teacher.depaul.edu/Documents/Whatisyourbigplan8thGrade.pdf>

### **Text-Dependent Questions**

*Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer.*

\_\_\_\_\_1. How does Obama explain that students should hold themselves responsible?

- A. by using their education to help them be able to do what they are passionate about
- B. by joining the debate team so that they can become a Supreme Court justice
- C. by dropping out of school and getting a good job
- D. by working hard on their English papers in school

\_\_\_\_\_2. Why does Obama think that education is so important?

- A. because the world needs future business leaders who'll make themselves rich
- B. because the future of America depends on having people who can solve big problems
- C. because quitting school is also quitting on your country
- D. because in the future, we will need to replace all of our current jobs and companies

\_\_\_\_\_3. How does Obama hope that students will respond to difficulty in life?

- A. by working hard, even when times are tough
- B. by talking back to teachers and cutting class
- C. by relying on getting second chances
- D. by living in safe neighborhoods and making good choices

\_\_\_\_\_4. Which statement identifies the central idea of the text?

- A. **Teachers should understand that some students come from difficult backgrounds, and teachers should support them more.**
- B. **President Obama wants students to focus on education like he did so they will have the knowledge they need to run the country one day.**
- C. **By getting a good education, students can avoid repeating the same mistakes others have made that prevented them from meeting their potential.**
- D. **Focusing on education, despite any challenges one may face, is a personal responsibility and the key to the nation's future success.**

\_\_\_\_\_5. How does paragraph 29 contribute to the development of ideas in the text? "And that's why I'm here today..."

- A. **It criticizes students for not being more involved in school.**
- B. **It suggests actions students can take in school to pursue their future careers.**
- C. **It reminds students that their future is at stake if they quit trying in school.**
- D. **It encourages students to set goals and take responsibility for their education.**

\_\_\_\_\_6. Which statement best describes the relationship between education and a student's future?

- A. **Students have to get an education so they can fail, because without failure you can't succeed.**
- B. **Students who think about the future of America are the best students.**
- C. **Students can prepare for their future careers by first exploring their talents in school.**
- D. **Students who pursue careers in sports or entertainment will never succeed.**

*Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. How does President Barack Obama express his point of view on students pursuing education? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Have you ever come across obstacles that made it difficult to perform your best in school? How did you overcome these obstacles?

## The Good Samaritan

By René Saldaña, Jr.

I know he's in there, I thought. I saw the curtains of his bedroom move, only a little, yes, but they moved.

Yesterday Orlie told me, "Come over tomorrow afternoon. We'll hang out by the pool."

I rang the doorbell again. Then I knocked.

The door creaked open. The afternoon light crept into the dark living room inch by slow inch. Mrs. Sánchez, Orlie's mom, stuck her head through the narrow opening, her body hidden behind the door. "Hi, Rey, how can I help you?"

"Ah, Mrs. Sánchez, is Orlando here?" I tried looking past her but only saw a few pictures hanging on the wall. One of the Sánchez family all dressed up fancy and smiling, standing in front of a gray marble background.

"No, he's not. He went with his father to Mission."

"Oh, because Orlando said he would be here, and told me to come over."

"They won't be back until later tonight," she said. "You can come by tomorrow and see if he's here. You know how it is in the summer. He and his dad are always doing work here and there. Come back tomorrow, but call first."

"It's just that he said I could come by and swim in your pool. Dijo, 'Tomorrow, come over. I'll be here. We'll go swimming.'"

"I'm sorry he told you that, but without him or my husband here, you won't be able to use the pool," me dijo Mrs. Sánchez.

"Okay," I said. "Maybe tomorrow?"

"Yeah, maybe."

But there was no maybe about it. I wouldn't be coming back. Because I knew that Orlando was in the house, he just didn't want to hang out. Bien codo con su pool. Plain stingy. And tricky. This guy invited me and a few others over all summer to help his dad with some yard work because Mr. Sánchez told us, "If you help clean up the yard, you boys can use the pool any time you want so long as one of us is here." And we cleaned up his yard. On that hot day the water that smelled of chlorine looked delicious to me. And after a hard day's work cleaning his yard, I so looked forward to taking a dip. I'd even worn my trunks under my work clothes. Then Mr. Sánchez said, "Come by tomorrow. I don't want you fellas to track all this dirt into the pool."

"We can go home and shower and be back," said Hernando.

"No, mejor que regresen mañana. I'll be here tomorrow and we can swim. After lunch, okay. For sure we'll do it tomorrow," said Mr. Sánchez.

The following day he was there, but he was headed out right after lunch and he didn't feel safe

leaving us behind without supervision. “If one of you drowns, your parents will be angry at me and...” He didn’t say it, but he didn’t need to. One of our parents could sue him. And he needed that like I needed another F in my Geometry I class!

Or, we figured out later, he could have just said, “I used you saps to do my dirty work. And I lied about the pool, suckers!”

I don’t know why we hadn’t learned our lesson. Twice before he had gypped us this way of our time and effort. Always dangling the carrot in front of our eyes, then snatching it away last second. One of those times he promised us soft drinks and snacks if we helped clean up a yard across the street from his house. It wasn’t his yard to worry about, but I guess he just didn’t like to see the weeds growing as tall as dogs. What if he had company? What would they think? And he was angling for a position on the school board. How could a politico live in such filth!

Well, we did get a soft drink and chips, only it was one two liter bottle of Coke and one bag of chips for close to ten of us. We had no cups, and the older, stronger boys got dibs on most of the eats. “I didn’t know there’d be so many of you,” he said. “Well, share. And thanks. You all are good, strong boys.”

The next time was real hard labor. He said, “Help me dig these holes here, then we can put up some basketball rims. Once the cement dries on the court itself, you all can come over and play anytime since it’s kind of your court too. That is, if you help me dig the holes.”

And we did. We dug and dug and dug for close to six hours straight until we got done, passing on the shovel from one of us to the next. But we got it done. We had our court. Mr. Sánchez kept his word. He reminded us we could come over to play anytime, and we took special care not to dunk and grab hold of the rim. Even the shortest kid could practically dunk it because the baskets were so low. But we’d seen the rims all bent down at the different yards at school. And we didn’t want that for our court.

One day, we wanted to play a little three on three. After knocking on the different doors several times and getting no answer, we figured the Sánchez family had gone out. We decided that it’d be okay to play. We weren’t going to do anything wrong. The court was far enough from the house that we couldn’t possibly break a window. And Mr. Sánchez had said we could come over any time we wanted. It was our court, after all. Those were his words exactly.

A little later in the afternoon, Mr. Sánchez drove up in his truck, honking and honking at us. “Here they come. Maybe Orlando and Marty can play with us,” someone said.

Pues, it was not to be. The truck had just come to a standstill when Mr. Sánchez shot out of the driver’s side. He ran up to us, waving his hands in the air like a crazy man, first saying, then screaming, “What are you guys doing here? You all can’t be here when I’m not here.”

“But you told us we could come over anytime. And we knocked and knocked, and we were being very careful.’

“It doesn’t matter. You all shouldn’t be here when I’m not home. What if you had broken something?” he said.

“But we didn’t,” I said.

“But if you had, then who would have been responsible for paying to replace it? I’m sure every one of you would have denied breaking anything.”

“Este vato!” said Hernando.

“Vato? Is that what you called me? I’m no street punk, no hoodlum. I’ll have you know, I’ve worked my whole life, and I won’t be called a vato. It’s Mr. Sánchez. Got that? And you boys know what—from now on, you are not allowed to come here whether I’m home or not! You all messed it up for yourselves. You’ve shown me so much disrespect today you don’t deserve to play on my court. It was a privilege and not a right, and you messed it up. Now leave!”

Hernando, who was fuming, said, “Orale, guys, let’s go.” He took the ball from one of the smaller boys and began to run toward the nearest basket. He slowed down the closer he came to the basket and leapt in the air. I’d never seen him jump with such grace. He floated from the foul line, his long hair like wings, all the way to the basket. He grabbed the ball in both his hands and let go of it at the last moment. Instead of dunking the ball, he let it shoot up to the sky; then he wrapped his fingers around the rim and pulled down as hard as he could, hanging on for a few seconds. Then the rest of us walked after him, dejected. He hadn’t bent the rim even a millimeter. Eventually Orlie talked us into going back when his dad wasn’t home. His baby brother, Marty, was small and slow, and Orlie wanted some competition on the court.

Today was it for me, though. I made up my mind never to go back to the Sanchezes’. I walked to the little store for a Fanta Orange. That and a grape Popsicle would cool me down. I sat on the bench outside, finished off the drink, returned the bottle for my nickel refund, and headed for home. As soon as I walked through our front door, my mother said, “Mi’jo, you need to go pick up your brother at summer school. He missed the bus.”

“Again? He probably missed it on purpose, , Ama. He’s always walking over to Leo’s Grocery to talk to his little girlfriends, then he calls when he needs a ride.” I turned toward the bedroom.

“Come back here,” she said. So I turned and took a seat at the table. “Have you forgotten the times we had to go pick you up? Your brother always went with us, no matter what time it was.”

“Yeah, but I was doing school stuff. Football, band He’s in summer school just piddling his time away!”

She looked at me as she brushed sweat away from her face with the back of her hand and said, “Just go pick him up, and hurry home. On the way back, stop at Circle Seven and buy some tortillas There’s money on the table.”

I shook my head in disgust. Here I was, already a senior, having to be my baby brother’s chauffeur. I’d driven halfway to Leo’s Grocery when I saw Mr. Sánchez’s truck up ahead by the side of the

road. I could just make him out sitting under the shade of his truck. Every time he heard a car coming his way, he'd raise his head slightly, try to catch the driver's attention by staring at him, then he'd hang his head again when the car didn't stop.

I slowed down as I approached. Could he tell it was me driving? When he looked up at my car, I could swear he almost smiled, thinking he had been saved. He had been leaning his head between his bent knees, and I could tell he was tired; his white shirt stuck to him because of all the sweat. His sock on one leg was bunched up at his ankle like a carnation. He had the whitest legs I'd ever seen on a Mexican. Whiter than even my dad's. I kept on looking straight; that is, I made like I was looking ahead, not a care in the world, but out of the corner of my eye I saw that he had a flat tire, that he had gotten two of the lug nuts off but hadn't gotten to the others, that the crowbar lay half on his other foot and half on the ground beside him, that his hair was matted by sweat to his forehead.

I knew that look. I'd probably looked just like that digging those holes for our basketball court, cleaning up his yard and the one across the street from his house. I wondered if he could use a cold two-liter Coke right about now! If he was dreaming of taking a dip in his pool!

I drove on. No way was I going to help him out again! Let him do his own dirty work for once. He could stay out there and melt in this heat for all I cared. And besides, someone else will stop, I thought. Someone who doesn't know him like I do.

And I knew that when Mr. Sánchez got home, he'd stop at my house on his walk around the barrio. My dad would be watering the plants, his evening ritual to relax from a hard day at work, and Mr. Sánchez would mention in passing that I had probably not seen him by the side of the road so I hadn't stopped to help him out; "Kids today" he would say to my dad, "not a care in the world, their heads up in the clouds somewhere." My dad would call me out and ask me to tell him and Mr. Sánchez why I hadn't helped out a neighbor when he needed it most. I'd say, to both of them, "That was you? I thought you and Orlie were in Mission taking care of some business, so it never occurred to me to stop to help a neighbor. Geez, I'm so sorry." Or I could say, "You know, I was in such a hurry to pick up my brother in La Joya that I didn't even notice you by the side of the road."

I'd be off the hook. Anyways, why should I be the one to extend a helping hand when he's done every one of us in the barrio wrong in one way or another! He deserves to sweat a little. A taste of his own bad medicine. Maybe he'll learn a lesson.

But I remembered the look in his eyes as I drove past him. That same tired look my father had when he'd get home from work and he didn't have the strength to take off his boots. My father always looked like he'd been working for centuries without any rest. He'd sit there in front of the television on his favorite green vinyl sofa chair and stare at whatever was on TV. He'd sit there for an hour before he could move, before he could eat his supper and take his shower, that same look on his face Mr. Sanchez had just now.

What if this were my dad stranded on the side of the road? I'd want someone to stop for him. "My one good deed for today," I told myself. "And I'm doing it for my dad really, not for Mr. Sánchez."

I made a U-turn, drove back to where he was still sitting, turned around again, and pulled up behind him.

"I thought that was you, Rey," he said. He wiped at his forehead with his shirtsleeve. "And when you drove past, I thought you hadn't seen me. Thank goodness you stopped. I've been here for close to forty-five minutes and nobody's stopped to help. Thank goodness you did. I just can't get the tire off."

Thank my father, I thought. If it weren't for my father, you'd still be out here.

I had that tire changed in no time. All the while Mr. Sánchez stood behind me and a bit to my left saying, "Yes, thank God you came by. Boy, it's hot out here. You're a good boy, Rey. You'll make a good man. How about some help there?"

"No, I've got it," I answered. "I'm almost done."

"Oyes, Rey, what if you come over tomorrow night to my house? I'm having a little barbecue for some important people here in town. You should come over. We're even going to do some swimming. What do you say?"

I tightened the last of the nuts, replaced the jack, the flat tire, and the crowbar in the bed of his truck, looked at him, and said, "Thanks. But I'll be playing football with the vatos."

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<https://greaatrazorj.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/good-samaritan-11.pdf>

*Directions: Answer the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

Questions taken from <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/languagearts/ose/literature/course2/docs/g7u03.pdf>.

1. Why is it important to be a person who others can count on?

2. Where is Rey going when he sees Mr. Sanchez?

3. What does Rey think about between the time he sees Mr. Sanchez on the side of the road and the time he stops to help him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why might Hernando call Mr. Sanchez *vato*?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Do you think you could count on Rey's father? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What type of relationship do you think Rey and his father have? What makes you think this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. List two events in the story that change the way Rey thinks about Mr. Sanchez.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why does Rey decide to help Mr. Sanchez?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. How is Rey's response to Mr. Sanchez's offer at the end of the story different from what he might have said at the beginning of the story? Why do you think this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What is the main idea of the story?

**Reading Log:** record the date, the title of what you read, the form of writing, and the length of time you read in the boxes provided.

Date	Title of book/article/etc.	Book? Newspaper? Poem? Online article? Magazine?	Minutes read





Date	Title of book/article/etc.	Book? Newspaper? Poem? Online article? Magazine?	Minutes read
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