

Summer Reading: 12th Grade History
(Grade Level)
2023-2024

***Black Boy* by Richard Wright.** Richard Wright was one of the most important American writers of the 20th century. He was African American, and he drew on his experiences in his essays and novels, which dealt with race and racism in America. *Black Boy* is Wright's autobiography. Please be advised that the book deals with harsh subject matter and uses harsh language. Violence, fear, anger, and hatred are central themes. The N-word appears many times as a hateful slur. These were part of the reality of Wright's youth as a young black person in the American South.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Scheinmann:
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To give you more background for the book, watch segments 7-11 and 22-23 of this documentary about Wright:

https://cvod.infobase.com/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=49760&tScript=0

Username: shalom

Password: barrack

Read Part One: Southern Night (Chapters 1-14) of *Black Boy*.

As you read, underline or note passages that deal with **violence, hatred, anger, and fear**. After you read, answer **each of the first two questions** in about 5-7 sentences. Include quotations from the book when indicated, and use C-Q-A format. Then choose **two of the other questions** to answer in 5-8 sentences. Include quotations from the book when indicated, and use C-Q-A format. These questions will be collected on the first day of class and will be the basis of an in-class essay during the first week of school.

1. In the first chapter of the book, Wright describes many events from his very early childhood. Give an example of family violence **and** an example of racial violence and explain how they shaped Wright during this time. Include a quotation from the book as part of your answer (use C-Q-A format).

2. In Chapter 2, Wright describes how, when he was a child, he and other black children taunted a Jewish shopkeeper. Why do you think he included this story in his autobiography?

Answer 2 of the following questions.

3. Choose two of the jobs that Richard had working for white people. What did those jobs teach him about being white and being black in the South? Include a quotation from the book as part of your answer (use C-Q-A format).

4. Hunger recurs as a theme in the book. What, besides food, was Richard hungry for? Give examples from the book. Include a quotation from the book as part of your answer (use C-Q-A format).

5. In Chapter 10, Wright states, "I had begun coping with the white world too late. I could not make subservience an automatic part of my behavior....I could not react as the world in which I lived expected me to; that world was too baffling, too uncertain." What is Wright referring to in this passage? What had he failed to learn? Why?