

When we come together in August, we will begin our exploration of American Literature. To prepare for the rigor of Honors English 10, you will read, reflect, and write about a work that examines the evolving American experience: *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. **Here is a link to the preferred version to purchase from Amazon**

https://www.amazon.com/Black-Seventy-fifth-Anniversary-Richard-Wright/dp/0062964135/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1NPV61CPW2NWB&dib=eyJ2IjojMSJ9.TtIYVsAeAwMo4Rp5tjqJgrXkhDJvvvn2JBAsQhQM6eD5icWavAkWWOvBDPO0ZSotYNNV1F4dJNbEGLPZ_-lvkLd8iqCioN_njyubBjNbphmF7xzmsrFeGL_bErUVkE2PwMjIUNfygRnfA63uy9LyQPn1ch59q16h8CRPwV-AYwiR-eZxbBbydoA-zelMkdo-ZUM9zqYFL0rjEOZD0b4jBpwbARbYdsw_fkYRn5puU.XnpkOQHArtaPJrsWS3cNP-66Ga_AL6JPMAtx0taPOvY&dib_tag=se&keywords=black+boy+richard+wright+penguin&qid=1779885926&srefix=black+boy+richard+wright+penguin%2Caps%2C104&sr=8-1

This course explores diverse perspectives in American literature. The summer assignments are designed to sharpen critical understandings of the American Experience as well as improve writing through explorations of theme, characters, and literary techniques. In addition, because you will take the PSAT in October, you must complete a practice test. Please read through all parts of this summer assignment so you do not miss any element of the summer work.

Written work is due on Monday, August 31st, 2026 (SILVER DAY)

Students who use AI for any portion of this work, including tools that fix/enhance writing like Grammarly, will be turned in to Mr. Harris for an Honor Code violation, be required to re-do the summer reading, and receive only UP TO HALF CREDIT.

Part #1- Read and annotate *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. Take notes and annotate as you read, focusing especially on the challenges Wright faces, the environment he lives in, and the societal forces influencing his choices. Use sticky notes or write in the margins. Be sure to track major themes, and literary elements such as symbolism, diction, and tone.

“Black Boy follows Richard Wright as he grows up in poverty in the Jim Crow South, facing hunger, racism, and a strict religious household. As he becomes aware of the racial oppression around him, he turns to reading and writing as a means of escape and empowerment. The memoir traces his journey from fear and deprivation to intellectual independence and the determination to define himself as a writer”

Part #2- For each theme-related concept listed in the chart below, find a quote that supports it and explain how the quotes reflect or reinforce the concept. **Please locate 3 quotes per theme word and provide a thorough explanation.** This must be typed or handwritten and readable. Text evidence should be cited appropriately with the author’s last name and page number in

MLA format. An example is provided below.

<i>Native Son</i>	Quote #1 (Text Evidence)	Quote #2 (Text Evidence)	Quote #3 (Text Evidence)	Analytic Commentary
Societal Perception	“Was she laughing at him? Were they making fun of him? What was it that they wanted? Why didn’t they leave him alone?” (Wright 67).	“So deeply conscious was he of violating a dangerous taboo, that he felt the very air or sky would suddenly speak, commanding him to stop” (Wright 184).	“Maybe all of the black men and women were talking about him this morning; maybe they were hating him for having brought this attack upon them” (Wright 246).	White society views Richard Wright as a threat, leading him to fear that his actions will confirm white stereotypes and endanger the entire Black community.

<i>Black Boy</i>	Quote #1 (Text Evidence)	Quote #2 (Text Evidence)	Quote #3 (Text Evidence)	Analytic Commentary
Power/ Powerlessness				
Hunger				
Racism/ Systemic Oppression				

Violence				
Education				
Identity				

Part #3-Write a 4-paragraph essay that demonstrates how **ONE** theme from *Black Boy* is developed/supported. This requires you first to write a theme statement based on one of the theme-related concepts above. Use the evidence/quotes you collected in the chart for ideas to create your theme statement. Be sure you can support the development of your theme through ample textual evidence! Theme can be revealed through the plot itself, changes in the character's thoughts, actions, and emotions (how do they change from the beginning of the work to the end), and through literary elements like irony, hypocrisy, metaphor, etc. **Please be prepared to turn this in to Canvas and have a final copy printed and ready to turn in on the date indicated above.** Your essay should be four paragraphs, including an introduction, two body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Double-spaced, 12-point font, MLA format. I am looking for quality, succinct writing. No essay should be less than two pages. Thesis construction, topic sentence construction, evidence and its integration, and analysis are critical elements of this writing assignment. Your essay should not exceed 3 pages. Please MLA cite all evidence and attach a works cited page for *Black Boy*. Using noodletools.com is REQUIRED.

Academic Integrity Notice: Any suspected use of AI-generated writing or outside assistance on the summer reading assignment will result in half credit. All work must reflect the student's own original thinking and analysis.

Part #4- You must complete BOTH Reading AND Writing sections on a full-length PSAT practice test located at this link:

<https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/psat-nmsqt-practice-test-1.pdf>

- Download and print the PSAT/NMSQT Practice Test 1
- Fill in both the Reading and the Writing sections (first 2 Modules)
- Bring a printed and completed version of the test on the second day of class