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Blind Brook High School
9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment
2026

Dear 9th Grader,

This summer, all 9th graders will read *The Other Wes Moore*, a memoir by Wes Moore. Moore wrote this story in 2010. In the years since, Moore has found great success as an author, a business owner, a public speaker, and most recently, he was elected the governor of Maryland in 2022. Wes Moore made history in this election as the first Black governor to serve this position in this state.

The Other Wes Moore chronicles the life of the author as well as another young man who, coincidentally, is also named Wes Moore! The memoir begins with the words, “The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his” (xi). More information about the book can be found on page two of this packet.

Reading and Writing Task:

- ☐ Read the memoir *The Other Wes Moore*.
- ☐ While you are reading you must use **sticky notes** to annotate for significant moments, paying attention to influences on each young man’s life.
- ☐ In order to keep track of the two main characters, a **T-Chart** has been provided for you to fill out while you read, tracking major forces that impact the life of each Wes. Be sure to complete the entire chart on pages 3-4.
- ☐ You may handwrite or type your answers. There is a digital copy posted on your 8th grade ELA Classroom page, as well as on the [Blind Brook Library Website](#).

Bring this work to class when we return to school in September. We will review the book and you will have the opportunity to show us your writing as you examine how forces influence the paths we take in our life.

We look forward to welcoming you to our classrooms! Have a wonderful summer.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gasparini and Mr. Olivencia
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Information about *The Other Wes Moore*

“It’s unsettling to know how little separates each of us from another life altogether” (xi).

The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore

In December 2000, the *Baltimore Sun* ran a small piece about Wes Moore, a local student who had just received a Rhodes Scholarship. The same paper also ran a series of articles about four young men who had allegedly killed a police officer in a spectacularly botched armed robbery. The police were still hunting for two of the suspects who had gone on the lam, a pair of brothers. One was named Wes Moore.

Wes just couldn’t shake off the unsettling coincidence, or the inkling that the two shared much more than space in the same newspaper. After following the story of the robbery, the manhunt, and the trial to its conclusion, he wrote a letter to the other Wes, now a convicted murderer serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. His letter tentatively asked the questions that had been haunting him: Who are you? How did this happen?

That letter led to a correspondence and relationship that has lasted for several years. Over dozens of letters and prison visits, Wes discovered that the other Wes had had a life not unlike his own: Both had grown up in similar neighborhoods and had had difficult childhoods, both were fatherless; they’d hung out on similar corners with similar crews, and both had run into trouble with the police. At each stage of their young lives they had come across similar moments of decision, yet their choices would lead them to astonishingly different destinies.

Told in alternating dramatic narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

Watch these clips to learn more about the Weses:



[Book Trailer](#)

[Wes Moore Makes History](#)

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Required Worksheet

The Other Wes Moore: Keeping track of Wes and Wes!

Force: What forces impact the choices and outcomes for each Wes? Keep track of specific **textual evidence** with page numbers. Consider family, friends, role models, education, environment, etc.

Impact: How does that force impact their paths in life (positively or negatively)?

Forces that Impact Wes Moore: The Author	Forces that Impact Wes Moore: The “Other”
Force with cited evidence: Impact:	Force with cited evidence: Impact:
Force with cited evidence: Impact:	Force with cited evidence: Impact:

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Force with cited evidence: Impact:	Force with cited evidence: Impact:
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Required Worksheet Example*

Below is an example of a version of the chart based on the mother of the “Other” Wes, Mary Moore. Your version must be focused on the two Wes characters.

Notice that a “Force” is identified (Education). Then the evidence is paraphrased with a page number. You may also use a quote. The “Impact” is an analysis of how the force impacts the characters' paths in life.

Forces that Impact Mary Moore
Force : Education. Mary Moore, mother of the “other” Wes, loses her Pell Grant which was paying for her college education: “The federal budget for...Pell Grants- was being slashed, and her grant was being terminated” (17). She was the first in her family to ever go to college. While she did complete 16 credits, without this funding she was forced to drop out of school. Impact: Without financial support, Mary could not pursue education. A lack of education meant that Mary worked a low paying job. She was forced to prioritize providing basic needs for her growing family financially, rather than her own personal goals. She was unable to supervise her children due to those long hours she had to work. Wes and his brothers quickly fell victim to street life because of the lack of supervision. This would eventually lead to her sons’ lives being influenced by fights, drugs, and gangs. The loss of Mary’s Pell Grant would cause her to deal with depression and guilt. The lack of education prevented Mary from breaking the cycle of poverty that her family experienced.

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Required Worksheet Rubric

The Other Wes Moore: Keeping track of Wes and Wes!

60 Points

Criteria	Points	Notes
Textual evidence of “Force” Gives specific, relevant evidence for each Wes and each force. Includes page numbers that match the text and clearly support the idea.	24 Points	
Analysis of “Impact” Clearly explains how each force impacts the character’s path in life, with accurate cause-and-effect reasoning and positive or negative impact.	24 Points	
Clarity and Organization Response is easy to follow, with organized ideas. Sentences are clear and focused on the task.	5 Points	
Grammar and Mechanics Uses correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling throughout. Errors, if any, do not distract from meaning.	5 Points	
Submission Work is legible and neat. Work is submitted on time.	2 Points	

Total _____/60