

**Springfield High School Required Summer Reading and Writing - Honors ELA 12  
*Native Son*- Richard Wright Assignment 1 (one analytical essay) and Assignment 2  
(one reflective essay)**

**Note: Regardless of when your particular Honors course runs during the academic year, you must submit your summer reading work prior to the start of the academic year.**

**Reading Assignment:** Please purchase and read Richard Wright's *Native Son* and take analytical notes to aid you in the writing work. We will be referencing specific portions of the text during the opening week of the course and the more specific your notes the more prepared you will be to respond to discussion questions. These notes will be collected and are critical for weaving textual evidence into your written assignment. They can also be used for class discussion and reading quizzes. In the opening weeks of school, you will be asked questions about specific excerpts from the text and having detailed notes will enable you to respond intelligently. You will submit your notes via Canvas in August. You must have a physical copy of the book for our opening weeks of school. There are two written assignments due before our first course meeting.

Our readings, discussions, and reflections will inspire us to probe deeply into not only characters, but also the manner in which the author invites us to think about big ideas and essential questions. Authorial choice is the awareness that authors make deliberate choices with intended consequences. In your notes and essays, you will need to analyze the choices authors make and how they impact the reading experience. For example, the name of a character, the setting, key images, the narrative style, the symbols – every single diction choice in the book is an authorial choice you can analyze.

**Assignment 1 - Analytical Writing - Select ONE of the following choice essays:**

**Choice 1-Writing Assignment 1 (3-4 pages)**

The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, "Nobody, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man's mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time. Using *Native Son*, select a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by the two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict within one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. To write an effective argument you will need to clearly name and specifically identify the two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences and how this conflict illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. This means you must name the meaning of the work as a whole (of course there are multiple meanings, but you must specifically name one). You must conclude your essay with an analysis of what would be missing from the message of the book if the author had not included the conflict as you define it. Do not summarize the plot at all. Be sure to include a minimum of

5-7 properly cited textual excerpts in your analysis. Work cited required. Title your essay in a way that indicates your argument. In this case, your title should name the character you chose and the two conflicting directions in which Wright pulls them in his novel. We will submit this essay electronically in August via Canvas. Plan for submission via Canvas by 11:59 PM on Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup>. (Stay tuned for communication from me if there is a delay in student access to Canvas. Obviously, you will not be penalized if we don't yet have access to Canvas. But you should have your notes and essays ready for submission by 8/25.)

### **Choice 2-Writing Assignment 1 (3-4 pages)**

Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and the sea) to represent opposed forces or ideas that are central to the meaning of the work. Drawing on your analytical reading of *Native Son*, write an essay explaining how the places differ, what each place represents, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of the work. Use *Native Son* to analyze two contrasting places in the text that represent opposed forces or ideas. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how the contrast between the two places conveys the meaning of the work as a whole. You must conclude your essay with an analysis of what would be missing from the message of the book if Wright had not included these contrasting places. Do not summarize the plot at all. Be sure to include a minimum of 5-7 properly cited textual excerpts in your analysis. Work cited required. Title your essay in a way that indicates your argument. In this case, your title should name the two places and what Wright uses them to represent in his novel. We will submit this essay electronically in August via Canvas. Plan for submission via Canvas by 11:59 PM on Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup>. (Stay tuned for communication from me if there is a delay in student access to Canvas. Obviously, you will not be penalized if we don't yet have access to Canvas. But you should have your notes and essays ready for submission by 8/25.)

### **Assignment 2 - Reflective Writing (3-4 pages)**

Select the three most pivotal passages in *Native Son* and reflect on how they impacted you as a reader. You must choose one excerpt from each of the three sections of the novel. Your excerpt can be as brief as a word, phrase or sentence or as lengthy as an entire passage on a page. Type out each excerpt and then include your reflective analysis on the author's choices in the passage and how they made you think and feel. How does the passage connect to your learning in other disciplines? Can you make an intertextual connection to a song, film, or other media experience? Why do you think this is such a key passage? What would be missing from the author's message without this passage? You can arrange this piece of writing however you like. It will most likely not be a traditional essay format. You will probably introduce the excerpt and then write your reflective analysis. Then introduce the next excerpt, and so on... We will submit this essay electronically in August via Canvas. Due for submission via Canvas by 11:59 PM on Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Both assignments (Analytical Essay and Reflective Writing Piece) are to be submitted via Canvas in August.** Due for submission via Canvas by 11:59 PM on Sunday August 25<sup>th</sup>. These will be the first grades of the semester so be sure to submit your best work as it will set the tone for your senior year. The smart summer work you submit in August becomes the foundation for your first quarter grades that get sent to college. Writing must be MLA formatted and supported by properly documented in-text citations. Do include a Works Cited for the text you are referencing. I look forward to a great year of reading, writing, and thinking.

Dr. Brett