

IB English HL1
2018 Summer Homework



Assignment Overview: This year's summer homework consists of three assignments. First, you will read Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* and write two responses (an essay and a speech) based on it. Finally, you will write a short, personal response.

- ❖ Richard Wright (1908-1960) published his novel *Native Son* in 1940; the story focuses on the experiences of Bigger Thomas, a young black man growing up in the segregated neighborhoods of Southside Chicago in the 1930s. Wright based Bigger on five young men whom he knew or encountered in his own life, each of whom challenged or rebelled against his society's racist laws and assumptions. In an essay titled "How 'Bigger' Was Born," Wright described this collective group as follows:

The Bigger Thomases were the only Negroes I know of who consistently violated the Jim Crow laws of the South and got away with it, at least for a brief spell. Eventually, the whites who restricted their lives made them pay a terrible price. They were shot, hanged, maimed, lynched, and generally hounded until they were either dead or their spirits broken.

For this novel, you have two responses to complete:

- (1) **Literary Response** | Write an essay on the following topic: **to what extent does the novel show that an individual is in control of his or her own destiny.** Your essay should be roughly 1,000 words, and it should include quotes from the text to support your claims.

Note, *Native Son* is a well-studied book, and there is an abundance of commentary available on it. We will probably look at some of this commentary as a class, but it is not necessary for you to consult any such commentary to write this essay. If I detect any instances of plagiarism in your essay, you will not receive credit for your response.

- (2) **Rhetoric in Practice** | In *Native Son*, there are two lengthy speeches given about Bigger Thomas, one by his attorney Max (pages 382-405) and one by the state prosecutor Buckley (pages 407-415). Suppose you were in the position of one of these two men. **Write your own speech either defending or prosecuting Bigger.** Your speech should be roughly 800 words, and it should demonstrate both your knowledge of his life & character as well as your own rhetorical skills.

Please do *read carefully*. At the beginning of the school year, you will have a test on the novel. The test will consist of quotes; you will be asked to provide context for these quotes (without using your book) and to comment on their significance to the novel's overall meaning. *Your copy of the novel is yours to keep; you may mark in it if you find that useful.*

- ❖ **Personal Response:** Tell me a story about yourself—focus on a specific, real event from your own life. Afterwards, explain why you chose this story and what you hope it reveals about you. Your response should be roughly 500 words.
- ❖ All of your responses should be typed, double spaced, in a legible 10 point font and with 1" margins. Include your word count at the bottom of each response. I will NOT accept work that is incorrectly formatted.

I will collect your responses during the first week of school. If you have questions, you may email me at clew@psusd.us (note, if you email me from your school account, your email will probably go to my school g-mail account, which I don't check as frequently, so if you are looking a quick response, do not use your school email account). I will probably be at school for most of the summer, so please don't hesitate to write or stop by.

Enjoy your summer! I look forward to working with you! ☺