



Westhill High School
Summer Reading 2015
Grade 11



Thematic Focus: Coming of Age in America

The Book

Two kids with the same name, living in the same city. One grew up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated combat veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader. The other is serving a life sentence in prison for felony murder. Here is the story of two boys and the journey of a generation.

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 a life not unlike his own: Both had grown up in similar neighborhoods and 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 and the people in their lives 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 challenging and at times, hostile world.*

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The Assignment

Read and enjoy *The Other Wes Moore*! ☺



Your written assignment is to create **12 dialectical journal entries**. Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the text. You simply write down passages that make you think, or interest you, and write about your thoughts. This process is an important way to understand a memoir or a piece of literary non-fiction. Make sure you write about passages from the beginning, middle, and end of the memoir.

As you read, look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. Once you choose a passage that stands out to you record it in the left-hand column of a T-chart (ALWAYS include page numbers). Your entries can be typed or handwritten in a journal.

In the right column, write your response to the text. Your response should include context (what is happening in the scene) and you must indicate what type of response you are writing:

- (Q) Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
- (C) Connect - make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
- (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
- (R) Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
- (E) Evaluate – make a judgment about the character(s), their actions, or what the author is trying to say

Sample T-Chart

| Quote | Response |
|--|--|
| <p>“When my mom first landed in the Bronx, she was just a small child, but she was a survivor and learned quickly. She studied other kids at school like an anthropologist, trying desperately to fit in. She started with the way that she spoke. She diligently listened to the radio from the time she was old enough to turn it and mimicked what she heard...she jumped into the melting pot with both feet” (8).</p> | <p>(R) This passage says a lot about the human desire for acceptance. When Wes Moore’s mother came to the United States from Jamaica she was only a kid but she already understood the importance of fitting in with the other children. Anthropology is the study of humans. The fact that Wes compares his mother to an anthropologist is interesting because it emphasizes how hard she worked to understand the ways and habits of the American children.</p> <p>It is also interesting that Wes notes that his mother changed the way she spoke to fit in and then says his mother “jumped into the melting pot.” Here he seems to be indicating that sometimes fitting in means giving up one’s own individuality and heritage.</p> <p>Your summer reading is DUE BY 9/4/15 (Friday). Please make sure that everything you hand in is your own original work; be aware, your teacher will ask you to submit portions of your summer reading to turnitin.com.</p> |

If you have any questions or need help you can email Ms. Wheeler at cwheeler@StamfordCT.gov or Ms. Tobin at ktobin@StamfordCT.gov.