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***Slam!***

BY WALTER DEAN MYERS



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All references come from the Scholastic point edition of *Slam!*, copyright 1996.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Pre-Reading

### Character Traits

**Objective:** Evaluating character traits to determine which are necessary for success in life

#### Activity

*Slam!* is the story of a seventeen-year-old high school student living in Harlem who dreams of one day playing basketball for the NBA. He is a wonderful basketball player, but despite his talents, he is not the best basketball player in Harlem. What qualities, other than basketball skills, do you think he might develop in himself that may help with his game and also help him to further himself in life?

Working in small groups, discuss the following summary of the article *The Psychology of the Winner* by Herbert M. Greenberg, Ph.D.

List the qualities of a winner discussed in the article on the **Qualities of a Winner Chart**. Then, add to this chart any other qualities the group thinks are important to success in life. The group should find at least 20 – 25 qualities.

Finally, select the top ten qualities your group considers to be the most important. In a short phrase or sentence, list these ten qualities on the **Profile of a Winner Chart**.

After reading the story, we will come back to this chart to evaluate the extent to which the protagonist in the book meets or exceeds the qualities on the chart.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 1 – 4****Vocabulary/Language**

**Objectives:** Translating slang words and phrases into Standard English  
Using vocabulary words from the text

**Activity**

There are many slang words and phrases in this novel. Based on your own experience and on the context clues in the text, translate the following list of slang words into Standard English. The first one is done for you as an example.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 1 – 4****Style****Objective:** Recognizing metaphors and similes in the text**Activity**

One aspect of a writer's style is his or her use of figurative language, including similes.

On the following **Simile Chart** find an example of a simile on the page number indicated. For each example you find, write the simile on the chart and indicate the two things that are being compared.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapters 5 – 7****Writing****Objective:** Inferring information about a character's thoughts, feelings, and actions**Activity**

At the end of Chapter Six, Jimmy tells Slam to act like he is part of the team. This angers Slam, but he does not say anything to Jimmy about this. However, in the following passage, Slam does share his feelings about Jimmy's comments with the reader:

We didn't say anything else all the way to the subway. I just wanted to get away from Jimmy, just wanted to walk out of his life. What I felt like, too, was going upside his head. But I knew that was what he was talking about, me acting like I had a chip on my shoulder, doing what I could do instead of fitting in like they wanted me to fit.

The words had to be there somewhere, the words that would tell him how I felt without catching in my throat or showing how mad I was. What I had to do was to find them, maybe even practice them so I could lay them on him the next time we met. (Pg. 89)

Assume that Slam does practice his next conversation with Jimmy. What do you think he might say after Slam has had time to think about the incident and calm down?

Write a dialogue between Slam and Jimmy. In the dialogue Slam should try to explain his feelings about basketball, the coach, and the team to Jimmy.

The dialogue might begin as follows:

**Slam:** So Jimmy, you still think I have an attitude problem?

**Jimmy:** The coach thinks you do.

**Slam:** I think the coach...