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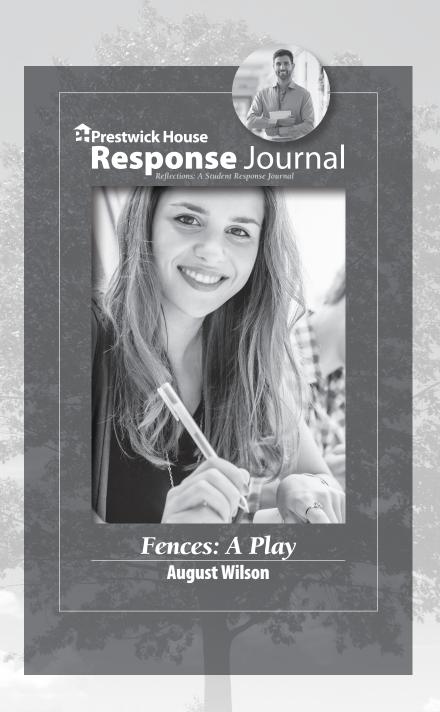
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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Fences

Act One, Scene One

- 1. Wilson writes that together "with his blackness, [Troy's] largeness informs his sensibilities and the choices he has made in his life." What aspects of your identity most inform your "sensibilities" and your choices—your age, your race, your beliefs, your financial background, something else? Explain your answer in a paragraph.
- 2. Troy and Bono's friendship is founded on Bono's admiration of "Troy's honesty, capacity for hard work, and his strength." What three characteristics do you most admire and seek in a friend? List the qualities, and then write a brief explanation for each as to why it is so important to you.
- 3. Troy's first line includes the controversial word "nigger." Write a one or two-paragraph letter to August Wilson about how you feel when you see this word and why you think he decided to include it in Troy's first speaking line.
- 4. Troy has just filed a complaint with his employer concerning the unequal way whites and "coloreds" are treated in his company, and some of the other black workers fear that Troy's boldness will get all of the blacks fired. Wilson doesn't include the dialogue Troy has with Mr. Rand in the play. In a page or so, write the scene between Troy and Mr. Rand as you think it would have taken place. Before starting the dialogue, imagine and describe the setting in a sentence or two.

Response Journal

Act One, Scene Two

- 12. Do you agree with Troy that lotteries take advantage of the poor? Pretend that your state is in the middle of a heated debate on whether to have or dispense with a lottery. A local newspaper has invited people to send in letters expressing their opinions on the subject. Write such a letter, making sure to include both your opinion and the reasoning behind it.
- 13. Although he doesn't mention it, Rose intuitively senses that Troy is worried about what happened at work yesterday. In a paragraph or two, describe a time when you were able to sense what someone was thinking even though he or she didn't speak of it directly. How could you tell what was really on that person's mind?
- 14. If it weren't for the money Gabe got from the government for his war wound, Troy would not have been able to buy a house. It upsets Troy to realize that he is fifty-three and wouldn't have a home if not for that money. Imagine that, instead of going to a listen to a ball game, Troy decides to write a journal entry addressing these circumstances at this end of this scene. As Troy, write the entry.

Fences

Act Two, Scene One

- 31. To Troy, Bono says, "I done learned a whole heap of things about life watching you." Make a list of at least five things you have learned about life from your friends. Then list three things you think your friends have learned from you.
- 32. Troy says that his heart tells him "right from wrong every time," and that it has *not* told him that having an affair with Alberta is wrong. Pretend that Troy is on a talk show and has just said this. You raise your hand and the host brings the microphone to you. Write out what you'd say to Troy at this point, including whether you agree with his reasoning.
- 33. Bono says, "Some people build fences to keep people out...and other people build fences to keep people in." If you were to build a fence at this point in your life, which kind would you build? Explain your answer.
- 34. Pretend that you are Rose and have just been told not only that your husband has fathered a child by another woman, but that he wants to continue seeing her. Taking the time period and your financial situation into account, write a journal entry exploring your feelings and what your options might be.

Fences

Act Two, Scene Two

- 38. Troy, who is illiterate, thought he was signing a form that released Gabe from jail, but actually signed a form to have Gabe committed. Make a list of at least five problems you would face daily if you were an illiterate adult in today's society.
- 39. When Troy loses Alberta, he becomes determined to build the fence around his yard to keep Death from sneaking up on him again. How do you feel as Troy's world unravels? Do you sympathize with him or think justice is being served? Explain your answer.

Act Two, Scene Three

40. For the first time, Troy has a daughter. From what you know of Troy's character and the way Troy has raised and treats his sons, how do you think he will raise and treat his daughter?

Act Two, Scene Four

- 41. As Bono, write a journal entry about what it was like to see Troy for the first time in a month. Do you still admire him at all? Do you miss him? Why did you decide to "dump" him?
- 42. As Cory, write a journal entry in which you explain why you found yourself unable to swing the bat.