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Monster

BY WALTER DEAN MYERS



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-reading**Research****Objective:** Researching the author**Activity**

Walter Dean Myers is an esteemed author of adolescent literature that focuses on African-American culture. He has received numerous awards for his provocative work, which includes fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

Use the library, the Internet, or both to answer the following questions about Walter Dean Myers. Your answers should be short and concise, but be sure to use complete sentences.

1. When and where was Myers born?
2. What disability did Myers suffer from when he was a child?
3. At what age did Myers learn to read?
4. When, if at all, did Myers complete high school?
5. What was Myers' first job?
6. Who published Myers' first children's book, and why?
7. What position did Myers retain with Bobbs Merrill publishing?
8. In what year did Myers write his first young adult novel, and what is the title?
9. What are some awards that Myers has received?
10. Where does Myers currently live?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Monday, July 6th**Journal Writing****Objective:** Writing character journals**Activity**

Imagine that you are serving on the jury for Steve's trial, and you manage to maintain a journal during the proceedings. The journal contains accounts of people and events that you find particularly interesting, exciting, or frustrating.

At the end of each day, or chapter, create a journal entry that is at least a half-page in length. The subject matter is left to your discretion. Remember, however, that you are a juror. The journal entries must be from a juror's perspective, which is limited. You do not have knowledge of the character's thoughts or feelings unless they are openly stated in the courtroom, but you may make conjectures about a character's disposition. Feel free to add any filler that you feel develops the juror's personality. For instance, you may mention the juror's feelings or personal life to make the writing seem genuine.

An example has been started.

Example:

Today was the first day of the trial, and I can see now why Bob told me to try and get out of jury duty. That prosecutor, Petro-something—boy, is she long-winded! Thought I was going to fall asleep. I guess she gave a nice speech, but I kind of felt like she was talking down to us, like we were stupid or something. I liked the one lawyer's speech—it was short and to the point—but Briggs himself seems shady. I don't know about the defendants. King gave me the creeps. The guy sits there looking like he doesn't have a care in the world when he's on trial for murder. I mean, come on! He could at least act like he cares.

The worst part of the deal is the kid. I feel sorry for him. He looks so scared, just sitting there with panic written across his face. It's understandable—guilty or not, he's just a kid, on trial for his life. I'm having trouble with that part, because it just makes me think about my boy. Kevin is the same age, and I can't begin to imagine him being in the same situation. How does a kid get mixed up in this mess? I'm surprised that he's even here. You'd think they'd cut a deal with him since he's so young. It's not like he pulled the trigger.

What is this world coming to?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Thursday, July 9th**Newspaper Article
Edit****Objective:** Improving writing skills**Activity**

Imagine that you are a journalist for the *Harlem Trumpet*, a weekly publication for the local area, and you have been instructed to cover the Nesbitt robbery.

The assignment is to write an article about the robbery-homicide that is between 200 and 220 words. Efficient article size is crucial because space is limited in this week's issue. Cover the basic elements of the story: who, what, when, where, why, and how? Also, create a brief, fictional statement from a witness, neighborhood resident, or police officer about the incident.

Compose the article on a separate sheet of paper as a final proof. Your work should be typed with double spaced lines and formatted in columnar style like that of a newspaper. Remember to include a catchy title and a byline.

Edit the article you receive. Check each sentence for proper spelling, structure, and word usage. Look at the length of the sentences, and make sure that they are not too long or too short. If you wish to revise a sentence, circle the sentence and draw an arrow to a blank spot on the page, then rewrite the sentence. This technique will help to keep the article legible. Verify that all of the basic elements—who, what, when, where, why, and how—are included in the article. When you are finished editing, count the words and put the number at the top of the page.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Friday, July 10th**Writing Dialogue
Characterization****Objective:** Writing a scene between characters**Activity**

Steve and James King react differently to the trial proceedings. Steve is horrified by the expert witnesses' accounts of the crime scene and Mr. Nesbitt's death. King, however, portrays indifference.

Write a two-page script of a conversation that takes place between Steve and King about the robbery or trial. The conversation should take place in a detention center cell. Format the scene in the same style that is used in *Monster*. For instance, include the speaker's name, setting descriptions, camera angles, and the characters' actions.

Use what you know about the characters to create a plausible script. Try to portray Steve's fear, regret, and innocence, and King's corrupt nature and apathetic disposition. You may wish to focus on a particular issue or the overall events. For a more realistic scene, make an effort to picture the events in your mind as you write.

A script has been started as an example.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Saturday, July 11th-Sunday, July 12th

Identifying Motif

Objective: Identifying motifs that contribute to theme

Activity

Despair is a primary motif in *Monster* that often appears in Steve's journal writings. Steve is depressed by living in the detention center and by his seemingly hopeless future. Mr. and Mrs. Harmon suffer from the shock of their son's arrest and his grave situation.

Reread the chapters to locate any dialogue, event, or behavior that exhibits despair. As you read, complete the **Motif Chart** by recording seven passages that demonstrate the motif. Cite each passage by supplying the page number. Also, choose a category from the list below for each passage that you find, and write the corresponding letter in the column provided. If more than one category seems acceptable, write both letters.

An example is given.

Choose at least one of the following categories for each quote that you locate:

- A. Despair for self
- B. Despair for others
- C. Hopelessness for the future
- D. Anguish about the past
- E. Isolation

Example:

Passage	Page	Category
"All you had to see were the tears running down her face and the whole story was there."	144-145	B