

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

***Black Boy* by Richard Wright**

English Language Arts, 11th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Black Boy is the autobiographical story of Richard Wright's childhood growing up in the Jim Crow South. Part I begins when Wright is four years old in 1912 and follows his struggle for acceptance and respect within his family and Southern society until he leaves for Chicago in 1925 at age twenty. Part II tells of Wright's life in slightly less segregated Chicago, his struggle to survive and provide for his mother during the Depression, his brief period of writing for--and eventual disillusionment with--the Communist Party, and his determination to become a writer, regardless of the roadblocks.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM*

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Language and Perspective**
 - Essential Questions: “How do texts reflect society both historically and linguistically?” and “How can crafting your story reflect personal identity?”
- **Unit 2: Complex Issues**
 - Essential Questions: “How does written language challenge and change an individual's mind? What role does the writer play in challenging and changing an individual's mind?”
- **Unit 3: Universal Human Experience**
 - Essential Questions: “How does sustained inquiry of the past inform and motivate change?” and “How do we prepare for an uncertain future?”
- **Unit 4: Personal Responsibility**
 - Essential Questions: “How can we challenge and develop our perspective on a real world issue?” and “How can I use my voice to create an impactful contribution?”

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. RL.11.1
- Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.11.2

- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama. RL.11.3
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. RL.11.5
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading. RL.11.10
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.11.11
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RI.11.12
- Read and comprehend grade-level appropriate nonfiction literature. RI.11.13
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. RL.11.4