

## Grade 10 Book Clubs

*Please scroll to find the questions for the novel you read. (Some books have more questions than others, but they will take roughly the same amount of time—it's fair, trust me!).*

*You will be discussing the questions with your group in Teams in the online chat under your group's "channel". Only your group, myself, and our EA, Mrs. Holeness, will be able to see the chat. Your discussion can veer off track to talk about other aspects of the book that are of interest.*

*\*Participating in this chat is part of your Mark and considered your Attendance "in the class."*

*\*In addition to the chat, each person needs to individually submit answers for the assignment in a formal Word document through Teams.*

### Questions:

#### ***The Book of Negroes***

1. What parts of the book stood out the most to you? (What is something that you won't forget?) What is your main "take-away" from the novel?
2. Aminata suffers horrifying cruelties at the hands of her captors, but her relationships with her maters are not always what one would expect. Explain.
3. How does Aminata's story reveal the complex ways that people react to the unequal relationships?
4. What does the novel tell us about survival? Which characters fare the best and why?
5. As Aminata moves from slavery to freedom, she finds that sometimes freedom is an empty promise. At what points did you feel this was true? Did it change how you thought about the meaning of freedom? Explain.

#### ***To Kill a Mockingbird***

1. Looking back on the trial, which character did you empathize with the most? IS there a character that you were surprised to empathize with once you found out details about the character's life?
2. How does Atticus show that Tom Robinson could not have committed the crime?

3. Debate the truth of the following quotation, citing evidence from the novel as well as real-life situations:

“There is one way in this country in which all [people] are equal—there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, the ignorant man the equal of a college president. That institution is the court” (205).

4. *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been challenged repeatedly by the political left and right, who have sought to remove it from libraries for its portrayal of conflict between children and adults; ungrammatical speech; references to sex, the supernatural, and witchcraft; and unfavorable presentation of blacks. Which elements of the book—if any—do you think touch on controversial issues in our contemporary culture? Did you find any of those elements especially troubling, persuasive, or insightful?

### ***The Secret Life of Bees***

1. How would you describe Lily's feelings about her mother? Did they change throughout the novel? How did hearing that her mother left her affect her perception of her mother?
2. What are the motivators and barriers to change for Lily?
3. What happens to reinforce Lily's belief in signs and premonitions?
4. Compare Zach and Rosaleen's confrontations with white men (this can be in a chart when you submit the questions).
5. How did the political climate contribute to the situation? Do you think Zach or Rosaleen's or both of them were justified in the actions they chose? Explain. What other choice could have been made? What might have been the consequences (physical, emotional, ethical) for choosing a different course of action?

### ***The Hate you Give***

1. Throughout the book, Starr talks about how she's different “versions” of herself. She's one person in Garden Heights and a different person at her school, Williamson Prep. This is often called “code-switching” when a person feels they must speak and act different in one social situation than in another. Do you think Starr switches successfully between the two places? What other characters do you see code switching? Are there any instances when someone doesn't switch and makes things socially awkward? Discuss how you might code switch in different circumstances in your own life.

2. How do you think Starr would define family? What about Seven, DeVante, Kenya and Khalil? Do you have to be related by blood to consider a person family? How do you define family?
3. Starr pledges to “never be quiet” (Chapter 26). After reading this book, how can you use your voice to promote and advance social justice? Reflect on how you and your community discuss and address inequality.
4. After Khalil dies, parts of his life are shared in conversations, news media, and social media. How do the messages differ from each medium? Was one more reliable? What might have been a more reliable source for information on Khalil?
5. What incidents cause a disagreement between Starr and Hailey? Starr says to Hailey, “You can say something racist and not be racist.” What do you think this means? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
6. In chapter 9, Starr’s mom is telling her a story and says, “Sometimes you can do everything right and things will still go wrong. The key is to never stop doing right” (154). Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

### ***All-American Boys***

1. Explain the title, *All American Boys*. What does it mean? In your opinion, does it accurately describe the events and relationships portrayed in the novel?
2. Dwyer tells Quinn, “Listen, man. You’ve got to fix this. We got to get the team straight...This is too big. This is our life, man. Our futures.” Consider English’s, Shannon’s, Guzzo’s, Dwyer’s, and Quinn’s shared passion for basketball. What role does the game play in the lives of these characters, and in what ways does this sport allow these young men to come together as a team? How is the team changed after the attack on Rashad? From your perspective, what will they have to do as a team to overcome this divisive experience?
3. How does the discovery of the spray-painted tag, “Rashad Is Absent Again Today” change the dynamics about how students at the high school are able to deal with the event? In what ways does this initially non-spoken symbol become an avenue for reflection and conversation among both the student body and the faculty?
4. What is the significance of the march? Why did it mean so much to Quinn, Rashad, and Spoony? How about the rest of the characters? Why do people protest? Do you think protests are effective in voicing a cause? Can they institute change?
5. How is *All American Boys* a statement, or a response, to some of the racial injustice featured in the media today? What is the message that you think the authors are trying to convey through this novel? Do you think this book is an accurate reflection on society today? (Consider more than just your social circles).

## ***Brother***

1. How does Michael and Francis's relationship as brothers evolve over the course of the events depicted in *Brother*? Considering the flashbacks to their childhood, which event(s) have the biggest impact on their relationship and why?
2. Michael mentions the notion of "complicated grief" in relation to his mother. Based on what we know about Ruth and her relationship with her sons, what is keeping her "mired [stuck] in mourning," as Michael puts it, over losing Francis?
3. *Brother* takes place in Canada. Do you think the story is specific to the setting, or is it more universal—for example, are the issues in the novel (such as racism) specific to setting? Why or why not?
4. What do you think the author, David Chariandy, is attempting to say about the immigrant experience in his novel?
5. Discuss Francis's interaction with the police immediately before he gets shot. Could the tragedy have been prevented? Are there events or interactions earlier in the novel that you think may have contributed to Francis's refusal to sit down when the officer asks him to? If so, what and how?

**Optional additional question for all books: how has your reading changed, challenged, or confirmed your thinking about the world?**