

Grade 8: **Unit 1**

The Other Wes Moore: Connected Text Seminars

Seminar 1: Connected Texts

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars articulate the authors' central arguments about identity.

Seminar 1:

“What Makes You Who You Are” by Matt Ridely from *Time Magazine* (Nonfiction) and “Pulled Over in Short Hills, NJ, 8:00 AM” by Ross Gay (Poem):

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday's seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will be reading two texts: “What Makes You Who You Are” and “Pulled Over in Short Hills, NJ, 8:00 AM.” Build excitement by telling scholars that both texts will develop their background knowledge about important concepts in *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Display “What Makes You Who You Are.”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about?”*
- Read the text aloud while scholars follow along on their digital copies.

Discuss (3 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “Why did the author write this text?”*
- Read the text aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copies. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
 - Stop after line 14, “...environments are critical.”
 - Partner Talk: What is Venter’s argument regarding genetic codes?
 - Stop after line 45, “...paradigm may extend.”
 - Partner Talk: How has the Human Genome Project changed scientists’ understanding of how genes work?
 - Stop after line 57, “...kind of nurture.”
 - Partner Talk: Why does the author include the anecdote about snakes in lines 51 through 55?
 - Stop after line 79, “...baking a body.”
 - Partner Talk: What does the author mean by the last two lines: “The genome is not a blueprint for constructing the body. It is a recipe for baking a body” (lines 78-79)?
 - Discuss: Why did the author write this text?

Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bullseye main idea jot and which do not.

Discuss (6 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - What is the author’s argument regarding nature vs. nurture?
 - How does the author convey his argument to the reader?

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- In line 15, what does the author mean when he says that “the number of human genes changed nothing”? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

Read and Discuss 2 — 30 minutes

Display “Pulled Over in Short Hills, NJ, 8:00 AM.”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (10 minutes):

- *Say: As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text?”*
- Scholars independently read and annotate the text on their Chromebooks. When they are finished, they jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work and conference with two to three scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Read (6 minutes):

- *Say: As you are rereading, think, “How does the poet convey the speaker’s emotions about being pulled over?”*
- Read the poem aloud to scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question as a whole class: How does the poet convey the speaker’s emotions about being pulled over?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does the speaker have such a strong reaction to being pulled over? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “Pulled Over in Short Hills, NJ, 8:00 AM.”

Seminar 2: Connected Texts

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars articulate the authors’ messages about dreams and opportunities.

Seminar 2:

“DREAMING BIG: George” from *The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream* by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt, and Lisa Frazier Page (Nonfiction) and “The Rights to the Streets of Memphis” by Richard Wright (Nonfiction)

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Play classical or jazz music to establish a calm work environment.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from yesterday’s seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today, they will be reading two texts: “DREAMING BIG: George” and an excerpt from “The Rights to the Streets of Memphis.” Build excitement by telling scholars that both texts develop themes that are central to *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Display “DREAMING BIG: George.”

Preview the Text (2 minutes):

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about?”*
- Read the text aloud while scholars follow along on their digital copies.

Discuss (3 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Read (10 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “Why did the author write this text?”*
- Read the text aloud as scholars follow along on their digital copies. While reading aloud, pause to ask the questions below:
 - Stop after line 15, “...snatched away all the time.”
 - Partner Talk: What do we learn about the narrator in this paragraph?
 - Stop after line 75, “...brother to my friends.”
 - Partner Talk: How do the narrator’s brother, mother, and friends each influence his dreams and opportunities?
 - Stop after line 84, “...so was I.”
 - Partner Talk: What is the author’s message about opportunities and dreams in an environment of adversity?
 - Discuss: Why did the author write this text?

Main Idea Jot (2 minutes):

- Scholars jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars are working, circulate to determine which scholars have a bull's-eye main idea jot and which do not.

Discuss (6 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - In what way did Garland support the narrator’s ambitions?
 - To what extent did the narrator’s community contribute to his success?

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Write — 10 minutes**Write an essay of no more than 200 words:**

- According to the author, what causes one person to become a drug dealer and another person to become a doctor? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “DREAMING BIG: George.”

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Set your expectations for what scholars must do differently when approaching the next text.

Read and Discuss 2 — 30 minutes**Display “The Rights to the Streets of Memphis.”****Preview the Text (2 minutes):**

- Have scholars read the title and scan the passage to frame their thinking.
- Call on scholars to share what they noticed about the text and what they will think about as they are reading.

Read (12 minutes):

- Say: *As you are reading, think, “What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text?”*
- Scholars independently read and annotate the text on their Chromebooks. When they are finished, they jot a main idea in a comment next to the title of the text.
- While scholars work, circulate to determine the major trend in scholars’ work and conference with two to three scholars.

Discuss (5 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What is this text mostly about? Why did the author write this text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Give scholars two minutes to revise their main idea jots based on the discussion.

Read (5 minutes):

- Say: *As you are rereading, think, “What does the narrator mean when he says that he earned his ‘right to the streets’ (line 121)?”*
- Reread lines 110–122 with scholars.

Discuss (4 minutes):

- Scholars discuss the following question as a whole class: What does the narrator mean when he says that he earned his “right to the streets” (line 121)?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What lesson does the narrator’s mother try to teach the narrator? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from “The Rights to the Streets of Memphis.”