

NATIVE SON

Richard Wright



RESOURCE GUIDE

Reading + Writing + Analysis

NO PREP

PRINT & GO

HIGH SCHOOL ELA

About the Text

Native Son by Richard Wright follows Bigger Thomas, a young Black man navigating poverty, racism, and limited opportunity in 1930s Chicago. The novel explores how environment, fear, and systemic inequality shape identity and decision-making.

Key Themes

- Identity
- Power and control
- Fear
- Systemic inequality

Before You Read

How does a person's environment shape the choices they make?

What happens when fear influences decision-making?

Section Breakdown

SECTION 1: Beginning

Focus: Introduction + Environment + Identity

- Introduction to Bigger Thomas
- Establishment of setting and circumstances
- Early signs of fear and pressure
- Power dynamics introduced

SECTION 2: Development

Focus: Fear + Decision-Making

- Increasing tension and conflict
- Key decisions and their impact
- Internal vs external pressure
- Escalation of events

SECTION 3: Turning Point

Focus: Consequences + Control

- Major events shift the story
- Bigger's responses to conflict
- Loss of control and rising tension
- Themes intensify

SECTION 4: Resolution

Focus: Reflection + Meaning

- Examination of actions and consequences
- Perspectives on responsibility
- Final outcomes
- Overall message of the novel

Comprehension Questions:

SECTION 1

1. Who is Bigger Thomas and what is his situation at the start of the novel?
2. How is the setting introduced and what does it reveal about his life?
3. What role does fear play in Bigger's actions early on?
4. How are power and control shown in this section?
5. How does Bigger's environment shape the way he thinks and behaves?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

How does Pecola's environment shape the way she begins to see herself?

Comprehension Questions

SECTION 2

1. What key decisions does Bigger make in this section?
2. How do these decisions affect the direction of the story?
3. How does fear influence Bigger's actions?
4. What conflicts become more intense?
5. How do relationships impact Bigger's choices?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

Why does fear play such a strong role in Bigger's decision-making?

Comprehension Questions

SECTION 3

1. What major event changes the course of the story?
2. How does Bigger respond to the consequences of his actions?
3. How does tension continue to build?
4. What internal conflicts does Bigger face?
5. How do Bigger's internal struggles affect his actions?

Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

How do Bigger's internal struggles affect his actions?

Comprehension Questions

SECTION 4

1. How is the central conflict addressed by the end of the novel?
2. What perspectives are offered about Bigger's actions?
3. How has Bigger changed or remained the same?
4. What message does the novel leave the reader with?
5. How do the themes connect to the ending?

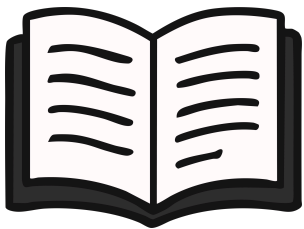
Quick Discussion

Time to Reflect

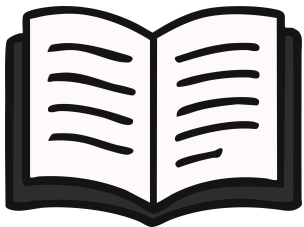
What does the novel suggest about responsibility and environment?

Extension Activity

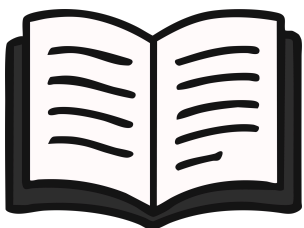
Choose one activity to complete.



Character journal from Bigger's perspective



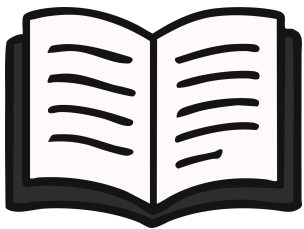
Analyze how setting influences behavior



Rewrite a key moment from another perspective

Writing Prompts

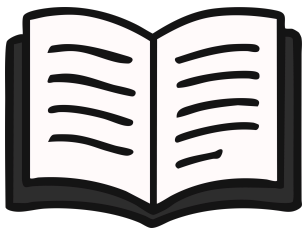
Choose one activity to complete.



How does the novel show the relationship between fear and decision-making?



How does environment shape Bigger's identity?

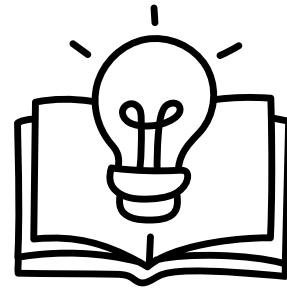


What message does the novel communicate about power and control?

Understanding the Big Ideas

This story explores:

- **Identity**
- **Fear**
- **Power**
- **Systemic inequality**



Which idea has the greatest impact on Bigger's actions? Explain your thinking.

Final Project

- Literary analysis essay on a major theme
- Character study presentation
- Visual or written project exploring identity and environment

Character Notes