

Grade 8:

Unit 1

The Other Wes Moore: Whole Class Novel Seminars

Seminar 3: Whole Class Book

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars analyze the author's use of language and setting to develop the character of each Wes Moore. They make inferences about each of the Wes Moore boys and their internal and external motivations.

Seminar 3:

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates: Introduction and Chapter 1 (pages xi–25)

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 entering the lives of two similar yet different men—both named Wes Moore. As scholars read and orient themselves in the worlds of both Wes Moores, tell them to pay attention to the subtle differences that resulted in two extremely different fates.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read (10 minutes):

- **Play Audiobook (00:00:26–00:09:58):** Introduction, pages xi–xiv

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How is Wes Moore impacted when he learns about the other Wes Moore? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does Wes Moore feel conflicted about his letter to the other Wes Moore?

Read (5 minutes):

- **Read Aloud:** Chapter 1, pages 1–8

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What does the story on pages 5–8 reveal about the author’s mother and father? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Based on the Introduction to Part I (pages 3–4), how do the author and the other Wes Moore attempt to cope with the absence of their fathers? Why does the author emphasize the difference in their coping mechanisms?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is Wes Moore’s purpose for writing this book? 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. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (15 minutes):

- Chapter 1, pages 9–25

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - Why does Wes include the story about his mother?
 - Why is this story about Wes’s mother’s experience central to our understanding of his background?
 - What was the other Wes Moore’s childhood like?
 - How was his childhood different from the author’s childhood?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on the details in this text, which would Wes Moore argue is a more important government investment: funding police departments or funding college scholarships? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 4: Whole Class Book

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars explain the author’s argument about how neighborhoods impact opportunities for youth.

Seminar 4:

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates: Chapter 2 (pages 26–45)

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

- Review the big ideas from yesterday’s reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: Based on the details in this text, which would Wes Moore argue is a more important government investment: funding police departments or funding college scholarships? Then, build excitement for today’s reading and discussion.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read (10 minutes):

- **Play Audiobook (01:01:29–01:08:32):** Chapter 2, pages 26–29

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why does the author compare Cherry Hill and Northwood? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does Mary move her family to Northwood?

Read (10 minutes):

Read Aloud: Chapter 2, pages 29–35

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How has the other Wes Moore's new neighborhood impacted him? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is significant about the choice Mary made to move her family to a new neighborhood?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Would Wes Moore argue that the other Wes Moore's move to Northwood impacted him positively or negatively? 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. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Chapter 2, pages 35–45

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - How does the author's home life differ from the other Wes Moore's home life?
 - How do the author's new surroundings differ from those of the other Wes Moore?
 - To what extent did each Wes Moore have control over his life circumstances?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the author's argument about how neighborhoods impact opportunities for youth? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*: Chapters 3–4 (pages 46–84).

Seminar 5: Whole Class Book

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars evaluate the author’s argument about how neighborhoods, housing projects, and schools impact opportunities for the youth. Scholars discuss the author’s message about community values.

Seminar 5:

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates: Chapters 3–4 (pages 46–84)

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

- Review the big ideas from last night’s reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: Based on the reading so far, how are the childhood experiences of the two Wes Moores similar and different? Then, build excitement for today’s close reading and discussion.

Close Read 1 — 15 minutes

Close Read (10 minutes):

- **Play Audiobook (01:43:36–01:53:27):** Chapter 3, pages 46–50

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How well does Wes fit into his community in the Bronx? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: In what ways is life in the Bronx different from, and similar to, life in Baltimore?

Discuss 1 — 10 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions from Chapter 3 as a whole class:
 - In what ways did the different neighborhoods of Baltimore (Murphy Apartments, Cherry Hill, Northwood) provide different experiences and opportunities to their residents? How do these experiences compare to those offered in the Bronx?
 - What does Riverdale represent for Wes’s mother, Wes, and other residents of the Bronx?
 - What does Wes’s interaction with Paris show the reader about community values in the Bronx?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- At the age of 14, Tony already feels that his life has “passed the point of no return” and he is destined to be involved in gang and drug activity (page 27). Would the author agree that this is true? 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. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Close Read 2 — 15 minutes

Close Read (8 minutes):

- **Play Audiobook (02:34:55–02:42:53):** Chapter 4, pages 75–78

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the significance of hip-hop music in Wes’s life? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Throughout Chapter 4, we see Wes face several conflicts. How do these conflicts contribute to his own internal struggles?

Discuss 2 — 15 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions based on Chapters 3 and 4 in pairs: How does Wes Moore characterize the opportunities available to residents of various neighborhoods? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - What do Baltimore County and the Dundee Village community represent for residents of Baltimore?
 - What does the other Wes's interaction with the kid wearing the headset show the reader about his community?
 - What racial or cultural tensions exist at Riverdale? How are Wes and his classmates affected by these tensions?
 - How is the author's relationships with his siblings different from the relationship between the other Wes Moore and his brother?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How did the other Wes's community influence his decision to enter the drug business? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*: Chapter 5 (pages 85–107).

Seminar 6: Whole Class Book

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars closely examine the author’s argument about adapting to change in order to draw conclusions about how change affected both Wes Moores. Scholars draw conclusions about the conflicts both Moores face and the impact of their choices.

Seminar 6:

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates: Chapter 5 (pages 85–107)

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

- Review the big ideas from last night’s reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: How did the other Wes Moore’s community affect his decision to join the drug business? Then, build excitement for today’s close reading and discussion.

Close Read 1 — 15 minutes

Close Read (5 minutes):

- Read Aloud: Chapter 5, pages 94–97

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What sacrifices does Wes’s family make for him to attend military school? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: To what extent is Wes given opportunities the other Wes would never have?

Discuss 1 — 10 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: In what ways are the other Wes’s new friends bad influences on him? In what ways is Wes’s changing behavior a result of his own actions? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - How do the Wes Moores’ experiences with unfamiliar surroundings differ?

- What does the author argue about the importance of education?
- How does Wes Moore develop his argument that community is a defining factor in influencing the youth?
- What argument would the author make about the impact of parenting on one's success?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What is the author's message about community values? 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. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Close Read 2 — 15 minutes

Close Read (5 minutes):

- **Read Aloud:** Chapter 5, pages 97–101

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What does the other Wes's point of view on Alicia's pregnancy reveal about his character and maturity? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does Tony's reaction to Wes's news suggest about Wes's family?

Discuss 2 — 15 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What are the conflicts in Wes's life at this point in the text? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - How are these conflicts different from the conflicts the other Wes Moore is facing?
 - How does the author characterize the ways in which each Wes Moore handles these conflicts?
 - To what extent do the Wes Moores interact with their mothers in similar or different ways?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How does the author develop his argument that communities shape the lives of youth? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*: Chapters 6–7 (pages 108–145).

Seminar 7: Whole Class Book

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars describe Wes's development and understand that strong relationships are at the root of his growth. Additionally, they discuss how the people around the other Wes impact his choices and identity, as well as how his crime impacts others.

Seminar 7:

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates: Chapters 6–7 (pages 108–145)

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

- Review the big ideas from last night's reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: Why is Chapter 6 titled "Hunted"? Then, build excitement for today's close reading and discussion.

Close Read 1 — 15 minutes

Close Read (6 minutes):

- **Play Audiobook (03:57:58–04:03:12)**: Chapter 6, pages 114–117

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How has Wes (the author) transformed? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Based on Wes's transformation, what is Moore's message about the power of relationships?

Discuss 1 — 10 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How are the people around Wes (the author) affected by his transformation? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - What does the conversation between Wes and his Uncle Howard show the reader?
 - What values do students at Valley Forge learn? How are these values different from the values Wes learned in the Bronx?
 - To what extent is Wes sheltered or protected from the harsh realities of life while at Valley Forge?
 - Based on the text, why does Wes choose to risk selling drugs to someone he thinks might be a police officer?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Would the author agree that he needed male mentors in his life? Why or why not? 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. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Close Read 2 — 15 minutes

Close Read (5 minutes):

- **Play Audiobook (04:15:35–04:19:30):** Introduction to Part III, pages 125–127

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does the author feel about the other Wes Moore’s responses in their conversation about expectations? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Wes says, “It’s easy to lose control when you were never looking for it in the first place” (page 127). What does this statement reveal about the author’s perspective on personal responsibility?

Discuss 2 — 15 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does literature impact Wes’s life choices and experiences? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - How does the end of Chapter 7 give deeper meaning to the conversation between the Wes Moores on pages 126–127?

- Why does the sentence, “The Army was living the democratic ideal ahead of the rest of America” especially resonate with Wes (page 131)?
- What does the story behind the other Wes Moore’s tattoo show the reader about his identity?
- To what extent is the other Wes Moore sheltered from the harsh realities of life while at the Job Corps? What does it reveal about what he desires in life?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Scholars respond to the following question in no more than 200 words:

- How have other people impacted the successes and failures of both Wes Moores? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*: Chapter 8, Epilogue, and Afterword (pages 146–183).

Seminar 8: Whole Class Book

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars compare and contrast coming of age in America with coming of age in South Africa to determine the author’s message about what it means to be a man. Additionally, scholars understand the author’s argument about a person’s control over their fate by examining his experiences and achievements as an adult, after the other Wes Moore was sent to prison.

Seminar 8:

***The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates: Chapter 8, Epilogue, and Afterword* (pages 146–183)**

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

- Review the big ideas from last night’s reading by having scholars quickly discuss the following question: Based on what you have read, to what extent is the other Wes Moore’s punishment justified? Then, build excitement for today’s close reading and discussion.

Close Read 1 — 15 minutes

Close Read (5 minutes):

- **Read Aloud:** Chapter 8, pages 155–157

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why does the author choose to tell the story of the jewelry store robbery and murder in the final chapter, as opposed to telling this story at the beginning of the book? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does the author mean when he says, “Finally, he could see his future”? (page 157).

Discuss 1 — 10 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: According to Wes, how does the way young men are perceived in the Xhosa tribe differ from how young men are perceived in America’s inner-city communities? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is the significance of Moore ending the chapter by saying, “I realized the journey I took was never mine alone” (page 171)? Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- In what ways have both Wes Moores sought manhood? 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. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their own work moving forward.

Close Read 2 — 15 minutes

Close Read (6 minutes):

- **Read Aloud:** Epilogue, pages 174–180

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How has the author developed as a person over the course of his life? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is the author’s tone as he describes the outcomes of the other Wes’s family and friends? Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

Discuss 2 — 15 minutes

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question, based on the Epilogue and Afterword in pairs: Why does the author believe his life turned out so differently from the other Wes Moore’s life? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- Scholars discuss the following questions as a whole class:
 - Who does the author feel is responsible for the well-being of young people?
 - At the end of the Afterword, the author quotes Sir William Ernest Henley, who said, “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul” (page 183). To what extent would both Wes Moores agree with Henley’s words?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Was the author’s success merely the result of “luck” or sneaking in “from the margins,” as he suggests? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

You Did It!

Congratulations! You’ve reached the end of Unit 1: *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates!*

As a result of teaching this unit, you as the teacher, have:

- Built your scholars’ passion for great nonfiction literature by helping them navigate parallel and diverging narratives in *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*.
- Built your scholars’ ability to articulate their understanding of texts both orally and in writing.

Your scholars can:

- Articulate a bullseye main idea, dissect the author’s argument, and explain how the author goes about making his argument.
- Notice interesting language and structures used by an author and explain how these choices support the big idea.
- Write and revise arguments of 200 words to demonstrate their understanding of texts.

Celebrate your scholars’ successes by acknowledging what they can now do as readers as a result of their work over the last several weeks. Invite scholars to share how much they learned while reading *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* and making connections to other texts.

Reflect on your successes and stretches, as well as those of your scholars. Have your scholars grown as readers over the last month? Do you have any readers who are not reading at Level Z? If so, create a plan to target those scholars during the Independent Reading portions of each seminar. Additionally, you must enlist parents to help get scholars over this hump!

Scholars must read at home, as well as in school. Do you have 100% of your scholars reading nightly at home? Make sure at-home reading is happening, and meet with families who are falling short to recommit them to this team effort.

Do you have 100% of your scholars reading fluently? Using all of the tools at their disposal to figure out the meaning of what they are reading?

Do you have 100% doing their literacy homework? You must insist that 100% of scholars complete their homework nightly.

Going into the next unit, make specific reading goals for yourself. Set a percentage goal for how many scholars you will move in the next 15 days. Set a goal for scholars who are not reading at home. Who will you get to consistently read at home? Set a goal for moving any scholars stuck below level Z. Why are they stuck? Do they read fluently? Do they understand what they're reading? Do they understand the big idea? How will you partner with parents to support their growth?

If you are having trouble meeting your goals, do not wait until you have NOT succeeded. Consult your colleagues. Consult your leaders. ASK FOR HELP so you can meet your goals!