

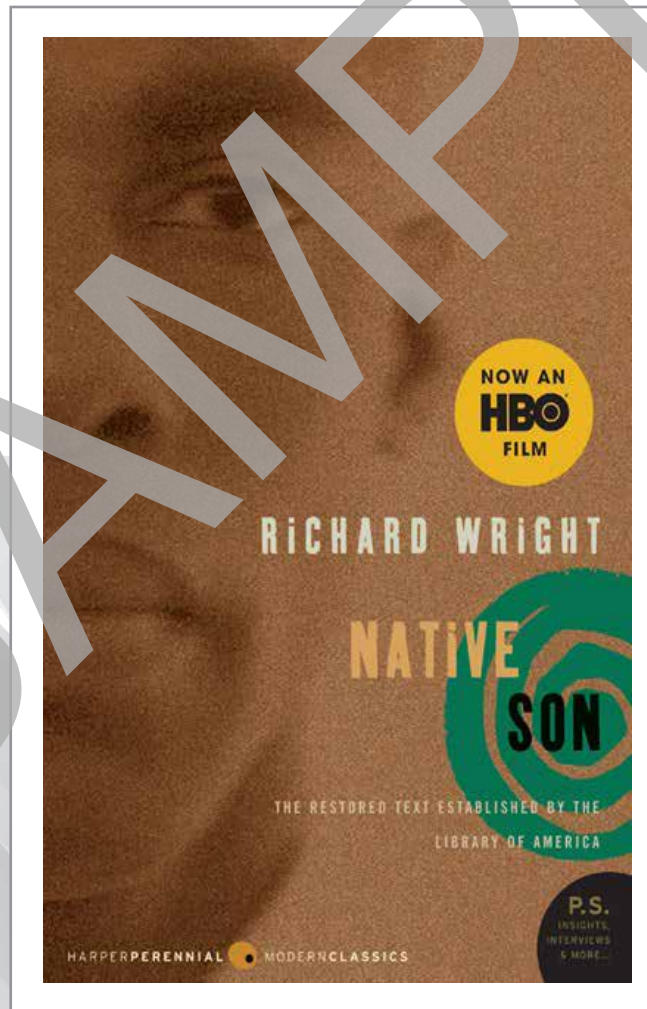


STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 9-12

# Native Son

Richard Wright



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

# Native Son

Richard Wright

## STUDENT PACKET

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Write a brief answer to each study question as you read the novel at home or in class. Use the questions for review before group discussions and before your novel test.

\* = thought question, no right or wrong answer

\*\* = prediction, no right or wrong answer

**Book One, pages 1-50**

1. Write down your first impressions of Bigger and his family.
2. According to Bigger's mother, why has Bigger taken a job?
3. Why is Bigger afraid to rob Mr. Blum's store?
4. What would Bigger like to be? Why hasn't he gone into that career?
5. Find two examples of Bigger's capacity for violence.
6. Bigger goes to the movies. What is the contrast between the newsreel and the movie?
- \*7. Why do you think Bigger enjoys "playing white" with Gus?
- \*\*8. How will Bigger get along with Mary? Will he tell her that he already saw her in the newsreel?

**Book One, pages 51-108**

1. Why does Bigger find himself staring at Mrs. Dalton?
2. When Mr. Dalton hires Bigger as chauffeur, does he know that Bigger has been in trouble with the law?
3. How does Mary embarrass Bigger when she first meets him?
4. What does Peggy show Bigger how to do?
5. Why doesn't Bigger drive Mary where Mr. Dalton originally told him he would be taking her?
6. How does Bigger kill Mary and dispose of the body?
- \*7. Why does Bigger kill Mary? Why doesn't he just tell Mrs. Dalton the truth about why he is in Mary's room?
- \*\*8. How will Mary's death be uncovered? Will Bigger be a suspect?

**Book Two, pages 109-160**

1. Why does Bigger throw away the purse but keep the Communist pamphlets?
2. How does Buddy know that Bigger is in some kind of trouble?
3. When do the Daltons start to worry about Mary?
4. How does Bigger set up Jan as a suspect?
5. Who is Bessie? What is she like?
6. What does Bessie want Bigger to tell her?
- \*7. How does Bigger feel about having murdered Mary? What does it mean, "He had murdered and had created a new life for himself. It was something that was all his own..."?
- \*\*8. How will Bessie react when she finds out that Bigger has murdered Mary?

**Book Two, pages 161-210**

1. What money-making scheme does Bigger come up with?
2. Who is Mr. Britten and why does he call Bigger "comrade"?
3. Jan is brought to the Dalton's house for questioning. How does his story differ from Bigger's?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Native Son*  
 Activity #6: **Characterization**  
 Use After Reading

Bigger Peggy Mrs. Dalton	Bessie Max preacher	Mary Jan Buckley	Gus Mrs. Thomas Mr. Dalton
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**Directions:** How **powerful or weak** and **good or bad** are the characters listed in the box above? Write the characters' names on the grid wherever you feel each one belongs. More than one name may be in a square. Discuss your placements in a small group.

	<b>very powerful</b>	<b>powerful</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>weak</b>	<b>very weak</b>
<b>very bad</b>					
<b>bad</b>					
<b>neutral</b>					
<b>good</b>					
<b>very good</b>					

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** In a small group, talk about Bigger's relationships with the following people: Mrs. Thomas, Max, Jan, Bessie. Act out some short scenes from the story that show how Bigger got along with each of the other four characters.

Then label each blank spoke below with a brief description of the relationship.

