



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

FENCES

BY AUGUST WILSON



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Written by Sondra Abel

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-reading**Research****Objective:** Researching the author and writing a eulogy**Activity**

August Wilson was an accomplished playwright, poet, and author. He was born on April 27, 1945 as Frederick August Kittel. Wilson died on October 2, 2005 from liver cancer.

Write a eulogy to remember the life of this famous playwright. A eulogy is written in a complimentary tone to celebrate the life of a person. It often takes the form of a poem. An obituary is a brief notice of someone's death and usually includes only biographical information. While you will be using the information that would be contained in an obituary, be sure that you write a eulogy.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Research

Objective: Researching the author of the *Introduction*

Activity

While an author writes his or her own work of literature, others may contribute by writing an introduction to the piece. Introductions serve many purposes: highlight the achievements of the author, discuss motifs in the work, or give further insight. The introduction to *Fences* was written by Lloyd Richards, who also directed the play. Answer the following questions below about who this man was.

1. What is Richards ethnicity?
2. In what country and year was he born?
3. How did his father's death affect the family?
4. What happened to Lloyd's mother? What did he do?
5. Describe Richards' educational background.
6. Richards aspired to become an actor. What was the prospect of working in the theatre like for African-American actors like during this time?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Theatre

Objective: Creating a playbill

Activity

A playbill is a poster that advertises a theatrical act. Create a colorful, eye-catching playbill for the play. Provide a brief statement or two about the play without giving too much of the plot away or provide a quote from a reputable source. Be sure to provide the names of the famous cast and important crewmembers, the date, and the location.

Your playbill should be creative. You may use hand-drawn or computer-generated images or clippings from newspapers or magazines if you are not artistically inclined.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act One, Scene One**Characterization****Objective:** Identifying with the main character**Activity**

Troy Maxson and his best friend, Bono, are garbage collectors. Clues about Troy's feelings regarding his job are present in this scene, and greater details are provided later in the play. Imagine that this is your job. Write a journal entry about a typical day you might experience.

Be sure to include the following in your entry:

- Describe how the job affects your senses.
- Discuss how you feel about this type of work.
- Why do you do this job?
- What other alternatives do you have? (Keep in mind Troy's race, education level, and societal restrictions during this time.)

Your entry should be at least one page long.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act One, Scene Two

Inference

Objective:

Activity

The play is titled *Fences*. In a previous activity, you were asked to analyze how the title might affect characters or motifs in the story. In the previous scene, Troy wanted his son, Cory, to help him build a fence. At the beginning of this scene, Rose sings a religious song about one:

ROSE: (*sings*) Jesus, be a fence all around me every day
 Jesus, I want you to protect me as I travel on my way.
 Jesus, be a fence all around me every day.

(Troy enters from the house)

ROSE: (*continued*): Jesus, I want you to protect me as I travel on my way.

Rose uses the word fence metaphorically in her religious song to discuss protection. Although this is only the second scene of the first act, make at least five hypotheses as to what Rose might need protection from. Consider her status in society as an African-American wife and mother and the relationships she has with family members.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act One, Scene Three**Applying “Fences” to Life****Objective:** Spending money wisely**Activity**

Troy and Cory have a debate about whether to buy a new television or not. Cory believes his father should just spend the \$200 on the television. Troy, however, believes the money would be better spent on repairing the roof.

TROY: While you thinking about a TV, I got to be thinking about the roof...and whatever else go wrong around here. Now if you had two hundred dollars, what would you do...fix the roof or buy a TV?

CORY: I'd buy a TV. Then when the roof started to leak...when it needed fixing...I'd fix it.

TROY: Where you gonna get the money from? You done spent it for a TV. You gonna sit up and watch the water run all over your brand new TV.

Imagine that you are Cory, and Troy has given you \$200. Troy has allowed you to make the financial decision to either buy the television you want or to hire someone to repair the roof. Which decision would you make and why? Write a brief paragraph explaining your decision. Remember, you currently have only \$200 but you want to get both objects. If you chose to buy the television, how will you repair the roof when it leaks? If you chose to repair the roof, how will you buy your television?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act One, Scene Four**Characterization****Objective:** Using quotes to explain character traits**Activity**

While Rose is not the main character, she takes a central role in the play. She has a strong relationship with every character in the play. As Troy's wife and Cory's mother, she is often trapped in the middle of many scenarios.

Examine the following quotes and give a brief explanation as to what they say about Rose's character.

1. Man, hush your mouth. I ain't no dog...talk about "come when you call me."
2. You can hand yours [money] over here too, Troy.
3. Now, that's the last I wanna hear about that. I don't wanna hear nothing else about Gabe and Miss Pearl.
4. And next week...when that recruiter come from that school...I want you to sign that paper and go on and let Cory play football. Than that'll be the last I have to hear about that.
5. BONO: Rose'll keep you straight. You get off the track, she'll straighten you up.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act Two, Scene One**Speech****Objective:** Giving an oral presentation**Activity**

Cory and Troy routinely fight about Cory's involvement with football. Cory refuses to quit the team, which creates static in the family.

Break into groups and examine the list below. Prepare an oral presentation on how sports participation affects one of the following:

- self-esteem
- academic achievement
- friendship
- drug use
- responsibility and time management
- sacrifice physical and emotional health
- employment

Make a Power Point presentation, poster, or collage to use as a visual aid during your oral presentation. Your presentation should be at least two minutes long. You may choose to do some research by using the library, the Internet, or both to support your ideas.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act Two, Scene Two**Summarizing****Objective:** Writing an inferred synopsis**Activity**

In the previous scene, Troy reveals his adulterous activities to Rose. She becomes angry upon hearing the news and tries to walk away from Troy. As she tries to leave, he grabs her arm. Cory witnesses his mother's struggle and comes to her aid by hitting Troy.

The next scene is six months later, and Troy and Rose haven't spoken for months. What do you think has happened in this time?

Write a one-page synopsis of what has happened between the following characters:

- Cory and Rose
- Troy and Rose
- Troy and Cory
- Troy and Alberta
- Troy and Bono