

**Summer Reading Expectations:**

- a) This summer, all students entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade need to read *Salvage the Bones*, by Jesmyn Ward. It's a novel about an African American family living through Hurricane Katrina. Here's how the National Book Foundation describes it: "A hurricane is building over the Gulf of Mexico, threatening the coastal

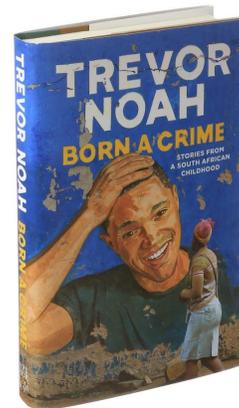


town of Bois Sauvage, Mississippi, and Esch's father is growing concerned. A hard drinker largely absent, he doesn't show interest in much else. Esch and her three brothers are stocking food, but there isn't much to save. Lately, Esch can't keep down what food she gets; she's fifteen and pregnant. Her brother Skeetah is sneaking scraps for his prized pit bull's new litter, dying one by one in the dirt. Meanwhile, brothers Randall and Junior try to stake their claim in a family long on child's play and short on parenting."

- b) In addition, all students must write a lengthy letter-essay.

The details are on the back. It is due on the first day of school.

- c) If you would like to earn honors credit, you must get also read the honors book, *Born a Crime*, by Trevor Noah. You must read the book and come to school prepared to have a book-group-style conversation with me and other honors-seeking students about the plot and important



themes of the book. If you demonstrate a solid comprehension of the text during this

conversation, and if you are able to speak thoughtfully on the major themes of the book , you can start the year with an A for the course and honors credit for the first semester.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade English Summer Writing Assignment**

- In addition to reading *Salvage the Bones*, students must complete a typed letter essay over the summer that addresses several questions raised by the novel.
- A letter-essay is formatted like a personal letter written to your humanities teacher, but it is meant to be deep and thoughtful like a longer essay for school.
- The letter needs to be at least three pages long. Make sure to include each of the three parts.
- This assignment is due on the first day of school, in your teacher's bin.

**Dear Humanities Teacher,**

#### **Part 1: Text-to-Self Connection (at least 1 page)**

- Which passage in the book did you find most powerful? Why?
- Answer in at least two paragraphs.
- In the first paragraph, describe in detail the passage in the story that you connected to most. Include at least one quote from this passage.
- In the second paragraph, describe in detail why you found this passage so powerful.

#### **Part 2: Character Change (at least 1 page)**

- How does Esch change over the course of this book?
- Describe one specific way that she changes during the course of the story.
- Find a scene from the beginning, middle, and end of the book that shows this change.
- Describe each scene and include a quote from each one. Make sure you explain how Esch is changing in each scene.

#### **Part 3: Reflecting on a Theme (at least 1 page)**

- What are you taking away from this book in terms of its larger morals or lessons?
- Pick one and only one of the following themes: motherhood, nature, poverty/survival.
- Reflect on just one of these themes and what you think the book suggests about this theme.
- Include at least a few quotes and refer to at least a few scenes from the book in which this theme comes up.

Sincerely,

[your name]