

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

Fences Express-Thanks-for-Yet-Another-Bonus-Opportunity Assignment

Directions: Read August Wilson’s *Fences* (pages 1391-1442). Respond to the following tasks and questions in a clearly organized way, and provide specific quotations from the text as evidence to support your ideas.

- Note the setting details through the play’s nine scenes (*in stage directions and dialogue*). When and in what ways does the setting transform? Analyze how the change in setting relates to the change in the tone of the play and the attitude/emotions of the characters.

	setting transformation	change in tone/attitude
scenes from Act 1		
scenes from Act 2		

- Construct a chronological biography of Troy Maxson and a timeline for his life. To whom does Troy tell about his past, at what pivotal points in the play does he recount his history, and for what reasons? Provide quotations as support.



- Discuss Troy’s relationships with other characters, focusing on the conflicts and connections that make these relationships complex. Provide quotations as support.

	Conflict(s)	Connection(s)
Rose		
Bono		
Lyons		
Gabriel		

- Define the conflicts and connections between Cory and Troy specifically, showing how they develop. In what ways do they resemble those between Troy and his own father? Consider the cycle that this play comments upon through the father-son relationship.

	Conflict(s)	Connection(s)
Cory		
Troy’s father		

- Explore the various meanings of the title, on its literal and figurative levels. Describe the literal fence Troy is building, including its supposed purposes and Troy’s reasons for constructing it. On the figurative level, what obstacles has Troy faced and overcome? How have Troy’s triumphs over various fences proved ironic, bringing him grief rather than happiness?

literal fence	purposes	reasons
figurative fences	obstacles	ironic triumphs

- What universal themes are conveyed within what seems—on the surface—to be the restricted, specific milieu of African-American urban life in the late fifties? What does this text teach us about the human condition? Compose at least two theme statements (following the prescribed format) and provide supporting evidence.