

## Honors English 300

### Summer Assignment

*Hello everyone!* To adequately prepare you for Honors English 300, you have a two part summer reading assignment. Part I is an assigned list of IXL skills, and Part II is a summer reading assignment. Please read below for more details.

**Part I: IXL** Attain at least an 80 Smart Score on the following IXL Skills:

- QBS Identify and correct errors with subject-verb agreement
- PZC Choose punctuation to avoid fragments and run-ons
- B7T Determine the main idea of a passage
- 9B6 Which text is most formal?
- 9VF Compare passages for subjective and objective tone
- WF9 Identify the narrative point of view
- YS9 Interpret the figure of speech
- VE5 Order topics from broadest to narrowest
- 88X Organize information by main idea
- HE6 Choose the topic sentence that best captures the main idea
- Q8K Identify thesis statements
- YJY Use the correct frequently confused word

**Part II: Independent Reading and Writing:** *Fences* by August Wilson

For your summer reading assignment, you will be reading the play *Fences* by August Wilson. *Fences* is a powerful and emotionally charged drama set in 1950s Pittsburgh, centering on Troy Maxson, a former baseball player turned sanitation worker. As a Black man navigating a racially segregated America, Troy struggles with bitterness over missed opportunities and wrestles with the responsibilities of fatherhood, marriage, and manhood. Through tense family dynamics and poetic dialogue, *Fences* explores themes of dreams deferred, generational conflict, and the invisible barriers that shape lives. August Wilson crafts a deeply human story that resonates with both personal and cultural significance.

As you read, answer the questions on the following pages. This study guide will be collected and graded as a Writing Assignment for Quarter 1. **It is due on the first day of class.** Late submissions will not be accepted.

Note: You will need to obtain a copy of the play from the school library, public library, or on your own.

**ONLY HANDWRITTEN SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

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If you have any questions over the summer, please feel free to contact Mrs. Bowden at:  
NBowden@rutherfordschools.org

## Act One - Scene One

Wilson writes that together “with his blackness, [Troy’s] largeness informs his sensibilities and the choices he has made in his life.” What aspects of your identity must inform your “sensibilities” and your choices - your age, your race, your beliefs, your financial background, something else? Essentially: Why are you, you?

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Lyons defends himself against his father’s accusations that he is lazy by stating, “I know I got to eat. But I got to live too. I need something that gonna help me get out of the bed in the morning. Make me feel like I belong in the world.” His statement reflects a basic moral dilemma: the importance of financial security versus the importance of happiness. What’s more important? Is it possible to choose between the two? Is there a time to make a sacrifice and just “do the job” even if it’s not the right one for you?

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## Act One - Scene Two

If it weren't for the money Gabe got from the government for his war wound, Troy would not have been able to buy a house. It upsets Troy to realize that he is 53 and wouldn't have a home if not for that money. Write out Troy's thoughts (in first person) as if he were to be able to really state what he was thinking instead of just going to listen to a ball game.

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## Act One - Scene Three

Troy is angry at Cory for having gone to football practice before doing his chores, yet Troy himself has avoided working on the fence for weeks. Does this seem unfair to you, or is this something a parent has the right to do? Explain.

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When Troy insists that Cory take back his after-school job instead of playing football, Cory knows that a potential college scholarship is at stake. What do you think motivates Troy to deny his son this chance? Explain his perspectives.

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Rose tells Troy that times have changed since Troy was Cory's age. Assume that at some point, you will be responsible for a child. How do you think times will have changed between now and the time when your child is your current age? List at least 5 things you think will be different by then. Don't just focus on "things." Think about civil rights, the environment, politics, and science.

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### **Act One - Scene Four**

When Lyons invites Troy to listen to Lyons' band play jazz, Troy says, "I don't like that music. All that noise." Do your parents enjoy the music you listen to now, or prefer music from their own youths? Answer and explain why you think they like what they do.

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When Cory gets "to the point where he wanna disobey me," Troy says, "then it's time for him to move on." Troy expects Cory to live by his rules while he lives in Troy's house. Make a list of 5 rules that you would have if you ran a household that had a teenager. Defend each rule with at least one reason why it should be a policy.

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Troy has spoken to Cory's coach and gotten Cory removed from the team. At this point, what would you do if you were Cory? Be serious. I know your first instinct is something big/over the top. But be serious. What would you do?

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## Act Two - Scene One

Bono says, "Some people build fences to keep people out ... and other people build fences to keep people in." If you were to build a fence at this point in your life, which kind would you build? Explain.

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Pretend you are Rose and have just learned that your husband has fathered a child by another woman and he also wants to continue seeing her. Consider the time period and Rose's financial situation. Write a journal entry as if you are Rose and looking at what possible options you might have.

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Troy compares his married and family life to a baseball game. If you were to compare your life to a game, what would it be? It doesn't have to just be a sport - video games, board games, party games also can work.

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## Act Two - Scene Two

Troy, who is illiterate, thought he was signing a form that released Gabe from jail, but he actually signed a form to have Gabe committed. Make a list of at least 5 problems you would face on a daily basis if you could not read or write.

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When Troy loses Alberta, he becomes determined to build the fence around his yard to keep Death from sneaking up on him again. How do you feel as Troy's world unravels? Do you sympathize with him or think justice is being served? Explain

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## Act Two - Scene Three

For the first time, Troy has a daughter. From what you know of Troy's character and the way Troy has raised and treats his sons, how do you think he will raise and treat his daughter? Why?

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**Act Two - Scene Four**

As Cory, write a journal entry in which you explain why you found yourself unable to swing the bat.

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**Act Two - Scene Five**

When Cory refuses to go to Troy’s funeral, Rose tells him, “You're just like [Troy]. You got him in your good ... You Troy Maxon all over again.” What is it about Cory’s behavior that reminds Rose of Troy?

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How do you feel about the way the play ends? Do you think it’s a fitting ending? An unsatisfying one? Why? If you think it was unsatisfying, what would have made it better? What should have happened?

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