

Wrongful Conviction in Non-Fiction

Day 1-2=

You are going to read about a real life case of the wrongful conviction of the Scottsboro boys (definition and examples of [wrongful conviction here](#)) that inspired Harper Lee to write *To Kill a Mockingbird*. To better understand that book and why it's important, Britannica states that "To Kill a Mockingbird is both a young girl's coming-of-age story and a darker drama about the roots and consequences of racism and prejudice, probing how good and evil can coexist within a single community or individual."

Watch the videos linked below to get a better understanding of the Scottsboro Boys and their case in Scottsboro, Alabama.

1. [The Scottsboro Boys \(Emory University Youtube\)](#)
2. [Guilty Until Proven Innocent | The Scottsboro Boys Cases \(Mr. Beat Youtube\)](#) (watch to 11:00)

After watching these videos, you will have a little context for the Scottsboro Boys and their wrongful conviction due to false claims of sexual assault by 2 white women in 1931. Next, you will need to read CommonLit to get an even more in-depth understanding of their case and how it connects to racism and injustice in the court system. I provide below an optional article to read, if you are interested in doing more reading on the boys and their case from the ABA.

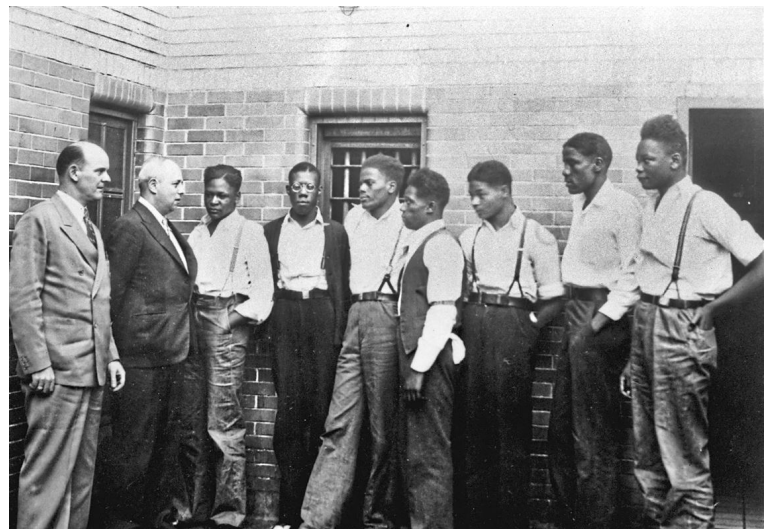
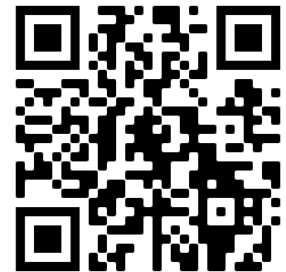
1. [Common Lit: THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS](#)
2. **OPTIONAL:** [Scottsboro: The Right to Counsel \(ABA Division for Public Education\)](#)

After reading the article, I want you to read a little poetry from the time period that reflects not only the Scottsboro Boys case in 1931 but also reflects the feelings of Black people and the culture that they were surrounded by from the Great Depression to the Civil Rights Movement.

1. [Langston Hughes and a few of his poems on Scottsboro \(PBS\)](#)
2. ["We Wear the Mask" By Paul Laurence Dunbar \(Poetry Foundation\)](#)
3. ["Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou \(Poetry Foundation\)](#)

After completing all of the above, your assignment is to complete a Google Form on the Scottsboro Boys and their case. It will pull heavily from the CommonLit article!

****Google Form Activity:** <https://forms.gle/6qezyJCs4hg2GuGR9>



Day 2-3=

For today's assignment, you will be **researching one of three incidents of wrongful conviction that have occurred in the United States since the Scottsboro Boys in 1931**. Obviously, there have been more than just 3 cases of wrongful conviction; however, I wanted to pick three that were similar in court proceedings and outcomes to the Scottsboro Boys (as well as similar to Tom Robinson's case in *To Kill a Mockingbird*).

You will pick **one** case of wrongful conviction and click through the links to read articles and watch videos that I provided to get an idea of what happened in the case and who was involved. THEN, **you** will start working on a **one-pager grade** based on the research that you will do for that case. I have provided samples for the assignment on the last page of this Doc. **45-60 minutes of class will be research**. The class will have a big discussion of what you learned through your research!

The three cases that you have to choose from are the [Wilmington 10](#) (1971, a group of activists charged with arson and conspiracy after protesting), the [Angola 3](#) (1972, imprisoned men who were accused of murdering a prison guard), and the [Central Park 5](#) (1989, group of 5 teenagers charged with sexual assault and attempted murder of jogger in NYC).

Choose one of the cases and click the name of the group; I have added the link to the articles that I collected for you to read for each of the cases with the group name.

****DIRECTIONS AND RUBRIC****:

On your page, **you must include**...(the point value for each item is in parentheses)

- (5 points) The **name** of the group that you chose from the THREE THAT I GAVE (appropriately capitalized)
- (10 points) Write a **1-2 sentence connection** between the Scottsboro Boys and your chosen case.
- (20 points) A **timeline that includes at least 4 dates** to show when the events of each case took place (**and 2 dates should be of the alleged/supposed crime(s) and the date of first trial**)
- (10 points) **List of the people, their ages, and brief "involvement"** (what they did) in the alleged/supposed crime that was committed
- (15 points) **2 drawn and colored symbols** (pictures that have a deeper meaning) that shows the case, the defendants (people that have charges against them), or the public opinion of the case
- (10 points) **List the final verdict** of the case OR a wrap-up **"Where are they now?"** for the men involved if they're still alive
- (10 points) **List the sources that you used for research** somewhere on your paper (at least 2 sources)
- (15 points) Include the **sheet of paper or Google Document** where you took notes of your research for this project

While there is no specific layout you are required to use for this project, I should be able to clearly identify the required components of this project.

Day 3-4=

Next up for this assignment, **you will FINISH the one-pager activity** on the research for the group that you chose (either Wilmington 10, Angola 3, or the Central Park 5).

After finishing the one-pager, **you will be presenting your findings** that you researched. Please make sure that you actually complete the research and work like you are supposed to! :)

Samples of One-Pagers for Wrongful Conviction Non-Fiction activity:

The Shattered Sky

By Bristol Lewis

RESTART

GORDON KORMAN
FORGIVENESS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

★★★★★

I rate this book a solid 5 because the reason behind this is because the book had great characters and the little details really made this book interesting. This book also has a lot of meaning. The reason this book is missing a star is because the genre of this book isn't really my favorite.

"I'm a blank, I'm like a computer with its hard drive wiped clean"

This quote clearly shows that Chase has a great example of a simile. Chase pg 3 in Restart.

"I like the NEW Chase"

-Shoshanna pg 135

I really like this quote because it shows that Shoshanna is forgiving Chase for his wrongdoing. It's a great example of improvement. Considering Shoshanna hated Chase before.

forgiveness = the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven. new beginnings - the start of something new or different.

"You have the chance to rebuild yourself... to make a completely fresh start!" - says the principal

I like this quote because it shows that Chase has a new beginning or chance to start something new, or be the old salty, mean Chase.

WITH FORGIVENESS COMES A NEW BEGINNING

From this book, I learned and took away an amazing message that taught me something that's very important. I learned that people can change. I say that because in the story, the main character, Chase, was a big, mean bully, but as the book went on, he became a approachable, nice boy.

"I drew these holding hands for forgiveness"

"I love how Chase has turned out to be a nice guy!" - Brendan pg 243

"This quote supports my theme because it shows that Brendan realizes that Chase can be a nice guy and that shows forgiveness."

The War On Drugs and Mass Incarceration

"Mass incarceration is a massive system of racial and social control. It is the process by which people - mostly people of color..."

"More black men are disenfranchised today as a result of mass incarceration..."

"...today there are more African Americans under conventional control in prison or jail..."

"Jim Crow Laws tried to deny to black citizens"

"Suddenly there was a dramatic increase in incarceration rates in the United States, more than a 600 percent increase in incarceration from the mid-1960s until the year 2000."

FACTS

• You can use...

MY NAME IS TRUTH

by Ann Turner

Theme: Truth

"I believe that if Rosa Parks hadn't been brave, we wouldn't have segregation."

Quotes: "She was a great with a quiet dignity despite all the cruelty she faced because of her color and her skin." "And may our dreams of freedom and equal rights for all come true."

Overall the story has led me to conclude that everyone is equal and should be equally treated.

RUBY BRIDGES

by Ruby Bridges

Quote 1: "I am brave, even though I may feel weak."

Quote 2: "I am proud of myself!"

"I believe that everyone should be treated equally and with respect."

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Quotes: "She was a great with a quiet dignity despite all the cruelty she faced because of her color and her skin." "And may our dreams of freedom and equal rights for all come true."

Let's GO Back IN TIME...

Slavery first began in 1619, then ended in 1865. Racial segregation ended in 1954.

The civil rights movement of 1964 gave the African-American population legal equality. Same sex marriage was legalized in all 50 states in 2015.

Yet after all of these "life changing" decisions, the government still can't change people's opinions.

Rate of Imprisonment (Women)

Female incarceration is going up, which means more families suffering because of their mother's absence.

WHAT DOES IDENTITY HAVE TO DO WITH INCARCERATION?

So, what can we CONCLUDE?

Racial Discrimination STILL EXISTS!

Listen up Government, you haven't changed anything!

We, the actual people, are the ones making the difference.

AN APPLE FOR HARRIET TUBMAN

by Corinne Tilly Turner

Theme: Freedom

"I believe that if Harriet Tubman hadn't been brave, we wouldn't have freedom."

Quotes: "I am a leader even though I am a slave." "I am a leader even though I am a slave." "I am a leader even though I am a slave."

I BELIEVE

by Henry's Freedom Box

Henry's Freedom Box

"I believe that if Henry hadn't been brave, we wouldn't have freedom."

Quotes: "I believe that if Henry hadn't been brave, we wouldn't have freedom."