



Born a Crime Reading/Response Assignment

The genre of **memoir** may be one that is new to you - that's great! It's always good to explore new things and see what you can learn from them. So let's talk quickly about **memoir: it's the story of a part of someone's life.**

Unlike a biography, which tends to be more factual and chronological, memoir tends to be more creative and focused on a shorter period of time.

More importantly, memoir distinguishes itself as a genre because the author is usually **reflective** in their writing, providing **insights and lessons** that they've learned through the events in their life, and sometimes asking the reader to evaluate their own life and experiences. Read Born A Crime with this in mind; Trevor Noah is only 36 but has much to tell us about his life growing up in South Africa.

General Directions: Read **ALL** of the questions before you begin reading his memoir so you know what you're looking for. I would even **recommend taking notes (annotating) as you read** (*on paper, on a Google Doc, a Word Doc, on post-its, whatever works for you*). Note-taking is only a suggestion and is not a required part of this assignment. However, if you know what you're looking for as you read, it may be easier to pay attention to the story and the way Noah tells it. These questions are designed to encompass the entire piece, so I'll be looking for evidence that you read the entire book, not just particular chapters to answer these questions.

In September, we will discuss this book as part of our first unit of study on memoir and narrative writing. You will be expected to have a working knowledge of Trevor Noah's story and his writing style. You may type or hand-write your responses - either way, I expect submissions to be in my hands on the first day of school (either on Classroom or a printed, hard-copy).

Part One: Personal Reflection

1. What was the most challenging part of reading Noah's story? Why?

2. What is your favorite chapter of Noah's story? Why?

Part Two: Text Study

1. **"AUTHOR'S CRAFT"** has many definitions. It is "the art of writing" and "the tools and techniques of storytelling". Simply put, "craft" is about the intentional choices an author makes when telling their story. While reading Find **2 examples** (passages) of intentional choices you believe Noah makes in his writing to effectively tell his story. Copy those passages here (citing the page number), then explain your choices, directly referencing the passages you chose.

2. **DICTION**, or **WORD CHOICE**, is simply which words the author intentionally uses and the effect(s) these choices have on the text and the reader; diction is directly tied to **tone, or the author's attitude toward their subject in the piece of writing**. While reading, choose **ONE short passage** that you believe is an example of effective word choice. Copy the passage (citing the page number) and explain how and why the word choice is effective, directly referencing the passage you chose.

3. The **STRUCTURE**, or **the way an author sets up and sequences their story**, is really important and tends to impact our reading and understanding of their message. Write a short reflection that discusses the **structure** that you see Trevor Noah using in his memoir: Did you like/dislike his structure? Why does it work? Why does it make it challenging? Be specific in your references to the text and provide page number(s) if you directly quote his work.

4. One of the elements of memoir that makes it different than the genre of biography is the **AUTHOR'S REFLECTION**. Identify one place in the text where Trevor Noah **reflects on his experiences** - note where this passage is (or copy the passage here, citing the page number). What does he tell you, the reader, in this passage? Is this section written differently than other parts of the story? What do you believe he wants you to take away from that section/his story?