

Model

CRITERIA SHEET: RESEARCH PAPER ENGLISH 10H

STANDARDS MET: E1a, E1b, E1c, E2a, E4a, E4b, E5a

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION:

1. You will read a novel with a coming-of-age theme. This means that in each story, a character will have to deal with an issue that forces them to learn a life lesson. (ex: drug abuse, family problems, romantic relationship issues) I will provide a list of choices, or you may find your own.
2. Each student will keep a book journal. You will receive a template for that journal. The completed journal will be handed in on the day the book is due to be read and will count as a quiz grade.
3. You will write a 3-5 page research paper that will explore the following (Thesis should answer these questions):
 - What is the cause of the central conflict in this story?
 - Does this story accurately reflect the effects that this issue can have on a person? In other words, are the main character's experiences in dealing with this problem realistic?
4. In order to answer these 2 questions, you will research the issue (causes, symptoms, effects). You must support your thesis by providing evidence from the novel as well as from the 3-4 additional sources located during the research process. These sources will be cited using MLA Documentation.

SCORING BREAKDOWN 50% of 3rd Quarter grade:

Annotated Bibliography=	25%
Thesis=	10%
Outline=	15%
Final Draft=	50%

****The rough draft will not be graded, but you will peer edit in class. If the rough draft is not completed by the assigned due date, you will lose 10 points from your final grade.*****

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English 10 Honors

21 March 2006

Title

Teenage crime is a life-changing dilemma caused by a number of factors from society. Teen delinquency has overwhelmed the American crime scene as of late and shows no sign of slowing down: "According to the FBI, the number of juveniles arrested for homicide between 1983 and 1992 increased 128 percent, as opposed to the 9 percent increase among the adult population" (Margolis 6). In the novel Monster, by Walter Dean Myers, a young man living in Harlem finds himself wrapped up in the familiar life of teenage crime. The reasons for Steve's actions and the consequences he suffers are a realistic portrayal of teenage crime. ✓ good intro overall

Teenage crime is an extremely common conflict wherever a youth population is present. It dates back all the way to 1786 when twelve-year old Hannah Ocuish murdered six-year-old Eunic Bollis in her backyard (Margolis 16). This recognized problem occurs so frequently due to a variety of causes. A major cause of teen crime is gangs. Joining a youth gang is a dark route that many teenagers choose to take: "Many young people today feel that they need to be a part of a group, to know that there are people who care about them" (Margolis 30). This quote reveals part of the reason why young people insist on joining gangs. Many kids grow up without a strong and supportive home life so they look to their peers for love and a sense of importance. From this source, gangs appear to be a main cause of the issue. In Monster, an obvious cause for 16 year-old Steve Harmon's criminal actions is neglect from his parents, but he is not

an apparent gang member. Steve's drug store robbery was not gang related, but seemed to be more of a result of lack of supervision: "You better chill; he hangs with some bad dudes" (Myers 81). This quote is referring to Steve and the type of people he hangs around with. His bad reputation shows that he is potentially involved with criminal activities and is lacking a supportive family to shelter him from the dangers of streets. Many young people, especially in urban areas, grow up without a mother or father, or just an irresponsible pair of parents. Lacking a stable home life, teenagers easily slip into dangers such as violence, guns, and drugs: "Almost one in every five high school seniors has tried cocaine or crack" (Margolis 34). The astonishing regularity of drug use in teens shows their involvement in harmful and illegal behavior.

✓ good analysis

With drugs and alcohol as standard recreation for many teenagers, violence is also just as common: "Some studies show that 60 and 90 percent of all juvenile crime in our country is drug related" (Margolis 32). The influence of drugs has a harmful effect on all users and can also lead to drug trafficking, resulting in more violence. This is seen in the novel when Steve and his two acquaintances execute the fatal robbery: "King took a hit on some crank we had and then we went in. We started a beef with the dude behind the counter. He came up with a chrome and started shouting and stuff" (Myers 179). This quote explains the situation Steve was involved in. Before the stick-up, Steve's acquaintances took a hit of some "crank," or crystal meth, and proceeded to commit a robbery and a murder. This shows similarity between real teenage crime, and Steve Harmon's experience in the novel Monster.

✓ good topic sent

Another factor adding to the teen crime rate is the easy accessibility of firearms: "In America's schools, it is estimated that as many as one hundred thousand students

carry guns to school on any given day" (Margolis 31). This statistic shows the regularity of gun possession into today's world of teens. When guns are common, more violence and dangerous gang activity is bound to occur. This issue is also obvious in Monster when the young man uses a pistol to murder the drug store clerk: "Anyway, King was trying to get the gun from him and I was going for the money. Then I heard the gun go off. I looked over and saw the guy falling down and King was holding the chrome" (Myers 179). This quote simply proves that a gun was used to commit the murder. Each of the three culprits were young men that had yet to reach legal adulthood, but obtaining a gun did not seem to be a problem. This is another example of how Steve's experience is similar to the reality of teenage crime. ✓

✓ good connection to thesis

An early life of crime for a young teen can have an everlasting effect. Teen years are a time of maturity and influence for many young men and women. When this decisive time of life is tainted with gangs, drugs, and guns a young person will find them self in a world of trouble: "One 15-year-old doing time in the maximum-security unit in Santa Clara County Juvenile hall cut symbols and letters into his own flesh..." (Juvenile Justice). This is an example of the harsh effects crime can have on a teen. Teenagers are supposed to be enjoying their youth; they do not belong in jail. Prison time for young men and women can cause emotional trauma and is shown in Monster when Steve says: "I want to know who I am" (Myers 281). This quote describes the result of teen crime for 16-year-old Steve Harmon. After his time in jail, the brutal life took a toll on him to the point where he doubted himself as a person. He was on trial for a murder, and his mistake ultimately led to his questioning of himself. Also, some teens that get involved with crime, can become more violent than ever: "Late last week, police arrested five

middle-class teens, saying they "murdered Liu for nothing more than a free meal-and a few sick kicks"(Roane 1). This quote shows teenagers taking it too far, and showing no respect for human life. These particular teens maliciously killed an innocent deliveryman because of a life of juvenile delinquency. Teen criminals lack the morals and values of life, resulting in meaningless crimes. The effect crime had on Steve Harmon in Monster compared to the reality of the issue leads me to believe that the novel is a realistic portrayal of teenage crime.

Through Steve's character, Monster is a realistic portrayal of teenage crime in terms of causes and effects of the issue. The main reasons such as availability of guns and drugs, as well as lack of supervision are all displayed in the novel, and play a part in causing the crime Steve is being tried for. In terms of effects, Steve endures the same type of mental and emotional pain that actual victims of teenage crime feel too. Teenage crime is reaching alarming proportions and needs to be limited by controlling firearms, supervising teenagers, and cracking down on drug abuse. Too many young lives have been already taken; this growing problem must be put to an end.

✓
strong conclusion

Works Cited

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- ✓ Myers, Walter Dean. Monster. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1999.
- ✓ Roane, Kit R. "Murder by Takeout." U.S. News & World Report. 18 September 2000.
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