

Characterization in Fences

- A. Morally ambiguous characters – characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good – are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a character from *Fences* and explain how that character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole.

- B. According to critic Northrop Frye, "Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divisive lightning." Write a response in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by the play's tragic figure (Troy Maxson) contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

- C. One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Write a response in which you discuss how a character in a novel or a drama struggles to free himself or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate how Wilson uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the play.