

WHS Book Rationale

Title: Fences

Author: August Wilson

- **Intended Audience**

English 9 Honors and English 9

- **Brief summary and educational significance**

- Set in the 1950's in what is thought to be Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The play explores the life and relationships of the Maxson family. Troy Maxson, though deeply flawed represents the struggle for justice and fair treatment during the 1950's. The play explores the human nature of change and its reluctance to accept and recognize change in ones own life and in society as a whole. *Fences*, brought August Wilson the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1987 for his portrayal of the African- American experience in the twentieth century.

- **Purpose of teaching the work and how it will be used**

- To explore the element of drama, the inner city African-American experience in the 1950's, the family dynamic, colloquial language, the qualities of a modern hero, the Civil Rights Movement, symbolism, themes, and the role of music and the title of the play.

- **Potential problems**

- Language, adultery, child abuse, crime, dysfunctional families, alcohol abuse

- **Addressing potential problems**

- Allows for opportunities to explore the father-son relationship. Discuss and research the changes made since the Civil Rights Movement. Explore the use and appropriateness of language and racial slurs in a modern text.