

## The Hood

### DEFINITION

(n.) Derived from the word “neighborhood”, usually refers to an undesirable area: Gangsters are from the “hood”.

source:  
<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=hood>. All rights reserved.

1) How can “the hood” be described? Underline the adjectives that match the definition. If you can, add your own adjectives to the list.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED	LIVELY	SWEET
RISKY	SAFE	CLEAN
SMALL	COMFORTABLE	ARROGANT
HEALTHY	SILLY	ATTRACTIVE

2) Before the first chapter starts, read the inscription\*. Comment on what the book could be about.



1) Identify which quote belongs to which character.

- Jay (Jayson Murphy) – main character, 16-year-old boy from Newport News, Virginia
- Nic (Nicole Marie Murphy) – Jay's older sister (17 years old)
- MiMi (Ms. Marie Murphy)– Jay & Nic's grandmother
- Riley Palmer – girl from church, preacher's daughter, Jay's friend
- Javon Hockaday – Nic's boyfriend

Look, I know you and your grandma and everybody else think I'm a piece of shit. Ain't no thing to me – my dad told me that before I learnt how to ride a bike. Nic's the first person to look at me like I'm a king.

Cops don't listen to guys like me – and they damn sure don't care about girls like Nic.

Kenny and I never stayed in Richmond. We always passed through there ... on our way to visit Mom. Kenny would give me a ride during some of her visitation days. I didn't want to tell you because you always get so weird when I bring up Mom. I just figured you never wanted to come with us.

Weeellll, they don't necessarily think we're going to Richmond. They might think we're just going to the bookstore to check out a few more books and stuff for Sunday school. And by we, they mainly think me. I'm not allowed to have other people in the car.

Okay, Jayson. First your sister's avoiding me all day, now you're coming home with your face all chopped and screwed. One of you is gonna end up in a ditch somewhere, and I'll be looking dumb, sitting here at this table. Watching your plates get cold.

2) Name three possible character traits of each quoted character.

1) Choose the one figure/movement of African American culture that interests you the most.



"He always finds a way to quote **Jay-Z**, even when preaching about distance formula."



"Expecting someone?" I ask MiMi.

She gives a weak shrug. "Just **President Obama**."

I shake my head as I stand. "He's not the president anymore, Mimi."

"He'll always be my president."



The guys on the court whoop and holler as one of them dunks the ball during a play. "You see that shit?" he bellows, still dangling from the hoop. "Tell me that wasn't a **Lebron** move right there."



"Clock's ticking, Jay," my Math Analysis teacher, Mr. Branch, says to me outside his classroom door, sipping from his **Black Power** coffee mug.

Now, let's get creative!

a) Create a new Instagram biography of your chosen figure/movement.

b) Design an Instagram post (picture + text) from your figure's/movement's perspective on African American Culture.

-> What has your person/movement done for the community?

-> What (more) needs to be done in the future?

1) "Doesn't matter that I'm the guy in here trying to work. My popping melanin makes me the aggressor in every situation." (p. 76)

2) "No worries. I'm used to folks thinking I'm trash. Par for the course when you live in the Ducts." (p. 139)

3) "A part of me figures that's why he got into the business. A big ol' middle finger to the system that gives the side-eye to guys who look like us." (p. 35)

4) "Cops around here are always looking for reasons. Reasons to lay hands on you, reasons to put cuffs on you but for the most trifling things." (p. 49)

5) "This is despite how they want the world to see us. Fatherless. Motherless. No future. No direction." (p. 212)

6) "Last thing I need is hundreds of fake comments on every black chick with braids. You know how some people can't tell us apart." (p. 152)

7) "I hadn't realized Taco Bell had as many clearances as the FBI. But that's what usually happens when you come from my neighborhood, live down the street from a guy like Javon." (p. 40)



## TASKS:

In your notebook:

1. Identify which quote belongs to which character.
2. Describe the situation or event in which the quote was mentioned.
3. Explain what the quote reveals about racism or its impact on the characters.

This reading journal  
belongs to:

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For the next few weeks, your English homework will mainly consist of writing a journal about the book "When You Look Like Us" by Pamela N. Harris.

Your reading journal includes:

- a list of characters (+ bullet point descriptions)
- a vocabulary glossary
- all mandatory and chosen optional tasks

Work on all mandatory tasks (!) and choose at least three optional tasks (???)

CHAPTERS	TASKS	
<b>1-3</b> 	Characterize the protagonist of the novel. (Who is he? Where does he live and go to school? What are his interests?)	
<b>4</b> 	Imagine you are Jay. Create a Snapchat conversation with your best friend Bowie. What would you tell him about your Snapchat conversation with Sterling? How are you feeling?	
<b>5</b> 	Draw a picture of one of the settings (e.g. Jay's room, kitchen, church).	
<b>6</b> 	a) Imagine you are Jay. Write a diary entry after you did not receive the help you hoped for at the police station. <b>or b)</b> Imagine you are a police officer. Write an alternative response to Jay's request for help.	
<b>7-9</b> 	Who does Jay think is responsible for Nicole's disappearance? And why? Give a brief character description.	
<b>10-13</b> 	Write down one title for each of the chapters. Briefly explain your choice.	

CHAPTERS	TASKS	
14-15 	Imagine you are Jay. What would you have told the news reporter about Nic and her disappearance?	
16-18 	Create a news report about Nic's disappearance that MiMi and Jay would have liked.	
19-20 	Choose one of the topics: Kenny's funeral, Jay's talk to Sterling, <b>or</b> Jay and Riley. Write a diary entry from Jay's perspective.	
21-23 	How does Javons' character change in these chapters? Explain the changes from Javons' point of view.	
24-25 	Comment on Javon's response to Jay: "Come on, bruh. Without evidence, they don't listen to guys like us" (p. 293). How is this quote related to the book's title?	
26-28 	Imagine you are Nic. Write a diary entry on your time in captivity.	
29-31 	What does friendship/love/family mean to you? Discuss the topics and your personal response to them.	

## POST-READING TASKS



Choose at least one post reading task and add it to your reading journal.

1. How has the character developed throughout the novel?  
Describe at least three different stages.
2. Continue the story after the epilogue. What could happen next?
3. Write a book review. Would you recommend the book to a friend?
4. Write an email to Pamela N. Harris. Pose at least three questions to the author.
5. Create a quiz about the book. Pose at least 10 multiple choice questions.

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