

## SYNOPSIS

**Introduction:** According to journalist M. S. Handler, Malcolm X displays the gentle, yet powerful qualities that destine him to lead millions of blacks to a "nascent Negro nationalism." Malcolm altered his extreme anti-white stance shortly before his assassination and never actualized his intent to unite American blacks with black Africans.

**Chapter 1, Nightmare** Malcolm Little, son of Reverend Earl and Louise Little, is born May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska, the seventh of ten children. His father, a Baptist clergyman and follower of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, supports an impractical philosophy of segregation and return to African roots. Local agitators and Ku Klux Klansmen force the family to flee. They settle in Milwaukee, then move to a farm outside Lansing, Michigan, where Malcolm attends Pleasant Grove School. Until the age of 6, he enjoys family solidarity and support.

In 1931, racists murder Earl Little, then place his corpse over streetcar tracks to make the death look like a suicide. By 1934, as Louise struggles to support the children, social workers split up the family. Because Malcolm is caught stealing, they place him in the Gohannas' foster home. Louise Little is taken to a mental hospital in Kalamazoo. Malcolm visits his mother until 1952, when she is profoundly insane.

**Chapter 2, Mascot** Malcolm is expelled from school and sent to a detention home in Mason, Michigan. His white foster parents, the Swerlins, help him improve his grades and behavior. In 1940, he leaves home to visit his sister Ella in Roxbury, Massachusetts—his first experience outside the Midwest. In 1941, after a junior high school teacher ridicules his aim to become a lawyer, 15-year-old Malcolm moves in permanently with Ella.

**Chapter 3, Homeboy** Guided by Shorty, a street-wise pal, Malcolm gravitates toward Harlem's ghetto influences. He shines shoes at the Roseland Ballroom and emulates the "cool dudes" of his day.

**Chapter 4, Laura** Malcolm abandons his girlfriend Laura and pursues Sophia, a white woman who owns a convertible. Shortly before the beginning of World War II, he quits his job, moves in with Shorty, and works as a busboy at the Parker House in Boston.

**Chapter 5, Harlemiter** Known as "Red," Malcolm works as a Pullman food distributor on the New York, New Haven, and Hartford railroad. After he grows rude and profane, the management fires him. At 17, he works briefly on the "Silver Meteor" to Miami and at Small's Paradise Club. A vivid underworld scene introduces him to hustling, selling illegal alcohol and marijuana, small-time racketeering, and robbery.

**Chapter 6, Detroit Red** Under the name "Detroit Red," Malcolm's sleazy reputation grows. After he is arrested for pimping and loses his job, he sells marijuana.

**Chapter 7, Hustler** Malcolm arms himself with a .25 auto-

matic and begins robbing and mugging. At the end of World War II, he hustles for a madam, takes drugs, and peddles bootleg whisky. His health declines.

**Chapter 8, Trapped** A feud with West Indian Archie endangers Malcolm's life. High on cocaine at the Onyx Club, he eludes arrest.

**Chapter 9, Caught** Both Shorty and Ella are alarmed at Malcolm's drug addiction. After leaving an expensive stolen watch at a repair shop, Malcolm is arrested for burglary.

**Chapter 10, Satan** In February 1946, 20-year-old Malcolm and his gang end their crime spree. Malcolm begins a sentence of 8-10 years at Charlestown State Prison. Bimbi, a self-schooled inmate, encourages Malcolm to improve himself through correspondence courses. In his third year of prison, Malcolm joins the Nation of Islam, a ten-year-old religious movement founded by Elijah Muhammad. Ella gets him transferred to a less restrictive penal colony in Norfolk, Massachusetts, late in 1948. He believes that whites infect the world with evil.

**Chapter 11, Saved** Under Muhammad's influence, Malcolm begins studying world history and reading about Ethiopia and the role of whites in the subjugation and exploitation of blacks. He has a vision of W. D. Fard, the founder of the Nation of Islam.

**Chapter 12, Savior** After Malcolm is paroled in August 1952, he heads for Detroit, drops his surname, and replaces it with X. He moves in with his brother Wilfred, a Detroit Muslim, and works at the Gar Wood truck factory. In 1953, Elijah Muhammad inspires Malcolm to become an assistant minister.

**Chapter 13, Minister Malcolm X** Malcolm opens a small temple in Boston. Within months, he accepts an assignment as missionary to Boston. In March 1954, he is reassigned to Philadelphia and, in June, is promoted to minister in Harlem's Temple Seven. In January 1958, on the advice of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm marries Betty X, a nurse and strong voice for women's roles in Islam. Following the arrest of Brother Hinton in 1959, Malcolm's control of the crowd awes police.

**Chapter 14, Black Muslims** Malcolm travels to Egypt, Arabia, Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana. News reports label Muslims a hate group. By 1961, the Nation of Islam proposes a \$20 million temple in Chicago. Elijah Muhammad grows ill and moves to Phoenix, Arizona. He warns Malcolm, his chief disciple, to expect to be hated.

**Chapter 15, Icarus** In the mid-1960s Black Muslims admire Malcolm for living a godly life and advocating that blacks police their own behavior. Whites fear the power of Muslim unity and hate him for his insistence on separatism. He speaks at the Harvard Law School Forum.

**Chapter 16, Out** As Elijah Muhammad's health worsens, Malcolm, his likely successor, is investigated by the IRS, CIA,

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and FBI. In 1962, jealous members of the movement slight him. The next year, Elijah Muhammad names him the first national minister. On July 3, 1963, reports that Elijah has been cohabiting with two former secretaries diminish the movement. On November 22, after the assassination of President John Kennedy, Malcolm labels the killing "chickens coming home to roost." Elijah, who is angered by his boldness, silences him for three months. Malcolm fears betrayal by enemies in the Nation of Islam. An insider warns Malcolm that his car will be wired to explode. He forms Muslim Mosque, Inc., composed of his own coterie of disciples. In 1964, he makes a pilgrimage to Mecca.

**Chapter 17, Mecca** Malcolm journeys to Cairo, Jedda, and on to the Ka'ba, the Sacred House in Mecca revered by worshippers of many nations and races. Welcomed by Dr. Azzam, Malcolm begins to rethink his severe anti-white philosophy and determines that brotherhood should be the core of his faith. He adopts a new name, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

**Chapter 18, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz** After calling on Muslims in Beirut, Cairo, Alexandria, and Lagos, Malcolm decides to unite Afro-Americans with Pan-Africanism. In Lagos, a student union renames him Omowale, "the son who has come home." Continuing to Accra, Ghana, he visits American expatriates, then sets out for Monrovia, Liberia; Dakar, Senegal; and Casablanca, Morocco. On return to New York, Malcolm intends to petition the United Nations to address the United States denial of human rights to blacks.

**Chapter 19, 1965** The press misrepresents Malcolm's campaign to destroy racism.

**Epilogue** Alex Haley begins writing Malcolm's biography while Malcolm works feverishly. In March and April, he returns to Mecca, Medina, and parts of Africa and attacks Elijah Muhammad's immorality. Rumors of assassination threats circulate. Barred from addressing the Congress of African Students in France, he returns to New York on February 13, 1965, the night his family escapes a firebombing and is evicted from their home. On February 21, 1965, Malcolm is shot by three black assassins at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem while addressing the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Police arrest Talmadge Thayer and two Black Muslims—Norman 3X Butler and Thomas 15X Johnson—for conspiracy and murder. Courts find the men guilty. Biographer Haley concludes that Malcolm was "the most electric personality I have ever met."

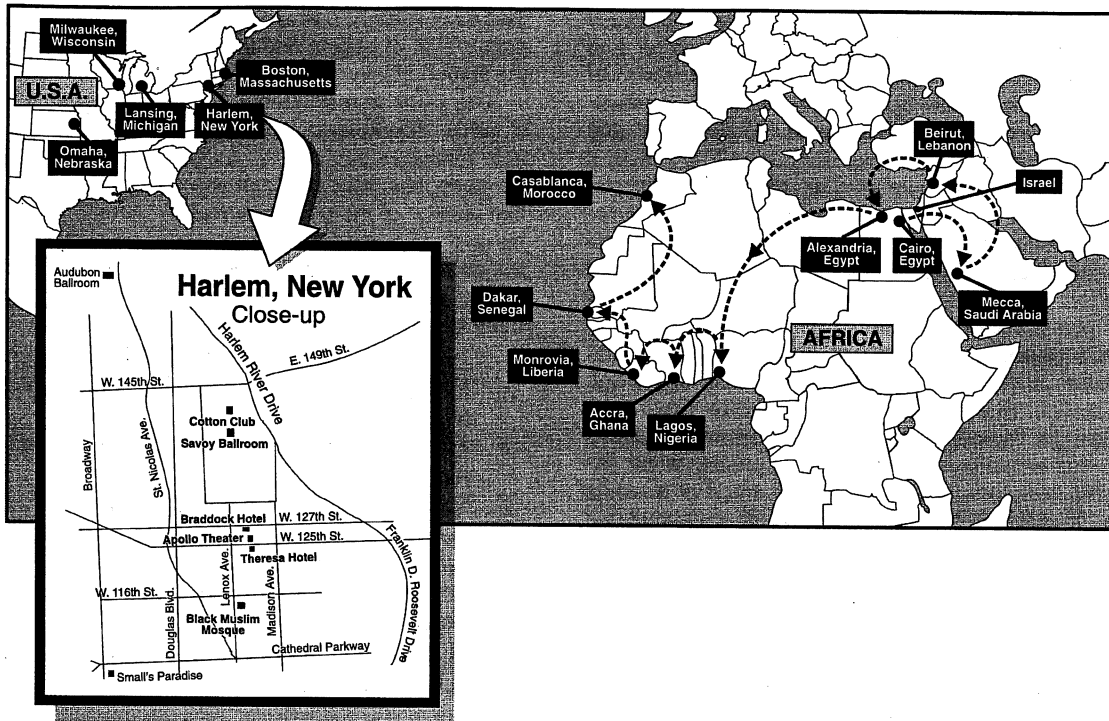
### TIME LINE OF THE ACTION

- 1897** Elijah Poole is born in Sandersville, Georgia.
- 1923** Elijah Poole moves his family to Detroit and changes his surname to Muhammad.
- 1925** **May 19** Malcolm Little is born in Omaha, Nebraska.
- 1926** The Cotton Club and the Savoy Ballroom open in Harlem.
- 1927** The lindy hop becomes a Harlem dance craze.
- 1929** **Oct. 29** The Stock Market crashes.
- 1931** Rev. Earl Little is murdered in Lansing, Michigan. Elijah Muhammad meets W. D. Fard, who teaches that American blacks are children of Allah and descendants of Muslims.
- 1933** **Dec. 5** Prohibition is repealed.
- 1934** The Littles are destitute. Master Fard disappears.
- 1935** A riot rocks Harlem.
- 1937** Malcolm is placed in foster care. Joe Louis becomes heavyweight champion of the world.
- 1939** Malcolm is sent to the Michigan State Detention Home.
- 1940** Malcolm visits Ella in Roxbury, a black district of Boston.
- 1941** Malcolm moves in with Ella, then joins Shorty.
- Dec. 8** The U. S. declares war on Japan.
- 1942** Malcolm works aboard the "Silver Meteor" to Miami. Elijah Muhammad is arrested.
- 1945** **Aug. 14** Japan surrenders to the U. S.
- 1946** **February** Malcolm is arrested for stealing and sentenced to 8-10 years in prison.
- 1949** Malcolm joins the Nation of Islam
- 1952** **August** Malcolm is paroled and adopts the name Malcolm X
- 1953** **summer** Malcolm becomes an assistant minister of the Nation of Islam.
- 1954** The Supreme Court declares racially segregated schools unconstitutional.
- 1955** Malcolm begins hearing rumors of Elijah's misconduct.
- 1956** Martin Luther King organizes the Montgomery bus boycott.
- 1957** Malcolm starts a temple in Los Angeles.
- 1958** **January** Malcolm marries Betty X.
- 1960** Malcolm travels to Egypt, Arabia, Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana.
- 1962** Malcolm becomes first national minister.
- 1963** Alex Haley begins writing Malcolm's life story.
- June 12** A Ku Klux Klansman shoots activist Medgar Evers in his own driveway.
- July 3** A news item reveals that Elijah has been cohabiting with his secretaries and has fathered three children.
- Sept. 15** A bomb kills four girls at the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.
- Nov. 22** President John Kennedy is assassinated. Elijah Muhammad reprimands Malcolm over his comments on the assassination.
- 1964** **January** Malcolm and his family visit Cassius Clay in Miami.
- spring** Malcolm journeys to Cairo, Jedda, and Mecca and visits Muslims in Beirut, Cairo, Alexandria, and Lagos before returning to New York to found his own sect. He travels to Mecca, Medina, and parts of Africa.
- summer** Racial tensions create the "long hot summer."
- 1965** **Feb. 13** Malcolm's residence is firebombed.
- Feb. 21** Three black gunmen assassinate Malcolm X at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem.
- 1991** Spike Lee films *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

### AUTHOR SKETCH

The seventh child of Reverend Earl Little and his West Indian wife, Louise, Malcolm Little was born May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska, to a family of eleven children—Earl, Ella, Mary, Wilfred, Hilda, Philbert, Malcolm, Reginald, Yvonne, Wesley, and Robert (the last two fathered after Earl Little's death). A Baptist clergyman and follower of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, Earl Little supported an impractical philosophy of segregation and return to Africa. Local agitators and Ku Klux Klansmen forced the family to flee. They settled first in Milwaukee, then on a farm in

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Lansing, Michigan. Until the age of 6, Malcolm enjoyed a normal home upbringing. A series of losses, beginning with his father's Klan-style murder in 1931, placement in foster care in 1937, and his mother's emotional collapse, scattered the Little children among a series of surrogate parents.

Malcolm internalized frustration and insecurity by challenging authority. By his teen years, he was a full-fledged delinquent housed at the Michigan State Detention Home. The encouragement of his white foster parents stabilized his behavior. His grades improved, yet his eighth grade teacher ridiculed his goal to obtain a law degree. The withering put-down destroyed Malcolm's spirit. He left his last midwestern residence—a boarding house in Mason City, Iowa—and moved east.

In 1941, resituated in Roxbury, a section of Boston, at the home of his sister Ella, Malcolm at first dated Laura, a decent girl, then gravitated toward Sophia, a white female gangster, and the ghetto underworld. He shined shoes, worked at a refreshment counter, waited tables at the Roseland Ballroom, and emulated the "cool dudes" of his day, who dressed in pegged pants, chain belts, and conked hair styles. He learned to dance, sold drugs, stole, hustled prostitutes, and preyed on the unwary. Ella was dismayed at his dissolute behavior.

Malcolm got a job on the railroad, lost it for irresponsible behavior, and moved to Harlem and a criminal environment that further corrupted him. An avid observer of human behavior, he waited tables at Small's Paradise Club, but lost his position for pimping on the job. A downward spiral of activities introduced him to selling illegal hooch and marijuana, small-time racketeering, and robbery. His illegal activities forced him to flee arrest and return to Ella.

Malcolm reunited with Sophia and her friends, who comprised a thriving theft ring. His salvation was imprisonment

from 1946-1952 with Bimbi, a principled inmate who taught Malcolm to value scholarship. In Malcolm's third year at Charlestown State Prison, he received a visit from his brother Reginald, who proposed that Malcolm fake a religious conversion as a means of impressing the parole board. Malcolm followed Muslim dietary laws and joined the Nation of Islam, a ten-year-old religious movement founded by Elijah Muhammad.

At the heart of Malcolm's conversion was the Black Muslim belief that whites infect the world with evil. He absorbed the teachings of Islam and began studying world history and the role of whites in the subjugation and exploitation of blacks. To divorce himself from slavery and its destruction of African captives, Malcolm dropped his surname and replaced it with X. Reginald's suggestions helped Malcolm lop three years off his sentence.

To strengthen ties with Islam, Malcolm moved to Detroit and lived with his brother Wilfred, who maintained a close relationship with Black Muslims. Malcolm worked in the automobile industry and continued his studies. His first face-to-face conversation with Elijah Muhammad led to a negation of work and society. Within months, Malcolm accepted an assignment in Boston to start a Black Muslim chapter.

In 1954, Malcolm accepted a new post in Philadelphia and advanced to the position of minister in Harlem's Temple Seven. He married Betty X and fathered daughters Attilah, Qubilah, Ilyasah, and Amiliah, who lived the strict and devout life described by the *Koran*, the sacred book of Islam. For a decade, the influence of Elijah Muhammad and his organized cadre built up the Islamic movement to a powerful national front. Black Muslims admired Malcolm X, a leader who lived a godly life and who advocated that black people take responsibility for policing their own behavior. Whites began to fear Muslim unity and to hate Malcolm X for his insistence on

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separatism.

The Islamic movement went into a critical phase because Elijah Muhammad grew suspicious of Malcolm's power and tried to conceal adultery with young female followers. In November 1963, the schism between the two leaders resulted after Malcolm ignored Elijah's order of "no comment" and made a volatile statement that President John F. Kennedy's assassination was an outgrowth of white corruption. Malcolm declined to give up his mission to bolster Black Muslims. Against the warnings of insiders who suspected violent retaliation from the group's hierarchy, he formed Muslim Mosque, Inc., composed of his own coterie of disciples, whom he drew from Elijah Muhammad's followers.

Malcolm's personal and spiritual growth moved toward orthodox Islam. In 1964, he made the obligatory pilgrimage or hajj to Mecca. In a joint effort sponsored by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, he mingled with worshipers of many nations and races and established a new name, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. He concluded that race is not the evil in white Americans. In place of black separatism, he contemplated brotherhood.

After calling on Middle Eastern and African Islamic communities and conferring with Islamic dignitaries, Malcolm sought a new forum—the United Nations, which he intended to petition on behalf of black civil rights. He failed to win converts, returned to the Mideast for eighteen weeks, and continued working toward black unity. His outreach was limited by lack of funds. To bolster his income, he joined the college lecture circuit and gave media interviews.

During these intense final days of his ministry, Malcolm harbored no illusions that the Nation of Islam would accept his new philosophy. His family remained under tight security as assassination threats increased. After a fiasco in France, where he was refused entry, he returned on February 13, 1965. That same day, his family survived a firebomb. Angered at the attempt to murder his family, he countered with charges against the Black Muslims, then blamed other political enemies, implying that the CIA or FBI were conspiring to kill him and that the Justice Department wanted to discredit his source of income.

On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was murdered in Harlem at a meeting of the Organization of Afro-American Unity at the Audubon Ballroom at a time when the Nation of Islam was pressing legal suit to evict him from his home. Before his closest supporters, wife, and children, he collapsed and died at the lectern from bullets fired by three assassins—Talmadge Thayer and two Black Muslims, whom police arrested. All three shooters were convicted of conspiracy and murder. Shortly, arsonists destroyed Mosque Number Seven. Malcolm's funeral followed Muslim rites, with actor Ossie Davis delivering the eulogy.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

In death, Malcolm X remained a controversial figure and influenced the Black Power drive of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the publication of an autobiography. The beginnings of an autobiography, which Malcolm had left in good order, passed to his collaborator, reporter Alex Haley, who did not always agree with or support Malcolm, but who was drawn to his power and influence. In 1963, Haley began writing and interviewing, although Malcolm harbored suspicion and withheld information about his family. Talks between the two men broadened to Malcolm's

relationship with his mother and to his distrust of the media. The most difficult part of Haley's task lay in reconciling Malcolm's shift of beliefs and loyalties during the difficult rift with the Nation of Islam.

The book immediately entered the canon of American classics. Young black activists born after Malcolm's remarkable ministry treasured his autobiography and collections of his speeches, reading them like scripture. Spike Lee's 1991 film version of the book renewed the fervor for black autonomy and spawned a new generation of devotees. The role of Malcolm, played by Denzel Washington, established on screen an uncanny verisimilitude that earned him an Oscar nomination.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To define the conventions of autobiography and biography
2. To describe the physical, mental, and emotional effects of racism
3. To pinpoint the sources of black rage
4. To characterize the pure lifestyle of a Black Muslim and the goals of the Nation of Islam
5. To list ways in which religion brings hope to oppressed people
6. To define Pan-Africanism and World Brotherhood
7. To justify a separatist philosophy
8. To assess the harm of disenfranchisement, racism, and mob violence
9. To isolate moments of disillusion, foreboding, buoyancy, and hope
10. To account for Alex Haley's inclusion of rumor and innuendo among facts

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To characterize the influence of Harlem, prison, and Mecca on the protagonist
2. To compare Malcolm's conversion with that of Reginald, Ella, and Elijah Muhammad
3. To characterize the relationship between Malcolm and Betty X
4. To comprehend the significance of Marcus Garvey to his generation
5. To list influences on Malcolm's new life
6. To explain how Malcolm X convinces blacks to help themselves
7. To account for name changes—to Malcolm X, Omowale, and El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz
8. To contrast Reverend Little's death with those of John Kennedy and Malcolm X
9. To analyze Haley's objectivity
10. To characterize the aftermath of Malcolm X's assassination

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of the autobiography, present the following terms and applications to the book:

**bildungsroman** [bihl' duhnz . roh . mahn] literally a "formation novel," which describes the coming-of-age of an untried or naive youth. Malcolm X is a significant contribution to American "formation autobiography" with its emphasis on wasted youth and conversion to austerity, self-control, and dedication to religious ideals.

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**epilogue** a concluding section, moral tag, or closing speech or peroration that summarizes theme or action. Because of the protagonist's unforeseen demise, writer Alex Haley must shift roles from collaborator to biographer. The epilogue injects the stunned reaction of Haley, who is suddenly the sole producer of facts about the martyred leader. More than moral tag, closing, or peroration, the epilogue explains the sudden reevaluation of actions and philosophy that never reached fruition. Without the epilogue, readers would have difficulty summarizing the importance of Malcolm X to civil rights and the Black Muslims.

**first-person limited narrative** a story told from the vantage point of a single observer who lived the story and narrates events as they occurred. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* can maintain a first-person accuracy so long as Malcolm is alive. After his assassination, writer Alex Haley is forced to alter the point of view and to append a framework introduction to set the memoirs in perspective of sudden death and unparalleled adulation for a notable American spiritual leader. **realism** a recreation of life in theme, plot, setting, mood, and characterization. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* depends on graphic details—Reverend Little's fatal head injury, the Sheik's ritual preparation of Malcolm's corpse, visits to an asylum, bomb threats, police cordons, mobs of pilgrims at Mecca, Malcolm's attempts to kneel and pray, Malcolm's dependence on nutmeg as a semi-drug, Ossie Davis's eulogy, black Africa's admiration for Malcolm, Cassius Clay's fight with Sonny Liston, and the Swerlins' attempts to halt Malcolm's evolving delinquency.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* varies from the United States to the Mideast, Europe, and Africa. However, the authors' stress never strays from the upheaval that threatens the American Northeast, especially Harlem. During the Harlem Renaissance intelligent and creative black people congregated to produce music, dance, art, poetry, novels, sculpture, and philosophy. In chapters 14, 17, 18, and the epilogue, Malcolm X broadens his sense of membership in humanity by journeying to Islamic centers and to Africa, the continent containing the preponderance of the world's black population. The nature of each setting has a profound effect on his spiritual development and may trigger the reaction that leads to his murder.

Ironically, in a foreign setting, Malcolm X begins to shed the traditional Black Muslim separatist philosophy and to accept brotherhood and racial oneness. In Cairo, he remarks on "throngs of people, obviously Muslims from everywhere, bound on the pilgrimage, . . . hugging and embracing. They were of all complexions, the whole atmosphere was of warmth and friendliness." He remarks on the insignificance of skin color. On the way to Mecca, he reports on planeloads of pilgrims, "white, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair—all together, brothers! All honoring the same God Allah, all in turn giving equal honor to each other." On his return trip, he undergoes a profound change of heart: "My pilgrimage broadened my scope. It blessed me with new insight . . . I saw what I never had seen . . . all races, all colors . . . in true brotherhood."

### Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* should include these

aspects:

#### Themes

- delinquency and crime
- redemption
- achievement
- autonomy
- self-esteem
- alienation
- certain doom
- martyrdom

#### Motifs

- dissolution of the family
- asserting self-control
- recovering from prison
- following orders
- coping with insecurity
- acknowledging fears
- developing self-confidence
- taking responsibility for actions
- becoming a leader
- accepting certain death

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the autobiography. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter numbers and titles and page numbers pinpoint the context in which the item appears.

1. He was the type who would never have been associated with Africa, until the fad of having African friends became a status symbol for "middle-class" Negroes. (Chap. 1, p. 5)  
*(Malcolm recognizes weaknesses in his race, particularly the possession of objects, alliances, and trendy beliefs that lift working-class blacks into higher social levels. Ironically, it is his struggle to throw off his past and to rise among Boston social climbers that leads to his incarceration and contact with Islam and to his selfless devotion to religious ideals.)*
2. She showed me how, in the country's entire social, political and economic structure, the criminal, the law, and the politicians were actually inseparable partners. (Chap. 7, p. 116)  
*(At this point in Malcolm's development, he applies his intelligence to a new career in crime, which ends his days as an ingratiating shoeshine boy. The cynicism of his early progression toward understanding links the origins of crime to law and society by shifting blame to dishonest police and politicians. His meaning is probably more inclusive. He implies that a society that denies opportunities to a segment of its population because of race in effect collaborates with its criminals. Thus, he rationalizes the causes of racism to justify his slide into crime as a defiance of the society that devalues him.)*
3. Now I watched brothers entwining themselves in the economic clutches of the white man who went home every night with another bag of the money drained out of the ghetto. (Chap. 12, p. 193)  
*(In Malcolm's view, white merchants—particularly Jews—exploit ghetto blacks. Every night, the white storekeepers enrich themselves by siphoning money out of the ghetto. None of the profit returns to the poor to improve their conditions. Malcolm condemns local*

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- merchants for selling shoddy goods and for encouraging blacks to plunge themselves voluntarily into debt to finance their materialism.)
4. Wilfred, the father, the family protector and provider, was the first to rise. "The father prepares the way for his family," he said. (Chap. 12, p. 193)  
*(From the beginning of Malcolm's experience with Islam, he is drawn to the importance of the father figure, who predominates in the home, business, religion, and politics. The value to a fatherless boy is obvious. Malcolm is becoming the father figure that he lacked after Reverend Little was murdered, leaving his ineffectual wife in charge of a large brood of hungry, unruly children. The appeal of the role of paterfamilias offers closure to Malcolm, who never lived out traditional family roles.)*
  5. "You want to know how to spread my teachings?" he said, and he pointed to the glasses of water. "Don't condemn if you see a person has a dirty glass of water," he said. "Just show them the clean glass of water that you have. When they inspect it, you won't have to say that yours is better." (Chap. 12, p. 205)  
*(Elijah Muhammad advises Malcolm X to teach by positive example rather than negative sermonizing. Instead of offending people by condemning current religious beliefs, the wise Muslim should concentrate on spreading Islamic teachings and lifestyle. In retrospect, Malcolm acknowledges his tendency toward smugness: "I love too much to battle. I'm inclined to tell somebody if his glass of water is dirty.")*
  6. Well, let's go back to the Greek, and maybe you will learn the first thing you need to know about the word 'demagogue.' 'Demagogue' means, actually, 'teacher of the people.' (Chap. 14, p. 242)  
*(In standard English, a demagogue is a leader and agitator who furthers a selfish interest by appealing to people's passions, prejudices, and paranoia. Detractors frequently label Malcolm X a divisive demagogue. He accepts the term, but not in the modern sense. He declares that the original Greek meaning parallels the position of Socrates, who was executed as a demagogue or teacher. The connection is prophetic: Malcolm, too, dies violently at the height of his influence.)*
  7. Segregation is that which is forced upon inferiors by superiors. But separation is that which is done voluntarily, by two equals—for the good of both! (Chap. 14, p. 246)  
*(Black Muslims reject integration because they fear corruption from association with white society. They also reject segregation because it implies that the majority corral and isolates a hated minority. Separation, on the other hand, is a voluntary agreement between equals to live apart, with black people setting up their own government in a land ceded to them by white America. Advocates of integration argue that the creation of a black nation is impractical and that both separation and segregation weaken and silence a valuable ethnic component of society. A small number of black activists contend that separation is the only way that the black race can deliver itself from white dominance, fulfill its ethnic destiny, and achieve equality.)*
  8. If I wasn't "polarizing the community," according to this bunch, I had "erroneously appraised the racial picture." (Chap. 15, p. 267)  
*(According to accusers, Malcolm polarizes by rejecting compromise and forcing on his followers an extreme stand. Critics condemn him for preaching a divisive, racist doctrine of separation of races. They contend that he drives hearers to extremes of conflict and violence.)*
  9. The literal meaning of Hajj in Arabic is to set out toward a definite objective. (Chap. 17, p. 322)  
*(Because of his religious piety, Malcolm makes a point of explaining the Islamic concept of hajj. He declares, "In Islamic law, it means to set out for Ka'ba, the Sacred House, and to fulfill the pilgrimage rites." Thus, the pilgrimage is a doctrinal obligation that every orthodox Muslim is supposed to fulfill if it is humanly possible. After his conversion to orthodox Islam and his hajj, he took a new name featuring the term Hajj as proof of piety and obedience to Allah.)*
  10. That is, with one singing exception, they all, every last, black, glory-hugging one of them, knew that Malcolm—whatever else he was or was not—*Malcolm was a man!* (p. 457)  
*(In a reflection on his friend's life, Ossie Davis idolizes Malcolm X as a man. Unlike black leaders who practiced caution in dealing with the white man, Malcolm challenged on the spot every instance of overt or covert racism. He frightened both white and black communities with intensity and fervor, but abandoned his racist hatred shortly before his assassination. He no longer insisted that the white man was the devil. The true evil, in his mind, was not white "tricknology" but the racist nature of all Americans. A stellar example for his people, he contrasted with martyr John Brown, who was hanged as a fanatic murderer in his own time, but later evolved into an honored martyr.)*

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the autobiography.

#### Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. Summarize Malcolm Little's childhood.  
*(In his early youth in Nebraska and Michigan, Malcolm Little grows up in a loving household. His father, Reverend Earl Little, was a "real Georgia Negro, big and black and well fed on soul food." A devout Baptist minister who follows the ideals of Marcus Garvey, leader of the back-to-Africa movement, Earl Little recognizes the threat of the Ku Klux Klan, who eventually murder him and leave his corpse on streetcar tracks to simulate suicide. The blow to his family was brutal: "Some kind of psychological deterioration hit our family circle and began to eat away our pride."*  
*Louise Little, his widow, was a strong Seventh Day Adventist who followed strict Biblical dietary laws. She was left to tend and support eight children, whom Malcolm describes as "destitute." Before she was institutionalized for insanity, she produced two more children by "a large, dark man from Lansing" who jilted her. She was unable to manage so large a household. In Mal-*

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colm's description, "she began to sit around and walk around talking to herself—almost as though she was unaware that we were there—it became increasingly terrifying." Her mental breakdown suggests forces too great for her to cope with. Malcolm turned to his sister Ella, a large, proud woman who dominated men.)

2. How were Harlemites surviving during Malcolm's youth? (According to Malcolm, during the late 1930s and early 1940s, residents of Harlem "needed some kind of hustle to survive, and needed to stay high in some way to forget what they had to do to survive." After witnessing the glamor of Harlem, Malcolm admits, "This world was where I belonged. On that night I had started on my way to becoming a Harlemite. I was going to become one of the most deprived parasitical hustlers among New York's eight million people—four million of whom work, and the other four million of whom live off them.")

Among cynical black urbanites, Malcolm comes to believe that trust is not possible for people struggling to survive. Among his circle, hustling includes numbers racketeering, fencing stolen merchandise, selling cheap goods and pretending they were stolen, dealing in marijuana and cocaine, selling bootleg whisky, and pimping for prostitutes. Even working as a Pullman porter requires that Malcolm play the role of obsequious Uncle Tom to cadge large tips. Eventually, he leaves legitimate jobs and takes up robbery, mugging, and drug dealing when the post-World War II economy proves unfavorable in Harlem.)

3. What were Malcolm X's original views on women and marriage?

(While he is single, Malcolm X mistrusts and downgrades women. He remarks, "I'd had too much experience that women were only tricky, deceitful, untrustworthy flesh. I had seen too many men ruined, or at least tied down, or in some other way messed up by women." After meeting and marrying Betty Shabazz, he changes his attitude. By accepting the Islamic view of husband as ruler of wife, children, and home, he develops a loving partnership based on trust and mature love rather than lust. He abandons the stereotypical image of romantic love and condemns interracial marriage. In his new view of mating, he believes that "Love is disposition, behavior, attitude, thoughts, likes, dislikes." He tempers his orthodox conservatism near the end of his life after he develops a sense of world brotherhood and no longer considers miscegenation a sin.)

4. What causes the schism between Malcolm X and his mentor, Elijah Muhammad?

(Malcolm X is a phenomenon among Muslim ministers. Elijah is proud of his development and rewards him accordingly until Malcolm deviates from the Islamic line. After President Kennedy's assassination, Malcolm refuses to remain silent and declares publicly that the loss is a case of "the chickens coming home to roost," implying that racial hatred causes the President's murder. An influential, articulate Islamic leader, Malcolm represents a looming threat to Elijah, an aging mentor who is weakening physically and politically. After Malcolm learns that Elijah has violated Islamic precepts by committing adultery with his secretaries and fathering children by them, he severs his relationship with the

Nation of Islam. The schism opens the way for Malcolm to challenge other teachings of the orthodox group, such as strict separatism from whites.)

5. What are the major turning points in Malcolm's life?

(The course of Malcolm's life alters several times. The death of his father and his mother's subsequent insanity breaks up the family and leaves Malcolm X without a strong parent. Also, his mother's strict adherence to Seventh Day Adventism sets an example of persecution for strong sectarian beliefs. Because Mr. Ostrowski, a junior high teacher, negates Malcolm's ambition to become a lawyer, Malcolm becomes bitter and withdrawn. After dropping out of school, he is vulnerable to the failings of most dropouts, particularly petty delinquency and aimlessness.)

When Malcolm leaves the Midwest and settles with his sister Ella in Roxbury, Massachusetts, he begins to admire the high life. After meeting Shorty in Boston in his late teens, he learns to hustle tips while shining shoes and working as a Pullman porter. Gradually giving up his country boy's ways, he has his hair conked and begins emulating slick street kids. The move to Harlem tempts him to adopt the hustler's code and to pimp, gamble, and addict himself to drugs. Joining Shorty and Sophia makes him partners in a burglary ring.

The end of Malcolm's career in crime comes after he leaves a stolen watch for repair. Arrest on fourteen counts of burglary leads to an 8-10 year prison term. While rooming with Bimbi at the Charlestown State Prison, he educates himself and embraces the Nation of Islam. Redeemed from street crime, drifting, and immorality, he develops a strong philosophy of right and wrong. He comes to condemn the white man as a devil who forces blacks to a degraded position at the bottom of the American social structure. In time, Malcolm prepares himself for the ministry.

Upon parole, Malcolm is ready to serve the Black Muslims as a minister and missionary converting disciples to orthodox Islam. Ultimately, his philosophy evolved and outpaced that of Elijah and his devout coterie. The split with fundamentalist Muslims enables Malcolm to rise above Elijah's hypocritical behaviors and to establish a worthy family relationship with Betty Shabazz. To realize the ultimate command of Islam, he journeys to Mecca and worships with a diverse gathering of believers. Traveling among people of all races and backgrounds, he concludes that his orthodoxy is mean and unrealistic. He embraces world brotherhood and rids himself of strong racism in the short time left before his assassination.)

### Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. What does conking symbolize to Malcolm?

(Processing his hair with congolene to rid it of Negroid kinkiness becomes a symbolic act to Malcolm. The painful, burning process involving soaking his head in sliced potatoes, eggs, and lye epitomized his degradation. He remembers, "I gritted my teeth and tried to pull the sides of the kitchen table together. The comb felt as if it was raking my skin off." By admitting that Caucasian hair is the ideal, he betrays his African background. The conk mutilates an aspect of God's creative handiwork,

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attesting "that the black people are 'inferior'—and white people 'superior.'" Rather than look pretty for whites, Malcolm condemns the conking process as proof of white rule over the black spirit. He summarizes, "I'm speaking from personal experience when I say of any black man who conks today, or any white-wigged black woman, that if they gave the brains in their heads just half as much attention as they do their hair, they would be a thousand times better off.")

7. What are the major tenets of Islam?

(The Nation of Islam reject "the white version" of history. According to Elijah Muhammad, history has been adulterated by whites until black contributions are wiped out. According to black Islamic tradition, the original man was black. Created 6600 years ago, Mr. Yacub, a surly, crazed scientist, bred a devil race—a bleached white imitation of black people who became the tormentors and enslavers of blacks. Malcolm remarks, "The devil white man cut these black people off from all knowledge of their own kind, and cut them off from any knowledge of their own language, religion, and past culture, until the black man in America was the earth's only race of people who had absolutely no knowledge of his true identity.")

Malcolm rejects white history and religion for the practices and teachings of Black Muslims, which derive from orthodox Islam. Followers observe a version of Muslim rules for prayer, diet, sexual relations, child-rearing, and cleanliness. Converts to Black Islam use X to replace surnames that were foisted on black slaves. Conversions among the young assure that the faith will grow and survive in the future. Prisons and ghetto privation provide fertile ground for missionaries, who uplift people sunk in white-inspired crime, ignominy, and self-abasement.)

8. What rationalization helps Malcolm X cope with a prison record?

(Like thousands of black youth exposed to an environment of neglect, poverty, crime, and violence, Malcolm X grows up fatherless, motherless, rootless, and insecure. Because of inadequate education and a lack of encouragement in his youth, he sees little chance of breaking the cycle of racism and degradation. If he had chosen an honest life, he would have condemned himself to menial jobs and no opportunity for advancement. According to his narrow view, the only way that he can flee the ghetto is through crime. Gifted with energy, ambition, and intelligence, he accedes to the lure of theft and hustling, beginning with petty mischief and working up to burglary, drugs, and weapons. Prison is inevitable as Malcolm dares larger felonies and a daily stream of misdemeanors.)

### Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. Account for the martyrdom of Malcolm X, whose death has been called a tragic loss.

(Whatever his worth to American society, Malcolm X is influential. To whites who consider him a fomenter of racism, anti-semitism, separatism, and crime, he is a giant of street demagoguery. To black disciples, he represents the culmination of years of oppression and the rise of a true leader. The assassination at the turning

point of Malcolm X's philosophical maturity is a loss to both extremes. His embrace of world brotherhood might have turned the bitterly racist Black Muslim movement toward a more amenable acceptance of all people and a beginning of peace between disparate races. As spokesman for a neutral group, he might have become a positive force for healing America's social ills.)

10. What is Malcolm's solution to equality and dignity for blacks?

(At a high point of Malcolm's rise to fame, he allows arrogance to inhibit his outreach to whites. A young white coed, moved by his speech on campus, asks what she can do to help the black race. He haughtily replies, "Nothing." In retrospect, he regrets his pomposity. He maintains his belief that races should live and work separately and fails to actualize his emerging belief that true human unity is possible. Instead, he proposes a binary world. In his words, "The American black man should be focusing his every effort toward building his own businesses, and decent homes for himself. As other ethnic groups have done, let the black people, wherever possible, patronize their own kind, hire their own kind, and start in those ways to build up the black race's ability to do for itself." He concludes that the rise of black self-sufficiency is the gateway to respect, independence, redemption, and self-respect.)

### Questions 11-13 Creative Level

11. In a speech, contrast Malcolm's historical importance with that of these activists and leaders: Martin Luther King, Jr., Ida Wells-Barnett, Jesse Jackson, Geronimo, Mary McLeod Bethune, Chief Joseph, Sojourner Truth, Louis Farrakhan, Barbara Jordan, John Kennedy, Margaret Sanger, and Colin Powell.

12. Account for the image of Icarus, the winged son of the inventor Daedalus in Greek mythology, as a title for Chapter 15. In what ways does Malcolm fly too high?

13. Explain in an impromptu speech how people of questionable reputation become heroes or martyrs after their deaths, especially if they died dramatically or tragically at the peak of their influence.

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Law Enforcement

1. Design an internet web site explaining how criminals are arrested, arraigned, tried, convicted, sentenced, imprisoned, rehabilitated, and paroled. Use Malcolm's experiences as models.
2. Explain why numbers running, pimping, gambling, drug selling, and bootlegging are called "victimless crimes."

#### Religion

1. Chart the major differences in Islam, Taoism, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Mormonism, animism, and Hinduism. Consider such common topics as death, the afterlife, marriage, family, worship, ritual, scriptural interpretation, and charity. Emphasize how Seventh Day Adventists differ from other American religions.
2. Express in a paragraph Malcolm X's concept of brotherhood. How does a religious definition differ from a philosophical view of brotherhood?
3. Discuss the aspects of Islam that Malcolm finds most



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appealing. Name other austere or fundamentalist religious groups that reject the eating of pork, indulgence in drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, promiscuous sex, and criminal behavior as well as abortion, divorce, and women leadership.

4. Discuss how Malcolm compensates for early privation by reading and following the Koran.

### Economics

1. Make a chart of businesses that have profited from South Africa's unity movement. Discuss which entrepreneurs support world brotherhood.
2. Determine the cost of imprisoning a felon for ten years. Include the added burden to the taxpayer of rehabilitation and parole. Explain why rehabilitation is better for the economy than recidivism.

### Cinema

1. Give an oral summary of Denzel Washington's mannerisms and vocal techniques in the film *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.
2. View some of these films: *Lilies of the Field*, *Native Son*, *A Patch of Blue*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Ghosts of Mississippi*, *The Associate*, *Glory*, *Mississippi Burning*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Boyz n' the Hood*, *The Color Purple*, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, *Sarafina!*, *The Power of One*, and *J.T.* Discuss with a small group the causes and results of racism.

### Science and Health

1. Compose a lecture on the causes of the decline in Malcolm's health during his years as a delinquent and criminal. Make a chalkboard list of addictive behaviors and their side effects. Include promiscuous sex, cocaine, alcohol, and marijuana.
2. List the dangers of living in a black ghetto. Explain why Malcolm is drawn to drugs, alcohol, flashy clothes, slang, firearms, automobiles, gang of thieves, and a white girl friend.
3. Explain to a small group the survival techniques Malcolm employs to keep himself and his family safe, such as sitting with his eye on a restaurant door, studying disciples' motivations, weighing the truth of rumors, or revealing travel plans only to a few trusted associates. Discuss why his dislike of security checks leads to his assassination.

### Geography

1. Create a mural or web site that contrasts these settings: early childhood in Omaha, the student center in Lagos, the assassination in the Audubon Ballroom, a Pullman car, Alex Haley's Greenwich Village residence, studying the Koran in a prison cell, the streetcar tracks in Lansing, Michigan, Ella's Roxbury neighborhood in Boston, Cassius Clay's Miami home, the Sacred House in Mecca, the flight to Cairo, Malcolm's first temple meeting in Chicago, addressing the Ghanaian parliament, and shining shoes at the Paradise Club.
2. Compose a paragraph justifying the black American expatriate's preference for Paris, Beirut, Accra, Monrovia, Cairo, or Lagos rather than the United States.

### Art

Using desk-top publishing or other artistic media, design a placard supporting Marcus Garvey or Martin Luther King, a

business card for Alex Haley or M. S. Handler, a menu for the Cotton Club or Audubon Ballroom, instructions on how to register for the draft, Muslim recruiting pamphlets, a plane schedule for the route from New York to Frankfurt to Cairo to Mecca, a court record of Sophia's thefts and incarceration in a women's prison, an advertisement for Small's or for Malcolm's shoeshine stand, a theater marquee announcing Cab Calloway or Lionel Hampton, or a news account of Malcolm's attempt to enter France to address a student congress.

### Social Studies

1. Write a brief address explaining the public's perception of Malcolm X as anti-Semite, anti-feminist, separatist, and anti-white. Comment on white attitudes toward disenfranchisement, the Ku Klux Klan, educational equality, religion, justice, prisons, drug sellers, street hustlers, crime, black entertainers, and Black Muslims.
2. List ways that political upheaval threatens the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X's family. Explain to a group why Muslims are willing to sacrifice innocent children to rid themselves of an upstart minister.
3. Make contrasting chalkboard definitions of crime and heroism. Explain how the terms define segments of Malcolm's life.

### Mathematics and Computers

1. Using desktop publishing, compose an annotated time line that indicates the rise of black rage in the United States.
2. Graph current census figures concerning the racial makeup of the United States. Highlight a map with graphs and data indicating what parts of the nation are the most racially diverse. Note the percentage of non-white peoples in Washington, D. C., Philadelphia, Detroit, New York, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, and other cities where Black Muslims flourish.
3. Explain the political ramifications of the growth of Black Muslims from 400 to 40,000.

### Music

Work with a group to compose a Nation of Islam anthem or marching song. Include recognition of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X.

### Language and Speech

1. Compose individual posters explaining the significance of these political and religious names and terms: Islam, white supremacy, Marcus Aurelius Garvey's U.N.I.A., Seventh Day Adventists, Allah, NAACP, W. D. Fard, Books of Moses, Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Quran, Pan-Africanism, expatriate, Kwame Nkrumah, Mandela, and Lumumba.
2. Compose a short speech in which you describe how racism demoralizes people and encourages criminal and addictive behavior.
3. Contrast the platform style of Malcolm X with the delivery and stage presence of Lyndon Johnson, Joan Baez, Ralph Abernethy, Faye Wattleton, Roy Wilkins, Shirley Chisholm, Medgar Evers, Carol Moseley-Braun, Bobby Kennedy, Barbara Jordan, and Dr. Martin Luther King.
4. Characterize in separate paragraphs the difference between leader, demagogue, martyr, savior, mentor, teacher, freedom fighter, spokesperson, organizer, agent, founder, minister, and disciple of Allah.

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### Literature

1. Read aloud from the speeches of Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, and Louis Farrakhan. Determine the style and content of oratory that typifies the Nation of Islam.
2. Using examples from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, account for the change in tone and organization of the introduction, body of the text, and epilogue.
3. Draw a character web representing the interconnectedness between Malcolm and Betty X, their five daughters, Ella, Wilbert, Reginald, Philbert, Louise Little, Reverend Earl Little, the Swerlins, Laura, Sophia, Sammy, Shorty, Bimbi, Alex Haley, the Nation of Islam, pilgrims to Mecca, Prince Faisal, the Gohannas, and Cassius Clay.

### History and Current Events

Recreate by time line, webbing, flow chart, mural, or web site the milieu of the 1960s. Explain why this era was crucial in American history. How did the Civil Rights movement produce greater freedom and representation for black people?

### Education

Brainstorm a curriculum to help prisoners complete their education. Emphasize American history, philosophy, world religions, health and hygiene, basic language and math skills, and family structure.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Organize a panel discussion of the long-range effects of racial segregation. Why is it important for people of different races to shop, work, go to school, live, worship, and play together?
2. Join a discussion group to determine how Malcolm X's leadership compares with that of Shirley Chisholm, Crispus Attucks, Marcus Garvey, Barbara Jordan, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Nat Turner, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Ida Wells-Barnett, Dred Scott, Madame C. J. Walker, Louis Farrakhan, or Harriet Tubman.
3. List questions to ask at an interview with Malcolm X, Cassius Clay, Marcus Garvey, John Kennedy, Betty X, Ella, Prince Faisal, or Elijah Muhammad.
4. Compose an introduction to Islam including commentary on women's rights and the role of Muslim females in the Islamic ministry and missions.
5. Explain in a short speech the right of individuals to assemble peacefully and to worship without harassment or intervention. Include commentary on other segments of the Bill of Rights, especially freedom of speech. Why is the concept of *habeas corpus* a major benefit to democracy? How did this concept evolve from the Magna Carta to influence modern democracies?
6. Dramatize in a short skit a police, FBI, CIA, and Justice Department investigation of the role of the Nation of Islam in Malcolm X's death.
7. Create a list of images from the novel that appeal to the five senses. Use these as models:
  - Like Cadillac, he too had both black and white women out making his living, but Sammy's women—who would come into Small's sometimes, looking for him, to give him money, and have him buy them a drink—were about as beautiful as any prostitutes who operated anywhere, I'd imagine.

• Now, when I try to separate that first year-plus what I spent at Charlestown, it runs all together in a memory of nutmeg and the other semi-drugs, of cursing guards, throwing things out of my cell, balking in the lines, dropping my tray in the dining hall, refusing to answer my number—claiming I forgot it—and things like that.

• The truth is that 'integration' is an *image*, it's a foxy Northern liberal's smoke-screen that confuses the true wants of the American black man.

• Malcolm X's hand flew to his chest as the first of sixteen shotgun pellets or revolver slugs hit him.

8. Write a scene in which Betty meets with Malcolm's disciples, writer Alex Haley, and actor Ossie Davis to plan an appropriate funeral for her husband, who was a leader, minister, founder of a religious sect, and head of a family.
9. Discuss the effects of rumor, threats, misrepresentation, despair, and violence on Malcolm X and his followers.
10. Draw a cause-and-effect diagram illustrating the change that takes place in American opinions, both black and white, during these events: Malcolm's rise to power, Elijah's reassertion of control, President Johnson's term of office, the "long hot summer," Martin Luther King's Montgomery boycott, and the period following President John Kennedy's assassination.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of teamwork, rumor, fear, insecurity, intimidation, loyalty, crime, strategy, pragmatism, idealism, resilience, and character among Islamic leaders.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate growing danger to Malcolm and his family.
3. Compose a scene in which Alex Haley explains to reporters his role in Malcolm's life and autobiography.
4. Make a character list and explain the relationship of each to Islam. Include W. D. Fard, Allah, Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, Betty Shabazz, Dr. Shabarbi, Dr. Azzam, Cassius Clay, Reginald, and Bimbi.

### MALCOLM X'S POSTHUMOUS WORKS

- The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965)  
*Malcolm X Speaks* (1965)  
*Malcolm X: Selected Speeches and Statements* (1965)  
*Malcolm X on Afro-American History* (1967)  
*The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard* (1968)  
*Malcolm X Talks to Young People* (1969)  
*Two Speeches by Malcolm X* (1969)  
*Malcolm X and the Negro Revolution* (1969)  
*By Any Means Necessary: Speeches, Interviews, and a Letter by Malcolm X* (1970)  
*The End of White Supremacy: Four Speeches by Malcolm X* (1971)  
*100 and More Quotes by Garvey, Lamumba, and Malcolm X* (1975)  
*Malcolm X: The Last Speeches* (1989)  
*Malcolm X Speeches: February 1965* (1992)

### ALEX HALEY'S PUBLISHED WORKS

- "Mr. Muhammad Speaks," *Reader's Digest* (March 1960)  
"Playboy Interview: Malcolm X," (May 1963)  
*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965)  
*Roots* (1976)

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*Roots: The Next Generation* (1979)  
*A Different Kind of Xmas* (1988)  
*Alex Haley's Queen: The Story of an American Family* (1993)

### RELATED READING

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*  
James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*  
William Barrett, *Lilies of the Field*  
Thomas Berger, *Little Big Man*  
Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*  
Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*  
Alice Childress, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich*  
Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*  
John Howard Griffin, *Black Like Me*  
Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*  
Terry McMillan, *Mama*  
Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*  
Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*  
Richard Wright, "Between the World and Me" and *Black Boy*

### CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

For more information about the Nation of Islam, the Black Muslim movement, and other subjects and issues deriving from the teachings of Malcolm X, consult these sources:

*Black Muslims*, Chelsea House  
*Black Muslims in America*, Africa World  
*Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, African-American Image  
*The Family Laws of Islam*, Kazi Publications  
*Islam*, Franklin Watts  
*The Islamic Conception of Justice*, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press

### Koran

*The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, Highsmith  
*Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement*, 1996.  
*Race and Prejudice in America Today*, Knowledge Unlimited  
*Vision for Black Men*, African-American Image

Also, consult these websites:

"Islam in America," <http://www.colostate.edu/Orgs/MSA/docs.iaa.html>.  
"The Thinker, Nation of Islam," <http://www.leland.stanford.edu/group/thinker/v2/v2n3/NO/Backg>.

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*African American Voices*, U\*X\*L/Gale, 1997.  
Asante, Molefi K. *Malcolm X As Cultural Hero: And Other Afrocentric Essays*. Africa World, 1993.  
Carson, Clayborne. *Malcolm X: The FBI File*. Carroll and Graf, 1991.  
Crenshaw, Gwendolyn J. *Malcolm X: Developing Self-Esteem, Self-Love, and Self-Dignity*. Aesop Enterprises, 1991.  
*DISCovering Authors* (CD-ROM), Gale, 1993.  
Doctor, Bernard A., *Malcolm X for Beginners*, Writers and Readers, 1992.  
Epps, Archie, *Malcolm X: Speeches at Harvard*, Marlowe & Co., 1994.  
Friedly, *Malcolm X: The Assassination*, Ballantine, 1995.  
Gallen, David. *Malcolm X: As They Knew Him*. Carroll and Graf, 1992.  
Kly, Y. N. *The Black Book: The True Political Philosophy of Malcolm X*. Clarity Press, 1986.  
Leader, Edward R. *Understanding Malcolm X: His Controversial Philosophical Changes*. Vantage, 1992.

Sagan, Miriam. *Malcolm X*. Lucent Books, 1996.  
Smith, Sande. *Malcolm X*. Book Sales Inc., 1993.  
Strickland, William. *Malcolm X: Make It Plain*. Viking Penguin, 1995.  
Wolfenstein, Eugene V. *The Victims of Democracy: Malcolm X and the Black Revolution with a New Preface*. Colorado University Press, 1990.

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

### VOCABULARY TEST

In the passage that follows, select words from the list below to fill each blank. You will have answers left over.

accordance	communal	heretical	resumed	shuffle
antireligious	dress	intercede	retinue	speculating
barricades	enraptured	intervals	ritual	tarried
bier	epitome	Koran	scapegoated	traditional
bronze	gesturing	Mutawaf	shrouds	valise

Sheik Hassoun prepared the body for burial in (1) \_\_\_\_\_ with Moslem (2) \_\_\_\_\_. Removing the Western clothing in which the body had been on display, Sheik Hassoun washed the body with special holy oil. Then he draped the body in the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ seven white linen (4) \_\_\_\_\_, called the *kafan*. Only the face with its reddish moustache and goatee was left exposed. The mourners who had come with Sheik Hassoun filed to the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ and he read passages from the (6) \_\_\_\_\_. Then he turned to a funeral home representative: "Now the body is ready for burial." Soon, the sheik and his (7) \_\_\_\_\_ left, and the viewing by the public (8) \_\_\_\_\_. When the word spread, numbers of persons who had come before returned for another wait in the long, slowly moving line, wanting to see the Moslem burial (9) \_\_\_\_\_.

It was late during this Friday afternoon that I got into the quietly moving line, thinking about the Malcolm X with whom I had worked closely for about two years. Blue-uniformed policemen stood at (10) \_\_\_\_\_ watching us (11) \_\_\_\_\_ along within the wooden gray-painted police (12) \_\_\_\_\_. Just across the street several men were looking at the line from behind a large side window of the "Lone Star Barber Shop, Eddie Johns, Prop., William Ashe, Mgr." Among the policemen were a few press representatives talking to each other to pass the time. Then we were inside the softly lit, hushed, cool, large chapel. Standing at either end of the long, handsome (13) \_\_\_\_\_ coffin were two big, dark policemen, mostly looking straight ahead, but moving their lips when some viewer (14) \_\_\_\_\_. Within minutes I had reached the coffin. Under the glass lid, I glimpsed the delicate white shrouding over the chest and up like a hood about the face on which I tried to concentrate for as long as I could. All that I could think was that it was he, all right—Malcolm X. "Move on"—the policeman's voice was soft. Malcolm looked at me—just waxy and *dead*. The policeman's hand was (15) \_\_\_\_\_ at his waist level. I thought, "*Well—good-bye.*" I moved on.

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with characters. Choose your answers from the list of names below. You may use some of the answers more than once and some not at all.

- |                    |                       |                             |                    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| A. Elijah Muhammad | F. Louise Little      | K. Betty Shabazz            | P. Laura           |
| B. John Kennedy    | G. Ella               | L. El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz | Q. Shorty          |
| C. Lamumba         | H. Sophia             | M. Allah                    | R. Cassius Clay    |
| D. Alex Haley      | I. Martin Luther King | N. Reginald                 | S. Talmadge Thayer |
| E. Earl Little     | J. Dr. Shawarbi       | O. M. S. Handler            | T. Ossie Davis     |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. American pilgrim
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. nurse
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. interviewer reporting for *Playboy*
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. victim of the Ku Klux Klan
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Islamic deity
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. the Gohannas' foster son
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. convicted murderer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. victor over Sonny Liston
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. adulterer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. eulogizer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. leader whose death proves that chickens come home to roost
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. inmate in an asylum
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Egyptian muslim
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. African leader
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. alluring convertible owner

#### Part III: Identification (10 points)

Explain the significance of the following details:

- 1. hajj
- 2. .25 automatic
- 3. Gohannas
- 4. W. D. Fard
- 5. firebomb

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

### Part II: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Complete each of these statements.

1. Malcolm goes to prison because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Malcolm stops visiting Louise because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The journey to Mecca is important because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Elijah Muhammad quarrels with Malcolm because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The man of the Muslim household sets the example because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Kennedy's death is a turning point because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Malcolm is photographed with a rifle because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Black Muslim leadership draws media attention because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. "Detroit Red" gives up his criminal past because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. As a martyr, Malcolm has become a hero and role model because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Account for the religious and philosophical changes in Malcolm.
2. Describe American race relations in the 1950s.
3. Discuss the significance of the visit to black Africa.
4. Summarize Malcolm's most impressive speeches.
5. Explain Alex Haley's involvement in Malcolm's life and autobiography.

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Setting Identification (20 points)

Identify a setting that fits each of the following descriptions. Select your answers from the list that follows.

- |                 |                             |                   |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Africa       | F. Charlestown State Prison | K. Lagos          | P. Chicago            |
| B. Onyx Club    | G. Omaha                    | L. Agra           | Q. Phoenix            |
| C. Lansing      | H. barber shop              | M. Savoy Ballroom | R. Roxbury            |
| D. Chicago      | I. Casablanca               | N. draft board    | S. Harvard Law School |
| E. Parker House | J. Muslim Mosque Inc.       | O. Pullman car    | T. Audubon Ballroom   |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Nation of Islam proposes a \$20 million temple.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Malcolm is renamed Omowale.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Malcolm is born the seventh child of Earl and Louise Little
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Marcus Garvey's intended home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Malcolm pretends to be insane.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Big churches and the black social world first attract Malcolm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Malcolm is high on cocaine and barely escapes arrest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Malcolm makes a last stop in northern Africa.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Malcolm addresses the Organization of Afro-American Unity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Malcolm begins serving time for fourteen felonies.

#### Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill in the paired blanks with answers that complete each statement.

1. After returning from a hajj to \_\_\_\_\_, Malcolm increases his attacks on \_\_\_\_\_ for immorality.
2. Malcolm works for the Gar Wood \_\_\_\_\_ and registers for the draft as a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. In 1954, Malcolm is assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ three months before becoming minister of Harlem's \_\_\_\_\_.
4. On his sixth anniversary, Malcolm and his family rest at the Miami home of \_\_\_\_\_, who becomes a Muslim after beating \_\_\_\_\_ in the ring.
5. Malcolm's funeral follows \_\_\_\_\_ rituals, with actor \_\_\_\_\_ delivering the eulogy.

## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

### Part III: Identification (30 points)

Place an X by statements that refer to Malcolm X.

- 1. retires to Phoenix
- 2. wants brotherhood to be the center of his faith
- 3. hears a rumor that his car will explode
- 4. dies before the birth of Gamilah Lamumbah
- 5. travels to Egypt, Arabia, Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana
- 6. moves in with Ella after he is paroled
- 7. is sent to a detention home in Mason, Michigan
- 8. takes the name "Detroit Red" for the hue of his skin
- 9. follows Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement
- 10. sees the Ku Klux Klansmen run over his father's head
- 11. leaves a stolen watch at a repair shop
- 12. leads Muslims in a riot against Harlem police
- 13. confers with Prince Faisal
- 14. defies Talmadge Thayer, Norman 3X Butler, and Thomas 15X Johnson
- 15. works for *Reader's Digest* and *Playboy*

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Summarize media rumors and innuendo about Black Muslims.
2. Describe the stages of Malcolm's emergence as a leader.
3. Explain the Nation of Islam's veiled attacks on Malcolm.
4. Account for Malcolm's success at launching his own sect.
5. Compare Malcolm's childhood with his own children's lives.



## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

### ANSWER KEY

#### VOCABULARY TEST

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. accordance  | 9. dress       |
| 2. ritual      | 10. intervals  |
| 3. traditional | 11. shuffle    |
| 4. shrouds     | 12. barricades |
| 5. bier        | 13. bronze     |
| 6. Koran       | 14. tarried    |
| 7. retinue     | 15. gesturing  |
| 8. resumed     |                |

#### COMPREHENSION TEST A

##### Part I: Matching (30 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. L | 6. L  | 11. B |
| 2. K | 7. S  | 12. F |
| 3. D | 8. R  | 13. J |
| 4. E | 9. A  | 14. C |
| 5. M | 10. T | 15. H |

##### Part II: Identification (10 points)

1. pilgrimage to Ka'ba in Mecca that is required of each Muslim
2. weapon with which Malcolm arms himself for robbery and mugging
3. foster family with whom Malcolm lives in Michigan
4. founder of the Nation of Islam
5. weapon that endangers Malcolm's family at their New York home on Feb. 13, 1965

##### Part III: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Answers will vary.

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST B

##### Part I: Settings (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. R  |
| 2. K | 7. B  |
| 3. G | 8. I  |
| 4. A | 9. T  |
| 5. N | 10. F |

##### Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

1. Mecca, Elijah Muhammad
2. Gar Wood truck factory, conscientious objector
3. Philadelphia, Temple Seven
4. Cassius Clay, Sonny Liston
5. Muslim, Ossie Davis

##### Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1.   | 6.    | 11. X |
| 2. X | 7. X  | 12.   |
| 3. X | 8.    | 13. X |
| 4.   | 9.    | 14.   |
| 5. X | 10. X | 15.   |

##### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X**

**TEACHER'S NOTES**

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X**

**TEACHER'S NOTES**



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