



Slam

by Walter Dean Myers

Teacher's Guide

Written By Kathy Sammis

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Synopsis

Chapter 1

Greg "Slam" Harris of Harlem narrates his story in an authentic, slangy urban black voice. Slam is a gifted high-school basketball player: "I can hoop. Case closed." While he has his game all together on the court, life off the court is another matter. Slam's father is out of work and drinking too much, so Pops and Moms argue often. Slam, a junior, is in his first year at mostly white Latimer Arts Magnet School in the Bronx, and Principal Tate has just warned him that his poor grades may interfere with his plans to be a basketball star for his new school. Slam casually shows up late for basketball tryouts and then declines to go into a tryout game as a center ("I'm a guard"). This immediately puts him at odds with Coach Nipper, who remarks to Assistant Coach Goldstein that they don't need any prima donnas on the team. To repay the coach for this perceived disrespect, Slam disses the coach with his superior game and superior attitude when they go one-on-one.

Chapter 2

Red-headed teammate Ducky shows Slam a local newspaper article predicting that the Latimer basketball team will post its fifth consecutive losing season. Back in Harlem after school, Slam hangs out with his "sort of" girlfriend Mtisha and his childhood, best friend Ice—also a very gifted hoopster. The boys have been like brothers, but Slam reflects that "things got a little cool" between them in the past year, that Ice seems to be getting harder. But, Slam thinks, that's the way it has to be: "You live in the hood and either you get hard or you get wasted." Slam feels that he's in love with Mtisha, who plans to go on to college, but she cautions him to hold back on those feelings. She also says she thinks Ice is now dealing dope, because he suddenly has a lot of

money. Slam doesn't want to think that's possible; they've seen drugs mess up too many people. He also worries about dissing Ice by suggesting he's dealing if in fact he isn't.

Chapter 3

Moms takes Slam to visit her mama, Grandma Ellie, in the hospital. Grandma's tumor has spread, and Moms is very sad and worried. Slam resents Grandma's advice about dealing with his bad grades; he feels she is disrespecting him.

Chapter 4

Coach Nipper criticizes Slam on the court for failing to follow team-play directions, and Slam walks off, angry at the coach for dissing him once again. In the locker room, Goldy counsels Slam to accept the fact that Nick and Trip are the starting guards; life isn't always fair. Slam thinks he will have to either quit the team and "give up what I was about or go back and still play with the team and just give up my respect."

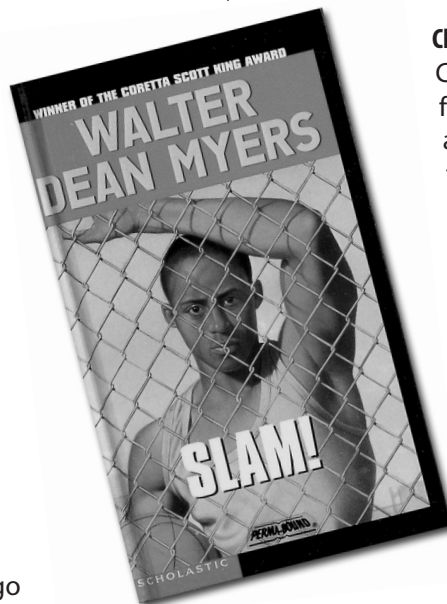
Chapter 5

Slam is sent to Mr. Tate's office, where his mother is waiting with a black college-graduate engineer. This Mr. Randall is a member of a volunteer

organization that tutors and counsels young blacks. Mr. Tate thinks Slam needs tutoring in math, which Slam takes as a suggestion that he is stupid. Slam also thinks that accepting a male tutor would be showing disrespect to his father. Latimer's match against Regis opens the seven-game season and provides the first in a series of crisply written court-action narratives. Slam chafes at bench-sitting, but Coach Nipper puts him in for the second half.

Chapter 6

Slam's slam over the Regis center energizes the Latimer team, which brings up a come-from-behind eleven-point win. After the game, Slam cruises with Ice in Ice's borrowed Mercedes-Benz, at first with two girls, then alone, revisiting their long-held NBA dreams. But Slam



can't bring himself to take this opportunity to talk to Ice about drug dealing. At school, Slam and a white girl, Margie, are assigned as partners; Margie agrees to edit a video Slam will shoot of his neighborhood and neighbors with a camera borrowed from the school. At school, Slam basks in the postgame recognition that he's the man. Next day after practice, the team's only other black player, Jimmy, tells Slam that Coach says Slam has an attitude problem, and Jimmy agrees that Slam should act more like part of the team.

Chapter 7

Mtisha confronts and spurns Slam about kissing the girl Kicky in Ice's Benz; Slam apologizes but doesn't think he did anything wrong—other than hurting Mtisha—because Kicky came on to him. Mtisha is not mollified.

Chapter 8

Slam spends the weekend shooting hoop and video-tape. The Tuesday after New Year's, Mr. Greene unexpectedly gives Slam's class an algebra test. Slam stumbles through the problems hoping for some partial credit. Latimer plays its second game, against St. Peter's.

Chapter 9

Again, Slam warms the bench and Latimer is down at the half. Again, Goldy has advice for Slam—respond to the coach's view of him as a hot dog by playing his best whenever he does get into a game. Finally, with eight minutes to play and down by twelve, Coach Nipper puts Slam in. Again, Slam's play picks up the whole team, and Nick scores the winning foul shot. But Slam's elation fades when Goldy tells him his low math grades might pull him off the team.

Chapter 10

Margie reviews Slam's video of his hood and exclaims, "This is really the ghetto!" Disgusted, Slam leaves with the tape. Back in Harlem, Mtisha reconsiders while Slam pours out all his troubles. Mtisha says she will tutor Slam in math. Then, while Slam is talking with Ice on the street, two crack heads come to Ice for "a dime." Ice angrily sends them off. Now Slam is sure Ice is dealing...but maybe not, in spite of the classy clothes, the beeper, and the cell phone.

Chapter 11

Nick, like Jimmy, tells Slam he's got a great game but a bad attitude—thinking "the world owes you a living." That Friday, Latimer plays Country Day, and on Saturday, Trinity. Latimer wins against Country Day easily, and Slam gets in during the first half. Ducky, though, plays so

poorly he wants to quit the team. Slam says he'll watch Ducky's back on the court next time to help him—Slam's first real move toward team play. At home, Slam's nine-year-old brother Derek confesses he left the school video camera unattended on the stoop, and it's been stolen.

Chapter 12

Before the Trinity game, Nick asks Slam to play well with him because a college scout will be at the game to see Nick. Slam agrees but is hurt that no scout is coming to see him. Coach puts Slam in for nearly the whole game to handle Brothers, Trinity's fine player. Latimer is down 28-16 at the half, and Brothers is outplaying Slam. Slam declares, "Let's win" for the second half, and Nick directs the team to get the ball to Slam. Slam matches Brothers, and Latimer loses by one point at the buzzer.

Chapter 13

Mtisha resumes the math tutoring; Pops is relieved that there's now no need for the adult male tutor. Mr. Parrish urges Slam to continue with his neighborhood video, for a statewide arts contest, without Margie's "immature attitude." When Slam asks Goldy if he really has a shot at playing college ball, Goldy answers with his own father's advice: When you do what you love, as hard as you can do it, it will work.

Chapter 14

Slam finally tells Ice he thought Ice was dealing, and accepts Ice's denial and affirmation of their love for one another. Slam realizes, "Me and Ice were edging in on a truth and we both knew it...that big truth we knew was out there waiting to get us." Mtisha calls with good news: Carl at the Curio Shop bought the missing video camera from a crack head and is returning it to Slam.

Chapter 15

Slam and Mtisha watch the Trinity-Carver game, and Slam studies the Ice-Brothers duel. Ice dominates Brothers in the first half. In the second half with Carver firmly in control, Ice lets up on Brothers.

Chapter 16

Slam is glad to get a 740 on his P.S.A.T.—high enough so Slam can take any offered basketball scholarship. "Now I had to go out and get one," he thinks. But at the Hunter game, Coach Nipper starts Nick and Trip. Slam is furious; he feels he's earned his respect. Again, Goldy advises: don't let the coach play with your mind, "play for yourself and show what you can do" in the second half. Slam does, and the team comes together and wins by five.

Chapter 17

Mr. Parrish, the English teacher, racially insults Slam in a confrontation about an undone assignment. Karen, a classmate, grabs Slam and stops him from punching the teacher. While classmates argue Slam’s case to the principal, Goldy catches up with Slam, who explains his main grievance: his teachers constantly tell him what’s he’s done wrong, giving him no respect. Goldy counters with the advice that when a ballplayer trash-talks Slam on the court, he answers with his game. But “I don’t have a game off the court,” Slam says. Goldy responds, “Everybody is in the game off the court. You will play, and you will win or lose.”

Chapter 18

Slam reviews Mtisha’s tape of the Ice-Brothers matchup and notices that Brothers didn’t work Ice hard for the whole game; Slam will. Goldy tells Slam that twelve colleges want tapes of tomorrow’s Latimer-Carver game for the division championship—they want to see Ice against real competition: Slam.

Chapter 19

The Latimer-Carver game is played fast and furious. Slam sticks close to Ice, which begins to get Ice mad. In the second half, Ice lets up on dogging Slam as he had Brothers. With the score tied, seconds left, Slam scores a jumper over Ice to win the game.

Chapter 20

That evening, Slam and Mtisha attend a party at Ice’s. After a disturbance at the door takes Ice out of the apartment, Slam goes looking and finds Ice on the roof—with the strung-out junkie who had tried to crash the party, desperate for a hit. Ice gives her the vials, Slam angrily pushes Ice away (“You dealing ain’t you? You part of the life ain’t you?”), they fight until pulled apart, and Slam and Mtisha leave the party, both crushed.

Chapter 21

At school, everyone is buzzing about the basketball victory, while Slam is preoccupied with the loss of Ice—as a friend, to the doping life. Ice’s girlfriend Bianca tells Mtisha that Ice is “giving up messing with crack,” but Slam says he’s not hanging with Ice while waiting to see what he actually does. Meanwhile, the Latimer team practices for the city tournament, a rematch against Carver. Slam thinks about Ice: “He had his game, the same game I had, and I had thought the game would make us all right. It hadn’t.” But now Slam realizes he has to take his game off the court, too, and be strong as he plays the unending off-court game.

Timeline

- late November** Basketball tryouts; Slam joins the Latimer team.
- December 1** Mtisha tells Slam she thinks Ice is dealing dope.
- next week** Basketball practice; Coach Nipper names Nick and Trip as starting guards.
- week or two later** First game: Latimer beats Regis; Slam plays second half, cruises with Ice, Bianca, and Kicky afterwards.
- next day** Mtisha confronts Slam about kissing Kicky; Slam starts shooting his video.
- January 2** Slam fumbles the algebra test. Second game: Latimer beats St. Peter’s; Slam plays last eight minutes.
- next day** Mtisha offers to tutor Slam in math.
- Friday** Latimer beats Country Day; Slam plays from first half on. Derek loses the video camera.
- Saturday** Latimer loses by one point to Trinity; Slam plays nearly the whole game.
- Monday** Ice tells Slam he’s not dealing; Carl recovers the video camera.
- next day** Trinity-Carver (Brothers vs. Ice) game.
- next day** Latimer beats Hunter; Slam plays second half.
- 3 days later** Latimer-Carver (Slam vs. Ice) game; Latimer wins.
- that night** Ice’s party; Slam and Ice have climactic fight about Ice’s dealing.

Author Sketch

Walter Dean Myers is a widely read, widely admired author noted especially for his novels about young African Americans that offer an accurate, sometimes humorous, and well-rounded portrayal of black life and culture. Myers was born Walter Milton Myers in Martinsburg, West Virginia, in 1937. After his mother died, family friends Herbert and Florence Dean informally adopted Walter and took him and two of his sisters to Harlem when the boy was three years old. Myers loved growing up in Harlem, which was at that time an exciting, vibrant, cohesive community.



Hampered socially by a speech impediment early in life, Walter became an avid reader. He attended a prestigious academic high school, where a teacher recognized and encouraged his talent for writing. When Myers realized that his dream of attending college would be financially impossible to achieve, he became depressed and disillusioned. He formed a belief that a writing career was not a viable option for a black child from a family and community of laborers, that "I was defined by factors other than my ability." He began skipping school and educating himself instead by reading voraciously.

At seventeen, Myers joined the army; after his discharge, he moved back to New York City and worked at a series of unfulfilling odd jobs while also writing poetry, articles, and stories for magazines. He had a son and a daughter by his first marriage and a son Christopher with his second wife, Connie, in 1974. They then moved to a modest home in Jersey City, New Jersey. Myers finally earned his B.A. degree in 1984, from Empire State College.

In 1968, Myers won first place in the picture book category in a contest for minority writers sponsored by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. This resulted in the publication of his first book, *Where Does the Day Go?* in 1969. In 1970, Myers began a job as an acquisitions editor with publisher Bobbs-Merrill. For his second picture book, published in 1972, Myers changed his middle name to Dean to honor his foster parents. In 1975, an editor asked Myers to expand a story he had written, which became his first young adult novel, the funny, episodic *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde and Stuff*, set in Harlem. In 1977, Myers became a full-time writer, devoting himself to giving young readers of all races a realistic, strong, non-stereotyped portrayal of black people, their lives, and their culture. Myers has also written books on African-American history and biography, poetry-and-photograph albums, picaresque and historical tales, mysteries, adventure stories, and fantasies, for upper elementary and middle graders as well as young adults. Myers's many readers can expect a continuing stream of publications; Myers says in *Something About the Author Autobiography Series*, "The books come. They pour from me at a great rate. I can't see how any writer can ever stop."

Critic's Corner

Many of Myers' books have won awards and critical praise. Myers was the 1994 recipient of the Margaret A. Edwards Award given by the American Library Association for lifetime achievement in writing books for young adults. He also won the 1994 ALAN Award given by the NCTE for outstanding contributions to young adult literature. His 1999 novel *Monster* won Myers the first Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. Myers is especially admired for writing about, as *Book World* put it, "the kind of characters for whom few others write about at all"—urban black teenagers coming of age in an environment filled with violence, drugs, poverty, and family disruptions.

In *Slam!* Myers draws on his passion for basketball to parallel vivid court-action scenes with Slam's off-court struggles. *Publishers Weekly* called the novel a "gritty, feelingly told tale," while *Horn Book* praised the honesty of Myers' portrayal of Slam. *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* wrote, "Myers has a neat trick of making the reader see the world through Slam's streetwise, life-naïve eyes....Slam's language is rhythmic and slangy, uncontrived and immediate." *Book World* added that the novel "evinces a deep understanding of the forces that shape life in the inner city."

Selected Works of Walter Dean Myers

Fiction

Fast Sam, Cool Clyde and Stuff (1975)
Brainstorm (1977)
Mojo and the Russians (1977)
Victory for Jamie (1977)
It Ain't All for Nothin' (1978)
The Young Landlords (1979)
The Golden Serpent (1980)
Hoops (1981)
The Legend of Tarik (1981)
Won't Know Till I Get There (1982)
The Nicholas Factor (1983)
Tales of a Dead King (1983)
Motown and Didi: A Love Story (1984)
The Outside Shot (1984)
"Arrow" adventure/mystery series (1985-86)
Sweet Illusions (1987)
Crystal (1987)
Shadow of the Red Moon (1987)

Scorpions (1988)
Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid (1988)
Fallen Angels (1988)
The Mouse Rap (1990)
Somewhere in the Darkness (1992)
Mop, Moondance, and the Nagasaki Knights (1992)
The Righteous Revenge of Artemis Bonner (1992)
The Glory Field (1994)
Darnell Rock Reporting (1994)
Smiffy Blue, Ace Crime Detective (1996)
Slam! (1996) (Recorded Books, 2000)
The Journal of Joshua Loper: A Black Cowboy (1999)
The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: A World War II Soldier (1999)
Monster (1999)
145th Street: Short Stories (2000)
The Journal of Biddy Owens, the Negro Leagues (2000)
Handbook for Boys: A Novel (2002)
Three Swords for Granada (2002)
The Dream Bearer (2003)
The Beast (2003)
Shooter (2004)

Selected Nonfiction

Now Is Your Time! The African-American Struggle for Freedom (1992)
Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary (1993)
Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Fight for Haiti's Freedom (1996)
Amistad: A Long Road to Freedom (1998)
At Her Majesty's Request: An African Princess in Victorian England (1999)
The Greatest: Muhammad Ali (2001)
Bad Boy: A Memoir (2001)

Selected Other Works

Brown Angels: An Album of Pictures and Verse (1993)
Harlem: A Poem (1997)
Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam (poems) (2002)

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Horn Book, January/February 1997, pp. 63-64.
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 Jordan, Denise M. *Walter Dean Myers: Writer for Real Teens*. Enslow Publishers, 1999.
Kirkus Reviews, Oct. 15, 1996, p. 1536.
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Adolescent in the Novels of Walter Dean Myers," in
African-American Voices in Young Adult Literature, Karen Patricia
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Internet Sites for Walter Dean Myers

Learning About Walter Dean Myers

www.scils.rutgers.edu/special/kay/myers.html

Walter Dean Myers (Authors & Illustrators)

www.randomhouse.com/teachers/authors/myer.html

Walter Dean Myers (biographical sketch)

www.edupaperback.org/showauth.cfm?authid=63

Walter Dean Myers (biographical sketch and interview
transcript)

www2.teacher.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsand-books/authorstudies/authorstudies.jhtml

Walter Dean Myers (in his own words)

www.penguinputnam.com

General Objectives

1. To examine the qualities that make for enduring friendship and consider what demands and limits friendship involves
2. To consider ways to interrupt progression into a life of crime or heavy drug use
3. To identify qualities of an effective teacher and/or coach
4. To analyze the dynamics of family relationships
5. To discuss the elements of, and relative importance of, respecting and disrespecting ("dissing") in interpersonal relations
6. To discuss the need to take responsibility for making life's hard choices
7. To gain an understanding of the game of basketball

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the life problems Slam is experiencing, the ways he does or does not develop to deal with them, and the role that Mr. Goldstein's advice plays in this process
2. To understand the dynamics of Slam's relationship with Coach Nipper, Principal Tate, and his teachers Mr. Greene and Mr. Parrish
3. To note the racist attitudes and comments Slam encounters at his new school
4. To identify both the good and the bad elements of Slam's urban world
5. To analyze the parallels and differences between Slam's on-court and off-court life
6. To examine Slam's relationships with his family members, Mtisha, and Ice through the course of the novel
7. To discuss Slam's deep concern with respect and disrespect

The Importance of Setting

The primary settings are Slam's Harlem neighborhood plus a series of New York City high school basketball courts. Slam lives in a modest walk-up apartment with his family. Slam's hood is two-sided. It is full of drugs, violence, poverty, hard times, and dilapidation (the corner of Ice's former apartment building recently fell off). On the other hand, it's a vibrant urban community with a multitude of small businesses and a neighborly camaraderie. Children play on the street, and Slam often goes to the nearby park to play hoop. On school days, Slam makes the long subway trip to Latimer Arts Magnet School in the South Bronx. Action there is focused on the school's fourth-floor basketball court, where Slam practices and plays with the team under the critical eye of Coach Nipper. Gyms for the away games range from Trinity's old one with a "beat-up" locker room to Hunter's "dynamite" college facility. The novel's climactic scene, the fight between Ice and Slam, takes place on the roof of Ice's current apartment building in Harlem.

Literary Terms and Applications

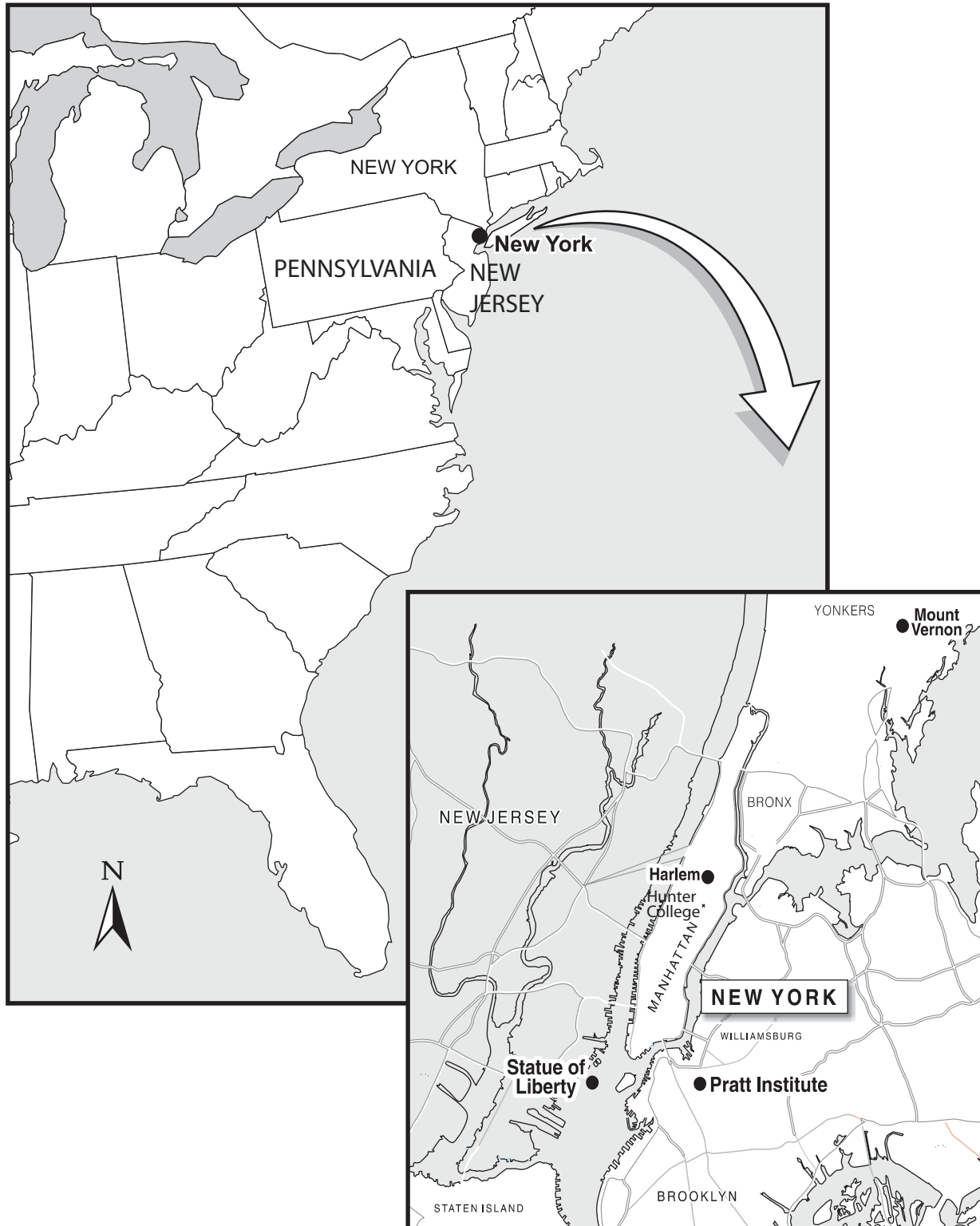
To enhance students' appreciation and understanding of the novel, present them with these terms.

Comic Relief: the interruption of a serious work or suspenseful adventure by short humorous scenes. Slam's interactions with his little brother Derek provide such scenes at regular intervals, in much the same way that

Jamal's interactions with his little sister Sassy provide comic relief in Myers's otherwise serious novel *Scorpions*.

First-Person Narration: the telling of a novel or short story from the point of view of only one person, in that

person's voice. In this novel, Slam tells his own story, in an authentic urban black voice that reveals his thoughts and feelings. Dialogue reveals the thoughts and feelings of the novel's other characters.



Realism: the technique and use of accurate detail in a work of fiction, often depicting middle or lower-class people and the commonplace details of their everyday lives. Myers is noted for his novels of urban realism depicting black people and their lives as strongly influenced by their inner-city, Harlem environment.

Sports Stories: novels that center around a protagonist's participation in a particular sport, a staple genre of young adult literature. As with *Slam!* most sports stories focus on character building and self-realization while also including plenty of exciting sports action.

Vernacular: non-standard language, often common to a particular region. Myers is often praised for his realistic use of inner-city black vernacular, which in this case is the voice of the narrator.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Fiction

James Bennett, *Squared Circle*
Bruce Brooks, *The Moves Make the Man*
Alice Childress, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich*
Chris Crutcher, *Athletic Shorts* and his sports novels
Mel Glenn, *Jump Ball: A Basketball Season in Poems*
Eloise Greenfield, *Sister*
Nikki Grimes, *Jazmin's Notebook*
Rosa Guy, *The Friends*
Kristin Hunter, *The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou*
June Jordan, *His Own Where*
David Klass, *Danger Zone*
Robert Lipsyte, *The Contender*
Victor Martinez, *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida*
Louise Meriwether, *Daddy Was a Numbers Runner*
Sharon Bell Mathis, *Listen for the Fig Tree, Sidewalk Story, and Teacup Full of Roses*
Jess Mowry, *Babylon Boyz*
Nadine Roberts, *These Are the Best Years?*
Gary Soto, *Buried Onions*
Cynthia Voigt, *Tell Me If the Lovers Are Losers*
Rich Wallace, *Shots on Goal*
Mary Wells, *When No One Was Looking*
Richard Wright, *Native Son* and *Rite of Passage*

Nonfiction

James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* and *You Should Have Seen Their Faces*
Gilda Bergin and Nancy Levitin, *Crack*
Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*
Marilyn Carroll, *Cocaine and Crack*
Veronica Chambers, *The Harlem Renaissance*

Debra Goldentyer, *Street Violence*
Geoffrey Jacques, *Free Within Ourselves: The Harlem Renaissance*
William L. Katz, *Black Legacy: A History of New York's African Americans*
Milton Meltzer, *The Black Americans: A History in Their Own Words*
James Preller, *NBA Game Day: An Inside Look at the NBA*

Audiocassette

Walter Dean Myers (Trumpet)

CD-ROMs

African American History: Slavery to Civil Rights (Queue/Clearvue)
American Journey—History in Your Hands: The African-American Experience (Primary Source Media)
Cultural Contributions of Black Americans (Clearvue)
Encarta Africana (Microsoft)
Simcity 2000 and *Simcity 3000* (Maxis)
Neighborhood Mapmachine (Tom Snyder Productions)

Internet

The African-American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide to the Study of Black History and Culture
lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html
Harlem 1900-1940
www.si.mich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/index.html
The Harlem Renaissance
www.nku.edu/~diesmanj/harlem_intro.html
The Universal Black Pages
www.ubp.com/
Meet the Author: Walter Dean Myers
www.eduplace.com/kids/hmr/mtai/wdmyers.html
New York: A Documentary Film Online
www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/
New York City Guide
www.ny.com/
Walter Dean Myers
www.kent.edu/virginiahiltonconf/Myersbio.htm

Video/DVD

Away We Go! In New York City (Library Video)
Good Morning, Miss Tolliver (Fase Productions)
Harlem (the Myers book, Spoken Arts)
Harlem Diary (Discovery School)
Hoop Dreams (New Line Studios)
Langston Hughes and Marcus Garvey (Library Video)
Marcus Garvey (Schlessinger Media)
New York: First City of the World (LDJ Prods./V.I.E.W. Video)
New York Scene: A Hip "How-To" (V.I.E.W. Video)
Nitty Gritty Basketball series (Golden Aura)
The Promised Land (Discovery Channel)
Real People: Violence Prevention—Don't Be a Victim (Sunburst)
Tough Guise (Media Education Foundation)
Working It Out: A Survival Guide for Kids (PSI Productions)

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in *Slam!* should include these aspects.

Themes

- coming of age
- responsibility
- self-esteem
- seeking validation
- respect
- survival amidst negative influences
- friendship
- family relationships
- disrespect
- peer relationships

Motifs

- basketball
- urban environment
- drugs and violence
- racism
- documentary videotaping
- school grades and P.S.A.T. scores
- athletic scholarships
- illness among the elderly

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. ...all the fuss about getting more black kids to go to the magnet schools... (Ch. 1, p. 7)
(A magnet school is a public school that offers innovative and specialized courses, aimed at attracting a racially mixed group of students from a broad urban area. Slam has just begun to attend Latimer Arts Magnet School in his junior year of high school. As its name says, Latimer offers specialized courses in the arts—visual, musical, drama, and so on. It also provides the needed academic courses, which are harder for Slam than the academic courses were at Carver.)
2. I hear him (Coach Nipper) saying something about not needing any prima donnas on the team. (Ch. 1, p. 12)
(A prima donna is, literally, the principal female singer in an opera or concert. The term is applied to anyone who is arrogant, temperamental, and/or vain. Coach Nipper has identified Slam as having prima donna characteristics because of Slam's response "I don't play center. I'm a guard." when the coach told him to get into the tryout game as a center. Coach Nipper continues to consider Slam a prima donna, and limits his playing time because of that, throughout most of the season.)
3. ... a lot of people were out on their stoops.... (Ch. 2, p. 19)
(Stoops are a familiar part of the urban landscape. A stoop is a small porch with steps at the entrance to a building. Urban apartment dwellers often spend a lot of time on their stoops, to escape indoor heat in the summer, to be part of the social scene of the neighborhood, and sometimes to get away from the dreariness of their apartments or tensions within their homes.)
4. She looked like a crack head. (Ch. 2, p. 20)
(Crack is a concentrated form of the drug cocaine, formed into pebblelike pellets for smoking. Crack is extremely potent and addictive. Addicts are called crack heads, and Slam tries to avoid them. The strung-out crack head who comes to Ice for the drug precipitates the climactic confrontation between Slam and Ice at the end of the novel.)
5. Everybody was looking at him (Ice) like they were waiting for him to hit the NBA. (Ch. 2, p. 29-30)
(The NBA is the National Basketball Association, the men's professional basketball league in the United States. Slam is at first confident that Ice wouldn't deal drugs because, with Ice's skill, he could be on the way to a lucrative career in the NBA, something that both Ice and Slam have dreamed about for years.)
6. "She had a tumor, but now it's spread." (Ch. 3, p. 37)
(A tumor is a mass of new tissue growth independent of its surrounding structures; a tumor can be benign or malignant. When a cancerous tumor spreads, it is an indication that the cancer is getting out of control. Slam's mother is worried that the spreading malignant growth may be killing her mama.)
7. "This is really the ghetto!" she said. (Ch. 10, p. 129)
(When Margie views Slam's videotape of his neighborhood and neighbors, she sees her stereotyped image of a black urban setting—a ghetto, a rundown section of a city where a disadvantaged minority group lives. Slam, naturally, is offended by Margie's reaction—this isn't a freak show, it's Slam's home, a many-faceted neighborhood with many friendly people.)
8. "...a college scout is coming to see me today." (Ch. 12, p. 152)
(Like Slam, Nick hopes to play college basketball, which would be a stepping stone to the NBA. Also like Slam, Nick can't afford

to go to college unless he gets an athletic scholarship, awarded because of his basketball skills. Colleges with athletic scholarships to award send scouts to high school games to observe and evaluate potential player-students. This is a big opportunity for Nick, and he asks Slam to play team ball and help to make him look good for the scout.)

9. One time he said he thought buzzards was circling over his head waiting for him to get weak enough to fall. (Ch. 13, p. 173)
(When Pops said this, Slam was much younger and took it literally, worrying that his father was seeing things. Now that Slam is older, he realizes that his father was using the image of the circling buzzards to describe his sense that whatever efforts he makes to hold his own and get ahead, for himself and his family, are constantly threatened by the challenging circumstances of life for a black male.)
10. Then he got busted and had to do half a calendar on Rikers Island. (Ch. 14, p. 181)
(Slam is describing Willie King, a man from the hood, who used to have a great basketball game and even attended a New York Knicks camp once. But then Willie was arrested—busted—and served six months in the New York City jail on Rikers Island in the East River. This is a familiar scenario that threatens to derail the dreams and hopes of Slam, Ice, and other Harlem youth.)

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 in the book.

Literal Level (Questions 1-4)

1. What problems is Slam currently trying to cope with in his life?
(He is struggling academically and socially at his new mostly white magnet school. His father is out of work and drinking too much, which results in frequent fights between Slam's parents. Slam's grandmother is very ill, possibly dying. Slam's superior, individualistic attitude has put him at arm's length from his teammates and at odds with his basketball coach, who restricts Slam's playing time. Slam is very confused about Mtisha's responses to his feelings for her, and he's very concerned about the developing distance between him and his best friend Ice, as well as the distinct possibility that Ice may now be dealing dope. Enveloping all of this is the urban environment in which Slam lives, with the ever-present drugs and violence that Slam tries always to stay away from.)

2. Why does Coach Nipper restrict Slam's playing time during games?
(The coach demands that Slam earn his place on the team through respect and responsibility and dedicated team play, not through flashy, individual moves. As Coach Nipper says to Assistant Coach Goldstein, he doesn't want any "prima donnas" on this basketball team. The more that Slam acts superior and sulks about not starting, the more bench-warming time Coach Nipper gives him. But the coach does recognize Slam's exceptional ability, and he puts Slam in each game in time to help pull out a team victory.)
3. What racist attitudes and comments does Slam encounter at his new high school?
(When white classmate Margie views the videotape of Slam's Harlem neighborhood—a place where Slam feels comfortable and at home—she exclaims, "This is really the ghetto!" To Slam, Margie is viewing his neighborhood and neighbors as a kind of freak show. Basketball teammate Nick asks Slam, "You think everybody's scared of you because you're black?" The English teacher, Mr. Parrish, delivers a direct racial slur to Slam in front of the entire class: "Don't be standing over me? Is that directly from your African background? Maybe from the We-Be tribe?" Mr. Parrish also stereotypes Slam and all residents of Harlem when he adds, "Why don't you just go out to your neighborhood and find a corner to stand on? That's what you want out of life, isn't it?" Coach Nipper remarks derisively, "We don't want to have this game breaking down into a two man jitterbug contest," referring to the Ice-Slam matchup in the earlier game. After the fight with Ice, and the confirmation that Ice is dealing dope, Slam doesn't feel that he can tell any of his white classmates about this troubling development—they won't understand; they'll just write it off as "a ghetto thing," something that automatically happens where Slam lives.)
4. What are the good and the bad elements of Slam's urban world?
(For Slam, his Harlem environment is a familiar, caring neighborhood, full of friendly people he has known for most of his life, and children playing in the streets and parks. These people try hard to make a decent life for themselves and for their families. But they face many challenges—drug use and drug dealing are pervasive, violence is frequent and often random, decent and steady jobs are not easy to come by, the housing is old and run-down, and many people are poor.)

Interpretive Level (Questions 5-7)

5. Compare Slam's attitude toward basketball with his attitude toward academics.
(Slam is dedicated to practicing and perfecting his hoop game. After school, and all summer, Slam plays basketball. As he tells Ducky, you can't just go out and play ball—"You got to work on

your game, man." Slam's approach to academics is just the opposite. He neglects his homework, fails to complete assignments when due, pays little attention in class, and doesn't care much about his grades, except when they threaten his place on the basketball team.)

6. Describe Slam's relationship with Mtisha.
(Slam aptly describes Mtisha as "sort of" his girlfriend. Slam feels that he loves Mtisha, and tells her so. Her responses to this are ambiguous. She tells Slam that she likes him but that he shouldn't fall in love with her, possibly because she is planning to go on to college, so they will be separated after their senior year of high school. But she has said she loves Slam, sometime before, although in a "half-kidding way," and she does kiss Slam, although she won't go any further. Mtisha responds very angrily when she learns that Slam cruised around kissing Kicky in the back seat of Ice's borrowed Benz, and she cares enough about Slam to offer to tutor him in math every day after school. While Slam tells Mtisha his "mouth is too small" to adequately express his feelings of love, Mtisha responds that she is afraid of saying too much when she and Slam talk about his love. The evening of Ice's party, Mtisha seems ready to take the relationship with Slam to another level, telling him he needs to prove his love to her that night—but the Ice-Slam confrontation intervenes.)

7. How does Slam's relationship with Ice change in the course of the novel, and why?
(Slam and Ice have been inseparable best friends since childhood; Slam has always felt as if Ice is his big brother. But, Slam reflects, this closeness cooled a bit last year during Slam's sophomore year at Carver. Slam feels that Ice has been getting harder, a natural reaction as you get older in the hood. Now, pushed by Mtisha to ask Ice if he is dealing dope, Slam resists. He doesn't want to disrupt their friendship, he doesn't want to believe Ice would be a dealer, and he doesn't want to disrespect Ice by suggesting he's dealing if he isn't. But Slam uneasily realizes that the signs are all there—the classy clothes, the beeper, the cell phone, the borrowed Benz, the rolls of cash, even two crack heads asking Ice for a dime. With Ice secretly dealing, and glossing over his activities, Slam and Ice no longer spend much time together. Hostility even flares between the friends on court during the Latimer-Carver game. The friendship is decisively breached, probably finally, during the rooftop fight when Slam confronts Ice as being a dealer ["You dealing ain't you? You part of the life ain't you?"] and Ice and Slam trade blows.)

Critical Level (Questions 8-10)

8. How does Mr. Goldstein's (Goldy's) advice point Slam toward a way of dealing with his problems?
(Goldy, the assistant basketball coach, takes on the role of Slam's mentor. His advice first helps Slam adjust to his role on the bas-

ketball team and to Mr. Nipper's coaching style and handling of Slam. Goldy's advice helps Slam see that fairness is a relative thing—it may not be fair that Slam isn't a starting guard, but then, maybe it's not fair for Slam to have so much more basketball talent than many others do. Goldy also guides Slam to realize that he has to put aside his resentment about sitting on the bench and play his hardest and best, every time, when he does get into games. Then, after the classroom blowup with Mr. Parrish, Goldy points the way for Slam to take his basketball court approach into the rest of his life—just as Slam counters trash-talking court opponents with his superior ball game, so Slam should respond to teachers who criticize him with a self-respecting "get it done" off-court game. Goldy helps Slam see that no one can opt out of the off-court game. It's the game of life, and everyone is playing in it. Slam is playing in that game, and he will win or lose, Goldy points out. This helps Slam realize that he must take his on-court attitude off the court and manage his problems; otherwise, he will lose by default.)

9. How do you evaluate Mr. Greene's and Mr. Parrish's teaching styles as applied to Slam?
(Answers will vary somewhat. While it is reasonable for each teacher to expect Slam to complete assignments and make an effort to learn the material, their confrontational style and disrespectful treatment of Slam seem counterproductive and even unprofessional. Certainly Mr. Parrish was out of line delivering racial slurs to Slam, and Mr. Greene's sneering comment that he is "tough enough to see that you don't graduate" in response to the Slam-Parrish blowup is also inappropriate.)

10. In what ways does the book's cover illustration aptly express the book's content?
(It aptly defines Slam as a basketball player, which sums up Slam's overriding image of himself. Slam's facial expression makes it clear that he is grappling with serious problems in his life. The fencing is, of course, part of the basketball court, but it also suggests the constrictions on Slam's life that he is struggling to overcome or, at least, deal with—the dangers of his urban environment that could trap him, the new academic challenges, the baffling social adjustments, the sense that he has no off-court game.)

Creative Level (Questions 11-12)

11. Imagine you are Mtisha, and write a series of journal entries describing events from your point of view. Or write a letter to Slam explaining your feelings about him.

12. Write an epilogue to the novel that tells what happens to Ice, Slam, and Mtisha—and any other characters—during the next year and a half (to the end of Slam's and Mtisha's senior year in high school).

Across the Curriculum

Art

1. Ask a friend or family member to pose for the Dürer artwork of the praying hands, as Karen does with Slam, and draw your own version of this famous artwork.
2. Find out about and report to classmates on the offerings in your school district for artistically gifted students.
3. Like Slam, try your hand at drawing a portrait of a friend.

Education/Sports

1. Investigate and report on the NCAA rules regulating college athletic scholarships and college athletes.
2. Draw up a list of qualifications required for sports coaches in your school district, and standards of eligibility and participation for student-athletes.
3. Find out what magnet schools you and your classmates might be eligible to attend, and what these magnet schools offer to potential student enrollees.

History and Social Studies

1. On a map of New York City, highlight the various locations mentioned in the novel. Create a map key that indicates the significance of each location relative to the novel's events.
2. Compare the Harlem of Walter Dean Myers' youth in the 1940s with the Harlem of today. Use images of Harlem, current and historical, to enhance your comparison.
3. Research and report on the life of Marcus Garvey, explaining why a park in Harlem would be named in his honor.
4. Trip's father was blinded in an attack on U.S. military forces in Lebanon. Find out and report on the details of this actual event in the 1980s.

Language Arts

1. Create a glossary of basketball terms that are used in the novel to enhance the understanding of students who are not familiar with this sport.

2. Write an appropriate title for each chapter of the book. Share chapter titles with classmates, and vote on a favorite title for each chapter.
3. Sit or lie down outside, or inside, with your eyes closed, and describe the various sounds you hear.
4. Read Walter Dean Myers' novel *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde and Stuff* or *Mojo and the Russians* or *The Young Landlords*. Compare the picture of Harlem in one of those books with the picture of that life in *Slam!*
5. Read other Walter Dean Myers "urban realism" novels, such as *It Ain't All for Nothin'* and *Motown and Didi* and *Scorpions*. Compare the tone and message of those novels with *Slam!*
6. Discuss with classmates other sports novels you have read, and compare plots, themes, characterizations, and so on.
7. Read about Walter Dean Myers' teenage years, and then compare the experiences and attitudes of Myers and Slam at school.
8. Write your own dialogue for a scene among teens that you might know.

Mathematics

1. Solve the problems on Slam's algebra test in Chapter 8 of the novel. Show your work to get full credit.
2. Calculate the statistical probabilities of the recipients of college basketball scholarships making it to the NBA. You could also calculate the possibilities of NBA rookies going on to meaningful careers in the NBA.

Music

1. Compose a school song, different from the usual school songs, which will charge up school spirit.
2. Listen to some Ice-T rap albums, and compare his work with that of current rappers/ hip hop artists.

Science/Health

1. Research and report on cocaine and crack cocaine—their chemical makeup, their effects on the body, their addictive qualities, and their economic/social impacts.

2. Research and report on AIDS—what it is, how it affects the body, how it is transmitted, treatments for HIV and AIDS, likely outcomes for those infected, methods that attempt to control its spread, and its economic/social impacts.
3. Arrange for a demonstration in your classroom of first aid for heart attack victims, including CPR. Was CPR the correct first aid response to the heart attack patient in the novel's Chapter 14?
4. In the novel, crack cocaine is the most common drug on the Harlem streets. Find out what is today's most common street drug, and report on its chemical makeup, its effects on the body, the extent of its use, and penalties for selling or possessing it.

Student Involvement Activities

1. With other classmates who are basketball players, demonstrate to classmates the various moves and play strategies that are described in the novel. Include an explanation of the distinctions among the positions of guard, center, and forward.
2. Make a videotape of your neighborhood and neighbors that captures the essence of where you live.
3. Counsel Slam about pursuing his visual art talent vs. pursuing his basketball talent. Be sure to include information on the pitfalls and potentials of both careers.
4. Watch a local basketball game and then write a vivid account of it for a school or local newspaper. Or, videotape a local basketball game and then add voice-over play-by-play commentary to the tape.
5. Act out favorite scenes from the novel with classmates.
6. Discuss with classmates what you think happens with Slam's, Mtisha's, and Ice's lives after the final scene of the novel.
7. Visit some of the Walter Dean Myers Web sites listed in Cross-Curricular Sources and the Bibliography sections. Then discuss with class-

mates what you have learned about the author and his goals and intentions in writing for young people.

8. Before you begin reading the novel, have on hand a map of New York City. As you read, locate and mark on your map the places and streets mentioned in the novel.
9. Discuss with classmates the respect/disrespect/masculinity issues that bother Slam so much.
10. Slam is very impressed with the Mercedes-Benz Ice cruises him around in, and Ice talks about customizing a Lexus. What would be your dream/luxury car, and why?

Alternate Assessment

1. Draw up a detailed character list for the novel. Next to each name, give a physical and character sketch, tell how the person is related to or involved with Slam, and explain what part that person plays in the novel's events.
2. Explain the ways in which Slam is streetwise yet naïve when it comes to "real life," as Mr. Goldstein (Goldy) remarks to Slam.
3. List Slam's problems with his current life, and then describe the elements of each problem and tell how Slam attempts to cope (or not) with each one.

Vocabulary

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| A. raiders | F. private teacher | K. unusual article | P. deserted |
| B. anxious | G. innocent, simple | L. rule-breaking | Q. shining |
| C. skill | H. freedom to act | M. directly related | R. not proud |
| D. refrigerator | I. freed of worry | N. athletic team | S. ravaged |
| E. outstanding | J. small porches | O. small bottles | T. sports official |

- ___ 1. Her eyes were glistening and I knew my moms was hurt by what he was saying.
- ___ 2. A lot of people were out on their stoops when I reached the neighborhood.
- ___ 3. "He wants to give the starters more latitude. They have to run the game."
- ___ 4. "We have a pretty good squad and we can be there at the end if we play together."
- ___ 5. We stole the ball twice and got them in a back-court violation.
- ___ 6. There was some orange juice in the fridge and I poured myself a glass.
- ___ 7. When I got down to Carl's Curio Shop he was talking to a girl trying to sell him two shiny things.
- ___ 8. The St. Peter's team was called the Marauders.
- ___ 9. They were using their center for some picks that looked illegal to me but the referee didn't call them.
- ___ 10. The coach looked over at me and I looked the other way. If he was expecting me to show humble he was wrong big time.
- ___ 11. "If you don't want to deal with the tutor from the school why don't you get some guys from the basketball team to help you?"
- ___ 12. "Are these all abandoned houses?" "People live there."
- ___ 13. Pops nodded to himself, and I thought he looked relieved.
- ___ 14. I was tense as I talked, almost holding my breath.
- ___ 15. "Nobody knows you outside of your immediate family and friends."
- ___ 16. The guy had an all right game but it wasn't bodacious.
- ___ 17. "How come a kid as streetwise as you seem to be is so naive when it comes to real life?"
- ___ 18. Their forward was looking for finesse but I came after him with muscle.
- ___ 19. When we hit 125th Street we saw this devastated-looking chick get on the train. I knew she was a head.
- ___ 20. Ice held out his hand to her and opened it, palm up. I saw two plastic vials.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- | | | | | |
|---------|-----------|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| A. Slam | C. Mtisha | E. Mr. Nipper | G. Mr. Parrish | I. Ducky |
| B. Ice | D. Derek | F. Mr. Tate | H. Mr. Goldstein | J. Brothers |

- ___ 1. Short, red-headed player who sometimes seems afraid of the basketball
- ___ 2. Slam's love who plans to go on to college
- ___ 3. Head coach of Slam's basketball team
- ___ 4. Slam's little brother
- ___ 5. Principal of Slam's high school
- ___ 6. Skilled pony-tailed basketball player for Trinity
- ___ 7. Seventeen-year-old basketball player with outstanding artistic talent
- ___ 8. English teacher whom Slam almost punches
- ___ 9. His real name is Benny Reese
- ___ 10. Assistant coach of Slam's basketball team, and Slam's mentor

Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

- When Slam says, "I can _____," he means he plays basketball very well.
- A foul shot in basketball scores _____ point(s).
- To _____ a basketball means to move it along the court with a series of bounces.
- Ice's girlfriend is named _____.
- Slam gets a grade of 34 on his _____ test.
- Slam gets into trouble with his girlfriend for kissing _____ in Ice's car.
- Slam lives and goes to school in _____ City.
- Slam attends _____ Arts Magnet School.
- For a school assignment, Slam does a very good _____ project about his neighborhood.
- Both Ice and Slam have long dreamed of having adult careers in the _____.
- Slam's real name is _____.
- The school principal and Slam's mother both think that Mr. Randall should _____ Slam in math.
- Slam is more worried about getting hooked on _____ than on getting AIDS.
- _____ High School is the defending city basketball champion.
- Slam's name for his father is _____.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. Slam's mother often cooks (**wedgies, collard greens, stewed goat, shrimp**) for dinner.
2. Derek is (**six, eight, nine, eleven**) years old.
3. Slam and his mother visit Grandma Ellie in the (**hospital, nursing home, city jail, penthouse**).
4. (**Nick, Jimmy, Goldy, Carl**) is a starting guard on Slam's basketball team.
5. Slam's partner on the video project is (**Mtisha, Kicky, Karen, Margie**).
6. Slam's current high school is in (**the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, Queens**).
7. Slam scores (**690, 740, 950, 1100**) on his P.S.A.T.
8. Slam hates it when his teachers (**ignore, flunk, bond with, diss**) him.
9. Ice and Slam fight each other in/on the (**stoop, roof, stairs, basement**) of Ice's building.
10. Slam is offended when Margie calls his neighborhood a (**ghetto, suburb, slum, homeland**).

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Why is basketball so important to Slam?
2. Compare Slam's life on and off the court.
3. How does the relationship between Slam and Ice change over the course of the novel?

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each quotation. Find the character who speaks the words in the list below. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the quotation number. Use each name only once.

- | | | | | |
|---------|-------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| A. Slam | C. Mtisha | E. Mr. Nipper | G. Mr. Greene | I. Margie |
| B. Ice | D. Brothers | F. Mr. Harris | H. Mr. Goldstein | J. Nick |

- ____ 1. "Tough enough to see that you don't graduate. How's that for tough?"
- ____ 2. "This is really the ghetto!"
- ____ 3. "And I walk the walk, black boy."
- ____ 4. "We don't want to have this game breaking down into a two man jitterbug contest."
- ____ 5. "You checking out my closet, figuring out how much I get paid, you must be FBI or something."
- ____ 6. "You want fair? How come a kid as streetwise as you seem to be is so naive when it comes to real life?"
- ____ 7. "Sometimes I think all you guys are just heartbreaks waiting to happen."
- ____ 8. "Cop a walk! Go on and lose the game!"
- ____ 9. "A college scout is coming to see me today. I can't look good if you and I aren't playing together."
- ____ 10. "I just ain't interested in nobody coming to my house and being no big brother to any of my kids. I'm the man in my house."

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Write a one- or two-word answer to each of the following questions.

- _____ 1. What position does Slam play on the basketball team?
- _____ 2. How many points does a layup score in basketball?
- _____ 3. What year of high school is Slam in?
- _____ 4. What is Slam's real name?
- _____ 5. What section of New York City does Slam live in?
- _____ 6. What high school do Ice and Mtisha attend?
- _____ 7. What item of Slam's does Derek carelessly lose?
- _____ 8. Who is the author of this novel?
- _____ 9. What subject does Mr. Greene teach?
- _____ 10. What illegal activity has Ice become active in?
- _____ 11. Which member of Slam's family is very ill, maybe dying?
- _____ 12. On what test does Slam score 740?
- _____ 13. What is Slam's name for his mother?
- _____ 14. Who runs the neighborhood Curio Shop and gets the video camera back to Slam?
- _____ 15. What derisive name does Ice keep calling Slam during and after their fistfight?

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. Slam attends the magnet school because he is talented in **(music, science, sports, visual arts)**.
2. In basketball, a slam is a **(jumper, dunk, layup, foul shot)**.
3. Slam loves cruising in Ice's borrowed **(Benz, Lexus, Cadillac, Humvee)**.
4. When Mtisha tells Slam he has to pay the curio shop owner "a dime" for the recovered camera, she means **(10 cents, \$1, \$10, \$100)**.
5. The head basketball coach calls Slam a **(crack head, prima donna, punk, racist)**.
6. Nick and Slam both hope for a **(handout, mentor, Pell Grant, scholarship)** to go to college.
7. **(Margie, Karen, Mtisha, Bianca)** stops Slam from punching their teacher in class.
8. When he is out of a job, Slam's father **(drinks alcohol, does drugs, steals purses, beats his boys)**.
9. Slam is **(fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, nineteen)** years old.
10. **(Nick, Ducky, Jimmy, Ice)** is the only other black player on Slam's basketball team this year.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two of the following questions and answer in complete sentences.

1. What problems does Slam have with his teachers, principal, and coach?
2. Describe the relationship between Slam and Mtisha.
3. What advice does Mr. Goldstein (Goldy) give Slam?

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Q | 6. D | 11. F | 16. E |
| 2. J | 7. K | 12. P | 17. G |
| 3. H | 8. A | 13. I | 18. C |
| 4. N | 9. T | 14. B | 19. S |
| 5. L | 10. R | 15. M | 20. O |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. I | 6. J |
| 2. C | 7. A |
| 3. E | 8. G |
| 4. D | 9. B |
| 5. F | 10. H |

Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. hoop | 9. videotape, documentary |
| 2. one | 10. NBA |
| 3. dribble | 11. Greg Harris |
| 4. Bianca | 12. tutor |
| 5. algebra (math) | 13. crack |
| 6. Kicky | 14. Carver |
| 7. New York | 15. Pops |
| 8. Latimer | |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. collard greens | 6. the Bronx |
| 2. nine | 7. 740 |
| 3. hospital | 8. diss |
| 4. Nick | 9. roof |
| 5. Margie | 10. ghetto |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. G | 6. H |
| 2. I | 7. C |
| 3. D | 8. A |
| 4. E | 9. J |
| 5. B | 10. F |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

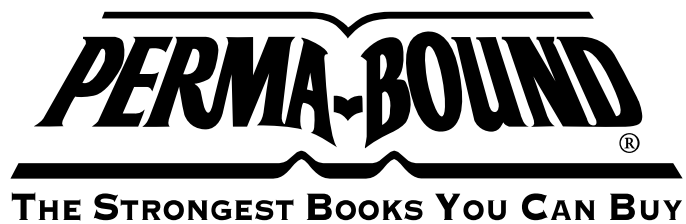
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. guard | 9. math |
| 2. two | 10. drug dealing |
| 3. junior | 11. Grandma (Ellie) |
| 4. Greg Harris | 12. P.S.A.T. |
| 5. Harlem | 13. Moms |
| 6. Carver | 14. Carl |
| 7. video camera | 15. punk |
| 8. Walter Dean Myers | |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. visual arts | 6. scholarship |
| 2. dunk | 7. Karen |
| 3. Benz | 8. drinks alcohol |
| 4. \$10 | 9. seventeen |
| 5. prima donna | 10. Jimmy |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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