

Course Title: Literary Experience

Grade: 9

Title: *Monster*

Author: Walter Dean Myers

Genre: Fiction

Editorial Review from Amazon.com:

"*Monster*" is what the prosecutor called 16-year-old Steve Harmon for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience-store owner. But was Steve really the lookout who gave the "all clear" to the murderer, or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time? In this innovative novel by Walter Dean Myers, the reader becomes both juror and witness during the trial of Steve's life. To calm his nerves as he sits in the courtroom, aspiring filmmaker Steve chronicles the proceedings in movie script format. Interspersed throughout his screenplay are journal writings that provide insight into Steve's life before the murder and his feelings about being held in prison during the trial. "They take away your shoelaces and your belt so you can't kill yourself no matter how bad it is. I guess making you live is part of the punishment." Jennifer Hubert

Myers, proves, with *Monster*, that he has kept up with both the struggles and the lingo of today's teens. Steve is an adolescent caught up in the violent circumstances of an adult world--a situation most teens can relate to on some level. Readers will no doubt be attracted to the novel's handwriting-style typeface, emphasis on dialogue, and fast-paced courtroom action. By weaving together Steve's journal entries and his script, Myers has given the first-person voice a new twist and added yet another worthy volume to his already admirable body of work.

Required Student Response: Identify elements of characterization and plot in the novel. You should take these notes in a notebook or on post-its within the text as you read.