Things that are very important, irreplaceable, or cherished are typically considered to be of high “value.” These valuables can be physical objects such as electronics, jewelry, cars, and homes. Loved ones such as friends, family, and pets can also be described as “valuables.” Another type of “valuable” is the more abstract and deeply held beliefs that guide individual’s lives such as honesty, loyalty, punctuality, integrity, etc. These are called “Personal Values.”

“Personal Values” is another theme that regularly emerges throughout “The Other Wes Moore” as we learn about the different Wes Moores’ lives, their decisions, and the challenges they each encounter. Students will build their understanding of “Personal Values” and use this theme to ground their thoughts, discussions, and written work in this next series of learning opportunities related to “The Other Wes Moore.”
**Common Core Standards Addressed in this Section:**

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

- Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, and presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.

- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

- Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

These discussion questions are designed to encourage students to think deeply about the scenarios and ideas presented in “The Other Wes Moore.” Specifically, these discussions will build students’ reading comprehension skills, allow them to connect the book to their own lives, provide opportunities for them to learn from their classmates, and increase their critical thinking skills.
Teacher Tip: Remind your students about the theme of “Personal Values” and encourage them to respond with that theme in mind. Although these discussion questions will guide the conversation, the teacher should ensure that all comments are grounded by the overarching theme so that students’ understanding of “Personal Values” is reinforced.

Read the following prompts and have a discussion with a partner, small group, or your class.

1| What do we mean when we talk about “personal values”?

2| Is it important to have personal values? Why or why not?

3| Which person from “The Other Wes Moore” do you think had strong personal values? Why?

4| Which person from “The Other Wes Moore” do you think lacked strong personal values? Why?

5| We learn that Wes and Nikki had a strong relationship and that they also fought as many siblings do. Why was it so important to Joy Moore to punish Wes when he hit Nikki? How did his father react? What do we learn about Joy Moore's history that would make her react to this incident in such a way?

6| On page 42, we learn that Wes’s mother and grandparents had a lot of rules for Wes. What were some of their rules? Do you think their rules were fair or too strict? Why do you think they had so many rules? How does Wes’s experience with rules and structure relate/differ from your experiences?

7| On page 50 Wes writes about time when he exaggerated the reason he was suspended from school. In this case, Wes felt that bloody fight was more respected than an accident that led to someone getting hurt. What does this indicate about Wes’s personal values at the time of this incident?

8| Discuss the types of friends that the two Wes Moores had. Talk about Wes's friendship with Justin as well as the other friends described in the book. Talk about the friends the other Wes Moore had. How did they influence Wes?

9| One of the “other” Wes Moore’s female friends says on page 102, “Get up and walk me out! Be a gentleman.” How might this example relate, or not relate to Wes’s personal values?

10| Imagine that the two mothers were able to meet. Discuss a conversation that Mary and Joy might have today. Discuss what they might have discussed when their boys were three years old? Thirteen years old?

11| We learn about Wes's South African family on pages 166–168. What are some of the values Wes and his new family seem to share?
PERSONAL VALUES INVENTORY

In this activity, students will think critically about their personal values, identify the origins of their personal values, provide examples in which they demonstrate their personal values in their lives, and make inferences about the personal values of either Wes Moore.

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<tr>
<th>Common Core Standards Addressed in this Activity:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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<td>• Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.</td>
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<th>Teach Prior to Activity:</th>
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<td>An inference is when a person uses the information they read to draw their own logical conclusion that is not explicitly stated in the passage. For example, On page 72, Mary discovers that her son is dealing drugs. The author explains that, “She wasn’t only upset about the drugs, she was upset about the lying.” In this example, the reader can make an inference that Mary taught her sons to be honest and trustworthy, which explains why she was upset that Wes was lying to her.</td>
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<th>Objectives:</th>
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<td>• Students will brainstorm different personal values and prioritize the five that are most important to themselves.</td>
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<td>• Students will identify the person(s) that instilled those values in them and name specific examples in which they demonstrated each of those values.</td>
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<td>• Students will make inferences and identify the personal values that either Wes Moore might list.</td>
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<td>• Students will use specific passages from “The Other Wes Moore” to support their responses.</td>
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<th>Individual Work:</th>
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<td>1] The introduction to this theme mentions a few examples of personal values (honesty, loyalty, punctuality, integrity). Work with a small group of 3–5 students and brainstorm as many personal values you can think of. Assign a note taker to write them down.</td>
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<td>2] Refer to the list of personal values you created with your group. Select the five personal values that are most important to you and write them on a list.</td>
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<td>3] Next to each of the five personal values on your list, identify the person(s) that instilled those values in you. Next, provide a specific example from your life in which you demonstrated that particular value.</td>
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<td>4] On a separate piece of paper, write the five personal values that you believe either Wes Moore might list if he were asked to complete a similar activity. Use specific examples from the book, with page numbers, to support your list of personal values (you will likely need to make a few inferences to do this).</td>
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DECISION MAKING ACTIVITY

We learn that the other Wes Moore was making a lot of money dealing drugs. Do you think that Tony and his mother knew where Wes was getting the money to buy clothes and shoes? What does Mary do when she discovers Wes's drugs? How does he react and how does Tony and his mother react? Keeping this scenario in mind, this activity will have students identify the decisions and the outcomes described in “The Other Wes Moore.”

Common Core Standards Addressed in this Activity:

- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Teach Prior to Activity:

Cause and Effect describes the relationship between two occurrences in a passage when one occurrence makes the other occurrence happen. For example, on pages 87–89, Wes shares a story in which he accidently caused his sister’s lip to bleed. When his mother heard this news, she slapped Wes on the face and made the decision to send him to military school. In this example, Wes’s actions and his sister’s bleeding lip is the cause and the effect is that he is slapped in the face and eventually sent to military school.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify examples of cause and effect in written passages.
- Students will link individual’s decisions with specific outcomes.
- Students will predict ways that outcomes can change when different decisions are made.
Individual Work:

1. Read the following passage from page 14:

The ambulance crew loaded my father onto the gurney and raced back out. By this point dozens of people lined the street. They watched as he was placed in the back of the ambulance. The doors slammed shut behind him. The loud sirens and flashing lights broke the silence of the neighborhood. Mommy quickly loaded us into the car and followed the ambulance to the hospital. The car was full of sound—Shani crying and Nikki making goo-goo noises to try to calm her down, and the roar of the ambulance in front of us—but it felt as silent as a tomb. No talking. No questions. Just the white noise of the ambulance, one sister crying, and the other struggling to comfort her without words.

2. In this example, what are the occurrences that cause something else to happen?

3. In this example, what are the effects that happen as a result of the items you indentified in question #2?

4. Prior to this horrible incident, what were the decisions that Wes's father made? What were the decisions that the doctors at the hospital made?

5. What were the consequences of these decisions? How might the story have changed if different decisions were made?

6. Think about other decisions made by the people in “The Other Wes Moore” and complete the following chart.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Decision and Outcome</th>
<th>How would this outcome change if a different decision was made?</th>
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This section will increase students’ comprehension of “The Other Wes Moore” through the writing process. Specifically, students will be asked to develop written responses to prompts in different formats, for different purposes, and for different audiences.
1| A persuasive writing piece encourages others to think or act in a certain way. On pages 112–113, someone approaches Wes and asks, “Do you guys know where I can buy some rocks?” As an instinct, Wes suspects he’s a cop and says “no.” But he decides to re-approach the man and sells him drugs. Pretend you are with Wes on this day and write three paragraphs trying to persuade him not to sell drugs.

• Pre-writing: Think about the personal values that Wes likely has and the potential outcomes if he continues to sell drugs.

• Draft: Write three paragraphs persuading Wes not to sell drugs. Your writing should include references to his personal values and the potential negative outcomes of selling drugs.

• Final Version: After you have reviewed your draft and received feedback from a peer, parent, or teacher, write a final version of your three paragraph persuasive writing piece.

2| A descriptive writing piece uses details to describe a person, place, or scenario for readers. We learn that Valley Forge students live by a motto, “No excuses, no exceptions” and the honor code, “A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those that do.” Wes writes that those “were not simply words we had to memorize but words to live by.” Are these personal values you live by? If so, who instilled them in you and name specific instances in which you did, or didn’t, live by these values.

Write a four paragraph essay responding to these questions.

Teacher Tips: • Begin by ensuring students understand the prompt and introduce them to the rubric so that they know what they are striving for in each scoring category.

• Use the K/W/L Chart, Venn Diagram, or other graphic organizer of your choice to help students to organize their thoughts in a pre-writing activity.

• Give students a few vocabulary words that you would like them to use in their writing.

• Ask students to use their pre-writing when they write their first draft. Be sure to ensure that they follow the prompt, use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

• Partner two students together and ask them to edit each other’s work. Ensure that they know how to give and receive technical and critical feedback.

• Set a clear expectation and due date for them to submit their final draft.
### Common Core Standards Addressed in this Section:

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

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- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

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- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Now that students have read different passages from “The Other Wes Moore” and have completed various discussions, activities, and written assignments, they will now have the opportunity to engage in a debate with their peers.
"Ad Hominem" means “against the man.” Through this strategy, students should “attack” their opponent’s position or credibility. For example, a student might argue that Wes’s mother made a great decision to send Wes to the Valley Forge Military Academy. Since the opposing position might lack substantial evidence, since Wes experienced great success at the school, they might argue that a family member from the opposing position taught at a military school and therefore they have a biased position. Teachers can also teach students strategies for avoiding this “attack” such as restating the facts from the book supporting their position and directly asking their opponent to provide “hard” facts from the book as well.

A “Red herring” occurs when an irrelevant idea or piece of information is entered into the debate as a “distracter.” For example, if someone holds the position that the police officer should have arrested Wes after he was caught spray painting public property, they might add, “but since the city jails are so crowded, they let him go. This is why we should have more jails in the city.” The opposing position should know that the issue of overcrowded jails, in this case, is a “red herring” because it offers up new information that isn’t directly related to the debate question. This is also an opportunity to teach students to avoid speculation and ways to challenge opponents who offer speculative evidence.

Teacher Tips:

- Explain the purpose of the debate to students and model appropriate debate discourse and transitional phrases such as, “I respectfully disagree with that because…” “You make a good point about ____________, I hadn’t thought about that before.” “Can you clarify what you mean?” “Your response made me think about ____________.” These transitional phrases encourage students to be active listeners, to articulate their own opinion in response to others, and require that they utilize details from the book to support their position.

- Modify the debate format by alternating between partner/small group debates and debates with the whole class.

- For more experienced debaters or in “competitive” debates, teach students about a few debate strategies such as:
The purpose of these debate questions is to increase students' critical thinking and to strengthen their ability to critique, evaluate, and form an opinion based on the passages they have read.

1| On page 51 Wes writes that he learned, “Never look people in the eye. Don't smile, it makes you look weak.” What does Wes mean by this? Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

2| On pages 69–72, Tony is very violent and threatening toward Wes because he wants him to stay away from drugs. In this instance, do you feel that Tony's violence toward Wes is excusable?

3| When Wes accidently caused his sister's lip to bleed on page 89, his mother slapped him on the face and made the decision to send him to military school. Do you agree with her reaction in this situation?

4| After shooting Ray on page 105 we learn that, “Adrenaline was rushing through Wes's body, followed quickly by fear, but no regret.” Do you think Wes should have felt regret for what he did? How does the regret, or lack of regret, relate to his personal values?
Each day, we all make a series of decisions that determine the ways in which we live our lives. These can include small decisions such as what to wear and what to eat for breakfast or involve larger daily decisions such as the decision to go to school or the decision to complete homework assignments on time.

In “The Other Wes Moore,” we gain insight into lives of several people and we learn about the different decisions they each make. Some of these decisions have positive consequences and others have negative ones. Additionally, we see examples of long and short term decision making by the different individuals portrayed in the book.

This section will explore the theme of “Decision Making” and students will have opportunities to examine the decisions made by others and to critically think about their own past, present, and future decisions that impact their lives.