

Example Legend for Mind Mapping Connections in All American Boys

- (1) Rashad Butler – I sincerely empathize with Rashad. When I read the story of what happened at Jerry's, I felt the reading was very emotional. The worse the situation got, the more helpless I became as a reader. The line, "I just wanted to live," hit the hardest for me (23). My connection with Rashad comes from what is happening in our country today. Every day it seems there's a new story about police brutality towards a person of color or another protest. To read an account (even fictional) makes me think of all those other names and stories I've heard on the news and on social media that also make my heart hurt.
- (2) Quinn Collins – I personally connect with Quinn. Quinn is faced with challenging how he perceives his family and friends. Paul brought up Quinn after his dad died, but now he sees Paul in new light and isn't sure how to take it: "...the man I'd watched grind a kid into the sidewalk—I don't know—was like someone else. [...] I could hear his voice, and yet it wasn't him. I could see his face, and yet it wasn't him" (62). I've also had to relearn who some of my family was as I got older. They weren't the same people I had once saw them when I was little.
- (3) Paul Galluzzo – I completely dislike Paul. I think what he did to Rashad was terrible. I think that regardless of what Rashad did (or in this case didn't do), the amount of force and pain Paul put onto Rashad was excessive and brutal. I don't think he was "just doing his job." I mean, the way he kept beating Rashad was so terrible to read: "Each blow earthquaked my insides, crushing parts of me I had never seen, parts of me I never knew were there. 'Fuckin' thugs can't just do what you're told. Need to learn how to respect authority. And I'm going to teach you,' [Paul] taunted, almost whispering in my ear" (23). I feel Paul knew exactly what he was doing and should have a very clear idea that he was not just doing his job at this point. I do not like Paul.
- (4) David Butler – I don't necessarily hate David as I do Paul. There are just some things David says to Rashad that perplex me. I don't understand why David doesn't stand up for Rashad, but rather he asks what he did wrong and why. Instead of trying to understand him, David accuses Rashad by saying, "'I need to know what the hell you were thinking, shoplifting. Shoplifting? And from Jerry's of all places?'" (46). I felt even more connected to Rashad because of this because my dad and I also had problems while I was growing up. I don't understand why David didn't sympathize with his son more.
- (5) Spoony Butler – I like Spoony. He has the attitude of an activist! I sympathize with his need to help his little brother. I particularly like that part when he stands up to David: "'Calm down? do you know the stats? It's something like black people are twice as likely to have no weapons on them when they're killed by cops. Twice as likely!'" (53). I really enjoyed Spoony's passion and presence. I wish I had more people in my life that were this passionate about the things they believed in.
- (6) Guzzo – I'm not really sure about Guzzo. I don't like how he was quick to stand up for Paul right away, but I understood because it's his brother. But Guzzo didn't even see or know the whole situation yet and he says to Quinn, "'My brother has to deal with that shit every day,' Guzzo kept saying. 'And he just does it, no complaints. He's amazing'" (62). I see that he looks up to his brother, but he hasn't even taken the chance to look at Rashad's side of things. I am not sure about Guzzo yet, but hopefully he gains some understanding outside of his brother and family's perspectives.