

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
“Dreams from My Father”

Text guide by: Tara Lloyd

Copyright © TSSM 2010

TSSM

ACN 099 422 670

ABN 54 099 422 670

A: Level 14, 474 Flinders Street Melbourne VIC 3000

T: 1300 134 518

F: 03 97084354

W: tssm.com.au

E: info@tssm.com.au

CONTENTS

AUTHOR NOTES.....	5
Timeline of Barack Obama's Life	5
HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....	9
History of slavery and racism in the United States of America	9
Afro-centrism.....	12
The Jim Crow Laws.....	12
The Civil Rights Movement	12
Interracial marriages - 1967 Virginia	13
John F. Kennedy	13
Rosa Parks	14
Harold Washington.....	14
Martin Luther King.....	14
Timeline of Hawaii.....	16
Timeline of Chicago.....	17
History of Kenya.....	18
Timeline of Kenya.....	19
GENRE.....	20
Autobiography.....	20
Memoir	21
Title.....	21
Political memoir biography	21
STRUCTURE.....	22
Chronology	22
Continuity	22
Sections.....	22
STYLE.....	24
Active Voice.....	24
Heavily Descriptive Voice.....	24
Narrative.....	24
Non-fiction text.....	25
Orientation (Point of View, Voice)	25
Impartiality	25
Humour	25
SETTING.....	26
Kenya.....	26
Chicago.....	27
Hawaii.....	29
PLOT SUMMARY.....	30
CHARACTER PROFILES.....	31
Major Characters	31
Minor Characters	35

Character Relationships	37
THEMES AND ISSUES	38
Hope of reconciliation between races	38
Strength and persistence	38
Personal identity	39
Family identity	40
Racial Identity	41
Inequality and racism/ racial prejudice	42
IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS	43
SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS	47
FINAL EXAMINATION ADVICE	48
REFERENCES	50
References Used	50
References for Students	51

SAMPLE

AUTHOR NOTES

Timeline of Barack Obama's Life

1959

At age 23 Barack Obama's father (Kenyan) is awarded a scholarship at the University of Hawaii. He leaves his pregnant Kenyan wife Kezia and their baby son behind (not Barack Jr). He is the first African student to receive a place at this University.

1961

At the age of 25, Barack Obama Sr. Married Ann Dunham. She is an 18 year old white American student, and at their wedding she is already three months pregnant with Barack Obama Sr. At this time Ann does not know that Barack has a wife and child in Kenya. The marriage between Barack Sr and Ann is interracial and this was certainly uncommon in the 1960's, in fact it was still illegal in some states.

On the 4th of August 1960 Barack Obama Jr. is born and after the birth his mother Ann drops out of college.

1963

Barack Obama Sr. Goes to Harvard as he wins a scholarship. Again he leaves his wife and child behind (Barack Jr. is two years old when he leaves). Ann returns to her study and her parents (Barack Obama's grandparents) look after Barack.

1964

Ann Dunham and Barack Obama Sr. are divorced. Ann then falls in love with an Indonesian man Lolo Soetoro.

1965

Barack Obama Sr. completes his degree at Harvard and travels back to Kenya with Ruth Nidesand, the lady who later becomes his third wife. Barack returned to Kenya as he wanted to help reduce the poverty of his country.

1967

Barack's mother Ann marries Lolo. Barack is six years old and he and his mother and new stepfather move to Jakarta Indonesia (Lolo's hometown). Ann gets a job as an English teacher and Barack attends a Catholic school, however the house they live in has no stable electricity and the poverty and illness begins to affect their happiness.

1969

Barack, his mother and stepfather Lolo move to a better neighbourhood as Lolo is promoted. As a result Barack must move schools.

1970

Barack's half sister Maya is born. Despite this new addition to the family, Barack's mother Ann misses home and her relationship to Lolo disintegrates.

1971

At the age of ten, Barack is sent by his mother to Hawaii to live with his grandparents. She does this to enhance his education and offer him better opportunities than available in Indonesia. Later, Barack receives a scholarship to an upper-class prep school in Honolulu Hawaii. Known as 'The black kid from Indonesia', Barack feels like an outcast here as there are not many other black students. It is at this age that Barack's separation from his mother begins to have a considerable impact on him.

1972

Leaving Lolo behind, Barack's mother Ann leaves Indonesia and returns to Hawaii with two year old Maya. They live together in a small apartment in Honolulu.

Barack Sr. arrives in Hawaii for a short visit. He comments on his son's upbringing and Barack feels he has no right to make such suggestions. His visit is not seen as a positive one, it is portrayed as a confusing disturbance. This visit is the last time Barack Jr. sees his father.

1975

Throughout this year Barack is in high school and feels that he does not fit in. In trying to discover his true identity he attempts to act tough, get drunk and experiment with drugs.

1979

This is Barack's first year at Occidental College and here he becomes friends with many black students but still feels like an outcast. Barack transfers to Columbia University in New York after finishing his sophomore year. Here he excels as a student, he reads and explores many books on racial injustice.

1980

Ann Dunham divorces Lolo Seotoro.

1982

Now a 21 year old man, Barack finds out that his father died in a car accident. In the same year Barack becomes a community organiser in Chicago with aspirations to tackle and minimise poverty and racial prejudice. He works with a group called Developing Communities Project and with this group works to improve public housing conditions. With great disparity he works on school reforms, waste cleanups and job training. In the same year he is offered a place at Harvard Law School and must take student loans to pay for his tuition.