

## Scottsboro: An American Tragedy

Write a 3-4 sentence response to each of the following questions. Remember to use plenty of examples to back up your claims.

1. How did the events of the trial and the outcome of the trial make you feel?
2. How did the socio-economic background, racial background, geographical background, and religious background of both the accusers and the defendants help shape the events of the case? Consider the nine African American men, Ruby Bates and Victoria Price, Liebowitz (defending attorney), and the fact that the events took place in the South.
3. How was this trial an example of injustice?
4. Do you think that racism is still at work today? If so, how? If not, why?
5. Read the two poems at the bottom of the page. What is Hughes saying about the Scottsboro case?

## Langston Hughes on Scottsboro

Langston Hughes was one of the most important literary voices to emerge from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. His prolific output included poetry, novels, short stories, and plays. Hughes' work frequently focused on the lives and experiences of his fellow African-Americans; at age thirty, he penned a volume inspired by the Scottsboro case. Below are two poems from that volume.

### **Justice**

That Justice is a blind goddess  
Is a thing to which we black are wise.  
Her bandage hides two festering sores  
That once perhaps were eyes.

### **The Town of Scottsboro**

Scottsboro's just a little place:  
No shame is writ across its face—  
Its courts too weak to stand against a mob,  
Its people's heart, too small to hold a sob.