

[Born a Crime](#) by Trevor Noah is a funny, heartfelt memoir about the comedian's early life in South Africa, and has been optioned for film. If your book club has chosen this fantastic title for your next meeting, rest easy! We've got a *Born a Crime* book club questions along with a book summary to help you prep!

Born A Crime summary

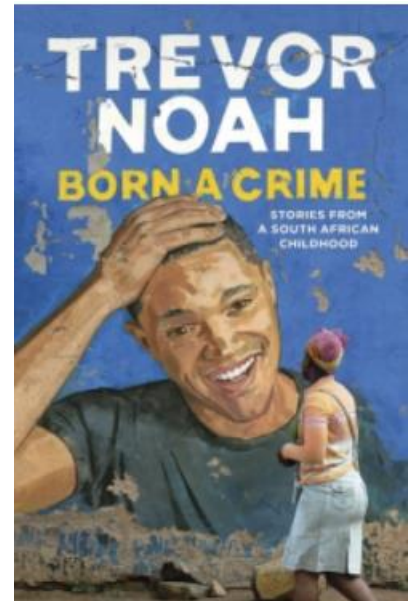
Noah was born to a black mother and white father in South Africa under apartheid, which meant that his existence was technically a crime. Apartheid ended when Noah was still a child, but that didn't mean his life got any easier.

As a biracial kid, Noah often found himself caught between two worlds, not able to find a place where he was accepted without question. As a result, Noah learned six languages as a kid and used humor to bridge the gaps between people while also thinking critically about the systems of power that made up his world.

The result is a hilarious, moving, and educational memoir about an extraordinary young man.

***Born A Crime* book club questions**

1. Did you know who Trevor Noah was before reading his memoir? If yes, what did you expect from the book? Did the book live up to your expectations, or not?
2. Noah begins the book about being thrown from a moving car. Why do you think he chose to begin his narrative with this anecdote?
3. Noah describes apartheid as "institutional racism." How much did you know about apartheid before reading this book? Were there any details that surprised you?



4. Although Noah's parents' relationship was against the law and could have induced violence if discovered, his mother always made sure that Noah knew he was loved and wanted, even though he lost contact with his father for many years. How do you think this knowledge affected Noah growing up, and in his mother's insistence that he reconnect with his father?
5. Noah's mother is a strong woman who taught her son to respect women, and yet she ended up marrying a man who physically abused her, Noah, and his younger brother. Discuss these contradictions, and the effect they had on young Noah.
6. Patricia's faith is also an extremely important aspect of the book--her faith was strong and unwavering, even in the face of great adversity. Noah tended to doubt a bit more. Discuss the effects of Patricia's faith, and how Noah struggled with it.
7. Despite Noah's pain seeing his mother in an abusive marriage, discuss the effect that she has on him. He writes, "My mother showed me what was possible"--what did she show him? What advice of hers does he take to heart? How does it impact his growth?
8. Noah speaks multiple languages--discuss how his knowledge of language affects his view of culture and helps him move between worlds.
9. What are some of your favorite funny anecdotes from this memoir?
10. Noah talks at length about how he didn't exactly fit in because he was mixed-race but lived with a black mother and family. Discuss how he was viewed in South Africa, and how he is viewed here in the U.S. Do his experiences as a biracial kid and teen have parallels in the U.S.?
11. When he was a teenager, Noah committed nonviolent petty crimes as a matter of survival. Discuss his turning point, when he thinks about selling a digital camera. What does his epiphany say about crime and injustice in general?

12. Although Noah's experiences in this book are rooted in South Africa, what do you think readers can take away and apply to current race relations in the U.S.?
13. Did you read the print version of the book, or listen to the audiobook (narrated by Trevor Noah himself)? Do you think Noah's narration adds something to the reading experience?
14. Noah's story and struggles deal with big topics that aren't really all that funny: apartheid, racism, poverty, domestic abuse, crime, and danger. And yet, most readers would agree that this is a very funny book. How do you think that Noah is able to maintain such a good sense of humor about these circumstances? Do you think he's an optimist?
15. At multiple points throughout the book, Noah injects a bit of historical information about apartheid and South Africa between anecdotes. These moments are important to understanding the context of Noah's experiences. As he points out, he was not taught about apartheid in a formal way, the way that German children learn about the Holocaust. Discuss the importance of reading personal stories about injustices and big moments in history. What, if anything, do you think is Noah's message about apartheid?
16. Would you recommend this memoir to someone who might not be familiar with Trevor Noah and his comedy? Would you read further memoirs by Noah?