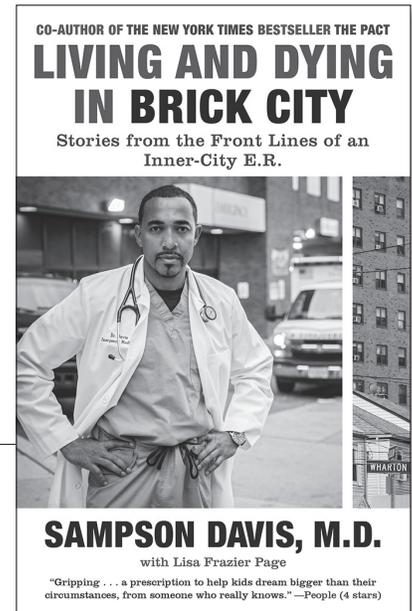




Living and Dying in Brick City

Stories from the Front Lines
of an Inner-City E.R.

by Sampson Davis, M.D. with Lisa Frazier Page



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READING LEVEL: 9th Grade



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“*Living and Dying in Brick City* provides a fascinating look at the interesting but often terrifying life of a medical professional in a tough inner-city hospital. More importantly it provides excellent and very practical advice about healthcare issues that are relevant to people of every socioeconomic group. It is entertaining while being helpful.”

—Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., M.D., Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery, The John Hopkins Medical Institution and author of *Think Big*, *The Big Picture*, and *Take the Risk*

“Some memoirs are heartfelt, some are informative and some are even important. Few, however, are all three. . . . As rare as it is for a book to be heartfelt, well written and inspirational, it’s even rarer for a critic to say that a book should be required reading. **This ought to be included in high school curricula**—for the kids in the suburbs who have no idea what life is like in the inner cities, and for the kids in the inner cities to know that there is a way out.” —*The Star-Ledger*

“This is one of the best books I have read in a long time. Sampson Davis’s personal story is powerful, and his experiences in the E.R. underscore the lack of effective healthcare in our underserved communities. His is an important voice in the conversation on healthcare in this country”

—Wes Moore, author of *The Other Wes Moore*

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• about the author

Sampson Davis, M.D., was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. He is a board-certified emergency medicine physician and co-author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Pact*, *We Beat the Street*, and *The Bond*. He is the youngest physician to receive the National Medical Association's highest honor, the Scroll of Merit. He is a recipient of *Essence* and BET humanitarian awards and was named by *Essence* as one of the forty most inspirational African Americans. He is a founder of the Three Doctors Foundation and practices medicine in New Jersey.

• note to the teacher

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) place emphasis on the importance of reading and examining nonfiction for meaning and application to society. For this reason, *Living and Dying in Brick City* is particularly appropriate for use in language arts and the social sciences. The discussion and activities in this guide are aligned with CCSS and offer an opportunity for discussion, analysis, and debate of the health crisis in urban America and as it relates to the population of the inner-city community.

For a complete listing of the Standards, go to www.corestandards.org/the-standards.

In addition, Dr. Davis's *Living and Dying in Brick City* not only explores the real world experiences inside the E.R., but also offers teenagers and adults preventative guidance to support initiatives for healthier lives and communities.

• about the book

Sampson Davis is best known as one of three friends from inner-city Newark who made a pact in high school to become doctors. Their book *The Pact* and their work through the Three Doctors Foundation have inspired countless young men and women to strive for goals they otherwise would not have dreamed they could attain. In this book, Dr. Davis looks at the healthcare crisis in the inner city from a rare perspective: as a doctor who works on the front line of emergency medical care in the community where he grew up, and as a member of that community who has faced the same challenges as the people he treats every day. He also offers invaluable practical advice for those living in such communities, where conditions like asthma, heart disease, stroke, obesity, and AIDS are disproportionately endemic.

Dr. Davis's sister, a drug addict, died of AIDS; his brother is now paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair as a result of a bar fight; and he himself did time in juvenile detention—a wake-up call that changed his life. He recounts recognizing a young man who is brought to the E.R. with critical gunshot wounds as someone who was arrested with him when he was a teenager during a robbery gone bad; describes a patient whose case of sickle-cell anemia rouses an ethical dilemma; and explains the difficulty he has convincing his landlord and friend, an older woman, to go to the hospital for much-needed treatment.

With empathy and hard-earned wisdom, *Living and Dying in Brick City* presents an urgent picture of medical care in our cities. It is an important resource guide for anyone at risk, anyone close to those at risk, and anyone who cares about the fate of our cities.

• pre-reading activity

Critical Thinking Activity:

Click and read the article “Woman Featured in Stark Anti-Smoking Ads Dies” (*Tween Tribune*) <http://tweentribune.com/teen/woman-featured-stark-anti-smoking-ads-dies>

Critical Thinking Challenge:

Why was Terri’s ad so effective? Click and read the *New York Times* article “The E-Cigarette Industry, Waiting to Exhale.” (A version of this article appears in print on October 27, 2013, on page BU1 of the New York edition with the headline “Waiting to Exhale.”) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/business/the-e-cigarette-industry-waiting-to-exhale.html?_r=0

Critical Thinking Challenge:

The F.D.A. has said it plans to issue preliminary rules for public comment on e-cigarette regulations. What is your opinion as to the impact of e-cigarettes? Is there enough supporting evidence to substantiate the claims made in this article? Consider other sources of research you may use to support your opinion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1.

Compare and Contrast:

After reading both articles and viewing Terri’s video, become the voice of Terri Hall. Challenge yourself to write a script/or produce a video on the effects of e-cigarettes that identifies with Terri Hall.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.9.

• classroom discussion

1. *Living and Dying in Brick City* is a work of nonfiction. Sampson Davis chose “real life drama to shine a light on the health crisis in America’s city and to show the potential consequences regarding personal health.” One of the goals of any type of research is to deepen an understanding of the issue. As a primary source, how does Sampson Davis set out to accomplish this goal? In your opinion, was he successful?

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1d.

2. Dr. Davis and Dr. Marc Borenstein, chairman of Beth Israel’s Emergency Department often shared their experiences of growing up. Dr. Davis stated, “Struggle can leave a lifelong imprint on a person’s soul, and it often breeds compassion.” Based on your personal experiences, what struggle in your life has led you to a greater understanding of the meaning of compassion?

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c.

3. Discuss and cite from the text the struggles that Sampson Davis experienced. How did these struggles affect his life?

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.3.

4. On his first day on duty in the E.R.’s trauma unit, Dr. Davis recognizes the name Don Moses (a.k.a. “Snake”) on the board with the names of the deceased. Compare and contrast the two men’s lives. What was the critical element in Dr. Davis’s early life that changed him? And how did it change him? In your discussion, cite supporting evidence and key elements that led to the change.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1d; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2.

• classroom discussion, continued

5. “Kids aren’t born without hope.” What do you think Sampson Davis meant by this statement? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2.
6. On page 23, the text reads “Children growing up in poor urban neighborhoods aren’t programmed by their DNA to run around with guns, killing one another. Violence is a learned behavior. . . .” What is your reaction to this statement?
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.4.
7. On page 41, Dr. Davis asks, “Do we do more harm than good?” Who is the “we” Dr. Davis is referring to? What is he referencing with this statement?
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.4.
8. In Chapter 4, “Love Hurts,” Dr. Davis writes about his family. Discuss some of the key elements in this chapter that influenced Dr. Davis’s life. Talk about the values that are important in your family. Discuss the value of family in the American culture.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4.
9. Chapter 5, “Dying for Love,” discusses sexually transmitted infections. Why did Dr. Davis feel compelled to include this topic in his book? How does this chapter impact the decisions in your life?
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6.
10. Read the *Tween Tribune* article, “Teen Moms Clueless About How They Got Pregnant,” below. What common threads do you see between the article and Chapter 6, “Baby Love”?
<http://tweentribune.com/teen/many-teenage-girls-clueless-about-getting-pregnant>
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3.
11. “Tempers, fueled by alcohol, explode over the smallest perceived insult—a wrong look, a stepped on shoe, rejection from a beautiful woman—suddenly throwing everything into chaos. Add guns to the mix, and many times someone winds up dead.” (Chapter 7, “Clubbing”) React to these statements, citing either personal experiences or information from other sources.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1c.
12. In Chapter 8, “Fear Factor,” Dr. Davis writes about cancer, smoking, and death. Share your knowledge and experiences on any of these topics. Which of these experiences (if any) has impacted your life?
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4.
13. Have you ever participated in any health awareness activities, such as the Relay for Life, Wear Pink, or Bandanas for Breast Cancer events? Share your experience. Did it change you in any way?
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4.

14. After reading pages 170 and 171, “The Warning Signs for Suicide,” discuss what interventions you could use when faced with a friend who is depressed.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4.

15. Read the article “Teens & Tweens ‘Don’t Know’ About Exercise.” Respond to the question at the end of the article, “What do you think?”

<http://tweentribune.com/teen/teens-tweens-dont-know-about-exercise>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1d.

16. In Chapter 13, “Reaching Out,” how does Monique remind Dr. Davis of himself? Cite supporting evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3.

17. Watch the YouTube video “Who Moved My Cheese?” After viewing the video, compare its message with Dr. Davis’s “unexpected twists” in Chapter 14. Make sure that you have supporting evidence. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDNhEYpBPbY>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3.

• activities

1. In Chapter 2, “Hidden in Plain Sight,” Dr. Davis references sickle cell anemia and the plague of drug abuse. Choose a current healthcare topic that you can relate to. Write a persuasive essay on the topic, expressing your own ideas clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.6.

2. Sudden cardiac arrest, smoking, diabetes, AIDS, STDs, birth control, cancer, obesity, and depression are all topics of discussion in *Living and Dying in Brick City*. Choose one topic to research. Use your research to create an informational pamphlet for a targeted audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.6.

3. In Chapter 2, “Hidden in Plain Sight” Dr. Davis states, “Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States.” (Page 40) Go to the website Above the Influence (<http://www.abovetheinfluence.com>). Choose one of the following formats (PowerPoint, video, or poster) to create an advertisement for Red Ribbon Week.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.8.

4. Dr. Davis struggled with the question, “Did we do more harm than good? We were supposed to help our patients, or at least do no harm. That’s what all doctors promise when we take the Hippocratic Oath.” Form teams and debate whether doctors help or harm patients. The book and the website *The Hippocratic Oath Today* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/hippocratic-oath-today.html>) can be used as resources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1d.

5. Create a brochure to inform your community of available healthcare resources. Be sure to include information such as dental care, local clinics, hospitals, schools, community center program, etc. Be sure to consider that you address the various needs of your population.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.9.

• activities, continued

6. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation or graph to illustrate and analyze the data related to one of the following topics: dating violence, domestic violence, or gang violence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.9;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.6.

7. Dr. Davis compared his Honda Accord, “The Coupe,” to himself. Explain his analogy in a reflective narrative.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3a; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3b;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3c; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3d; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3e.

8. Dr. Davis referred to the 1932 Tuskegee Institute experiment, “Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male.” Research this topic and be prepared to present your findings. Be sure to reference the following people in your research and their link to the topic: Bill Clinton, Clark and Vondelehr, Dr. Dibble and Nurse Rivers, and Peter Buxtun.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2a;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2b; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2c;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2d; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.2e.

9. “Education is the most permanent way off the streets,” says Dr. Davis. Create a jingle, musical number, rap, poem, illustration, cartoon, or video to showcase this quote.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.6.

10. Research the Three Doctors Foundation at <http://www.threedoctorsfoundation.org>. Dr. Davis dedicated his book to his mother who taught him that “the most important ingredient in medicine is compassion.” As a class, plan a schoolwide or classroom event that would focus on creating compassion among all members of your school community.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.8; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4;
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5.

• other works of interest

Results May Vary: A Novel About an Urban High School by Michael H. Haussler

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World
by Tracy Kidder

Dear Marcus: A Letter to the Man Who Shot Me by Jerry McGill

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates by Wes Moore

A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League
by Ron Suskind

• about this guide’s writers

As educators, **PATTY DeGEORGE**, **KATHY DiPROFIO**, and **NANCY SIRACUSA** formed a pact while in graduate school. They vowed that through “determination, discipline and dedication,” they would earn their master’s degree in Educational Leadership and make a positive impact in education. Today, these three educators remain fast friends and continue to support each other in their respective roles as educational leaders in their school districts.

• notes



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