Reading Assignment
Short Story Questions
“The Circuit”

1. Describe your ideal working conditions, including length of days, number of days, environment, etc...
2. On page 24, the author says, “Those were words I waited for twelve hours a day, every day, seven days a week, week after week.” Compare this work week to the work schedule of slaves.
3. On page 25, the author tells us that they found a tie in the car and assumed the previous owner must have been an important man. Why do you think that the family equated a tie with a person’s importance?
4. If you had to pack up your possessions alone, just yours, not your family’s, how many boxes do you think you would have? Compare this to what the family in the piece packed up for the entire family.
5. On page 27, we learn that the children, who are working with their father, have to hide from the school bus. How would you feel if you had to work 12 hour days, in the heat, instead of going to school? Does hearing about children who have to do this make you think differently about going to school? Explain.
6. Compare and contrast the descriptions of the Sullivan’s house with the place he provides for the family to live, found on page 26. What does this tell you about Mr. Sullivan and his attitude towards this family?
7. On pages 27 and 28, the author tells us that he will go to school at the beginning of November, but his brother won’t get to go until February. What kinds of problems could this create for the boys? How would you feel if you were in their place?
8. At the end of the story, the author is excited because he has bonded with his teacher, who is going to teach him to play the trumpet, but when he gets home, he discovers all of the family’s belongings packed up, ready to move again. How do you think he felt? How would you feel?
9. Are there dangers to us, as a society, to have people treated the way this family was in the piece? Explain.
10. Does this piece make you feel any differently about your own life?