

## Reading Portfolio

Literary Text: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Author: Zora Neale Hurston

Subject: American Literature

Audience: 11th Grade CP/Gifted Students

### **Before Reading Strategies**

1. Tea Party (Beers)
  - a. What is the strategy?
    - i. The Tea Party strategy allows students to get up, move around, and talk with other people in the classroom about what the text could be about. First, each student receives a quote from the book. Then, the student meets someone else with a different quote, and they predict what the text will be about. This continues for about 5-10 minutes before everyone returns to their seat for the whole group discussion.
  - b. How could it be implemented in the classroom?
    - i. It may be hard to do this activity with students social-distancing. However, the teacher could first give students individual quotes and then assign them random small groups that could easily be spaced out.
  - c. Example:
    - i. Student 1 Quote: *Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything.*
    - ii. Student 2 Quote: *Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman.*
    - iii. Student 3 Quote: *A bee for her bloom.*
    - iv. Prediction? This book will be about a black woman's journey to finding herself in a white man's world.
  - d. Potential Issues?
    - i. Not ideal to have students mingling and so close to each other during this season (COVID)
2. [Knowledge Rating](#)
  - a. What is the strategy?
    - i. The Knowledge Rating strategy uses a chart to help students access prior knowledge about concepts in a particular text. The chart is set up in rows and columns, with each row being a new concept/topic relating to the text. Each column (3) asks the student to 1) rate their knowledge about the concept, 2) write about the important things they know or questions they have about this concept, and 3) rate their interest in learning more about the concept. This strategy is very helpful because it allows the students to reflect on what they think they know about a topic before it's expanded upon. It can also help the teacher gauge what help the students will need in understanding where their weaknesses and strengths will be in reading comprehension. Teachers can also learn what concepts/topics a student does and does not want to know more about.

b. Examples:

Topic	Knowledge Rating (circle one)	Write a few of the most important things that you know about this topic and/or questions that come up when you think of the topic.	Interest in Learning More Rating (circle one)
Neighborhoods	I know a lot. <u>I know some.</u> This is new to me	A neighborhood is a collection of houses or living complexes in a single community. They can be big or small, and full of a diverse groups of people with similar living styles.	I'm interested in learning more. I'm okay with learning this. <u>I'm not interested.</u>

c. How could it be implemented in the classroom?

- i. Provided a list of concepts/topics in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the students will individually fill out the chart. Then, students will form into groups and share answers with each other. Hopefully, in forming groups, students can add more to their charts from learning from others. Lastly, we will join together for whole-class discussion and go over each concept/topic.

d. Potential Issues?

- i. Since most of the concepts/topics in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are centered around race and social justice, this activity may be a little uncomfortable to do for my predominantly white classes/students. When writing down their prior knowledge about topics like *racial injustice* or *economic disparity*, the students may have biased answers, which can lead to tense discussions.

3. [Word Scramble Prediction](#)

a. What is the strategy?

- i. The Word Scramble Prediction strategy uses a student's interests in words as an anticipation guide for the text. First, the teacher provides a list of interesting words from the text. Then, the students reflect on those words and their reasons for being in the text. Using imagination and context clues, the students are to write their own predictions of what will happen in the story. This activity is created to excite or make the students curious about the text before they read it.

b. How could it be implemented in the classroom?

- i. Students work in groups. Each group will be given a different list of words from the text. Working together, each group will use their set of words to predict what *Their Eyes Were Watching God* will be about. After five or so minutes, we will re-group as a class and each group will share their predictions and the words that shaped their ideas.

c. Example:

- i. Group 1:
  1. Words: *horizon, resignation, treacherous, lavish*

2. Prediction: The story is about someone getting fired because of something treacherous that was done to them. However, things end up working out and they live well and lavish.
- ii. Group 2:
  1. Words: *wade, irk, water, fumble, orator*
  2. Prediction: The story is about an orator's journey to freedom, having waded through the water to escape slavery.
- d. Potential Issues?
  - i. Certain students may have already read *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and know the premise of the story.

### **During Reading Strategies**

#### 1. Graphic Organizer/ Character Map

- a. What is the strategy?
  - i. Using evidence from the text, students will fill out this Character Map graphic organizer to grasp a further understanding of the protagonist. Students must find three traits and three examples of concrete evidence for each trait. This map aims to help the student understand the character more, as well as how the author shapes his/her personality.
- b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?
  - i. While reading *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, students will fill out this chart for one of the main characters (Janie, Tea Cake, etc.). Students can keep this chart near them as we read the novel and add any new traits as they emerge.

#### 2. Say Something

- a. What is the strategy?
  - i. In groups of two to three, students will take turns reading aloud the text. Occasionally, the students will stop the reader to “say something” about the text. Students may ask a question, reflect on the scene, or make a connection. Then, others in the group will respond and make comments as well. This strategy will help students, especially struggling students, to pay more attention to the text and the symbolism that exists.
- b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?
  - i. Students will be informed that chapter X of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* will be read in class, so they are not to read that chapter outside class. Then, students will engage a “Say Something” group activity for the majority of the class period, or until they finish the chapter. If there is time remaining, the whole class will discuss the comments made.
  - ii. Students should use this scaffolding chart to help make commentary during the activity:

<b>Make a Prediction</b> * I predict that... * I bet that... * I think that... * Since _____ happened, I bet _____ will happen * I wonder if...	<b>Ask a Question</b> * What's this part about... * How is _____ like this _____? * What would happen if...? * What does this section _____ mean... * Do you think that... * Why did... * Why... * Who is...	<b>Clarify Something</b> * Now I understand... * This makes sense now... * No, I think it means... * I agree with you. This means... * At first I thought _____, but now I think...
<b>Make a Comment</b> * This is good because... * This is confusing because... * I like/don't like the part where... * My favorite part so far is... * I think that...	<b>Make a Connection</b> * This reminds me of... * The differences are... * I also/never (name something that happened in the book)... * This character makes me think of... * This setting reminds me of... * This part is like... * This character _____ is like _____ because...	

### 3. Sticky Notes

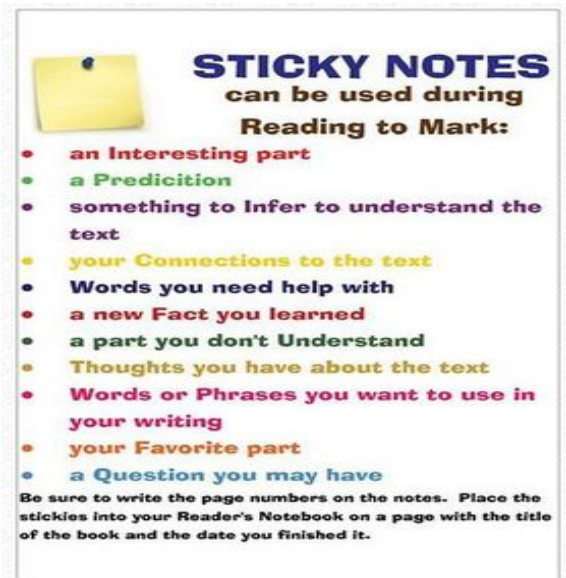
#### a. What is the strategy?

- i. The Post-It Sticky Notes strategy is a form of annotation that uses sticky notes to code a particular theme or idea in a text. It helps students become engaged, track thinking, and remember key information.

1. There are several different ways students can use this strategy since the purpose of sticky notes are so versatile. For instance, students can use different colored or sized sticky notes to code. Or, students could also create their own codes to write on the stickies, like (?) for questions and (!) for important findings.

#### b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?

- i. Students can use sticky notes provided in the classroom to analyze *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as they read. Students can also purchase their own sticky notes to personalize their coding to their own specific needs.
- ii. Students can use the graphic image below to guide their coding and reading:



### After Reading Strategies

#### 1. Think-Pair-Share

#### a. What is the strategy?

- i. The Think-Pair-Share strategy is a collaborative after-reading activity that challenges students to work with others to reflect or expand upon a text. Essentially, students will work together to answer a set of post-reading questions.

#### b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?

- i. After reading *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, students will be given a set of thought-provoking questions. First, students will be required to individually answer the questions. Then, students will get into pairs to

discuss their answers. While discussing, students should find similarities in their responses. Finally, for each question, students will create one concise statement combining each member's thoughts to share with the class.

c. Example:

i. Question: What is the major theme in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?

1. Student #1: *Social justice*

2. Student #2: *Feminism*

a. Concise statement? *We found that the major theme in Their Eyes Were Watching God was gender equality and rights in the early 20th century.*

d. Possible Issues?

i. Students may not be able to create a concise statement depending on how differently they individually answered the questions.

2. Sketch to Stretch

a. What is the strategy?

i. The Sketch to Stretch strategy is a way for students to create symbolic sketches of texts to expand their thinking. In creating their own interpretations of the text's meaning, students can help themselves and others 'stretch' their thinking.

b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?

i. Using a blank piece of paper, students will take about five-ten minutes to sketch a symbol that they believe best represents the narrative *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as a whole. Then, on the back of the paper, students should write a brief explanation of what their sketch symbolizes.

c. Example:

i. Sketch: A girl with long hair.

ii. Sketch Description: The hair, which stays uncut, symbolizes Janie's strength, resolve, and unrelenting identity throughout the narrative.

3. 3-2-1 Strategy

a. What is the strategy?

i. The 3-2-1 Strategy is comprehension activity that helps students summarize their thoughts following the reading of a text. It helps students identify important details, make connections, and ask further questions.

b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?

i. Working in small groups, students will fill out a 3-2-1 chart. They will write down **three** important details, **two** connections, and **one** question they have about the text. Students will complete this chart as a way to summarize and conclude their reading of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

c. Examples:

i. 3 Details

1. Janie's long hair symbolizes her lasting strength.

2. The theme of chaos and pain is constant.

3. Biblical allusions are woven in and out of the book.
- ii. 2 Connections
  1. Civil rights issues of the early 20th century -> #BLM
  2. Mental abuse in marriage -> #Metoo
- iii. 1 Question
  1. Did Janie truly find happiness in the end?

## **Discussion**

### 1. Philosophical Chairs

- a. What is the strategy?
  - i. The Philosophical Chairs strategy challenges students to engage in analytical debates with one another about themes in a text.
- b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?
  - i. The desks in the classroom will be pushed to the corners of the room to create an open space. The teacher will read off a single statement regarding the *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to the students. If the students agree, they will move to the right side of the room. If the students disagree, they will move to the left side of the room. Then, students will take turns defending their response from where they're standing.
- c. Potential Issues?
  - i. Depending on the statement and the students' opinions, the conversations may get heated. Some students may become overly competitive and aggressive.

### 2. Hot Seat

- a. What is the strategy?
  - i. The Hot Seat Strategy is a theatrical way for students to engage in discussion and analysis. It forces the students to quickly recollect previous knowledge about a character, moment, or theme in a literary text.
- b. How can it be implemented in the classroom?
  - i. One student is chosen to assume the role of a character in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The student will sit in a chair in front of the room and answer the questions of the audience. The student will be expected to remain in character for the entirety of their time in the "hot seat." They will always be expected to answer the questions based on what their character would know or remember.
    1. Each student, or character, will get about five minutes in the hot seat before trading off with another student, or character.
- c. Potential Issues?
  - i. If the student in the hot seat does not know a lot about the character they are portraying, they will not be able to engage effectively. It may be helpful to remind the students to review *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

the day before the activity so that they can better represent the characters.

### **Supplementary Texts**

1. Three Essential Questions:

**a. What is the meaning of the title, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?**

- i. Answer: The title shows how little control the characters have over their lives. It's the realization that their lives are in the hands of God, so they must look to a higher power to spare or save them from misery and injustice.
- ii. Supplementary Pieces/Text:
  1. "My Honest Poem" by Rudy Francisco (poem)
  2. TJ Eckleburg Eyes Scene from film *The Great Gatsby* (2013)
  3. Excerpts from *Zora Neale Hurston, Freethought, and African American Religion* written by Christopher Cameron ([Journal of Africana Religions](#) article)

**b. What determines one's value?**

- i. Answer: Varies. Students could say that one's value is determined by class, gender, marriage, society, or self.
- ii. Supplementary Pieces/Text:
  1. "Rifle II" by Rudy Francisco (poem)
  2. *What Shapes You Does Not Define You* written by Jason Blight ([BetterHumans](#) article)
  3. Clips from *FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE/ WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF* Theater Production (play)

**c. This novel gives us an unconventional lens into the lives of African Americans in the early 1900s. What is this lens? How is it different from that of other classic African American novels?**

- i. Answer: The novel is not a classic African American tale focusing on slavery or the injustice of the White man. Instead, it is about the trials and tribulations that an African American community endures on their own. The novel shows its readers how concepts in the early 1900s like racism, sexism, and classism are not primarily Black vs. White issues. They can also be Black vs. Black issues.
- ii. Supplementary Pieces/Text:
  1. "Cookout" by Rudy Francisco (poem)
  2. "How It Feels To Be Colored Me" by Zora Neale Hurston (essay)
  3. Excerpts from "The Hate U Give" by Angie Thompson (book)