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**Coming of Age and Constructing Identity, with Jacqueline Woodson:
An 8th Grade English/Language Arts Unit**

Unit Rationale:

In Stuart Greene's (2008) Introduction to the book *Literacy as a Civil Right*, he explains S. Nieto's (2002) three components of teaching as social justice: "The first entails providing students with the resources necessary to become more fully human and to learn to their full potential... The second urges teachers to draw on the resources, talents, strengths, and 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez & Moll, 2005) that students bring to their education. Students need to see their experiences in the materials we teach... The third requires that teachers create a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and agency for social change, and that views students and teachers as actors in the struggle for social justice" (pgs. 4-5). I believe that this Coming of Age and Constructing Identity unit based on the reading of literarily significant works by Jacqueline Woodson accomplishes all three of these components.

Psychology and Human Development

All students should have the right to see themselves reflected in the literature they read in school; however, too often, this is simply not the case, particularly for certain student populations. Many of Jacqueline Woodson's novels, though, are about African American girls, for example – a population I feel is vastly underserved and underrepresented in young adult literature. However, Woodson does not only write about African American girls, as she also includes and incorporates all kinds of characters, promoting tolerance and unity even as the main conflicts of many of her novels openly acknowledge our complicated culture's divisive nature. I have found a deep and personal appreciation for Woodson's inclusive intentions, and the remarkable range of authenticity found in her writing, and I think my enthusiasm will translate to the students.

Aside from my own personal enjoyment and appreciation, though, I also think all students have a lot to benefit from reading Woodson's work, as well. In her novels, Woodson writes about a broad range of human beings; she writes about girls and boys, black and white and multiracial, only children and siblings, kids with both parents, kids with single parents, kids with divorced parents, Jewish and Christian, straight and gay, bullies and victims, privileged and poor. Rarely have I seen another young adult author that is as inclusive as Woodson; students of all kinds are bound to relate to her range of characters in one way or another, and see themselves reflected in the literature they are reading.

Psychologically, it is very important for all students to see a broad range of characters reflected in the literature they read. As Rudine Sims Bishop (1997) explains in her essay *Selecting Literature for a Multicultural Curriculum*, "if our society is to meet the challenges of democratic pluralism, all students need to recognize the diversity that defines this society, learn to respect it, and see it in a positive light" (pg. 3). Woodson's novels are beneficial to all students, as they are reflective of so many types of people and the diversity of our culture is well represented. Sims Bishop (1997) continues, "Self-esteem develops from a number of sources, not the least of which is the social context in which children grow up, including the context beyond family and community. As a part of the social and scholastic context, literature can contribute to the development of self-esteem by holding up to its readers images of themselves. When children are invisible in the literature sanctioned by the schools...the effect on their self-esteem is likely to be negative" (pg. 4). Thus, by providing works of literature with a range of characters, students are bound to see themselves reflected in the text, affirming their value in society and boosting self-esteem.

Similarly, the "Who Am I?" project also affirms the value of students' experiences. By focusing on the students' lives as writing material, this project validates those lives. As George Hillocks, Jr. (2007) explains of autobiographical narrative writing in his book *Narrative Writing: Learning a New Model for Teaching*, "work on narrative, if we make it personal, is a way to examine the stories of our lives. Beyond that, it allows students to *contribute* to the body of literature they will study, understand more fully how the works of

professional writers are constructed, and learn techniques that will be useful in other kinds of writing” (pg. 1, italics my own). This writing project allows each student to write their own story, which they will share with the class as a valued literary text. This assignment both draws on the strengths and talents the students bring into the classroom, as well as promotes a development of those strengths and talents, supporting the value of each students’ present and future potential, and empowering students by illuminating the fact that they are the very creators of their own future lives.

Relevance

Just as students need to see characters like themselves reflected in the literature they read, they also need to find relevance in the literature, which I feel they will easily be able to do with Woodson’s work. Thematically, most of Woodson’s novels focus on family, friendships, and relationships. However, she complicates these simpler themes by also layering each work with a coming-of-age theme. Woodson’s characters are often exploring a difficult time of life, negotiating new relationships and old relationships, exploring their emerging sexuality, and asking big, hard questions about race, love, friendship, abuse, secrets, loyalty, hope, religion, and survival. Her novels often include characters with complex feelings about first love, friendship, bullying, sibling and parent relationships, etc. These are exactly the types of issues students of this age are dealing with in their own lives at this point in their adolescence. I believe that reading books about the big issues students are facing in their own lives is so important, as it provides them with a safe place to explore choices and alternatives. As Louise Rosenblatt (1995) explains of literature in her book *Literature as Exploration*, “another personal value of literature [is] its objective presentation of our own problems. It places them outside us, enables us to see them with a certain detachment and to understand our own situation and motivation more objectively” (pg. 40). Students have a lot to gain by seeing these types of stories unfold in books, and I think they may even feel better prepared to handle these kinds of issues in their own lives after reading such stories. Woodson’s novels may also provide students with the knowledge and understanding that there are others who are experiencing these tough issues in their lives,

too. As alone as one can feel during adolescence, Woodson's characters can offer readers a sense of companionship and affiliation.

Another thing I like about Woodson's work is how much of it carries on. Many of her young adult novels are sequels to other works: *Peace, Locomotion; Lena; Behind You*; and the Maizon novels (*Last Summer with Maizon, Maizon at Blue Hill, and Between Madison and Palmetto*). This continuity is another way in which her body of work is relevant to young adults and their reading preferences. Judging from the popularity and success of many young adult series books (*Sweet Valley Twins/High; Babysitter's Club; Nancy Drew; Hardy Boys; Gossip Girl; Harry Potter; The Twilight Saga*; etc.), young adult readers really like it when stories continue on. They grow attached to the characters they meet in the pages and enjoy seeing their stories evolve in different books. Woodson understands that and offers her young adult readers multiple stories with more than one book. This also promotes continued reading from our students. I have frequently heard students say something along these lines: "Well, I did like that one particular book, but I don't like reading." If students connect with the characters, they will want to read the next book of the story, as well! Also, if they like one of the author's books, they may realize they'd probably enjoy another of the author's books. Jacqueline Woodson offers such a broad range of reading material for young adult readers to explore and enjoy, which may translate to more students reading more often!

Literary Significance

I also chose Jacqueline Woodson as the featured author of this unit because she is such an honored and recognized writer in the world of Young Adult Literature! *Feathers* was named a 2008 Newberry Honor Book. *Miracle's Boys* won the 2001 Coretta Scott King Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and was named a 2001 American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults. *If You Come Softly* was named a 1999 American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, as well as a Bulletin Blue Ribbon Work. *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This* received a 1995 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Award, and was included in the body of work – along with *Miracle's Boys, If You Come Softly*, and other novels – for which Woodson was

honored with the 2006 Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award. Woodson also won a 2009 Newberry Honor Award for her novel *After Tupac and D. Foster*, a 1996 Coretta Scott King Author Honor Award for *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*, and numerous nominations, honors, and awards for *Locomotion*, *Hush*, and several of her illustrated children's books, as well. If this stunning collection of honors and awards in itself does not prove the validity of this young adult novel author, I'm not sure what would!

Woodson's literary significance, however, extends beyond her many honors and awards. For example, Woodson also frequently incorporates references to other artists and authors in her works, including The Eagles, Audre Lorde, Emily Dickinson, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Toni Morrison, and Tupac Shakur. She infuses the poetry of these other artists into the lyricism of her own works seamlessly and in a way that her own story is rounded out, given an additional relevance and authority. These inclusions also offer opportunities to bridge Woodson's work with some more difficult authors. For example, the entire theme of Woodson's novel *Feathers* is based on one of my favorite Emily Dickinson poems that begins: "Hope is the thing with feathers— / That perches in the soul— ..." By using Woodson's text to make a literary connection to Emily Dickinson, students will also get the benefit of studying Dickinson's work, as well. Dickinson is a highly esteemed American poet whom they will study more extensively in American Literature in high school; however, by exploring Woodson's built-in connections now, students may feel a greater sense of confidence and preparedness when they get to Dickinson in their American Literature courses in the future.

Similarly, one could do the same to connect students reading Woodson's work to a more difficult author, such as Toni Morrison. The reference to Toni Morrison that is included in *Miracle's Boys* yields an opportunity to initially introduce students to the Nobel Prize-winning author. Then, after a carefully scaffolded reading of the difficult subject matter [familial sexual abuse] introduced in *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, a teacher could use discretion in gauging whether or not the students might be ready for a more difficult text, such as Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Of course, these types of cross-textual learning

opportunities will surely differ from class to class as the students' needs will vary. As Rosenblatt (1995) explains, "although the school should not force on the student subject matter and materials beyond his intellectual and emotional level of comprehension, it should permit him to function at his fullest emotional and intellectual capacity" (pg. 165). Of course, some classes may not be ready for the level of difficulty of Morrison, which is fine, too; just gaining a basic awareness of the author through the reference in *Miracle's Boys* will still be a valid learning experience of literary significance for students.

Focus on Current Social Problems

Some may argue that students of this age really shouldn't be reading about some of the difficult social conflicts Jacqueline Woodson explores in her writing. Admittedly, she does tackle some large life issues in her novels – racism, death, abuse, etc. However, I feel strongly that Woodson is promoting good messages in her stories – unity, hope, tolerance, etc. – the types of messages I believe young students need to hear and will benefit from hearing. Additionally, I would argue that students of this age group are mature enough to handle these subjects when they are scaffolded judiciously by a caring instructor in a safe environment. And we must not underestimate these students; they are on their way to high school – nearing adulthood – and these are issues they will probably in some way, shape, or form face in life someday. After all, as Rosenblatt (1995) explains, "It must not be forgotten that the student—no matter whether he is a young child or a college boy soon to enter adult life—is already functioning in society. He has to make choices; he must set up goals for himself in his daily life; he must develop a sense of priorities. And these demands he will continue to meet throughout his life. The pressure of actual living does not permit prolonged meditation and analysis in precisely those person-to-person and general social situations where such reflection is most needed" (pg. 169). By exploring these issues in a safe, classroom environment now, the student will be given the opportunity to meditate on and analyze some of these more difficult social situations he or she may encounter later in life.

Additionally, because Woodson’s work does deal with difficult themes and conflicts, students will be able to think critically on these ideas, examine values and attitudes, and ultimately play a role in the creation of a new future – perhaps one that will not have racism and sexual abuse, or at least will have considerably less. Woodson’s literature can be a starting point for students to examine various social problems, “a starting point for reflections on what it means to live in a democratic society” (Sims Bishop, 1997, pg. 6), and a starting point for younger generations “toward new choices and new patterns of behavior...and...a more successful solution of their problems” (Rosenblatt, 1995, pg. 171). Through engaging with Woodson’s texts and exploring their own experiences through autobiographical narrative writing, students will become more fully human as they work to their full potential, they will see a diverse population including people that look like themselves reflected in the materials studied, and they will think critically about social change and view themselves as participants in the struggle towards social justice (Greene, 2007, pg. 4).

Bibliography

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Overarching Goals/Rubrics:**Reader Response Journal and In-Class Writing Activities:**

Students will be responsible for keeping a Reader Response Journal in which they will respond to various questions and ideas relating to the novels. They will be asked to complete in-class writing exercises in this journal, as well, on a frequent, if not daily, basis. These journal entries will take different forms throughout the unit (see journal options handout). Some may be prompts about personal experiences that connect with the literature. Some journals may be free-write responses. Some may take the “2-2-2” format (2 ideas from the reading that they want to talk about during discussion, 2 questions about the reading – “fat” questions, not “skinny” ones, and 2 quotations from the reading that they found moving/important/confusing/etc.).

These writing activities will require that the student demonstrate comprehension of the major events of the novel as well as allow the student to connect his or her own life to the characters and themes of the story. The Reader Response Journal will also be intended to get the students thinking about identity and coming of age, in preparation for their culminating multigenre “Who Am I?” project.

These writing exercises will be considered low-stake assignments and will be read and responded to as opposed to critically assessed. They will be graded, but on a very loose scale – whole credit, three-quarters credit, half credit, no credit. Each week’s journal writing will count as a basic class work grade. See the Reader Response Journal grading scale below.

Students will also participate in Literature Circles during this unit. Each Literature Circle will read a different text, meeting together in class to discuss. During these meetings, each student will take on a different role: Discussion Director, Character Captain, Passage Pirate, and Literary Illustrator. These roles will rotate with each meeting. Students will write their role responses and meeting notes in their Reading Response Journals, and these will also be graded weekly on the same scale and as a basic classwork grade. I will be circulating the classroom during these meetings and students’ attitudes and engagement with group

members may also be taken into account when necessary. For a more in-depth description of Literature Circle tasks, please see the following pages.

The Reading Response Journal will be evaluated as follows:

- A grade of 100 percent will be given to journals that
 - Are complete and fully answer the posed question or prompt.
 - Illustrate comprehension of and personal engagement with the novel.
 - Demonstrate creative thinking and writing when appropriate.
- A grade of 75 percent will be given to journals that
 - Mostly answer the posed question or prompt.
 - Illustrate comprehension of the novel.
 - Demonstrate creative thinking and writing when appropriate.
- A grade of 50 percent will be given to journals that
 - Are incomplete and show little attempt to respond to question or prompt.
 - Show minimal comprehension of and engagement with the novel.
 - Demonstrate minimal creative thinking and writing when appropriate.
- A grade of 0 percent will be given to students who
 - Make no attempt to do the assignment.

Student Reader Response Journal Prompts

When asked to respond in your Reader Response Journals, please choose one of the following prompts. Please try to vary your responses; don't respond in the same way every time! And please try to choose a prompt that is an appropriate way for you to think about the particular passage of reading to which you are responding. Remember: you are both extending and exploring what you have read, as well as proving to me that you have in fact done the reading!

- 2:2:2 – Write down 2 ideas from the reading that you want to talk about during discussions, 2 question you have about the reading (“fat” questions, not “skinny” ones), and 2 quotations from the reading that you found moving/important/confusing/etc.
- Describe a character that you would like to meet (which doesn't mean that you think you would like the character, but just that you think the character would be interesting). List 4 questions that you would ask.
- Describe what was either believable or unbelievable about your reading. Defend your opinion.
- Describe the similarities and differences between the main character and you.
- Do you like what you're reading? Why or why not?
- Draw a comic strip or graphic novel page for what you just read.
- Explain how you have been surprised by what you are reading.
- How did the reading make you feel? Why?
- If the author were here, what would you say to him/her? What questions would you ask? What would you want to tell him/her about yourself? How does that relate to what you have been reading?
- If you were a character in this book, who would you be? Why?
- Predict what will happen next.
- Pretend what you are reading is nominated for a national award. Explain why you think it should or should not receive an award.
- Pretend you are a talk show host and two characters are the guests on your show. Which characters would you chose and why? List two questions that you, the host, would ask each character.
- Pretend you are the friend of one of the characters. Write him or her a letter.

- Pretend you get to create the music soundtrack for what you've been reading. What five songs would you include? Write an explanation for each song: why would you include it? How does the song connect to events in the story?
- Pretend you have special powers and could put yourself in your reading. Where would you put yourself and why? How would you being there change the story?
- Select a quote or passage from your reading that has meaning for you and respond to it. What made you pick it? How does it make you pause and think? What does it mean to your life?
- What is the author trying to tell you about life in this story? Defend this moral.
- What questions would you like answered about your reading? Would you like the book/article better if you knew those answers now? Why?
- What special way did the author write (for example, flashbacks, told in first person, multiple voice narrative, foreshadowing, lost descriptive words that create visual images in your mind, etc.)? Did that make reading it better or worse? Explain.
- Write a journal entry as if you were a certain character from your reading.
- Write a review of what you just read (summary plus personal opinions).
- Compare what is happening to a character in the book with your own or a friend's life.
- Describe something you have read that is similar to this. Explain how they are similar.
- How have your feelings changed as you've been reading?
- Finish one of the following sentence starters and elaborate on the idea you express:
 - This character, _____, reminds me of someone I know because...
 - This character, _____, reminds me of me because...
 - This character, _____, is like _____, in another book, _____, because...
 - This scene reminds me of a scene in another book, _____, because...
 - This situation reminds me of a similar situation in my own life when...
 - The character I most admire is _____ because...
 - If I were this character, _____, at this point, I would...
 - This part (explain what part!) made me think of...
 - I like the way the author...
 - I felt _____ when _____ because...
 - This connects to my life in this way:...

Literature Circles

You will meet with your group members once a week to discuss your reading. Group members will be responsible for fulfilling one of four literature circle roles for each meeting. Your role will be recorded in your Reading Response Journal. During your meeting in class, you will take notes from the meeting on the back of the page.

Format for Journal Entries

Literature Circle journals should be kept in your Reading Response Journal. For each entry, your page should be labeled as follows:

Top of the page:

Date Job for this Meeting Title of Novel Pages Read

Rest of the Page:

Complete your job assignment for the meeting. See descriptions below.

Back of the Page:

Notes from your meeting:

- a. Include the names of members and their jobs from this meeting.
- b. Write at least five interesting points that were brought up during the meeting.

Rotating Roles

Discussion Director

Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details. Your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read. You might list your own feelings, or you might choose from the general questions below to develop topics for your group. Your journal page should look like this:

Possible Discussion Topics for Today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sample Questions:

What was going through your mind as you read this?
 How did you feel when you read this part of the book?
 What was discussed in this section of the book?
 Can someone summarize the reading briefly?
 What questions did you have when you finished this section?

Character Captain

Your job is to find passages where the author is giving you information about a character’s personality. It might be a description of his/her clothes, a quotation, something another character says about him/her, etc. The best characterization is not obvious (like, “Sam is a funny guy”). Rather, good characterization is often indirect and found in subtle clues. Your journal page should look like this:

1. The character being described is _____ on page _____. The line is “ _____.”
From this information, I learned that this character is _____.

2. The character being described is _____ on page _____. The line is “ _____.”
From this information, I learned that this character is _____.

3. The character being described is _____ on page _____. The line is “ _____.”
From this information, I learned that this character is _____.

Passage Pirate

Your job is to locate a few sections of the text that are worth sharing with your group. The idea is to help people remember some interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text. You decide which passages are worth sharing, and then jot down ideas for how they should be shared. You could read the passages yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read them silently and then discuss. Your journal page should look like this:

Location	Reason for Choosing
1. Page _____	_____
2. Page _____	_____
3. Page _____	_____

Possible General Reasons for Choosing a Passage to Share (your reasons in your journal should be more specific):
 Important Confusing Well-written Surprising
 Funny Informative Controversial Develops a theme Thought-provoking

Literary Illustrator

Your job is to visually represent the reading. You may want to choose a meaningful scene or passage to represent, or you may want to represent an emerging theme or symbol. You may choose to draw by hand, use technology, cut and paste from magazines, etc. Be creative! Once you have visually represented the reading, jot down a few sentences explaining the thoughts and ideas behind your choices. Be prepared to talk about your portrayal with your group members. Your journal page will look different every time!

Literature Circles Novel Presentation:

As a culminating group assignment for the Literature Circle novels, each Literature Circle will induct their novel into the Class Literature Circle Hall of Fame. Creativity will be highly valued in the induction ceremony presentation. Some groups might choose a science fair kind of display with handmade visuals. Others might prefer a more technological induction with videos and music. Students will be urged to consider what will work best for their group and for their particular novel. Each presentation display and ceremony should be attractive, organized, creative, and effective. The display and ceremony should be interesting, informative, and interactive. The best displays will have a clear theme which ties the presentation together. Components for the various required elements of the presentation should incorporate multimedia forms and may be visual, performance based, auditory, technology-based, etc.

Each group will be expected to include and will be graded on the following components:

- **Opening Extravaganza** – When a band is inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, other bands come together to pay tribute to their work. They put on a big concert to celebrate the inducted band. Each group must find a creative and appropriate way to pay tribute to the book they are inducting. They will be expected to put on their own “book concert,” creatively introducing their novel to the class and getting their audience excited about its induction!
- **The Story** – Students should present a brief summary of the book. They should explain in a creative, interesting, and effective manner what the book is about, who the characters are, where and when the story is set, and the main conflict(s) of the story. Their goal should be to tempt their classmates to read the book without giving away any story spoilers!

- **The Theme(s)** – Students should acknowledge their novel’s message(s) and state 1-3 themes for their novel. Students will be expected to explain why these messages are relevant in the book and in life.
- **Multisensory multimedia components** – Students will also be expected to incorporate multisensory multimedia components into their presentation ceremonies. They may want to perform a dramatic reenactment of a scene from their novel. They may choose to create some form of artwork, or a time-capsule representing the novel. If food played a role in the story, they may want to bring in a relevant recipe for the class to try, etc. Students should strive for an interactive presentation that involves several of the senses.
- **Overall effectiveness** – Also, in addition to the required components, presentations will also be scored on overall effectiveness, which includes: poise, eye contact, gestures, audible voice-levels, equal participation from group members, visuals, seamless use of media or technology (if applicable), preparation, transitions from one element of the presentation to the next, and heeding the time limit (10-15 minutes; if more time is necessary, students should request special permission beforehand).
- **Class Reaction Sheets** – While students present, the rest of the class will be asked to fill out reaction sheets with information they learn from the presentation ceremonies. If the class is not given the information they need, the presenting group will lose points. These reaction sheets will also be graded and the points will be added to students’ presentation scores.

Please see the accompanying presentation rubric and reaction sheets below.

Group Members _____

Title of Novel _____

Grading Rubric for Literature Circle Presentations

Opening Extravaganza

Focuses audience

Appropriate for novel

Creative, effective presentation _____/15

Plot Summary

Logical, effective summary

Includes thorough descriptions of characters, setting(s), main conflict

Group is well-rehearsed and prepared

Tempts audience to read the book, but with no spoilers!

Creative, effective presentation _____/20

Statement of Theme(s)

1-3 presented in complete sentences

Explain relevance of themes to the book and in life

Themes are not repetitive

Creative, effective presentation _____/20

Use of Multimedia Components

Components are multi-sensory

Exhibits thoughtful elements of design

Creativity, effectiveness, relevant to novel _____/20

Overall Presentation Effectiveness

Poise, eye contact, gestures, audible voices, etc

Every group member participates equally

Transitions are smooth, clearly planned from start to finish

Time limit (10-15 minutes) heeded _____/15

Comments:

Total: _____/90*

* Up to 10 points will be added for your reaction sheets to the presentations. Total score is out of 100 points.

Your Name _____

DO NOT INTERRUPT THE PRESENTATIONS ONCE THEY HAVE BEGUN.

Completing these reaction sheets is part of **your** individual presentation score (10 points total).

Book 1 – Title of the Novel: _____ Year of Publication: _____

What is the setting of the book? Time: _____ Place(s): _____

Summarize the plot in no more than 3 sentences: _____

Write a theme for the novel: _____

Book 2 – Title of the Novel: _____ Year of Publication: _____

What is the setting of the book? Time: _____ Place(s): _____

Summarize the plot in no more than 3 sentences: _____

Write a theme for the novel: _____

Book 3 – Title of the Novel: _____ Year of Publication: _____

What is the setting of the book? Time: _____ Place(s): _____

Summarize the plot in no more than 3 sentences: _____

Write a theme for the novel: _____

Book 4 – Title of the Novel: _____ Year of Publication: _____

What is the setting of the book? Time: _____ Place(s): _____

Summarize the plot in no more than 3 sentences: _____

Write a theme for the novel: _____

Book 5 – Title of the Novel: _____ Year of Publication: _____

What is the setting of the book? Time: _____ Place(s): _____

Summarize the plot in no more than 3 sentences: _____

Write a theme for the novel: _____

Do you have any additional comments about any of the presentations? If so, please write them below. Specify which group presentation you are referring to by the name of the novel, please:

Multigenre “Who Am I?” Project

Students will complete a multigenre “Who Am I?” project as their ongoing culminating text for the year. They will work on this project throughout each unit we cover and will begin it during the unit on Coming of Age and Constructing Identity, with Jacqueline Woodson. The multigenre project will be a creative representation of each student – their life, who they are, how they see themselves – and may include but will not be limited to collage, painting, poetry, music, photography, drama, sculpture, performance art, or other textual forms, and will go hand in hand with an autobiographical paper. Each section of the paper will also include some other textual medium or genre representation and the project as a whole should incorporate at least five different artistic mediums or textual genres.

To make this project more manageable, the paper will be written in sections throughout the course of the year. Much of the autobiographical writing will begin in daily journal prompts that tie in with the readings. These writings will later be revisited, extended, and revised for inclusion in the final project. Through this process, students will explore their pasts, anticipate their futures, and gain a clearer understanding of the present. Students will also be asked in their paper to consider what they’ve learned about themselves in the writing and constructing process. I think students will find this final project before they enter high school to be meaningful, illuminating, and empowering.

Portions of the paper and project will be due at the end of each unit. When each portion of the project is complete, the class will spend time in a “coffeehouse” sharing. We will enjoy viewing each other’s photographs and artistic endeavors, witnessing each other’s special strengths and talents, tasting each other’s family recipes, and learning about each other’s favorite hobbies, pastimes, and friend and family traditions.

The written portions of the final project will be assessed with a rubric adapted from those used by George Hillocks, Jr. (2007) in *Narrative Writing*, as well as from the 6-Point Writer’s Rubrics (see handout). For the more open-ended and creative aspects of the project, students will be assessed on their multimedia component choices using a very basic rubric such as the one attached below (see handout).

Who Am I? Multigenre Project

This is a project that is all about YOU! I want you to explore through photos, writing, and other genres who you are and the things that are important to you. I want you to begin thinking about yourself, your family, your friends, and why all of the things that are important to you are so very important – what they say about the person you are. As we explore who we are in this project, we will be reading various novels, autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, essays, and poetry that will help guide us in the process of better understanding ourselves.

For this project you will create a portfolio that may include photographs, videos, art projects, newspaper clippings, etc. of and about yourself, your friends, your family, your favorite family recipe, a great vacation or birthday memory, a family event or tradition, your favorite hobbies or past-times, etc. Along with this variety of genres to represent yourself, you will incorporate various types of writing to help us learn more about you and the importance of these people, pastimes, and stories within your life.

When this project is complete, we will spend time sharing with each other about who we are. I look forward to taking this journey with you and being a part of this process as we all learn more about ourselves and what is important to us. If you have problems with any aspect of this project, please come see me so we can work out a way to overcome those issues.

Topics that will be included in your “Who Am I?” Portfolio:

- ___ Yourself – I Am Poem
- ___ Your family
- ___ Your friends
- ___ Memorable Vacation/Birthday
- ___ Family Event/Tradition
- ___ Favorite Hobby/Past-time

Who Am I? Multigenre Project – Written

Student Name _____

CATEGORIES	5	4	3	2	1
Ideas and Content	Main idea is clear, supported, and enriched by relevant anecdotes and details. Author writes from own knowledge/ experience. Ideas are fresh, original. Reader's questions are answered.	Main idea is well-marked by detail but could benefit from additional information. Author presents new ways of thinking about topic based on personal knowledge/ experience. Most of reader's questions are answered.	Topic or theme is identified as main idea; development remains basic or general. Some details begin to define main idea, yet are limited in number or clarity. Reader generally understands content with few questions.	Main idea is present; may be broad or simplistic. Author "tells" based on others' experiences rather than "showing" by own experience. Reader begins to recognize focus with specifics, though questions remain.	Main idea is still missing, though possible topic/ theme emerging. Author generalizes about topic without personal knowledge /experience. Reader has many questions due to lack of specifics; it is hard to "fill in the blanks"
Specificity of Detail	Writing is highly specific & details are chosen for effect. Details are consistent and contribute to a central focus.	Details are consistent. Some are elaborated. Many details are chosen for effect.	Includes details but they tend to be sporadic or thin. Some details may be clichés or remain unfocused or imprecise.	Writing contains few highly specific images. Specificity tends to be confined to naming places & times rather than evocative detail.	Writing contains almost no specific detail. It uses barest language to tell what happens, & deals in general abstractions.
Style and Voice	Voice of the writer is strong and consistent, maintains emotional character of the piece. Special devices are used effectively. Tone is appropriate & gives flavor and texture to message.	Writing shows relatively consistent awareness of readers & includes attempts to surprise or impress. Paper attempts to use special devices. Tone leans in the right direction most of the time.	Voice is sincere but lacks spark. Writing shows clear signs of attempts to engage readers. Attempts at special devices are sporadic or may misfire. Tone begins to support and enrich writing.	Content & syntax are relatively clear, but lacks detail. Author's voice is hard to recognize. Little apparent attempt to engage an audience. Tone is flat; author does not commit to own writing.	Author seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from topic, purpose, & audience. Content & syntax may be unclear; word choice may be awkward or inappropriate. Tone does not support writing.
Organization, Conventions, & Mechanics	Organization enhances central idea. Standard writing conventions are used effectively. Errors are few & minor.	Organization is smooth with minimal bumps. Author tries more complex conventions, but mistakes still exist.	Organization may be hard to follow or feel formulaic. Reasonable control of conventions. Errors distract.	Organization is problematic; ability to follow text is slowed. Author stumbles in conventions even on simple tasks.	Organization is ineffective or unidentifiable. Many errors of various types of conventions distract reader throughout text.

Who Am I? Multigenre Project – Multimedia

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Mediums/ Genres	Student incorporates at least 5 different artistic mediums or textual genres.	Student incorporates at least 4 different artistic mediums or textual genres.	Student incorporates at least 3 different artistic mediums or textual genres.	Student incorporates 2 or fewer artistic mediums or textual genres.
Paper Section Representations	Every section of the paper has a multimedia component representation.	One section of the paper is lacking a multimedia component representation.	Two sections of the paper are lacking a multimedia component representation.	Three or more sections of the paper are lacking a multimedia component representation.
Relevance of Choices	The multimedia component representation for each section of the paper is clearly relevant to the content of the section.	Most multimedia component representations for each section of the paper are clearly relevant to the content of the sections.	Some multimedia component representations for each section of the paper are clearly relevant to the content of the sections.	Few if any multimedia component representations for each section of the paper are clearly relevant to the content of the sections.
Mechanics/ Presentation	Material is presented in an attractive manner. Very few errors or mistakes are evident.	Material is presented in a relatively attractive manner. Few errors or mistakes are evident.	Material is presented in an acceptable manner, but errors or mistakes are clearly evident.	Material is presented in a sloppy, careless manner. Multiple errors or mistakes are evident.

Week 1, Day 1 (Monday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

15 minutes: Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

In your Reader Response Journals, write about a personal experience you've had in which you've lost someone close to you. You may have experienced the death of a loved one, the loss of a friend who has moved away, the loss of a close relationship due to one or both of you changing in some way, etc. Make sure you explain:

- the nature of the relationship you shared with the person
- the nature of the loss or change in the relationship
- the ways in which you (and, if appropriate, they) dealt with this loss, whether you feel these were effective ways of coping, and why you believe you acted in the ways you did
- how you feel you have changed (or not) due to this experience.

Keep in mind that you will be sharing this piece of writing with other students.

15 minutes: Have students get in small groups of their choosing to share the experiences they wrote about. Ask them to look for similarities and differences in their stories. Ask them to consider the causes of loss, the nature of change, and their ways of coping. Remind students to be mindful of the feelings of their classmates during discussion, as this is a difficult and sensitive topic.

15 minutes: Lead a whole-class discussion, asking individual groups to report to the class some of what they discussed.

3 minutes: Explain to the students that we are beginning a unit on Jacqueline Woodson, coming of age, and identity. Explain that in each of the texts we will work with as a class, one or more characters must deal with loss in some way. Tell students you will introduce Jacqueline Woodson further the following day, as well as the texts with which we will be working. Dismiss class.

Week 1, Day 2 (Tuesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

11 minutes: Introduce Jacqueline Woodson, show students all the many features of her website: www.jacquelinewoodson.com. Suggest they may want to use it as a reference during this unit, particularly when they are asked to select their Literature Circle novel choices. Show students link to Teaching Books site; play the mini-documentary projectable video of Jacqueline Woodson (3:44). Introduce *If You Come*

Softly and *Miracle's Boys*; show students the "Special Projects" section of Woodson's page where she discusses the *Miracle's Boys* miniseries. Show students Scholastic News page:

www.teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/miraclesboys.asp; suggest they may find these interviews with the cast of *Miracle's Boys* to be interesting to peruse on their own time.

22 minutes: Show Episode 1 of *Miracle's Boys* miniseries: "New Charlie"

12 minutes: Pass out books; begin reading Chapter 1 together as a class (Round-Robin? Popcorn?)

3 minutes: Assign homework: Finish reading Chapters 1 and 2 of *Miracle's Boys* and write a short response in Reader Response Journals. (See prompt possibilities handout in Goals & Rubrics.) Dismiss class.

Week 1, Day 3 (Wednesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

15 minutes: Chalk Talk on "Newcharlie." Discuss. Allow the discussion of "Newcharlie" to lead into a broader – albeit brief – discussion of Chapters 1 and 2: Who is narrating this story? Where does it take place? What is Rahway? What is Newcharlie's friend Aaron like; what kind of person is he? Who is Milagros and what does "milagros" mean? What does Charlie call Lafayette at the end of Chapter 1, and how do you think that makes him feel? How do you think Lafayette feels losing his parents at such a young age? Do you think it's understandable that Lafayette has all these questions floating around in his head?

30 minutes: Introduce the "Who Am I" Project, pass out and explain the assignment, field questions, etc. Have students begin initial writing assignment after providing them with the following prompt:

Choose some period in your life that you remember fondly or some experience that you enjoyed very much. Here are some possibilities: a day at an amusement park, a camping trip, a shopping excursion, a hike, a party, a school or professional athletic event, a fishing trip, a special holiday dinner or picnic, a parade, a visit to a museum or library. Write a story about this event; include sights, sounds, smells, other sense impressions, and your reactions. Write about it in as much detail as you can so that someone reading it will be able to see what you saw and feel what you felt.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Complete writing assignment begun in class. Read Chapter 3 of *Miracle's Boys*. Dismiss class.

Week 1, Day 4 (Thursday)

5 minutes: Attendance, take up homework, etc. Begin class by playing Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby McGee" (4:31), and challenge students to identify the song, the artist, and the page number of the reference in the text.

7 minutes: Read passage describing Ty'ree on pages 24-26 aloud to the class. Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

In your Reader Response Journals, write down some of your thoughts about this passage. What does Lafayette mean when he says that Ty'ree's smile was peaceful and right? What does 'right' mean in this case? Is there a person in your life who you admire, whose presence or smile is peaceful and right? Describe how it is to be around that person.

10 minutes: Ask for volunteers to share their responses and/or ideas. Let response sharing discussion lead into discussion of Chapter 3: Describe Ty'ree. In what ways has Ty'ree assumed responsibility for his brothers? What will happen if either Newcharlie or Lafayette get into trouble with the law? What do you think it's like to be Ty'ree and in what way is he a positive role model for Lafayette? Why do you think it's so important for Lafayette to have a brother like Ty'ree in his life?

15 minutes: Read Chapter 4 of *Miracle's Boys* together as a class in Reader's Theatre format – have one student read as narrator/Lafayette's thoughts, have one student read for Lafayette, and another student read for Ty'ree. (But don't let students get confused! Make sure they understand that the person reading as the narrator/thinking-Lafayette and the person reading as speaking-Lafayette are the same person in the story!)

10 minutes: Provide students with the Open Mind Portrait assignment explanation. (See handout.) Begin Open Mind Portrait of Lafayette.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapter 5 of *Miracle's Boys* and complete an Open Mind Portrait of Lafayette representing his thoughts, feelings, personality traits, etc. evident up to this point in the novel (through Ch. 5). Dismiss class.

Week 1, Day 5 (Friday)

2 minutes: Attendance, take up homework, etc.

7 minutes: Read passage about time on pages 33-34 aloud to the class. Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

In your Reader Response Journals, write down some of your thoughts about this passage. What do you think Mama meant when she said that time became more precise and that every day mattered that much more? Do you appreciate every day as if it's your last?

13 minutes: Ask for volunteers to share their responses and/or ideas. Let response sharing discussion lead into discussion of Chapters 4 and 5: How did Charlie end up in Rahway? How old was he? How did Mama die? Describe that morning. Describe what happened after Mama died. How did Charlie react to Mama's death?

3 minutes: Briefly explain the content of Episodes 2 and 3 of the *Miracle's Boys* miniseries ("In the Game of Life" and "Who's to Blame?")...

22 minutes: Show Episode 4 of *Miracle's Boys* miniseries: "Miracle's Songs."

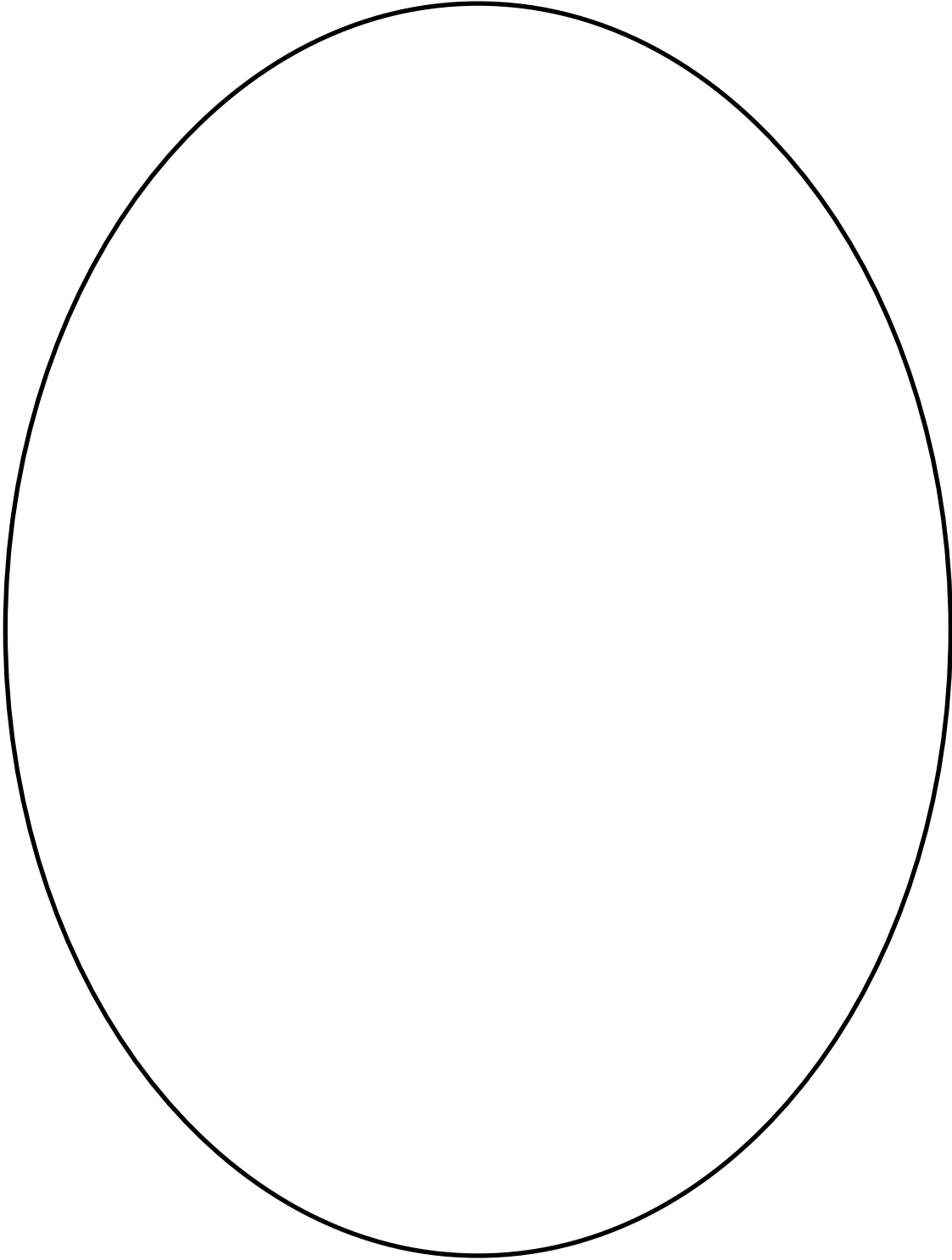
3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapters 6 and 7 of *Miracle's Boys*. Be prepared to write a Reader Response Journal on Chapters 6 and 7 at the beginning of class on Monday. Wish students a wonderful weekend! Dismiss class.

Open Mind Portrait

- 1. Make a portrait of a character.** Draw and color a large portrait of the head and neck of the character. (See oval-shaped template page attached or design your own.)
- 2. Cut out the portrait and open-mind pages.** Cut out the character's portrait and trace around the character's head on one or more sheets of paper. Make an open-mind portrait with "mind" pages to show what the character is thinking at important points in the story or in each chapter of the book. Then cut out the mind pages and attach the portrait and mind pages with a staple or brad to a sheet of heavy construction paper or cardboard. The portrait goes on top. It is important to place the staple or brad at the top of the portrait so that there will be space to write and draw on the mind pages.
- 3. Design the mind pages.** Lift the portrait and draw and write about the character, from the character's viewpoint, on the mind pages. Focus on what the character is thinking and doing during specific points in the story. Include representations of the character's personality, thoughts, feelings, emotions, behaviors, and motivations. You may also want to incorporate key quotes from the text.

Name _____ Character: _____

Open Mind Portrait



Week 2, Day 1 (Monday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

10 minutes: Have students respond to Chapters 6 and 7 of *Miracle's Boys* in their Reader Response Journals with a self-selected journal activity from the journal prompts handout.

15 minutes: Allow opportunity for students to share their journals. Allow journal sharing to lead into whole-class discussion of Chapters 6 and 7: What does Aunt Cecile want to do after Mama dies? What does Ty'ree give up to keep his family together? What does Ty'ree express concern about regarding Lafayette? How does Ty'ree feel Lafayette has changed since their mother's death? How does Ty'ree reassure Lafayette about the morning Mama died? Why does Lafayette blame himself for her death? Lafayette is facing a lot of grief, with both of his parents being dead, and he's been holding in his sadness for a long time; what happens if you do that? What event or group of events in the story has moved you the most so far?

10 minutes: Pass out Literature Circle options (see handout) and have students tally their choices.

10 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading of Chapter 8 in *Miracle's Boys*.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Finish reading Chapter 8 of *Miracle's Boys* and write a short response in Reader Response Journals. Dismiss class.

Week 2, Day 2 (Tuesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

22 minutes: Show episode 5 of *Miracle's Boys* miniseries: "Free Day."

5 minutes: Quickly review Chapter 8: Describe the family's financial situation. What do Lafayette and Ty'ree decide to do instead of going to the movies? What does "B to B" mean, who coined it, and why? At the end of Chapter 8, Ty'ree begins to tell Lafayette about their father's death. How is this different from the episode of the miniseries you just watched?

15 minutes: Read Chapter 9 of *Miracle's Boys* (Ty'ree's story) aloud to the class. Afterwards, allow the class to read Chapter 10 of *Miracle's Boys* together in Reader's Theatre format – have one student read as narrator/Lafayette's thoughts, have one student read for Lafayette, and another student read for Ty'ree. (But don't let students get confused! Make sure they understand that the person reading as the narrator/thinking-Lafayette and the person reading as speaking-Lafayette are the same person in the story!)

6 minutes: Assign Literature Circle groups, pass out books, and assign Literature Circle roles and first reading assignment to be done by Friday. *Feathers* group and *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This* group: Read through Chapter 3 by Friday. All other groups: Read through Chapter 1 by Friday. Assign other homework: Read Chapters 11, 12, and 13 of *Miracle's Boys*. Dismiss class.

Week 2, Day 3 (Wednesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

15 minutes: Read Jacqueline Woodson's poem "Describe Somebody" (from *Locomotion*, pages 22-3) aloud with the class. Read George Ella Lyons's poem "Where I'm From" aloud with the class. Introduce Writing-Workshop-Wednesday topic of the week: "I Am..."/"Where I'm From..." Poems (see handouts). Go over instructions, and perhaps read your own examples aloud to the class.

30 minutes: Students should practice writing their own "I Am..." and/or "Where I'm From..." poems.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Complete writing assignment begun in class. Read Chapter 14 of *Miracle's Boys*. Dismiss class.

Week 2, Day 4 (Thursday)

2 minutes: Attendance, take up homework, etc.

10 minutes: Read Chapters 15 and 16 of *Miracle's Boys* aloud as a class. (Round-robin? Popcorn?)

35 minutes: Students should break into small groups for group work and mini-presentations on Chs 11-16.

Group 1 is responsible for a Storyboard of Chapter 11.

Group 2 is responsible for a Storyboard of Chapters 12 and 13.

Group 3 is responsible for a Storyboard of Chapter 14 (see Storyboard handout).

Group 4 is responsible for a Body Biography of Charlie/Newcharlie (see Body Biography handout).

Group 5 is responsible for a *Miracle's Boys* Sociogram (see Sociogram handout).

Group 6 is responsible for a mini-research presentation on Toni Morrison; who is she? Why is she important? What books has she written? Has she won any important awards? What does she look like? Do you agree with her quote, *The function of freedom is to free someone else*?

Considering the context of Chapter 15, why do you think Woodson includes this quote; what does it add to the story? Considering the context of Chapter 16, why do you think

Woodson includes this quote; what does it add to the story? Can you find any other Toni Morrison quotes that you agree with? (Note: Group 6 will probably need access to the internet to complete this assignment.)

3 minutes: Remind students that Literature Circles will meet tomorrow, so be sure to have read and completed your Literature Circle role for the week. Dismiss class.

Week 2, Day 5 (Friday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

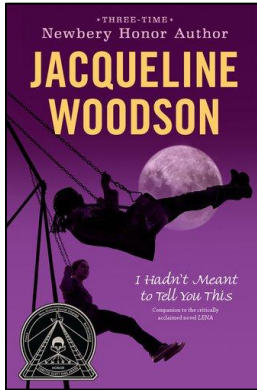
22 minutes: Students will give brief presentations of the group work they completed on Chapters 11-16.

23 minutes: Students will meet in their Literature Circle groups to begin discussing their particular novels. Students will share the work they have prepared (Discussion Director, etc.) and all students will take notes in their Reader Response Journals on the work of the other members in their group. Since this is the first Literature Circle meeting, students will also be responsible for creating a Reading Schedule and assigning a particular number of pages for the group to read each week. They will also rotate roles and assign jobs for the next meeting.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Finish *Miracle's Boys* (Chapters 17 and 18). Be prepared to write a Reader Response Journal on Chapters 17 and 18 at the beginning of class on Monday. Wish students a wonderful weekend! Dismiss class.

Jacqueline Woodson Literature Circle Book Choices

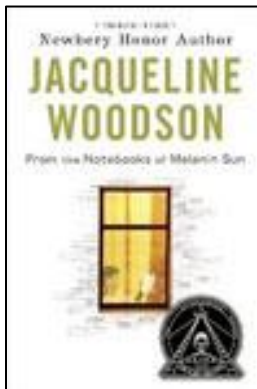
Please rank the following titles in order from 1-6, with 1 being your first reading choice, 2 being your second reading choice, etc. If you feel especially strongly one way or another about any of the titles, please indicate that in the section at the bottom of the tally sheet. I will try to place everyone in one of their top choices.



I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This (1994)

Marie and Lena are both motherless. Marie is black and well off. Lena is white and poor. And in the small town of Chauncey, Ohio blacks and whites don't mix. But Lena and Marie become friends anyway. One of them has a terrible secret and the other must decide—Is it best to keep it? Or should she tell someone fast?

Why I wrote it: I wanted to write a novel about friendship and in it, I wanted to show how destructive racism and classism can be. I also wanted to write about the "secret" in the book—to say to young readers—"Don't be afraid. You are not alone."



From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun (1995)

Melanin Sun is almost fourteen and has a lot to say about the world. But sometimes words come slowly, so he writes them down in his notebook instead of speaking his mind. Then his mom reveals a secret she's been keeping from him. A secret that will change him, and the way he thinks about things, forever...

Why I wrote it: This was the first time I wrote from the point of view of a boy. I wanted to challenge myself and see if I could actually do it. I also wanted to write about different kinds of love and different kinds of families because I hadn't seen many books written about what Melanin goes through. Just like with *If You Come*

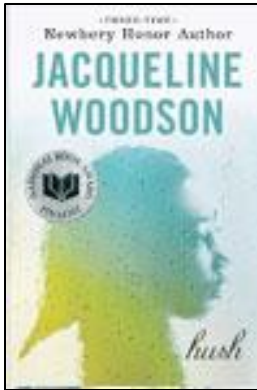
Softly, I wanted to say that it's important to love who you want as long as you're happy.



The House You Pass on the Way (1997)

Staggerlee meets her adopted cousin Trout for the first time the summer they are both thirteen. Trout is exactly what Staggerlee wishes she could be: outspoken, sure of herself, beautiful. Finally, Staggerlee has a friend. Someone she can share her deepest, most private thoughts with. Someone who will teach her how to be the strong girl she longs to be... The two girls form a strong friendship and learn a lot from each other about what it means to be the children of heroes and what it means to grow up in a world that isn't tolerant.

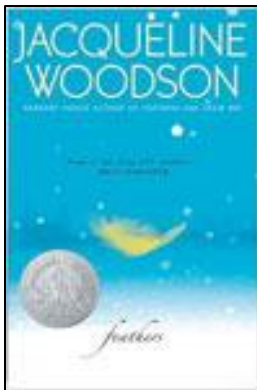
Why I wrote it: I wanted to write about the south—something I hadn't really done before. I wanted to write about friendship and I wanted to write about what it means to love someone—how painful and confusing that can be.



Hush (2002)

When she is twelve, Toswiah and her older sister Cameron have to leave the place they've always known, change their identities and leave no trace of their past life. Toswiah becomes Evie. Her sister becomes Anna. In the new city, they have to reinvent themselves and figure out how to move on when just about everything they ever loved is behind them.

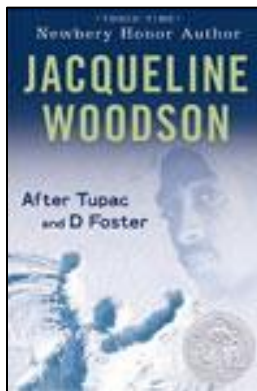
Why I wrote it: I read an article about the Witness Protection Program and it fascinated me. I kept asking myself "What if..."



Feathers (2007)

Though they're reading poems about it in school, Frannie hasn't thought much about hope. Instead, she's worried about her brother, concerned about her best friend's increasing holiness, and feeling fed up with the bullies at school. But then a mysterious new boy comes to school. He seems almost perfect, but maybe he isn't quite what he appears. Through his perspective, though, Frannie and her friends start seeing things in a different way.

Why I wrote it: "Feathers" is a book I wrote because I wanted to write about the many ways people find Hope in the world.



After Tupac and D Foster (2009)

The first time Tupac is shot, D Foster walks into the lives of Neeka and her best friend. From that point on, no one's world is ever the same. D Foster lives with her foster mom who lets her 'roam' while Neeka and the narrator aren't even allowed to leave their block. But the three soon realize they have a lot in common – including their love of Tupac – his lyrics, his life, the way he keeps on keeping on and this helps them move through the years between 11 and 13 in search of their Big Purpose even as the narrator's brother is wrongly accused of a crime and gets sent to jail and D's absent mom keeps disappointing her.

Why I wrote it: I think Tupac was an amazing activist and I wanted to create a story around his story. The more I wrote, the more there was to say about Tupac and about the girls.

I Am.../Where I'm From... Poems

Write an “I Am...” or “Where I’m From...” poem. This is entirely open to interpretation, but you may, if you wish, include statements about where you're from regionally, ethnically, religiously, and so on; memories from different points in your lives; interests and hobbies; mottos or credos; favorite phrases; family traditions and customs; and whatever else defines who you are. Please feel free to experiment with this assignment! However, if you need a little more structure, you may use one of the following templates if you would rather.

The I Am... Template

FIRST STANZA

I am (2 special characteristics you have)
 I wonder (something you are actually curious about)
 I hear (an imaginary sound)
 I see (an imaginary sight)
 I want (an actual desire)
 I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

SECOND STANZA

I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)
 I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
 I touch (an imaginary touch)
 I worry (something that really bothers you)
 I cry (something that makes you very sad)
 I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA

I understand (something that is true)
 I say (something you believe in)
 I dream (something you dream about)
 I try (something you really make an effort to do)
 I hope (something you actually hope for)
 I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

“If you don't know where you're from, you'll have a hard time saying where you're going.”
– Wendell Berry

The Where I'm From... Template

I am from _____ (specific ordinary item), from _____ (product name) and _____ (another one).

I am from the _____ (home description... adjective, adjective, sensory detail).

I am from the _____ (plant, flower, natural item), the _____ (plant, flower, natural detail)

I am from _____ (family tradition) and _____ (family trait), from _____ (name of family member)
 and _____ (another family name) and _____ (family name).

I am from the _____ (description of family tendency) and _____ (another one).

From _____ (something you were told as a child) and _____ (another).

I am from (representation of religion, or lack of it). (Further description).

I'm from _____ (place of birth and family ancestry), _____ (two food items representing your family).

From the _____ (specific family story about a specific person and detail), the _____ (another detail,
 and the _____ (another detail about another family member).

I am from _____ (particular location of family pictures, mementos, archives and several more lines
 indicating their worth).

Storyboard Assignment

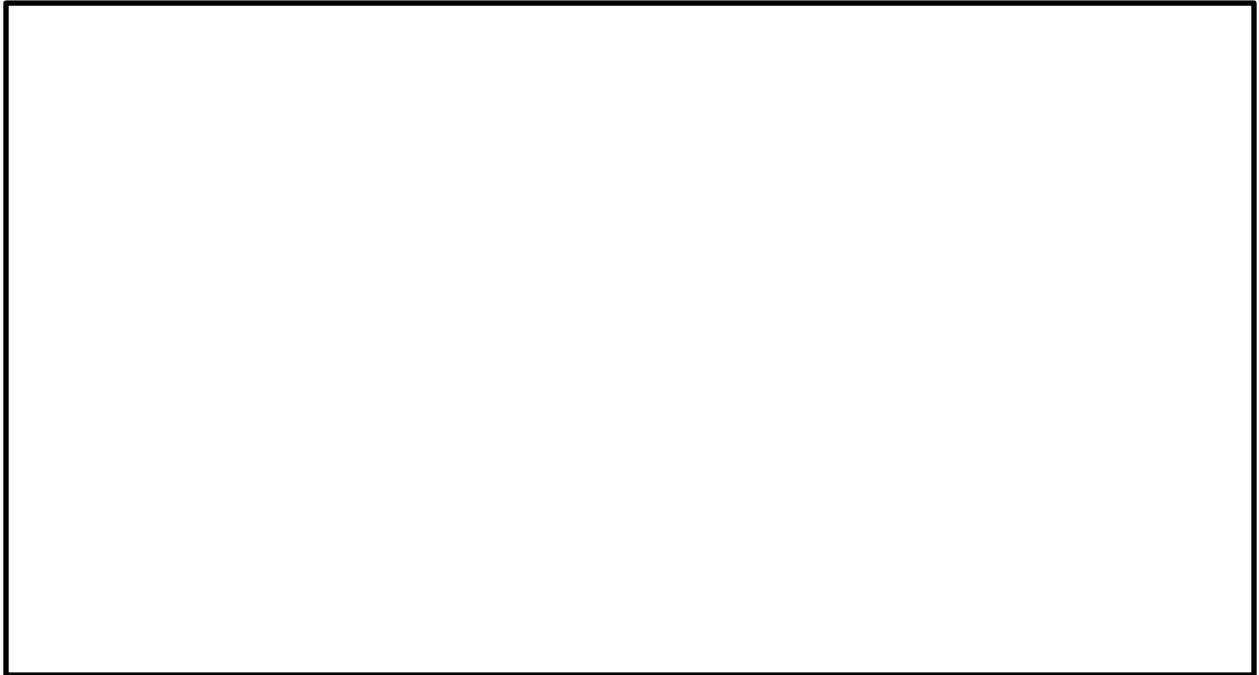
A storyboard is a series of drawings that depict a scene or parts of a scene in a story. In films, storyboards are used to plan the action in a scene. They are similar to comic books or comic strips in the newspaper.

Re-familiarize yourself with the portion of the story you are responsible for representing. Choose 6-8 parts that you think are significant to the action of the story and create a storyboard.

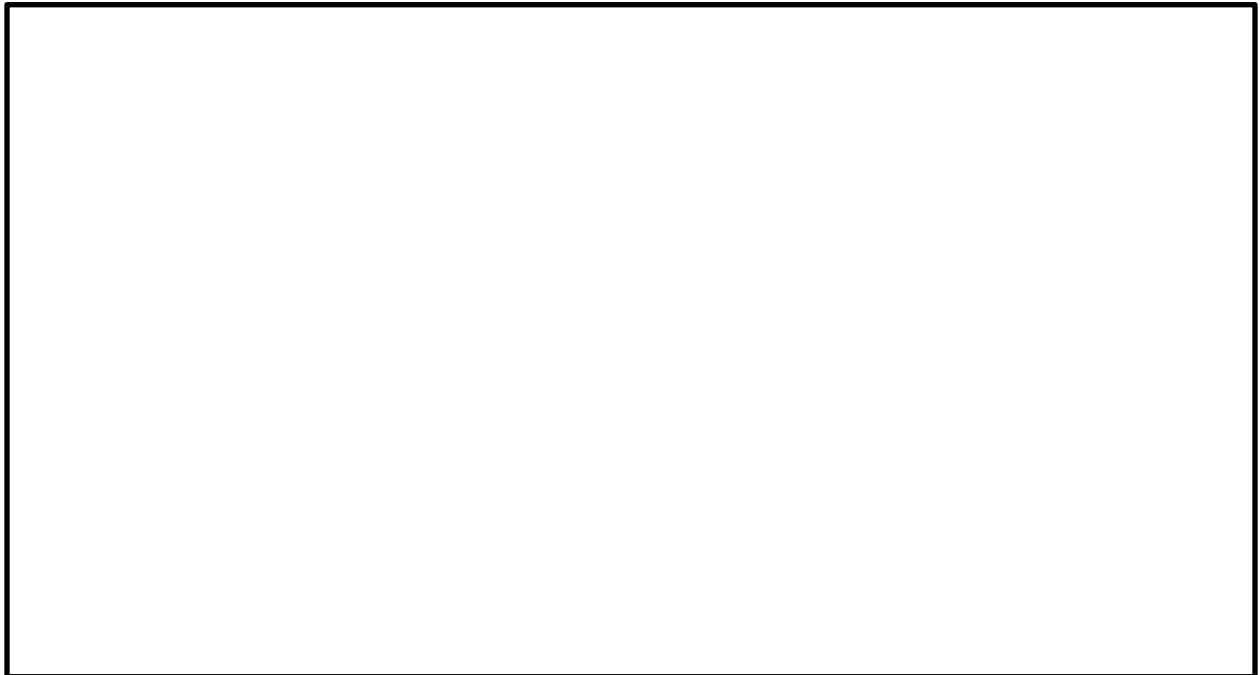
Requirements:

- ❑ At least 6 frames or panels that detail the action in a drawing sketch (you may use the frames I provide you with or you may design your own).
- ❑ The use of color in all of your frames.
- ❑ A caption or summary of the action beneath each frame (you may use your own words, sound effects, or quotes from the story).
- ❑ Accuracy in the action of the story (make sure the events in the plot are in the correct order).
- ❑ Correct use of language conventions, including the correct spelling of the names of all people and places.

Storyboard Templates



CAPTION:



CAPTION:

Body Biography Assignment

For your chosen character, your group will be creating a body biography—a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the character’s life within the novel. After completing this portrait, you will participate in a showing in which you will present your masterpiece to the class. This showing should accomplish these objectives. It should:

- review significant events, choices, and changes involving your character
- communicate to us the full essence of your character by emphasizing the traits that make him/her who he/she is
- promote discussion of your character

Body Biography Possibilities

Depending on the character in question, your portrait might contain:

- a review of significant happenings in the novel
- visual symbols
- an original text
- some of your character’s important statements or other quotations from the novel

Body Biography Suggestions

1. Placement – Carefully choose the placement of your text and artwork. For example, the area where your character’s heart would be might be appropriate for illustrating the important relationships within his or her life.
2. Spine – Actors often discuss a character’s spine. What is the most important goal for your character? What drives his/her thoughts and actions? This is his/her spine. How can you illustrate it?
3. Virtues & Vices – What are your character’s most admirable qualities? What are his/her worst qualities? How can you make us visualize them?
4. Color – Colors are often symbolic. What color(s) do you most associate with your character? Why? How can you effectively work these colors into your presentation?
5. Symbols – What objects can you associate with your character that illustrate his/her essence? Are there objects mentioned within the novel itself that you could use? If not, choose objects that especially seem to correspond with the character.
6. Formula Poems – These are fast, but effective, recipes for producing a text because they are designed to reveal a lot about a character.
7. Mirror, Mirror... – Consider both how your character appears to others on the surface and what you know about the character’s inner self. Do these images clash or correspond? What does this tell you about the character?
8. Changes – How has your character changed within the novel? Trace these changes within your text and/or artwork.

Sociogram Assignment

According to Merriam-Webster.com a sociogram is “a sociometric chart that plots the structure of interpersonal relationships in a group situation.” Additionally, Wikipedia defines it as “a graphic representation of social links.” Sociograms display the structure and patterns of group interactions. A sociogram can be drawn on the basis of many different criteria: social relations, channels of influence, lines of communication, etc.

Those points on a sociogram who have many choices are called *stars*. Those with few or no choices are called *isolates*. Individuals who choose each other are known to have made a *mutual choice*. *One-way choice* refers to individuals who choose someone, but the choice is not reciprocated. *Cliques* are groups of three or more people within a larger group who all choose each other (mutual choice). Often, the most important person/thing is in a bigger bubble than everyone else. The size of the bubble represents the importance, with the biggest bubble meaning “most important,” and the smallest representing the “least important.”

How does it work in Literature?

A sociogram is a visual representation of the relationships among characters in a literary text. Students can make use of pictures, symbols, shapes, colors, and line styles to illustrate these relationships. In a sociogram, the central character(s) is placed at the center of the page, and the other characters are placed around him/her. The spatial relationship on the page should in some way represent each of the character’s relationship with the main character, as well as with each other. Lines/arrows can be used to show the “direction and nature” of the relationship (e.g., strength/ weakness, friend/foe, dominance/submissiveness, etc.). A number of conventions may be useful in developing sociograms:

- Place the central character(s) at the center of the diagram
- Let the physical distance between characters reflect the perceived psychological distance between the characters
- Let the size/shape/symbol of a character metaphorically represent each personality, importance, one’s power or lack of, etc.
- Show the direction of a relationship by an arrow/line, and its nature by a brief label (the lines can be creatively applied: What might the following types of lines indicate? A jagged line? A wavy line? The thickness of a line? etc.)
- Represent substantiated relationships with a solid line and inferred relationships by a broken line.
- Circle active characters with a solid line; circle significantly absent characters with a broken line.
- Place the characters that support the main character on one side of a dividing line, and antagonistic characters on the other side.
- Illustrate the tone and/or theme of a piece through the use of color or visual symbols.
- Explore creative ways to represent a character’s motivation. For example, inside each “character’s circle” might be one or more words that seem to capture the essence of that character. Immediately outside the circle could be a series of arrows that represent the forces that influence that character.

Week 3, Day 1 (Monday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

15 minutes: Begin the week with a double journal entry. Have students respond to the following prompts in their Reader Response Journals:

Charlie sounds like he came back around to his old self again by the end of the novel. Talk about what Charlie will need to do in order to keep this positive change going. What should be his vision? What should be his plan? And what effort do you think he will need to expend in order to not get involved again with Aaron and his buddies?

After about 7 minutes or so, have students stop writing and respond again to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

Is there some aspect of your life you would like to change, like Charlie? Write about what your vision is, what your plan should be and the effort needed to meet that goal.

15 minutes: After finishing the novel, have students carefully re-consider the character of Lafayette. What do you think it's like to be Lafayette? Would it be hard to be living his life? Why or why not? How do you think Lafayette got the courage to stand up to Aaron? In what ways does Lafayette show maturity through his actions with Aaron? Do you think Mama would be proud of him? Have students return to their original Open Mind Portrait of Lafayette to consider what has changed. Have students complete a second Open Mind Portrait of Lafayette including all the things Lafayette is thinking and feeling now (see handout from Week 1). How has he changed? How has he matured? How do you think he feels when he sees Aaron and how do you think he feels when he stands up to him? What has changed about his feelings towards Charlie?

15 minutes: Open the floor for a final discussion on *Miracle's Boys*. Did students like this book? Did students not like this book? Why or why not? What questions are we left with? What have we learned from this book? What would be a good theme statement for this novel? What do you think the future holds for Miracle's boys?

3 minutes: Remind students to keep reading their Literature Circle novels. Explain that we will be beginning a new novel as a class tomorrow and that any time they can devote to their Literature Circle novel (such as no-homework-nights!) should probably be used wisely! Dismiss class.

Week 3, Day 2 (Tuesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

22 minutes: Show Episode 6 of *Miracle's Boys* miniseries: "Band of Brothers."

10 minutes: Lead discussion on differences and similarities between Woodson's novel and the Nickelodeon miniseries. Why do you think the directors made the choices they did? Field any final questions or comments on *Miracle's Boys*...

3 minutes: Introduce next novel, *If You Come Softly*, and pass out books. Explain to students that this book deals with some particularly difficult subjects, such as racism, and that in order for everyone to get the most out of our study of this novel, we need to approach these issues with sensitivity, maturity, and open-mindedness...

10 minutes: Sustained Silent Reading: *If You Come Softly*, Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2

3 minutes: Assign homework: Finish reading through Chapter 2 of *If You Come Softly*, and write a brief reflection response in Reader Response Journal. Dismiss class.

Week 3, Day 3 (Wednesday)

4 minutes: Attendance, etc. Begin class by playing Three Dog Night's "Joy to the World" (3:17), and challenge students to identify the song, the artist, and the page number of the reference in the text.

4 minutes: Introduce Writing-Workshop-Wednesday topic of the week: Incorporating sounds into our writing. Remind students that many common words are onomatopoeic (hiss, ring, crunch, etc.), many other words also imitate sounds (whisper, galumph, etc.), and many words are made-up specifically to imitate sounds (pow! bam!, etc.). Discuss how we often consider multiple sounds as one sound because we are so used to hearing them together (for example, a bus stopping at a bus stop on a city street). Remind students that writers often break sounds down into parts to describe them and sometimes describe the sound in terms of pitch or quality. Sometimes the only way we can describe sound is by comparing it to another, more familiar sound, etc. Writers also often suggest how they feel emotionally about a particular sound by the way they choose to describe it (soothing vs. grating, etc.). Ask students to consider all of the various ways writers describe sounds as they engage in the next few activities.

10 minutes: Play audio cassette of various household sounds (the roar of the clothes dryer, ice cubes clinking in a glass, a tissue being pulled from its box, a toilet flushing, a key turning in a lock, a car engine starting, etc.), stopping between each one for students to:

1. Indicate the source of the sound.
2. Use words that imitate the sound.
3. Break complicated sounds into parts.

4. Describe the character of the sound.
5. Use figurative language or analogy to describe the sound, comparing it to something else.

15 minutes: Assign Hillocks' activity, "Describing Sounds" (see handout), and then have students share what they have written in small groups.

15 minutes: Have students select a piece of writing they have already done – either from their Reader Response Journal or their work from one of the previous Writing-Workshop-Wednesdays – that they would like to focus on for the first portion of their Who Am I? multigenre project and have them revise what they have written by trying to incorporate appropriate sound details to their work in order to make the piece both more effective and truer to their experience.

2 minutes: Assign homework: Complete writing assignment begun in class. Read Chapter 3 of *If You Come Softly*. Dismiss class.

Week 3, Day 4 (Thursday)

4 minutes: Attendance, etc. Begin class by playing Billie Holiday's "Summertime" (3:00), and challenge students to identify the song, the artist, and the page number of the reference in the text.

13 minutes: Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals. Remind students that one of the portions of the Who Am I? multigenre project is about family, and that this journal entry may turn into a more polished piece of writing later, so consider the prompt carefully:

Both Miah and Ellie have interesting familial situations. Consider your own family. In what ways is your family like Miah's? In what ways is your family like Ellie's? In what ways is your family *not* like Miah's? (Obviously, most of us do not have famous parents, like Miah, but beyond that – what about the *details* of Miah's life are different than yours?) And, in what ways is your family *not* like Ellie's? Etc. Use the story as a point of comparison to explore the details of your own family life.

15 minutes: Have students get in small groups of their choosing to discuss the following questions:

- In Chapter 1, Miah openly explores the matter of race. How did Miah's grandmother feel about being black? How do you know? How is her view different from his father's view? Finally, how does Miah feel about it? How do you know?
- Describe Ellie's relationship with her mother and her father. How have her relationships with them been influenced by things that happened in the past? How is Ellie's life different from her older siblings? What long-term effect has Marion's disappearance act had on Ellie?

- What parental issues does Miah have to contend with? How do Miah’s famous parents impact his life? How has he handled the reactions of his peers in the past when they learn about his father? How is Miah affected by his parents’ separation?
- Discuss whether or not you think each has the ability to cope positively with these family issues based on what you’ve learned so far about both Miah and Ellie’s character traits.
- Woodson has a very poetic style of writing. Have each group member find an example of this within the first three chapters and share it with the group. What is poetic about the passage you chose? What effect do you think Woodson is trying to create with each example?

Ask students to listen carefully and with open minds to the opinions of each individual. Remind students to also be mindful of and sensitive to the feelings of their classmates during discussion.

15 minutes: Lead a whole-class discussion; ask individual groups to report to the class what they discussed.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapter 4 of *If You Come Softly*, and finish reading agreed upon portion of Literature Circle novel, as well as complete role responsibility for the week in Reader Response Journals. Dismiss class.

Week 3, Day 5 (Friday)

4 minutes: Attendance, etc. Begin class by playing Percy Sledge’s “When A Man Loves A Woman” (3:00), and challenge students to identify the song, the artist, and the page number of the reference in the text.

10 minutes: Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

Ellie expected Anne to understand about Miah. Discuss how you feel about Anne’s reaction to the fact that Miah is black. Can you relate this to an experience in your own life? Have you ever expected someone to react a certain way about something important to you only to be disappointed (or pleasantly surprised)? Explain.

33 minutes: Students will meet in their Literature Circle groups to continue discussing their particular novels. Students will share the work they have prepared and all students will take notes in their Reader Response Journals. Students will renegotiate Reading Schedule as necessary, and will rotate roles and assign jobs for the next meeting. Present students with Literature Circle Novel Hall-of-Fame Induction Presentation assignment. Field questions. Suggest to students to keep this assignment in mind as they read, perhaps keeping a running list of ideas, etc. If students end up with extra time, they may continue reading their novel together as a group, or as Sustained Silent Reading.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Finish Part 1 (Chapters 5 and 6) of *If You Come Softly*. Wish students a wonderful weekend! Dismiss class.

Describing Sounds

Think about, take notes, and compose sentences describing *four* of the following sounds:

1. An automatic dishwasher
2. An automatic ice-cube maker
3. Someone taking a shower
4. A basketball player dribbling and shooting baskets alone in a gym
5. Late-night sounds from the street near your house
6. A gas-powered lawn mower
7. A diesel locomotive
8. Someone sawing a wooden plank in half
9. A screen door slamming
10. A sound of your choice

Remember to do the following:

- Take the sounds apart.
- Think of words or phrases to describe rhythm and tone.
- Think of words that imitate the sound.
- Invent comparisons.

When you are done, share what you have written with others in your group.

Week 4, Day 1 (Monday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

15 minutes: Begin the week with a double journal entry. Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

“Change is a good thing, his grandma used to say. Think of it like seasons. You don’t want to stay one way all your life and have moss grow under your toes.” How do you feel about her words? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

After about 7 minutes or so, have students stop writing and respond again to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

Ellie doesn’t have any close friends from her old school or at Percy Academy. If you were a close friend of Ellie’s, what advice would you give her regarding Miah and why?

25 minutes: Read Chapters 7 and 8 of *If You Come Softly* aloud as a class. (Round-robin? Popcorn?)

3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapters 9 and 10 of *If You Come Softly*, and respond with a brief entry in Reader Response Journals. Dismiss class.

Week 4, Day 2 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance, etc. Begin class by playing Bob Marley’s “Buffalo Soldiers” (4:17), and challenge students to identify the song, the artist, and the page number of the reference in the text.

22 minutes: Have students get in small groups of their choosing to discuss the following questions:

- How has racism played a significant role in this novel so far? How do students and teachers at Percy Academy attempt to stereotype Miah? How does he handle these incidents?
- To follow up on the previous question, why did the school put Miah in remedial history? How do you feel about this mistake? Do you think this portrayal of this event is accurate of the “real world?” Can you support your opinion?
- How does Carlton feel about interracial relationships? Look at the last line on page 89 – How do you feel about his statement?
- Discuss your reaction to the instant connection between Miah and Ellie.
- What is the effect of having alternating chapters representing Ellie’s and Miah’s points of view?
- Woodson has included a number of musical references within this novel. If we were to create a class soundtrack to *If You Come Softly*, what song would each group member most like to contribute

to the album, and why? Does your song represent a particular scene or event in the novel or just an overall theme song, etc.? Explain your choice.

Ask students to listen carefully and with open minds to the opinions of each individual. Remind students to also be mindful of and sensitive to the feelings of their classmates during discussion.

20 minutes: Lead a whole-class discussion, asking individual groups to report to the class some of the ideas they discussed.

3 minutes: Dismiss class. Remind students to continue reading their Literature Circle novels.

Week 4, Day 3 (Wednesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

5 minutes: Introduce Writing-Workshop-Wednesday topic of the week: Smells and Synesthesia. Taste and smell are two of the most difficult senses to describe. Writers sometimes use comparisons to other sense impressions when trying to describe these two sensory experiences. For example, the smell of ammonia may be described as abrasive (tactile) or chartreuse (visual).

10 minutes: Have students visit various “Smell Stations,” including cinnamon, vanilla, bleach, gasoline, grass clippings, baby powder, lavender, anise, etc. Ask students to smell each odor, and jot down a description of it using synesthesia, in addition to a note or two about how it made them feel or of what it reminded them.

15 minutes: Assign Hillocks’ activity, “Crossing Senses” (see handout), and then have students share what they have written in small groups.

15 minutes: Have students continue to revise the piece of writing they have chosen to focus on for the first portion of their Who Am I? multigenre project, by trying to incorporate appropriate smell details and effective uses of synesthesia to their work in order to make the piece more successful and truer to their experience.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Complete writing assignment begun in class. Remind students to continue reading their Literature Circle novels. Dismiss class.

Week 4, Day 4 (Thursday)

2 minutes: Attendance, take up homework, etc.

20 minutes: Read Chapter 11 of *If You Come Softly* together in Reader's Theatre format – have one student read as narrator/Ellie's thoughts, have one student read for Ellie, and another student read for Miah; you will also need someone to read for the old woman on page 106. (But, again, don't let students get confused! Make sure they understand that the person reading as the narrator/thinking-Ellie and the person reading as speaking-Ellie are the same person in the story!)

8 minutes: Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

Read the following passage of the poem by Audre Lorde:

*If you come as softly
as the wind within the trees
You may hear what I hear
See what sorrow sees.
If you come as lightly
as threading dew
I will take you gladly
nor ask more of you.*

What do you think Lorde is trying to say here? How might it apply to issues of race? Why do you think Woodson found it important enough to name her book after it? What do you think is the significance of the title of Woodson's novel: *If You Come Softly*? Keep in mind that you will be sharing this piece of writing with other students.

8 minutes: Have students get in small groups of their choosing to share the ideas they wrote about.

9 minutes: Lead a very brief whole-class discussion, asking individual groups to report to the class some of what they discussed about the meaning of the poem and the significance of the novel's title.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapters 12-15 of *If You Come Softly*. Remind students also to finish reading agreed upon portion of Literature Circle novel, and complete Literature Circle role responsibility in Reader Response Journals by tomorrow, as well. Dismiss class.

Week 4, Day 5 (Friday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

10 minutes: Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

Consider the novel you have been reading in your Literature Circle. Do you see any similarities between that novel and *If You Come Softly* and/or *Miracle's Boys*? What about writing style or technique? Of the three books, which have you enjoyed the most? Which have you enjoyed the least? Why do you think this is?

35 minutes: Students will meet in their Literature Circle groups to continue discussing their particular novels. Students will share the work they have prepared (Discussion Director, etc.) and all students will take notes in their Reader Response Journals on the work of the other members in their group. Students should be reminded that they all need to have finished their novels by next Friday, and they will also rotate roles and assign jobs for the next meeting. All students should keep in mind the Literature Circle Novel Hall-of-Fame Induction Presentation they will give at the completion of the novel, and continue to keep a running list of ideas as they read, as they will begin preparation for their presentations next Friday, as well. If students end up with extra time, they may continue reading their novel together as a group, or as Sustained Silent Reading.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapters 16-19 of *If You Come Softly*. Wish students a wonderful weekend! Dismiss class.

Crossing Senses

Choose **five** odors from the numbered list below to describe.

1. Bacon burning
2. Your favorite food, either as it's cooking or when you sit down to eat it
3. Exhaust fumes of a bus or truck
4. A beach along the ocean
5. An auto-repair shop
6. A forest
7. A burning garbage dump
8. A locker room
9. The school cafeteria
10. Hot grease on machinery
11. Carnations or other flowers
12. A dusty, sun-baked field
13. A bakery
14. A shoe store
15. Any odor that makes you recall a pleasant experience

Describe each in terms of

- Color
- Shape
- Weight
- Temperature
- Sound
- What it reminds you of

Write a sentence or two about each of the five odors you chose.

Week 5, Day 1 (Monday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

15 minutes: Chalk Talk on “Race” and/or “Racism.” Remind students before you begin how sensitive and difficult a subject this is; ask students to approach the activity with maturity and open-mindedness. Discuss. As discussion begins winding down, remind students that while these are important ideas to consider and question, and while Woodson wants her book to spark these kinds of discussions, these issues and questions are too big to solve or answer in one class period. However, it is good that we are thinking and considering and stretching our minds in these ways and that we should continue to do so as we finish the book.

30 minutes: Students should break into small groups for group work and mini-presentations on Chs. 12-19:

Group 1 is responsible for a Storyboard of Chapters 12-19 with an emphasis on race and racism.

Group 2 is responsible for a Storyboard of Chapters 12-19 with an emphasis on love/Ellie and Miah’s relationship (see Storyboard handout from Week 2).

Group 3 is responsible for a complete Body Biography of Ellie.

Group 4 is responsible for a complete Body Biography of Miah (see Body Biography handout from Week 2).

Group 5 is responsible for a full *If You Come Softly* Sociogram of Miah’s relationships (As you create this, consider all of the different types of minorities and people Woodson includes in this novel, and how their inclusion affects the story).

Group 6 is responsible for a full *If You Come Softly* Sociogram of Ellie’s relationships (As you create this, consider all of the different types of minorities and people Woodson includes in this novel, and how their inclusion affects the story) (See Sociogram handout from Week 2).

3 minutes: Assign homework: Read Chapters 20 and 21 of *If You Come Softly*. Dismiss class.

Week 5, Day 2 (Tuesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

30 minutes: Students may have a few minutes to finalize their work and then students will give brief presentations on the group work they did on Chapters 12-19.

15 minutes: In preparation for tomorrow’s Writing Workshop on naming colors, pass around paint swatches and analyze the names of the colors. After a few minutes of analysis on how colors are named (basic colors are usually modified in some way – canary yellow, barn red, burnt orange, etc.), write the word “orange” on the board and ask students to think of synonyms for orange – objects or animals that are

always orange, adjectives that describe a particular shade of orange, etc. – and write as many synonyms as the class can come up with on the board. Pass out homework assignment prompt:

Choose two colors (other than orange, which we used as an example in class) and list nine or ten synonyms for that color:

- actual words that mean the same color (for example, *tangerine* for orange)
- things that are universally known to be that color (for example, an orange *basketball* or an orange *sunrise*)
- specific adjectives that describe a certain shade of the color (for example, *burnt orange*)

Do not include:

- generic words like *light*, *dark*, *medium*, and *pale*
- color adjectives like *red orange* and *yellow orange*

Try to be as creative as possible. The more interesting synonyms, the better. You may use a thesaurus. Your homework will help your team when you play the Color Relay game tomorrow.

3 minutes: Assign additional homework: Read Chapter 22 of *If You Come Softly*. Dismiss class.

Week 5, Day 3 (Wednesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

5 minutes: Break the class into teams and pass out the following rules for the Color Relay game:

1. The object of the Color Relay game is to come up with the most original color names.
2. You may start writing when I say go and you must stop writing when I say stop.
3. You must write at least ONE idea at each station. Your team will lose five points for each station you miss.
4. You may not REPEAT what another team has already written. If you do, a point will be deducted from your team's overall score for each duplication.
5. Your synonyms must be genuine synonyms (like *tangerine* for orange) OR a specific adjective-noun combination (*light orange* is NOT specific; *peach fuzz orange* IS specific).
6. Your synonyms must make sense (*peach fuzz purple* doesn't make a whole lot of sense to most people).
7. Your similes and metaphors must be universal enough to make sense beyond this classroom. (You shouldn't write "*orange like Monica's shirt*," because Monica's shirt isn't always orange and not everyone knows who Monica is. "*Orange like Garfield*" is much more universal.)
8. You may use your homework to help your team during the game.

Field any questions and make sure all teams are ready before beginning the game.

15 minutes: Play the Color Relay game. Have each team rotate around the ten stations (red, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, black, brown, white, clear) with 1 ½ minutes at each station...

10 minutes: Hang the finished color scrolls on the classroom walls for student reference. Tally the team contributions and announce the Color Relay winners! (You may want to offer a small prize to each member of the winning team – a small box of crayons, for example...)

15 minutes: Have students continue to revise the piece of writing they have chosen to focus on for the first portion of their Who Am I? multigenre project, by trying to incorporate appropriate and specific color details to their work in order to make the piece more effective and truer to their experience. Remind students that the first part of the Coffeehouse Sharing series will be next week, so they should be polishing these pieces up and thinking about/working on the multigenre pairing to their writing that they will share with the class.

3 minutes: Assign homework: Finish *If You Come Softly* (Chapters 23-26). Dismiss class.

Week 5, Day 4 (Thursday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

10 minutes: Have students respond to the following prompt in their Reader Response Journals:

After reading *If You Come Softly*, you almost feel like you know Miah and Ellie. Pretend you *do* know them and write a reflection on or response to the news of Jeremiah's death. This may take the form of a letter – to Miah, what you always wanted to tell him, but never got the opportunity..., or to Ellie – a sympathy card, etc. It may take the form of a poem, or a text reformulation - using Woodson's words and passages from the novel rearranged to express a new truth. Be thoughtful and creative. Keep in mind you will be sharing these reflections with other students.

15 minutes: In self-selected groups, have students share their journal responses. As a group, have them come up with a brief group contribution to the class-wide memorial ceremony. Again, this may take the form of a letter, poem, text reformulation, etc. They may want to incorporate a drawing or a song, etc. However, each student should be involved and have a say in what is presented. Also, remind them that each group will have no more than approximately three minutes to present their memorial contribution.

20 minutes: Class-wide memorial for Jeremiah; Allow individual groups to present their contribution to the class memorial tribute ceremony... Field any lasting comments, questions, thoughts on *If You Come Softly*...

Remind students that if they enjoyed this story there is a follow-up novel to *If You Come Softly* entitled *Behind You...*

3 minutes: Remind students to *finish* Literature Circle novels as well as assigned role responsibilities in Reader Response Journals by tomorrow. Dismiss class.

Week 5, Day 5 (Friday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

45 minutes: Students will meet in their Literature Circle groups to finish discussing their particular novels. Students will share the work they have prepared (Discussion Director, etc.) and all students will take notes in their Reader Response Journals on the work of the other members in their group. Students will use the rest of the time to plan and prepare their Literature Circle Novel Hall-of-Fame Induction Presentations for next week.

3 minutes: Wish students a wonderful weekend! Dismiss class.

Week 6, Day 1 (Monday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

22 minutes: Students will meet in their Literature Circle groups to run-through or practice or make any last-minute preparations for their presentations on Tuesday and Wednesday.

22 minutes: In self-selected peer-editing groups of three, students will share what they have composed as part of their Who Am I? project (to be presented on Thursday and Friday). Students will read each other's work and fill out the Feedback Sheets for each classmate (see Peer Feedback Sheet handout).

4 minutes: Assign homework: Alert students of the order of the Literature Circle Novel Presentations so those who will present the following day are prepared to do so. Also alert students of the order of the Coffeehouse Sharing Series Pt. 1 – Who Am I? Project Presentations on Thursday and Friday, as well. Remind students to use the Feedback Sheets from their classmates to make any final revisions that they see fit to their Who Am I? project pieces. Also remind students of the multimedia pairing they will need to be

prepared to share on Thursday or Friday as well. Make any additional final arrangements with particular students (Anyone bringing in food may bring it by the classroom at the beginning of the day; anyone needing a computer or VCR or DVD player for the multimedia portion of their project should let you know in order to have one available at class time, etc...) Dismiss class.

Week 6, Day 2 (Tuesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

45 minutes: Literature Circle Novel Hall-of-Fame Induction Presentations (3 groups – possibly 4...)

3 minutes: Remind students of who will present tomorrow. Remind students also of the order of the Coffeehouse Sharing Series Pt. 1 – Who Am I? Project Presentations on Thursday and Friday. Make any additional final arrangements with particular students (Anyone bringing in food may bring it by the classroom at the beginning of the day; anyone needing a computer or VCR or DVD player for the multimedia portion of their project should let you know in order to have one available at class time, etc...) Dismiss class.

Week 6, Day 3 (Wednesday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

45 minutes: Literature Circle Novel Hall-of-Fame Induction Presentations continued... (3 groups – or possibly only 2...) Use any remaining time for final revisions/preparation/questions/etc. about Coffeehouse Sharing Series Pt. 1 – Who Am I? Project Presentations on Thursday and Friday...

3 minutes: Remind students of the order of the Coffeehouse Sharing Series Pt. 1 – Who Am I? Project Presentations on Thursday and Friday. Make any additional final arrangements with particular students (Anyone bringing in food may bring it by the classroom at the beginning of the day; anyone needing a computer or VCR or DVD player for the multimedia portion of their project should let you know in order to have one available at class time, etc...) Dismiss class.

Week 6, Day 4 (Thursday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

5 minutes: Allow students to get drinks or snacks and get settled. (You may want to provide hot chocolate and pretzels or popcorn or something for a more genuine coffeehouse-feel!)

40 minutes: Student presentations of Who Am I? Projects part 1... Students should read their written composition and share or explain the multimedia pairing they have provided.

3 minutes: Thank student presenters. Dismiss class.

Week 6, Day 5 (Friday)

2 minutes: Attendance, etc.

5 minutes: Allow students to get drinks or snacks and get settled. (You may want to provide hot chocolate and pretzels or popcorn or something for a more genuine coffeehouse-feel!)

40 minutes: Student presentations of Who Am I? Projects part 1... Students should read their written composition and share or explain the multimedia pairing they have provided.

3 minutes: Thank student presenters. Assign homework: Ask students to spend 20-30 minutes filling out the Unit Reflection Survey; thank students in advance for their feedback! Wish students a wonderful weekend! Dismiss class.

Note: Should there be any additional students who have yet to present their Who Am I? projects part 1, these students will present at the beginning of class on Monday. After doing the first one of these Coffeehouse Sharings, you will probably have a better gauge for planning for them in the future!...

Unit Reflection Survey

Please answer each question that follows on a separate sheet of paper. Your comments will strongly influence my efforts to revise this unit for future use, so I'd appreciate your complete honesty in responding. You do not need to identify yourself, though you are welcome to if you wish.

1. We read the following literature during this unit. Please write your honest opinion of each work of literature. Did you like it? Did you hate it? Why? Why not? Is there anything that I could have done differently that would have helped you to better enjoy your study of these works? Do you recommend I use each of these texts with future students? Why or why not?
 - *Miracle's Boys* – Jacqueline Woodson
 - *If You Come Softly* – Jacqueline Woodson
 - Write in your Literature Circle novel – Jacqueline Woodson
2. What did you learn from keeping your Reader Response Journal? Did you feel that you were adequately taught how to keep one? Please explain. Do you think that keeping a Reader Response Journal would be a good idea for units that we do later this year? Why or why not?
3. What did you learn from participating in group work activities? Did you feel that these were a good way of engaging with each other and with the literature? Please explain. Do you think that I should continue to use group work activities of this sort? Why or why not?
4. What did you learn from the Writing Workshops? What was your favorite workshop? What was your least favorite workshop? Do you feel that your writing has improved from participating in these types of activities? Would you recommend I include Writing Workshops in this unit again next year? Why or why not?
5. What did you learn from working with your Literature Circle? Did you feel that you were adequately taught how to engage with this type of group? Please explain. Do you think that Literature Circles would be a good idea for units that we do later this year? Why or why not?
6. What did you learn from doing your Literature Circle Novel Hall-of-Fame Induction Presentation? Would you recommend that I use this assignment again next year?
7. What did you learn from completing the first portion of your Who Am I? Project? Did you enjoy the Coffeehouse Sharing? Why or why not? Would you recommend including this assignment next year? Why or why not?
8. What would you recommend that I do the same if I taught this unit again to other students?
9. What would you recommend that I do differently?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK! HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND!

Unit Sources

- Reader Response Journal Prompts borrowed and/or adapted from a number of web sources, including: <http://pmms.msdp.k12.in.us/imc/preddy/writing%20prompts.pdf> and <http://hmaine.blogspot.com/2010/03/reader-response-journal-prompts.html>
- Literature Circles and Novel Presentations adapted from similar assignment given by teachers in the Oconee County High School English Department, Watkinsville, GA.
- Who Am I? Project adapted from similar assignment given by Ms. Erin Cawthon of Clarke Central High School, Athens, GA.
- Most of the Writing-Workshop-Wednesday assignments, as well as the Peer Feedback Sheets borrowed and/or adapted from activities designed by George Hillocks, Jr. (2007), in *Narrative Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Several *Miracle's Boys* journal assignments adapted or borrowed from exercises found at the following web address: <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/cblp/change/middleschool/suggestedweeklyplans.html>
- Open Mind Portrait activity found at the following web address: http://www.lesn.appstate.edu/fryem/RE4030/openmind_portrait.htm – Tompkins, G. E. (2003). Samples from “Compendium of Instructional Procedures” In *Literacy for the 21st century*, 3rd ed. (pp. 486-487). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Woodson book descriptions taken from the back covers of the books and/or from information provided by Woodson at the following site: <http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com/ya.shtml>
- “I Am” poem assignment adapted from exercises found at the following web addresses: <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/poetry.html> and <http://freecology.com/formsforteachers/pdf/iampoem.pdf>
- “Where I’m From” poem assignment found at the following web address: <http://www.swva.net/fred1st/wif.htm>
- Storyboard assignment adapted from an activity found at the following web address: www2.informns.k12.mn.us/.../484823Theseus_Storyboard_Assignment.doc
- Body Biography assignment borrowed from an activity assigned in Dr. Joel Taxel’s LLED 7318 Culturally Diverse Children’s Literature course at the University of Georgia.

- Sociogram assignment adapted from one I received from a peer in my student teaching cohort; I honestly have no idea where she initially found it...
- Some of the *If You Come Softly* journal prompts or discussion questions have been borrowed and/or adapted from information found at the following websites: www.connected-learning.org/Products/jwekarlu2.doc and <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/novels/lesson-plan/31364.html?page=2&detoured=1>
- Unit Reflection Survey adapted from the reflection survey included in Peter Smagorinsky's (2008) *Teaching English By Design*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.