

TITLE OF LESSON

American Literature Unit 2 Lesson 14 – The Importance of Place
*What is the importance of community in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*?*

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – Eng 11-12: R1.0-3, 2.0, 2.4, 3.0-6, W1.0-5, 1.9, 2.0-1, 2.3-4, W/O1.0-2, L/S1.0, 1.4-8

MATERIALS

Essay 3: Reflections on Folk Groups – Student Page
Butcher Paper and Pens

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To revise a partner’s essay
- To discuss the importance of community in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- To create [Society Charts](#)
- To begin reading Chapter 6 of the novel

FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Homework Check – Stamp/Initial homework assignments (and Step 2 of **Essay 3 Guidelines**). Return any graded assignments and have students place them in their binders.
- 2) [Daily Log](#) – Copy Daily Log below
- 3) [Sustained Silent Reading](#) – Read for fifteen minutes. At the end of the reading, ask students to describe the communities that form the settings of their novels. Is the neighborhood, town, or country important to the story? Why? Describe the setting of your own novel as well.

Date	Journal	Lecture Discussion	Activity	Readings	Homework
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer Revision (Step 3 of Guidelines) 2. Summary and Discussion of Chapter 5 3. Society Chart 4. Read Chapter 6 	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Chapter 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Chapter 6 of <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> and write Dialectical Journal 4. 2. Write the second draft of Essay 3 (step 4 of Guidelines). 3. Continue reading novels. 4. Organize binders. Due tomorrow. 5. Study vocabulary to date.

ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. [Peer Revision](#) – Ask students to take out the first drafts of their Essay 3 and the **Essay 3: Reflections on Folk Groups** guidelines. Pair up the students and have them trade essays. Tell them to look at the **Guidelines** while revising their partner’s essay. They have been through the revision process before, so they should be familiar with it. If anything is missing, they should make a note of it and suggest how to incorporate it. Spend twenty minutes on revision.
2. Chapter 5 – A key event in Chapter 5 is Janie’s and Joe’s move to Eatonville, and Joe’s subsequent rise to power. Tell students the following fact about the novel: when it was first written, white reviewers had trouble believing that a community such as Eatonville existed, where African Americans governed themselves. Joe’s

position of power in the community is therefore quite significant. This makes it even more significant that Janie resents the way he dis-empowers her, as is evident in the following passage:

[Joe speaks] *“Thank yuh fuh yo’ compliments, but mah wife don’t know nothin’ ‘bout no speech-makin’. Ah never married her for nothin’ lak dat. She’s uh woman and her place is in de home.”*
Janie made her face laugh after a short pause, but it wasn’t easy. She had never thought of making a speech, and didn’t know if she cared to make one at all. It must have been the way Joe spoke out without giving her a chance to say anything one way or another that took the bloom off of things.

3. **Society Chart** – At the top of a large piece of butcher paper, write the word Eatonville. Divide the piece of butcher paper into five columns. In the first column, write the word Dress at the top. In the second column, write the word Entertainment at the top. In the third column, write the word Rules at the top. In the fourth column, write the word Dangers. In the last column, write the word Geography. Have students take out their notebooks and create a chart that looks exactly like yours. Anything you write down, they should also be writing in their notebooks.
4. **Visualize** – Ask students to put down their pens/pencils and close their eyes. Ask them to imagine what life would have been like in Eatonville in the mid-1930s. Remind them that this was considered the new part of Florida, and hadn’t been developed the way that the urban centers in the Northeast had been. Ask them to imagine what the land might have been like. Was it hilly or flat? Was it near the ocean or far from it? Was it a small or large country? Ask them to imagine the climate. Was it warm or cold? Rainy or dry?

Now ask them to imagine the residents of Eatonville, reminding them that it was an entirely African American community. Were they dark or light? What kind of dress did they probably wear, based on the climate? What kinds of entertainment might the people have been interested in? What kind of purpose would each form of entertainment have served? Thinking about their land and their climate, as well as their race, imagine what some of the dangers might have been for these people. What would they have feared? Finally, imagine what kinds of rules they might have created to protect themselves. What other structures might they have created besides rules?

5. **Student Charts** – Ask students to open their eyes and without talking to anyone begin to fill in the columns on their **Society Chart**. Remind them there are no right or wrong answers, only well thought out, informed opinions. Give them approximately 2-5 minutes for this. At the end of the 5 minutes, ask for a volunteer to write on your chart all of the possibilities the students have written down for each column. This frees you up to facilitate the process and gives the students ownership of their **Society Chart**. Take as many answers as students are willing to volunteer for each column. If at any point, students are unwilling to give, just go around the room and have each student give one possibility that is different than any other that has already been given. Allow all answers, as they will be revising this chart. Make sure that all students are taking notes in their notebooks, adding any answers that are different than theirs.
6. **Janie’s Role** – Tell the students to think back to Janie’s image of the pear tree, and the tension between her need to be an individual and her attachment to the community. Explain that the ideas explored in the society chart are important to the understanding of the novel because of Hurston’s recurring theme about these tensions between the individual and the community. (That is another reason that Hurston’s use of folklore is so significant, because folklore only survives if it communicates something important about the people in the folk group.) Think of the quote mentioned earlier in class. It would not have been unusual for a man to make a statement like Joe’s, that Janie’s place was in the home. Yet Janie resents it. What does that tell the reader about what is important to Janie? What does the reader know about what is important to the community? Why would the rules be important to them? What danger are they in if the rules are not followed? As students suggest answers to these questions, have them add these ideas on the **Society Chart**.
7. **Chapter 6** – Tell the class to bring out *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and open to Chapter 6. Begin reading with them (having them read aloud individually, or do choral reading). Stop after each paragraph to have them summarize. It is useful to spend some time reading this book in class. Despite all the practice in reading dialect, students may still struggle with reading this kind of writing, and it takes awhile to get used to it. Students should continue to read Chapter 6 and write **Dialectical Journal 4** tonight for homework.

8. Review Homework – Students should write their second drafts of the reflective autobiographical essay tonight. They should also continue to read their novels and study vocabulary. Tomorrow is a library day, so remind them to meet there.
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HOMEWORK

- 1) Read Chapter 6 of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and write [Dialectical Journal 4](#).
 - 2) Write second draft of Essay 3.
 - 3) Continue reading Independent Reading novels.
 - 4) Organize binders. Due tomorrow.
 - 5) Study vocabulary to date.
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GROUP ROLES

None

DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

Unit 1

Project 1: A True Story
Evaluation Essay 1
Incident Poem
Essay 2
Essay 3: Satire
Final Project: Flash Dictionary Chapter
American Literature Unit 1 Final Exam

Unit 2

Essay 1: Reflective Language
Essay 2: Novel Evaluation