

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Cable, Centa, Myers, Zeller    Grade: 12    School: Olentangy High School

Book Title: Their Eyes Were Watching God    Genre: Fiction

Author: Zora Neale Hurston    Pages: 184

Publisher: Harper Perennial    Copyright: 1990

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Back Cover:

First published in 1937, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is Zora Neale Hurston's most highly acclaimed novel. A classic of black literature, it tells with haunting sympathy and piercing immediacy the story of Janie Crawford's evolving selfhood through three marriages. Fair-skinned, long-haired, dreamy as a child, Janie grows up expecting better treatment than she gets until she meets Tea Cake, a younger man who engages her heart and spirit in equal measure and gives her the chance to enjoy life without being one man's mule or another man's adornment. It is a tribute to the author's wisdom that though her story does not end happily, it does draw to a satisfying conclusion. Janie is one black woman who doesn't have to live lost in sorrow, bitterness, fear or foolish romantic dreams, for Janie and the reader have learned "two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out aboot livin' fuh theyselves."

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Develop and apply strategies to comprehend and interpret text.

Gain and demonstrate a deeper understanding of human story by reading varieties of genres.

18. Compare and contrast motivations and reactions of literary characters confronting similar conflicts (e.g., individual vs. nature, freedom vs. responsibility, individual vs. society), using specific examples of character's thoughts, words and actions. 12RALB

19. Recognize and analyze characteristics of sub-genres and American Literature. 12RALC

21. Evaluate ways authors develop point of view and style to achieve specific rhetorical and aesthetic purposes (e.g., through use of figurative language, irony, tone, diction, imagery, symbolism and sounds of language), citing specific examples from text to support analysis. 12RALD,E

Standard 12

22. Compare and contrast motivations and reactions

- of literary characters confronting similar conflicts using specific examples of characters' thoughts, words and actions. 12RALB
23. Analyze the historical, social and cultural context of setting. 12DALC
24. Explain how the narrator affects the characterization, plot and credibility. 12RALA
25. Analyze variations of universal themes in literary texts. 12RALA
15. Distinguish between valid and invalid inferences. 12RAIB
16. Examine an author's beliefs about a subject. 12RAIE

Writing Process  
This book is an excellent tool for teaching close reading techniques and different literary analysis methods. Also, it contains many themes and encourages rich classroom discussions.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Saturday Review

A classic of black literature, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* belongs in the same category — with that of William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway — of enduring American literature.

Review #2

From AudioFile

Nora Zeale Hurston's notable story comes to life through Ruby Dee's fine interpretation. The story of Janie Crawford, her strength and gentleness, was written to be heard. Dee's deep, melodic tones enliven Hurston's evocative prose and powerful images. The colorful characters, Janie's three husbands, Mr. Killicks, Mayor Starks and Tea Cake, her friend Phoeby, and so many others emerge through Dee's strong command of dialogue and her mastery of dialect. She conveys Hurston's sense of drama and spiritual strength in a dynamic program. For readers who know Hurston's work, this program will be a joy, for those who are lucky and wise enough to discover her here, it will be an exceptional experience. R.F.W. An AUDIOFILE Earphones Award winner (c)AudioFile, Portland, Maine --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

Title: *The Color Purple*     Author: Alice Walker

Title:                     Author:

Title:                     Author:

Title:                     Author:

Title:                     Author:

Title:                     Author:

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

References to sexual encounters, use of the word nigger to accurately depict vernacular of the setting of the novel

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated      Regular      At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):**        6    7    8    9    10    11    12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):**

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** June 4, 2008

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults