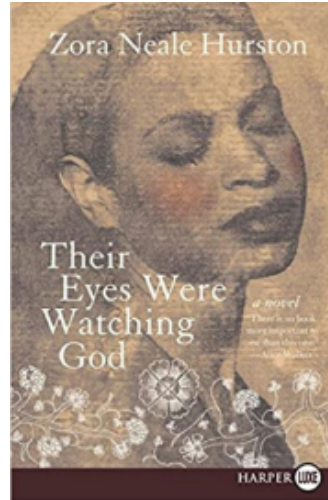


# WBHS English Department Honors American Literature Summer Reading 2022

Ms. Tionen (formerly McQuillan)

We are all regionalists in our origins, however 'universal' our themes and characters, and without our cherished hometowns and childhood landscapes to nourish us, we would be like plants set in shallow soil. Our souls must take root - almost literally.

- Joyce Carol Oates



The summer reading texts for Honors American Literature have been chosen because they connect to the notion of **landscape** that pervades American literature. Native American tribes sang of the power of the land in their creation myths; the Puritans believed the dark forests harbored wild beasts and wild men. Henry David Thoreau retreated to a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond to “live deliberately,” and Mark Twain sent Huck Finn and Jim adrift on a raft along the Mississippi River in search of freedom in an America bound by racism and hypocrisy. Jay Gatsby gazed longingly across the bay where his American Dream glittered, but he was haunted by the Valley of Ashes that signaled America’s moral decline following WWI. Hemingway fished the rivers and swamps of Northern Michigan, and J.D. Salinger packed off Holden searching for answers about life after death in the middle of Central Park in New York City. Zora Neale Hurston used her blossoming pear tree to show one woman’s awakening in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and Lorraine Hansberry gave the Youngers hope with one nurtured houseplant on Chicago’s South Side. This idea spans *four hundred years* of American literature and is worthy of our study this year.

See page 2 for the directions:

**Directions:**

**A. You will read two books this summer; the reading is due by the second day of class:**

- i. *Of Mice and Men* (John Steinbeck), and
- ii. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Zora Neale Hurston).

If you have questions over the summer, please contact me at

[jennifer.tianen@wbsd.org](mailto:jennifer.tianen@wbsd.org)

You are encouraged to not only READ, but also to LISTEN to the audiobook of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, which is available via the West Bloomfield Public Library. Please click [here](#) for more information.

You are also welcome and encouraged to [annotate](#) while you read, but **this is not required** for your summer homework.

Enjoy your summer reading, and I look forward to meeting you this fall!

