

Completed by April 9th

11th GRADE ENGLISH PACKET CHECKLIST

You must complete

1. To Be Young Gifted and _____ 8 part Autobiography (4 mandatory entries)
2. A Raisin in the Sun Guiding Questions Act I Scene I Guiding Questions
3. A Raisin in the Sun Guiding Questions Act I Scene II Guiding Questions
4. A Raisin in the Sun Guiding Questions Act II Scene III & Act III Guiding Questions
5. A Raisin in the Sun Dreams Chart

Complete Collections 11 Workbook Pages 115-122 Harlem Renaissance

To Be Young, Gifted and _____?
An 8 Part
Autobiography
100 pt. Major Grade

Each of you will write an eight part paper in which you will write about the same elements of your life as Lorraine Hansberry wrote about hers. For the eighth section, you should write about something for which you feel great passion, as Hansberry felt about her ethnicity.

You will write the sections in this order: 5, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 1.

The length and depth of each section is up to the individual writer, but the topics will be determined as follows:

1. Why is it important to write about me.
2. The place where I grew up and how it influenced me.
3. How members of my family relate to each other emotionally.
4. How birth order affected me.
5. Games I played as a child.
6. Things we did as a family.
7. My _____.
8. To be young, gifted, and what?

You will format your paper like Hansberry's. Errors should be minimal. Remember, you will share this with your family when completed and you will want to, hopefully, save it forever.

Lorraine Hansberry from To Be Young, Gifted and Black

Chicago: South Side Summers

1.

For some time now — I think since I was a child—I have been possessed of the desire to put down the stuff of my life. That is a commonplace impulse, apparently, among persons of massive self-interest; sooner or later we all do it. And, I am quite certain, there is only one internal quarrel: how much of the truth to tell? How much, how much, how much! It is brutal in sober uncompromising moments, to reflect on the comedy of concern we all enact when it comes to our precious images!

Even so, when such vanity as propels the writing of such memoirs is examined, certainly one would wish at least to have some boast of social serviceability on one's side. I shall set down in these pages what shall seem to me to be the truth of my life and essences... which are to be found, first of all, on the South side of Chicago, where I was born. . . .

visitors
can get to
know it
by riding
train

Say

2.

All travelers to my city should ride the elevated trains that race along the back ways of Chicago. The lives you can look into!

I think you could find the tempo of my people on their back porches. The honesty of their living is there in the shabbiness. Scrubbed porches that sag and look their danger. Dirty gray wood steps. And always a line of white and pink clothes scrubbed so well, waving in the dirty wind of the city.

My people are poor. And they are tired. And they are determined to live.

Our South side is a place apart: each piece of our living is a protest.

Birth date
Corden 3.

I was born May 19, 1930, the last of four children.

Of love and my parents there is little to be written: their relationship to their children was utilitarian. We were fed and housed and dressed and outfitted with more cash than our associates and that was all. We were also vaguely taught certain vague absolutes: that we were better than no one but infinitely superior to everyone; that we were the products of the proudest and most mistreated of the races of man; that there was nothing enormously difficult about life; that one succeeded as a matter of course.

Life was not a struggle—it was something that one did. One won an argument because, if facts gave out, one invented them — with color! The only sinful people in the world were dull people. And, above all, there were two things which were never to be betrayed: the family and the race. But of love, there was nothing ever said.

If we were sick, we were sternly, impersonally, and carefully nursed and doctored back to health. Fevers, toothaches were attended to with urgency

does

recovery
by

imagined
clean
but
poor

claim

Repetition

metaphore

states
facts

describe
parental
style

4 years
Principles

assumption
made
explicit

and importance; one always felt important in my family. Mother came with a tray to your room with the soup and Vick's salve or gave the enemas in a steaming bathroom. But we were not fondled, any of us— head held to breast, fingers about that head— until we were grown, all of us, and my father died.

At his funeral I at last, in my memory, saw my mother hold her sons that way, and for the first time in her life my sister held me in her arms I think. We were not a loving people: we were passionate in our hostilities and affinities, but the caress embarrassed us.

We have changed little. . . .

4.

Seven years separated the nearest of my brothers and sisters and myself; I wear, I am sure, the earmarks of that familial station to this day. Little has been written or thought to my knowledge about children who occupy that place: the last born separated by an uncommon length of time from the next youngest. I suspect we are probably a race apart.

The last born is an object toy which comes in years when brothers and sisters who are seven, ten, twelve years older are old enough to appreciate it rather than poke out its eyes. They do not mind diapering you the first two years, but by the time you are five you are a pest that has to be attended to in the washroom, taken to the movies and "sat with" at night. You are not a person—you are a nuisance who is not particular fun any more. Consequently, you swiftly learn to play alone. . . .

5.

My childhood South side summers were the ordinary city kind, full of the street games which other rememberers have turned into fine ballets these days, and rhymes that anticipated what some people insist on calling modern poetry:

Oh, Mary Mack, Mack, Mack
with the silver buttons, buttons, buttons
All down her back, back, back
She asked her mother, mother, mother
For fifteen cents, cents, cents
To see the elephant, elephant, elephant
Jump the fence, fence, fence
Well, he jumped so high, high, high
Til he touched the sky, sky, sky
And he didn't come back, back, back
Til the Fourth of Ju-ly, ly, ly!

I remember skinny little South side bodies by the fives and tens of us panting the delicious hours away:

"May I?"

And the voice of authority: "Yes, you may—you may take one giant step."

One drew in all one's breath and tightened one's fist and pulled the small body against the heavens, stretching, straining all the muscles in the legs to make - one giant step.

It is a long time. One forgets the reason for the game. (For children's games are always explicit in their reasons for being. To play is to win something. Or not to be "it." Or to be high pointer, or outdoor or, sometimes—just the winner. But after a time one forgets.)

Why was it important to take a small step, a teeny step, or the most desired of all— one GIANT step?

A giant step to where?

explains
the love
or lack
of it

images

6.

Evenings were spent mainly on the back porches where screen doors slammed in the darkness with those really very special summertime sounds and, sometimes, when Chicago nights got too steamy, the whole family got into the car and went to the park and slept out in the open on blankets. Those were, of course, the best times of all because the grownups were invariably reminded of having been children in the South and told the best stories then. And it was also cool and sweet to be on the grass and there was usually the scent of freshly cut lemons or melons in the air. Daddy would lie on his back, as fathers must, and explain about how men thought the stars above us came to be and how far away they were.

I never did learn to believe that anything could be as far away as that. Especially the stars. . . .

7.

The man that I remember was an educated soul, though I think now, looking back, that it was as much a matter of the physical bearing of my father as his command of information and of thought that left that impression upon me. I know nothing of the "assurance of kings" and will not use that metaphor on account of it. Suffice it to say that my father's enduring image in my mind is that of a man whom kings might have imitated and properly created their own flattering descriptions of. A man who always seemed to be doing something brilliant and/or unusual to such an extent that to be doing something brilliant and/or unusual was the way I assumed fathers behaved.

He digested the laws of the State of Illinois and put them into little booklets. He invented complicated pumps and railroad devices. He could talk at length on American history and private enterprise (to

which he utterly subscribed). And he carried his head in such a way that I was quite certain that there was nothing he was afraid of. Even writing this, how profoundly it shocks my inner senses to realize suddenly that *my father*, like all men, must have known fear. . . .

8.

April 23, 1964

To the Editor,
The New York Times:

With reference to civil disobedience and the Congress of Racial Equality stall-in:

. . . My father was typical of a generation of Negroes who believed that the "American way" could successfully be made to work to democratize the United States. Thus, twenty-five years ago, he spent a small personal fortune, his considerable talents, and many years of his life fighting, in association with NAACP¹ attorneys, Chicago's "restrictive covenants" in one of this nation's ugliest ghettos.

That fight also required that our family occupy the disputed property in a hellishly hostile "white neighborhood" in which, literally, howling mobs surrounded our house. One of their missiles almost took the life of the then eight year-old signer of this letter. My memories of this "correct" way of fighting white supremacy in America included being spat at, cursed and pummeled in the daily trek to and from school. And I also remember my desperate and courageous mother, patrolling our house all night with a loaded German Luger, doggedly guarding her four children, while my father fought the respectable part of the battle in the Washington court.

The fact that my father and the NAACP "won" a Supreme Court decision, in a now famous case which bears his name in the law books, is -- ironically -- the sort of "progress" our satisfied friends allude to when they presume to deride the more radical means of struggle. The cost, in emotional turmoil, time and money, which led to my father's early death as a permanently embittered exile in a foreign country when he saw that after such sacrificial efforts the Negroes of Chicago were as ghetto-locked as ever, does not seem to figure in their calculations.

That is the reality that I am faced with when I now read that some Negroes my own age and younger say that we must now lie down in the streets, tie up traffic, do whatever we can -- take to the hills with guns if necessary--and fight back. Fatuous people remark these days on our "bitterness." Why, of course we are bitter. The entire situation suggests that the nation be reminded of the too little noted final lines of Langston Hughes' mighty poem.²

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
Like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Sincerely,

Lorraine Hansberry

From the book **TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK:** Lorraine Hansberry In Her Own Words, adapted by Robert Nemiroff. Copyright 1989 by Robert Nemiroff and Robert Nemiroff as Executor of the Estate of Lorraine Hansberry.

Copyright 1959, 1951 by Langston Hughes. Reprinted from **THE PANTHER AND THE LASH**, by Langston Hughes, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. and Harold Ober Associates, Inc.

1. NAACP, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
2. *Langston Hughes' mighty poem, "Harlem,"* later published under the title "Dream Deferred."

5. What does Travis ask his mother, Ruth, for in the beginning of the play and why? What is her response? What is the ultimate result of the situation?

6. What does Walter say to Beneatha about what she wants to go to school for? What is Beneatha's response?

7. What does Walter ask Ruth for and why on his way to work in the morning?

8. What does Mama wish for Travis?

9. How does Mama and Ruth tease Beneatha and what for?

10. What does Beneatha do that upsets Mama?

11. What happens to Ruth at the end of the first scene?

Analysis of the reading:

12. Does the family in the opening scene seem happy? Why or why not?

13. How does the opening scene reflect culture and lifestyle for most African-Americans during this time period? (US 1950s/60s)?

14. How does the theme of dreams present itself in this first scene? Give one example.

me: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

A Raisin in the Sun- Guiding Questions

Directions: As you read this first part to the play by Lorraine Hansberry please answer each question. Let's first take a look at the poem that inspired the name of the play.

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore-

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat

Or crust and sugar over-

Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

-Langston Hughes

1. What do think is the overall meaning of the poem?

2. How does the first line and the phrase "a raisin in the sun" connect to one another?

ACT I Scene I Questions

3. Describe the setting of the play. Where does it take place, who does it involve, and what time period does the setting take place in?

4. Describe the living conditions of the family in the opening scene. How would you describe the financial situation of the family and why?

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

A Raisin in the Sun- Dreams Chart

Directions: A Raisin in the Sun presents characters who have mentioned multiple unmet dreams/goals, similar to the novel *Of Mice & Men*. For each character listed below, state what their dream is and where you found this evidence (w/ the page number) and whether or not you believe they achieve their dream by the end of the play.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Dream/goal</i>	<i>Evidence to support this is their dream/goal</i>	<i>Did they accomplish their goal/meet their dream w/explanation?</i>
Walter			
Beneatha			
Lena "Mama"			

Ruth			
Travis			
Joseph Asagai			

George Murchison			
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Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

A Raisin in the Sun- Guiding Questions
Act I Scene II

Directions: Please answer the following guiding questions as you read Act I Scene II of the play.

1. Who does Walter receive a phone call from and regarding what? What is Walter waiting for to pursue his plans?
2. While cleaning, what is Beneatha doing to the apartment and why? How does this further illustrate the living conditions of the Younger family?
3. When the phone rings, what does Beneatha do once she answers the phone? Why does this irritate Mama?
4. Who did Beneatha speak to on the phone? What does Beneatha insist from Mama when this person comes over?
5. How does Beneatha's request to Mama further illustrate Mama's knowledge?
6. When Ruth returns from the doctor's office, what does she reveal to Beneatha and Mama? How does Mama feel about the news? How does Ruth feel about the news?
7. What type of judgements does Asagai make on Beneatha from her physical appearance?
8. Based off of Beneatha's response, what is apparent that she is doing in terms of her culture?

9. How does Mama and Beneatha feel about Asagai after he leaves?

10. Why does Ruth become upset with Walter when he returns home?

11. What type of things does Walter express that he is upset about?

12. What does Mama reveal to Walter? What is her fear?

13. Afterwards, what does Ruth reveal?

After Reading Analysis

14. Describe Beneatha and Asagai's relationship. Is it a genuine relationship? Why or why not?

15. Describe Ruth's and Walter's relationship. What are some of the problems they face and how do you know?

16. Which one is in the wrong for not listening to one another, Ruth, Walter, or both? Explain.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

A Raisin in the Sun- Guiding Questions
ACT II Scene III & ACT III

Directions: As you read this section of the play, answer each question.

1. What examples does Ruth provide for how the mood has changed for the family in the apartment?

2. What does Beneatha tease Ruth and Walter for?

3. Who is Karl Linder and why does he come to speak to the Youngers?

4. What does Karl Linder offer the Youngers? What do the Youngers do?

5. How does Mama respond when she gets back to the apartment?

6. What present do the Youngers give Mama and why?

7. When Walter's friend comes over, what does he reveal?

8. How does Mama respond?

ACT III Questions

9. Who comes to help Beneatha pack? What does the person say about Beneatha's choice to want to become a doctor?

10. How does Beneatha's attitude towards helping African Americans change?

11. How does the visitor help change this?
12. What does Asagai ask Beneatha to do with him?
13. What does Mama announce when she returns to the apartment?
14. What does Walter suggest doing? How do Ruth and Beneatha respond?
15. What does Walter end up doing in regards to the deal offered from Karl Linder?
16. What do both Mama and Ruth acknowledge about Walter?

After Reading Analysis

17. What do Karl Linder's actions represent regarding American society at the time?
18. Do Walter's actions at the end of the play redeem his actions throughout the rest of the play? Why or why not?
19. What is the significance of Walter's speech at the end of the play?
20. What do Mama's plants symbolize?

Background In the early 1920s, African American artists, writers, musicians, and performers were part of a great cultural movement known as the Harlem Renaissance. The huge migration to the north after World War I brought African Americans of all ages and walks of life to the thriving New York City neighborhood called Harlem. Black men and women drew on their own cultural resources—their folk traditions as well as a new urban awareness—to produce unique forms of expression. These young black writers were the founders of a new era in literature. Looking inward, they expressed what it meant to be black in a white-dominated world.

Selections from

The Harlem Renaissance

How It Feels to Be Colored Me. Essay by Zora Neale Hurston

The Weary Blues Poem by Langston Hughes

Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960) grew up in the all-black town of Eatonville, Florida. Hurston was 13 when her family fell apart: her mother died, her father remarried, and by the age of 14, Hurston was on her own. In 1925, she moved to New York to study anthropology. Encouraged by her professors, she returned to the South to collect African American folklore, which she published in the collection *Mules and Men*. Sadly, her work fell out of favor in the 1940s, and Hurston died poor and nearly forgotten.



Langston Hughes (1902–1967) was one of the leading poets of the Harlem Renaissance. On a March night in 1922, Hughes sat in a small Harlem cabaret and wrote "The Weary Blues." In this poem, he incorporated the many elements of his life—the music of Southern black speech, the lyrics of the first blues he heard, and traditional poetic forms he learned in school. While the body of the poem took shape quickly, it took Hughes two years to get the ending right.



1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–25, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
 - Underline text that is comic or ironic.
 - Circle the extended metaphor in lines 14–17.
 - In the margin, explain her description of the Northerners in lines 4–13.

How It Feels to Be Colored Me

Essay by Zora Neale Hurston

extenuating:

I am colored but I offer nothing in the way of **extenuating** circumstances except the fact that I am the only Negro in the United States whose grandfather on the mother's side was *not* an Indian chief.

I remember the very day that I became colored. Up to my thirteenth year I lived in the little Negro town of Eatonville, Florida. It is exclusively a colored town. The only white people I knew passed through the town going to or coming from Orlando. The native whites rode dusty horses, the Northern tourists chugged down the sandy village road in automobiles. The town knew the Southerners and never stopped cane chewing when they passed. But the
 10 Northerners were something else again. They were peered at cautiously from behind curtains by the timid. The more venturesome would come out on the porch to watch them go past and got just as much pleasure out of the tourists as the tourists got out of the village.

The front porch might seem a daring place for the rest of the town, but it was a gallery seat to me. My favorite place was atop the gate-post. Proscenium box for a born first-nighter.¹ Not only did I enjoy the show, but I didn't mind the actors knowing that I liked it. I actually spoke to them in passing. I'd wave at them and when they returned my salute, I would say something like this: "Howdy-do-well-I-thank-you-where-you-goin'?" Usually automobile or the
 20 horse paused at this, and after a queer exchange of compliments, I would probably "go a piece of the way" with them, as we say in farthest Florida. If one of my family happened to come to the front in time to see me, of course negotiations would be rudely broken off. But even so, it is clear that I was the first "welcome-to-our-state" Floridian, and I hope the Miami Chamber of Commerce will please take notice.

¹ **proscenium . . . first-nighter:** A proscenium box is a box near the stage. A first-nighter is a person who attends the opening night of a performance.

During this period, white people differed from colored to me only in that they rode through town and never lived there. They liked to hear me “speak pieces” and sing and wanted to see me dance the parse-me-la,² and gave me generously of their small silver for doing these things, which seemed strange to me for I wanted to do them so much that I needed bribing to stop. Only they
 30 didn’t know it. The colored people gave no dimes. They **deplored** any joyful tendencies in me, but I was their Zora nevertheless. I belonged to them, to the nearby hotels, to the county—everybody’s Zora.

deplore:

But changes came in the family when I was thirteen, and I was sent to school in Jacksonville. I left Eatonville, the town of the oleanders,³ as Zora. When I disembarked from the riverboat at Jacksonville, she was no more. It seemed that I had suffered a sea change.⁴ I was not Zora of Orange County any more, I was now a little colored girl. I found it out in certain ways. In my heart as well as in the mirror, I became a fast brown—warranted not to rub nor run.

40 But I am not tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a low-down dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it. Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world—I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.⁵

² **parse-me-la:** a dance movement popular with Southern African Americans of the period.

³ **oleanders:** evergreen shrubs with fragrant flowers.

⁴ **sea change:** a complete transformation.

⁵ **oyster knife:** a reference to the saying “The world is my oyster,” implying that the world contains treasure waiting to be taken, like the pearl in an oyster.

2. **REREAD** Reread lines 4–25. Explain the extended metaphor. What can you infer about Hurston’s character in these lines?

3. **READ** As you read lines 26–46, continue to cite text evidence.

- Underline text describing the differences between whites and blacks.
- In the margin, summarize how Zora becomes “a little colored girl.”

specter:

Someone is always at my elbow reminding me that I am the granddaughter of slaves. It fails to register depression with me. Slavery is sixty years in the past. The operation was successful and the patient is doing well, thank
 50 you. The terrible struggle that made me an American out of a potential slave said "On the line!" The Reconstruction said "Get set!"; and the generation before said "Go!" I am off to a flying start and I must not halt in the stretch to look behind and weep. Slavery is the price I paid for civilization, and the choice was not with me. It is a bully adventure and worth all that I have paid through my ancestors for it. No one on earth ever had a greater chance for glory. The world to be won and nothing to be lost. It is thrilling to think—to know that for any act of mine, I shall get twice as much praise or twice as much blame. It is quite exciting to hold the center of the national stage, with the spectators not knowing whether to laugh or to weep.

60 The position of my white neighbor is much more difficult. No brown specter pulls up a chair beside me when I sit down to eat. No dark ghost thrusts its leg against mine in bed. The game of keeping what one has is never so exciting as the game of getting.

I do not always feel colored. Even now I often achieve the unconscious Zora of Eatonville before the Hegira.⁶ I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background.

For instance at Barnard. "Beside the waters of the Hudson"⁷ I feel my race. Among the thousand white persons, I am a dark rock surged upon, overswept by a creamy sea. I am surged upon and overswept, but through it all, I remain
 70 myself. When covered by the waters, I am; and the ebb but reveals me again.

Sometimes it is the other way around. A white person is set down in our midst, but the contrast is just as sharp for me. For instance, when I sit in the drafty basement that is The New World Cabaret with a white person, my color comes. We enter chatting about any little nothing that we have in common and are seated by the jazz waiters. In the abrupt way that jazz orchestras have, this

⁶ **Hegira:** journey (from the name given to Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Medina in 622).

⁷ **Barnard . . . Hudson:** Barnard is the college in New York City from which Hurston graduated in 1928. "Beside the water . . ." is a reference to the first line of the college song. The college is located near the Hudson River.

4. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 47–94, continue to cite text evidence.

- Underline examples of repetition in lines 47–59.
- Circle words and phrases that show the transformative power of the jazz music in lines 71–88.
- In the margin, summarize what Hurston says about slavery.

circumlocutions:

one plunges into a number. It loses no time in **circumlocutions**, but gets right down to business. It constricts the thorax and splits the heart with its tempo and narcotic harmonies. This orchestra grows rambunctious, rears on its hind legs and attacks the tonal veil with primitive fury, rending it, clawing it until it
 80 breaks through to the jungle beyond. I follow those heathen—follow them exultingly. I dance wildly inside myself; I yell within, I whoop; I shake my assegai⁸ above my head, I hurl it true to the mark yeeeeooww! I am in the jungle and living in the jungle way. My face is painted red and yellow, and my body is painted blue. My pulse is throbbing like a war drum. I want to slaughter something—give pain, give death to what, I do not know. But the piece ends. The men of the orchestra wipe their lips and rest their fingers. I creep back slowly to the **veneer** we call civilization with the last tone and find the white friend sitting motionless in his seat, smoking calmly.

veneer:

“Good music they have here,” he remarks, drumming the table with his
 90 fingertips.

Music! The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him. He has only heard what I felt. He is far away and I see him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us. He is so pale with his whiteness then and I am *so* colored.

At certain times I have no race, I am *me*. When I set my hat at a certain angle and saunter down Seventh Avenue, Harlem City, feeling as snooty as the lions in front of the Forty-Second Street Library, for instance. So far as my

⁸ **assegai**: a type of light spear used in southern Africa.

5. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 71–94. How is Hurston affected by the jazz performance? What does it reveal about her?

6. **▶ READ** As you read lines 95–120, continue to cite text evidence.

- Underline text that shows Hurston's pride and positive feelings about herself.
- In the margin, summarize why people are like “bags of miscellany” (lines 108–120).

raiment:

miscellany:

feelings are concerned, Peggy Hopkins Joyce on the Boule Mich⁹ with her gorgeous **raiment**, stately carriage, knees knocking together in a most aristocratic manner, has nothing on me. The cosmic Zora emerges. I belong to no race nor time, I am the eternal feminine with its string of beads.

I have no separate feeling about being an American citizen and colored. I am merely a fragment of the Great Soul that surges within the boundaries. My country, right or wrong.

Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How *can* any deny themselves the pleasure of my company! It's beyond me.

But in the main, I feel like a brown bag of **miscellany** propped against a wall. Against a wall in company with other bags, white, red, and yellow. Pour out the contents, and there is discovered a jumble of small things priceless and worthless. A first-water¹⁰ diamond, an empty spool, bits of broken glass, lengths of string, a key to a door long since crumbled away, a rusty knife-blade, old shoes saved for a road that never was and never will be, a nail bent under the weight of things too heavy for any nail, a dried flower or two, still a little fragrant. In your hand is the brown bag. On the ground before you is the jumble it held—so much like the jumble in the bags, could they be emptied, that all might be dumped in a single heap and the bags refilled without altering the content of any greatly. A bit of colored glass more or less would not matter. Perhaps that is how the Great Stuffer of Bags filled them in the first place—who knows?

⁹ **Peggy . . . Boule Mich:** a wealthy woman of Hurston's day, walking along the Boulevard Saint-Michel in Paris.

¹⁰ **first-water:** of the highest quality or purity.

7. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 108–120. What does Hurston's statement about "bags" say about human character?

8. **READ** ▶ As you read “The Weary Blues,” continue to cite text evidence.

- Underline pairs of words with alliteration within a line.
- Circle the words or phrases describing sadness or defeat.

The Weary Blues

Poem by Langston Hughes

Droning a drowsy syncopated¹¹ tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow **croon**,
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue¹² the other night
5 By the pale dull **pallor** of an old gas light
He did a lazy sway. . . .
He did a lazy sway. . . .
To the tune o’ those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
10 He made that poor piano moan with melody.
O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
15 Coming from a black man’s soul.
O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—
“Ain’t got nobody in all this world,
20 Ain’t got nobody but ma self.
I’s gwine to quit ma frownin’
And put ma troubles on the shelf.”
Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
25 “I got the Weary Blues
And I can’t be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues
And can’t be satisfied—

croon:

pallor:

¹¹**syncopated**: characterized by a shifting of stresses from normally strong to normally weak beats.

¹²**Lenox Avenue**: a main north-south street in Harlem.

- I ain't happy no mo'
30 And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
35 He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

9. **REREAD** Hughes was one of the first innovators of "jazz poetry"—poetry with a jazz-like rhythm and feeling of improvisation. Reread the poem and then describe the effect of its rhythm and repetitions on your experience as a reader.

SHORT RESPONSE

Cite Text Evidence Discuss how Hurston's essay and Hughes's poem—in their subject matter, style, form, and content—exemplify the themes of the Harlem Renaissance. Review your reading notes, and **cite text evidence** in your response.
