

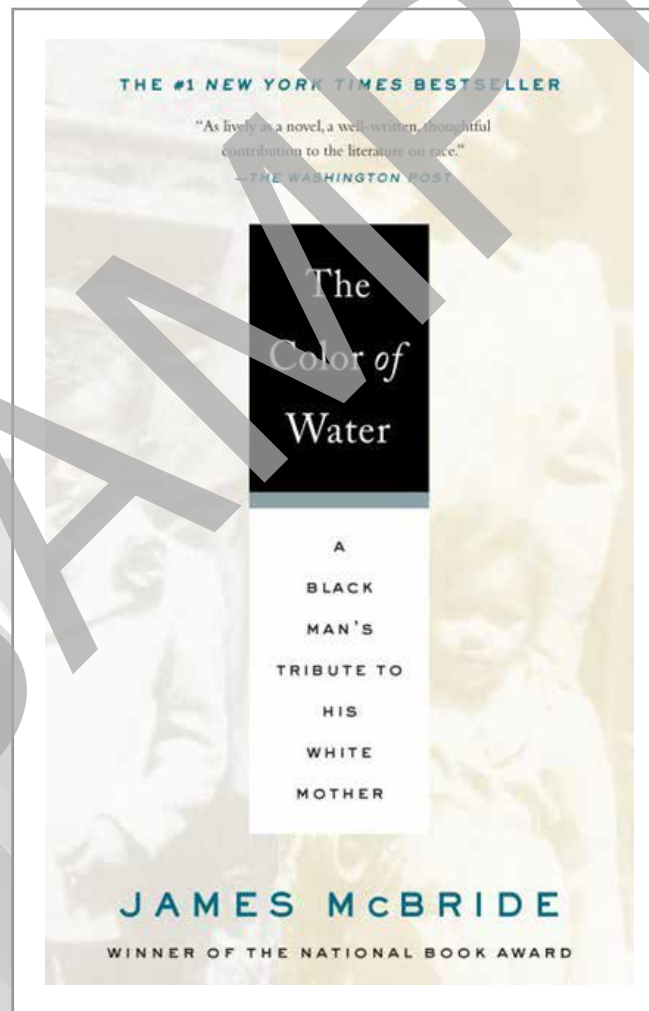


STUDENT PACKET

GRADES 9-12

The Color of Water

James McBride



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Color of Water

James McBride

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NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

ISBN 978-1-50204-493-8

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Name _____

Orthodox Jew (1)	kaddish (2)	shiva (2)	tallis (2)	Holocaust (3)
Yiddish (9)	kosher (15)	cantor (37)	seder (43)	Passover (43)
Haggadah (43)	bar mitzvah (62)	Hasidic (85)	yarmulkes (85)	

Directions: Match each of the following words with the correct definition.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Orthodox Jew | a. prayer shawl or scarf worn around the neck or on the arm |
| ___ 2. kaddish | b. Jewish dialect of Hebrew, German, and other elements |
| ___ 3. shiva | c. one who is adherent to the branch of Judaism most closely aligned with ancient rituals |
| ___ 4. tallis | d. Jewish service and feast held on the first night or first two nights of Passover |
| ___ 5. Holocaust | e. skullcaps worn by Jewish men and boys |
| ___ 6. Yiddish | f. Hebrew prayer in mourning for a deceased relative |
| ___ 7. kosher | g. ceremony held when a Jewish boy turns 13 years old |
| ___ 8. cantor | h. book used at Passover to tell the story of the exodus of the Israelites |
| ___ 9. seder | i. relating to members of a Jewish sect that emphasize devotion over formal learning |
| ___ 10. Passover | j. initial seven days of Jewish mourning for a relative |
| ___ 11. Haggadah | k. Jewish celebration of flight of Israelites from Egyptian slavery |
| ___ 12. bar mitzvah | l. person who chants prayers in a Jewish synagogue |
| ___ 13. Hasidic | m. destruction by fire; murder of 6,000,000 Jews and others |
| ___ 14. yarmulkes | n. right or clean according to the Jewish law |

Name _____

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Starred questions indicate thought or opinion questions or an activity. Use your answers in class discussions, for writing assignments, and to review for tests.

Note: The questions that refer to Ruth McBride Jordan's memoirs are phrased in the past tense. Those that refer to James McBride's memoirs are phrased in the present tense.

Chapters 1–3

Ruth

1. Give the background information Ruth McBride Jordan revealed in this section: her birth, parents and brother, religious heritage, and memories of her childhood. How did she feel about her parents?
2. State and explain the significance of Ruth's three different full names.
3. *Why did Ruth begin her narrative with, "I'm dead"? Why did she think she had "to die"? Explain how you feel about the way her family treated her.
4. *What effect did the memory of her grandfather's death have on Ruth?

James

5. *Why do you think James begins his memoirs with a narrative of when he was 14 years old? What does Ruth's bicycle typify to James?
6. Summarize James' memories of his stepfather and the effect of Jordan's death on James.
7. How does James initially portray his mother?
8. Contrast the reality of James' home life with his "dream" home.
9. *Activity: Write your own "First Day of School" memoir.
10. *Activity: List two similes (pp. 11, 13) and one metaphor (p. 15) from this section and the page number on which they are found. Add others to your list after each section.

Chapters 4–5

James

1. *What causes James' confusion about his mother? What questions does he ask her and what is her reply to each? Explain why you think she is right or wrong in her responses.

Name _____

Character Attribute Chart

Directions: Choose five characters (other than James, Ruth, Dennis McBride, and Hunter Jordan, Sr.) from the book. List their names in the left-hand boxes. Fill in the other boxes with the requested information.

Character	One-Word Description	Appearance	Significance to the Story	Do you know anyone similar?

Name _____

Survival Chart

Directions: Complete the chart below to explain how Ruth McBride Jordan's family's needs are met.

Needs	How Family Gets Them
Food	
Shelter	
Love	
Companionship	
Nurturing	
Mental Stimulation	
Education	