

Teacher Guide

Grades 9–12

A Raisin in the Sun

Lorraine Hansberry



**NEW WAYS TO TEACH READING,
WRITING, & CRITICAL THINKING**



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A RAISIN IN THE SUN

by
Lorraine Hansberry

Teacher Guide

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Note

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Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with your class.

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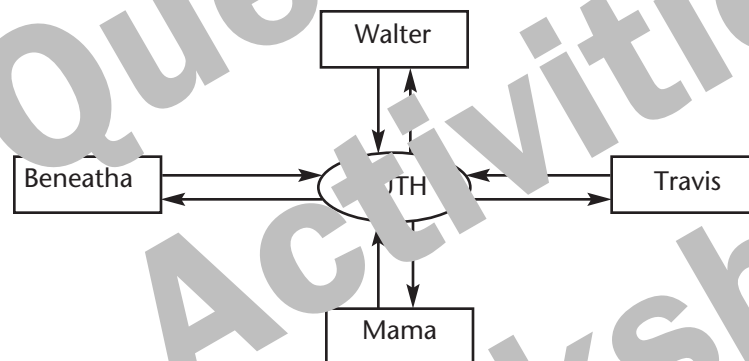
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ACT ONE: Scene 1 - pp. 23-53

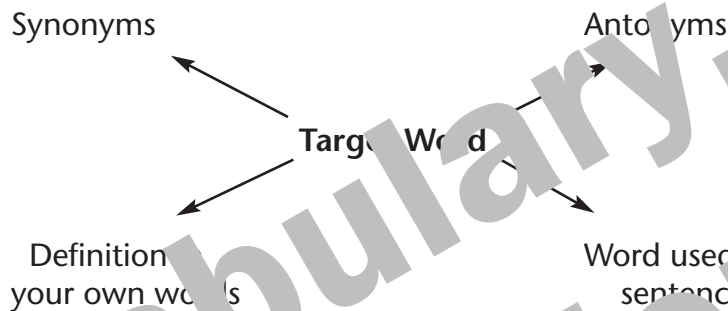
Discussion Questions:

1. Describe the setting of the story. What does the interior of the Younger house tell you about the family that lives there? (The home furnishings were once selected with care and hope but are now crowded and worn; pride and weariness characterize the family.)
2. What is your impression of Ruth? From what you have seen so far, how would you describe the relationship between Ruth and Travis? Ruth and Walter? Ruth and Beneatha? Ruth and Mama? (Ruth is pretty, tired, disappointed, direct. There is a close bond of affection between Ruth and Travis, although she is often directive and stern with him. More practical than Walter, she criticizes him sarcastically while he accuses her of not understanding him, but they seem to care about each other and protect each other. Ruth and Beneatha are able to talk to each other, but Ruth doesn't understand Beneatha's need to "express herself"—or why Beneatha would turn down a rich, handsome husband. Beneatha, on her part, doesn't see how Ruth can put up with Walter. Ruth admires and loves Mama; both share an understanding of the difficulties entailed by motherhood.)

(As students discuss the relationships between Ruth and the other characters, the teacher—or a student scribe—might jot some of the ideas down on the arrows of a sociogram like the one that follows.)



Vocabulary Activity: Word mapping is an activity that lends itself to any vocabulary list. For words that have clear antonyms, the following framework would be suitable:



Students might enjoy coming up with variations on this framework. For example, instead of listing antonyms, students could provide line drawings to illustrate the target word.

Cooperative Learning Activity: You may want to have all students examine examples of word maps for all target vocabulary words in a lengthy vocabulary list, such as the one provided in the Student Packet for pp. 23-53. One way to accomplish this is to assign small groups responsibility for several words; each group selects a member who describes the group's word maps to the large group, using an overhead projector.

Using Character Attribute Webs

Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character's traits. They provide a systematic way for the students to organize and recap the information they have about that particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the story or completed gradually as information unfolds—done individually, or finished as a group project.

One type of character web uses these categories:

- How a character acts and feels (What do his/her statements reveal about his/her feelings? What does his/her behavior show about his/her? In a play—what do the character's gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice tell you about his/her emotions?)
- How a character looks (What do clothing and physical features tell you about this character?)
- Where a character lives (In what state, neighborhood does this character live? During what time period?)
- How others feel about the character (What do others' statements and actions show about their attitude toward the character?)

In group discussion about the student attribute webs and specific characters, the teacher can ask for supportive evidence from the story.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They can also be used to organize information about a concept, object, or place.

Attribute webs are a kind of semantic mapping. Students can move on from attribute webs to other creative kinds of mapping. They can be encouraged to modify attribute webs and use sub-divisions in whatever ways are useful to them personally. It is important to emphasize that attribute webs are just a graphic way to record ideas. They provide students with a tool for helping them generate ideas and think about relationships among those ideas.

Acts

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Character

Feels

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Looks

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Says

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____