NOVELUNITS

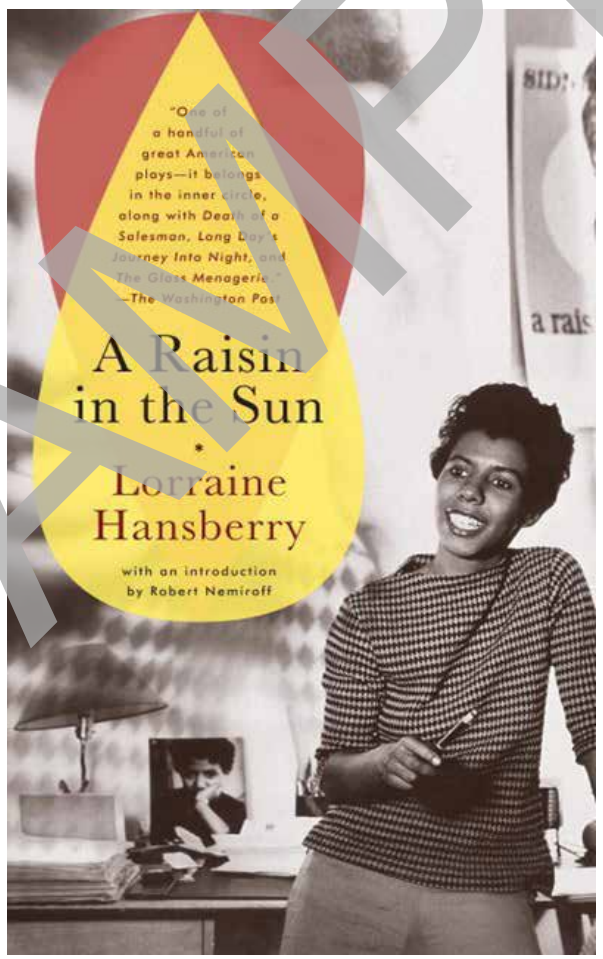
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

A Raisin in the Sun

Lorraine Hansberry



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

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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!

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Novel Units: Rationale

How do you ensure that individual needs are met in a heterogeneous classroom? How do you challenge students of all abilities without losing some to boredom or confusion?

With the push toward "untracking" our schools, these are questions that more and more educators need to examine. As any teacher of "gifted" or "remedial" students can attest, even "homogeneous" classrooms contain students with a range of abilities.

Here are some of the solutions suggested by research:

- cooperative learning
- differentiated assignments
- questioning strategies that tap several levels of thinking
- flexible grouping within the class
- cross-curriculum integration
- process writing
- portfolio evaluation

Novel Units are designed with these seven facets in mind. Discussion questions and projects are framed to span all of the levels of **Bloom's taxonomy.** Tests have been developed at two levels of difficulty (Level 1=lower; Level 2=higher). While most projects could be completed individually, many are ideal vehicles for collaborative effort. Throughout the guides, there is an emphasis on collaboration: students helping other students to generate ideas, students working together to actualize those ideas, and students sharing their products with other students. Extension activities link literature with other areas of the curriculum—including writing, art, science, history, and current events—and provide a basis for portfolio evaluation.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to adapt the guides to meet the needs of individual classes and students; they are your tools. Here are some of the "nuts and bolts"—a glossary of terms that will facilitate your use of the guides.

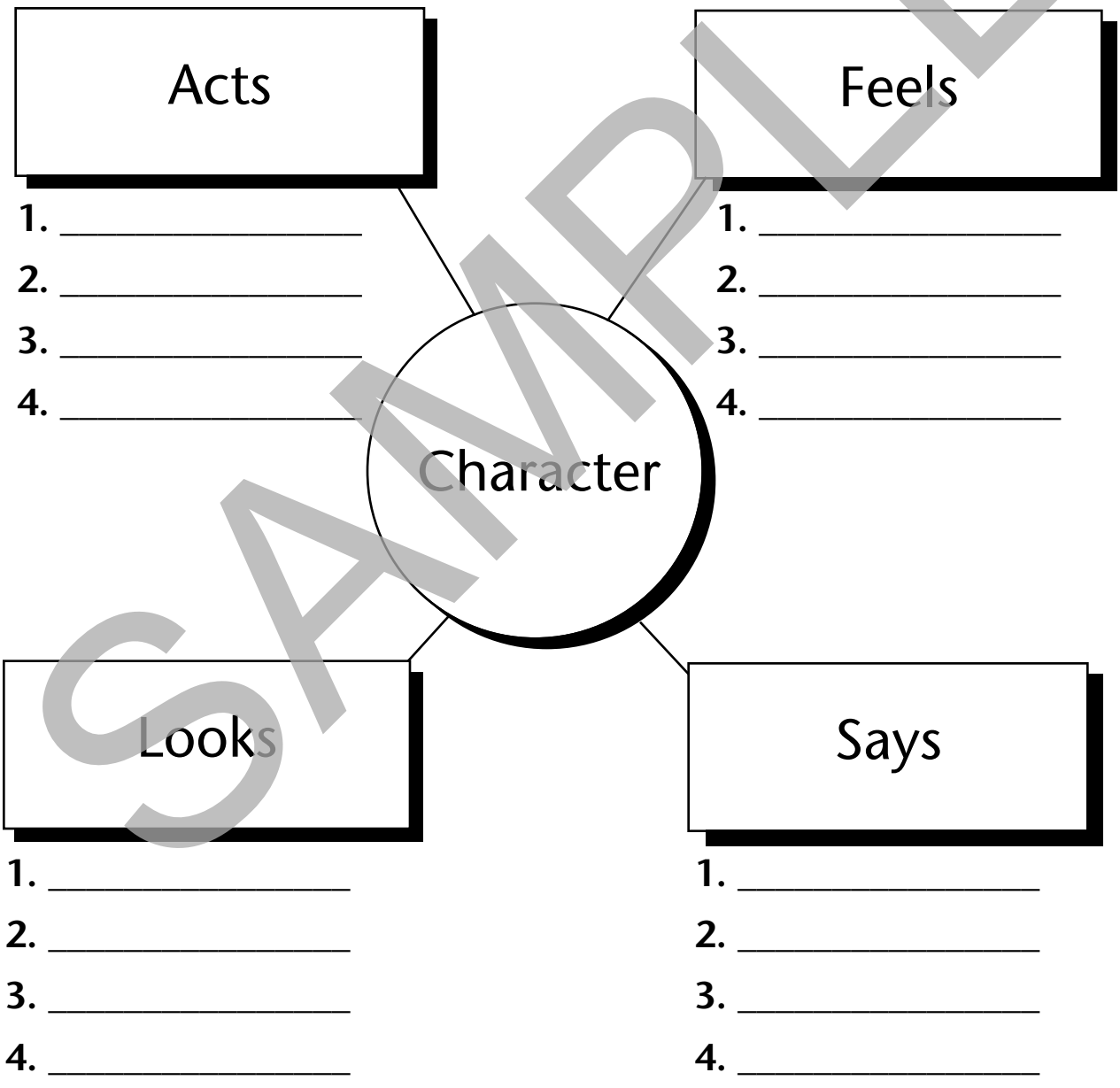
Bloom's Taxonomy: a classification system for various levels of thinking. Questions keyed to these levels may be:

- *comprehension questions,* which ask you to state the meaning of what is written
- *application questions,* which ask you to extend your understanding to a new situation
- *analysis questions,* which ask you to think about relationships between ideas such as cause/effect
- *evaluation questions*, which ask you to judge the accuracy of ideas
- *synthesis questions,* which ask you to produce a product integrating the ideas in the text with ideas of your own

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.



ACT ONE: Scene 2 - pp. 54-75

Discussion Questions

1. What goes on during housecleaning at the Youngers? Is the housecleaning process at your house similar to what goes on at the Youngers'? Why or why not? (Mama likes a clean house; walls are washed and roaches are sprayed.)

2. What is your impression of Asagai? How do you form that impression? Do you think you would like him? (Based on what he says and how he treats Beneatha and Mama, he seems intelligent, respectful, proud of his heritage.)

3. How does Beneatha feel about the church? How does this contrast with her mother's feelings? (Beneatha feels that missionaries are misguided while Mama believes the church is working to "save" people in Africa.)

4. How do Ruth and the other family members react to the news of her pregnancy? What decisions does she need to make? (Mama is upbeat, saying she hopes it is a girl, but the others are dispirited; Ruth needs to decide whether to continue the pregnancy.)

5. How does Ruth behave when she learns about the rat? Why do you think she is so upset? (She gets nearly hysterical; the rat is an all-too-vivid reminder of the slum world in which she must raise her son.)

6. How do the various family members use humor to reduce the stressfulness of their situation? Cite examples. (Beneatha and Mama joke about the roaches.)

7. What is "assimilationism"? Why do Asagai and Beneatha argue about assimilationism? How does Asagai tease Beneatha about her hair? With whom do you side in their argument? (Assimilationism is the "melting pot" process by which subgroups incorporate themselves into the larger group by adopting the ways of the larger group. Beneatha doesn't like being called an assimilationist by Asagai because she straightens her hair instead of leaving it to grow naturally.)

8. Why does Mama mention Tarzan to Asagai? What is his attitude toward Mama? What does the interaction show you about each of them? (Beneatha had warned her about making ignorant comments, and Mama is trying to show Asagai and Beneatha that she is not one of those ignorant people who know so little about Africa—while making Asagai feel at home; Asagai remains respectful, and responds to the kindness beneath Mama's words.)

9. Why has everyone been waiting for the mailman's arrival? How does the piece of paper that arrives affect each member of the family? Why? (Everyone knows that the insurance check is coming. Beneatha knows that the money will help her through medical school; Walter hopes that the money will enable him to buy the liquor store.)

10. Why does Mama tell Walter that he is a disgrace to his father's memory? Do you think she is being fair? What do you think Walter will do now? Will he try to stop Ruth? (Walter's father loved children, was heartsick over the loss of one of his own children, and worked himself to the bone for his family; Walter does not try to talk Ruth out of having an abortion.)

ACT TWO: Scene 1 - pp. 76-95

Discussion Questions

1. How does Beneatha's Nigerian dress affect Walter? Who is Jomo Kenyatta, and why does Walter cry out his name? (Walter, who has been drinking, begins shouting and leaping, pretending to be an African tribal leader; caught up in the spirit of the music and African brotherhood, he calls out the name of Kenyatta, an educator and political leader of Kenya [1893-1978].)

2. How does George's reaction to Beneatha's costume compare with Asagai's reaction to her hair? What does this show about the contrast between the two men? Which one do you think is more compatible with Beneatha? (While both are teasing Beneatha, George is making fun of Beneatha's attempt to affirm her heritage while Asagai is trying to encourage that affirmation.)

3. Walter insults George. How? Why do you think he says these things? How does Ruth try to handle his rudeness? How does George react? (Walter makes fun of George's clothes and education; George has money and Walter feels trapped by poverty; Ruth tries to apologize for him; George ignores what he can and replies rather condescendingly to the rest.)

4. What does George mean when he calls Walter "Prometheus"? (Walter has said that no one understands his big, bold investment plans; in classical mythology, Prometheus was a boldly original Titan who taught mankind various arts—and was chained to a rock where an eagle daily tore at his liver, for having stolen fire from Olympus and given it to mankind.)