

SUMMER READING – 11th GRADE – ENGLISH III
THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD by Zora Neale Hurston

1. To whom does Janie tell the story of her life, and why?
2. With whom does Janie live during her childhood years? Why?
3. Joe Starks seems an attractive man to Janie when she first meets him. What is one change in him that later makes her realize he is not after all a desirable mate?
4. How do the events that follow the teasing of the yellow mule relate to Janie's discovery of Jody's real character?
5. After Joe Starks dies, Janie spends six months in black. When she begins to wear mourning white, how do the townspeople react to her? Why?
6. When Tea Cake and Janie are seen together, what facts make people predict that the two will not get along and therefore would be a bad match?
7. The first quality that attracts Janie to Tea Cake is that he knows how to play. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and explain your position.
8. Janie feels close to the natural world. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and explain your position.
9. Janie reflects, near the end of the novel, that she hates her grandmother. What is the reason for her hatred?
10. What effect does Janie's tale have on the person to whom Janie tells her life story?
11. With details, briefly describe **Eatonville** and tell why this place was so important to Janie.
12. With details, briefly describe **The Everglades/The Muck** and tell why this place was so important to Janie.
13. Give an example from anywhere in the novel of White racism causing suffering for Blacks.
14. What is one reason for the presence of the Turner family as an element in the plot?
15. When Janie shoots Tea Cake, she must be tried for murder. The Blacks in the community turn against her. Why?

16. Why do the people forget their hostility after Tea Cake's funeral?
17. How does the title of this novel relate to an event or events in the story?
18. The following characters have different ideas about achieving and maintaining status in society. Explain each character's ideas. Use quotes from the novel.

Janie

Tea Cake

Mrs. Turner

Nanny

Logan Killicks

Joe Starks

Pheoby Watson

Hezekiah

19. Using Janie's words, "two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves," discuss Janie's movement toward God and her discoveries about living.
20. After completing the novel, reread the first two paragraphs of chapter 1. Explain the distinction between how men and women view what happens to them. Explain how the differences would have been viewed in the thirties, when the book was first published, and now in 2005.