
Activity 5:

Now that you have finished the novel and thought about it on your own, you will have an opportunity to read about the author Zora Neale Hurston. Her life was as full of drama as Janie's. In this activity you will look critically at Hurston's life and works and come to some conclusions about her impact on young people today. Write an evaluative essay judging the appeal Hurston, as a person and as a writer, might have to today's youths.

Step 1. Every year in Eatonville, Florida, where Ms. Hurston grew up, a festival is held in her honor with a specific theme for the year as you can see by visiting <http://longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~zora/Education97.html>. Write down the focus for the 1997.

Step 2. While reading the biographical information listed below, keep in mind the question "Why does Zora Neale Hurston, a black woman born in the 19th century, have such an appeal for youth living on the brink of the 21th century?"

Step 3. Now that you have read the novel and some biographical information about Hurston, write an essay answering the question: "Why does Zora Neale Hurston, a black woman born in the 19th century, have such an appeal for youth living on the brink of the 21st century?" You may respond to this in either the third person or first person by giving your own personal reasons why Hurston spoke to you.

Step 4. Your essay should be organized in the following way:

- Introductory paragraph with thesis sentence which directly or indirectly answers the above question
- Two to three body paragraphs giving reasons and evidence from the web sites and your own experience to support your thesis
- Concluding paragraph which reflects on what you've written

How You Will Be Graded

Your interpretive essay will be graded on:

- Insight and perspective given the topic
- Depth of reasoning and support
- Coherent organization
- Clarity of prose
- Correct use of standard English

Your essay must meet the standard of the persuasive essay, in that you will need:

- Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion
 - Specific rhetorical devices to support assertions
 - Clarity and be able to defend positions with precise and relevant evidence
 - Address readers' concerns, counterclaims, biases, and/or expectations
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