

Activity 4:

Much of Janie's journey is described in images so beautifully created by Zora Neale Hurston that we can see and feel Janie's life vividly. In this activity you will visit a site that describes many of her images and their meanings, and then you will have an opportunity to create visual representations of her poetic images.

After reading about and taking notes on Hurston's poetic images, you will illustrate six poetic passages from the novel.

Step 1. Reread parts of the novel and note poetic images that attract you.

Step 2. Narrow your selections to the six images that you think represent significant events in Janie's journey.

Draw each image in as imaginative way as you can. You don't have to be good in art to do these drawings; perhaps you would like to make the drawings abstract or use symbols to bring out the ideas.

You can use colored marking pens, pen and ink, charcoal or any medium you want.

The cover of 1990 Perennial Library edition of the novel with Janie under the pear tree is a good example of what one of these illustrations may look like.

Step 3. Think of each of these drawings as pieces of a quilt.

Place them in order and attach them to a larger piece of paper so that there is a border around them.

Around that border write a narrative that captures the story the pictures tell. Incorporate as many of Hurston's own descriptive phrases as you can into the narrative.

There is reference to African quilts on <http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmah/always.htm> which is a bibliography from the Smithsonian Institute. Further search of African quilts and/or Faith Ringgold may be helpful.

While you are doing this, you might find it interesting to look at the work of one of the most famous contemporary African-American quilt makers, Faith Ringgold as well as other quilters from the past. If you click on each of the squares, you will see the enlarged image. Faith Ringgold, like Zora Neale Hurston, celebrates the folk customs and art of her people in beautiful art forms.

How You Will Be Graded

The six visual images and explanations will be evaluated by the following:

- The visual attractiveness of the drawings
- The fluency and meaningfulness of the narrative
- The use of Hurston's descriptions within the narrative
- The correct use of standard English

