

Reading Identity:

Segregation and Gentrification in *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park*

THEME	CONTENT	ART
Who are we?	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9	TH:Re9.1.HSI II

KEY VOCABULARY

- Gentrification
- Segregation
- False Narrative

PACING: 1-3 DAYS

ASSESSMENT (Summative):

Descriptive OR Argumentative essay on changing the perspective of a narrative based on time or character

ELEMENTS OF ART:

- **Time** (When in history/period of the day)
- **Imitation** (reproduction of thoughts/ideas)
- **Action** (Movement of people/story)
- **Language** (Use of words-written or verbal)

MATERIALS LIST

- Full class texts of both scripts: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry and *Clybourne Park* by Bruce Norris
- Copies of two Emily Dickinson poems (attached)

LESSON OBJECTIVE

- ❑ By the end of class, students will be able to identify core themes relating to identity politics and the African American experience in 1950s (and 2000s) in Hansberry and Norris' acclaimed plays.
- ❑ By the end of the unit, students will be able to apply non-linear narrative structures to works of literature and dramatic literature.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do different groups of people view the same incident or conflict from different perspectives?

21st CENTURY SKILLS:

X Critical Thinking X Creative Thinking X Collaborating X Initiative
 X Communicating ? Media Literacy ? Informational Literacy
 ? Tech Literacy X Flexibility X Social Skills ? Leadership
 ? Productivity

CONTENT STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.9

Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

ARTS STANDARDS:

TH:Re9.1.HSIII

- Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.
- Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same drama/theatre work.
- Compare and debate the connection between a drama/theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.

WARM-UP OPTIONS (10 MIN)

- **35 - Guided Improv.** (Emphasis on various perspectives of similar experiences)
- **38 - Mrs. Mumble** (Emphasis on communication between people who can't seem to communicate clearly)

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will investigate identity politics in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and Bruce Norris' *Clybourne Park* by analyzing the way that different individuals approach similar conflicts and situations from vastly different perspectives.

After reading both plays, discussing the processes of segregation and gentrification, and viewing how different perspectives of the same situation can yield different (and altering validities of...) perspectives - students will write descriptive essays applying the lens of an alternate perspective on a situation or character from a different play or novel read this year in order to demonstrate growth in their ability to analyze narratives in a multiplicitous way.

ENGAGEMENT

Emily Dickinson and False Narratives

Class begins with a bit of an odd engagement/hook process - but one that should yield plenty of discussion and bridge well into a discussion of the two plays.

1. Start by handing students one of two Emily Dickinson poems
 - "Faith" is a fine invention (Franklin 202) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48184/faith-is-fine-invention-202>
 - Come slowly - Eden (Franklin 205) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52136/come-slowly-eden-205>
2. Have students take **3 minutes** to read the poem, with little other prompting or instructions.
3. When time is up, explain to students that they will be taking a really brief pop quiz, and that the moment you pass one paper out everyone in the room has to be silent. 5 points per question, and 10 points *just for taking the quiz silently and without raising their hands or talking.*
4. Pass out "Emily Dickinson Poetry Pop Quiz" - collect after **4 minutes** time

STEP 2

Perspective and Reception

1. Ask students around the class (after collecting all papers) how the quiz went, and if they were confident in their answers. Now, seeing how the quiz is a surface level engagement with *only one of the two* poems, about half of the class should be fairly upset and feel like they were cheated.
2. Field questions and reflections about why students are responding the way that they are to this pop quiz, pointing out that “the name of the quiz is ‘Emily Dickinson Poetry Pop Quiz’ and you all read Emily Dickinson before taking it - what is the problem!”
3. Reveal that this was all a rouse to force discussion, pointing to the fact that you wanted to create a **False Narrative**, making it seem like all students *should* have been able to pass the quiz, though they were not given the tools to.
4. Have a more in-depth meta-analysis of his process, and what it is like to view the same situation from two unequal sides.
 - Specifically, discuss anxieties or frustrations students with poem 202 may have had that didn’t even occur to students with poem 205.

Teacher-to-Teacher

Mediating this process could prove to be fairly interesting. Note that the whole point here is that you trick students into thinking that something is at stake - when it really isn't, and you can explain that after -so that they grow upset.

Take lots of discussion points, and see WHY students are angry or feel the way they choose to feel.

STEP 3

Gentrification and Segregation

Ideally, this lesson is taking place after having read both plays - or at least read text for *A Raisin in the Sun* (the text engagement to many Grade 11-12 curricula and AP Literature suggested reading), and having talked about Norris’ *Clybourne Park* and Kwame Kwei-Armah’s play *Beneatha’s Place* completing the colloquially referred to “Raisin Cycle”

If so, this is less important - but if not take a moment to more broadly lecture and discuss on the definitions and process of segregation and gentrification.

- **Segregation:** the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means
- **Gentrification:** the process of repairing and rebuilding homes and businesses in a deteriorating area (such as an urban neighborhood) accompanied by an influx of middle-class or affluent people and that often results in the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents

Use these terms, accompanied by earlier engagement with the two plays AND the engagement exercise, to discuss the relevance of the Younger family's position of being segregated and not allowed into an affluent white community in the 1950s VS. Steve and Lindsey attempting to buy and remodel a house in the black neighborhood of Clybourne Park amidst gentrification in the 2000s.

ARTFUL THINKING ROUTINE

The Elaboration Game. Have students view various play covers and production advertisements for both *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park* and to elaborate on the significance of each as they relate to the two plays.

- *A Raisin in the Sun*
 - <https://freebooksummary.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/A-Raisin-in-the-Sun.jpg>
 - <https://danwoog.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/raisin-in-the-sun.jpg>
 - http://english11r.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/5/6/12564812/3119633_orig.jpg
 - http://galleryplayers.com/uploads/2011/07/raisin_front_web.jpg

- *Clybourne Park*
 - <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/2b/39/28/2b3928c6dde3252b483737c57d8e5e27.jpg>
 - <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/7e/a3/23/7ea3230e8319fe4920f8dc40250a13f7.jpg>
 - <http://studio180theatre.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/clybourne.jpg>
 - <https://theatre.cas2.lehigh.edu/sites/theatre.cas2.lehigh.edu/files/ClybourneParkWebsite-12.png>

As a group, observe and describe several different sections of an artwork.

1. One person identifies a specific section of the artwork and describes what he or she sees.

Another person **elaborates** on the first person's observations by adding more detail about the section.

A third person **elaborates** further by adding yet more detail, and a fourth person adds yet more.

Observers: Only describe what you see. Hold off giving your ideas about the art until the last step of the routine.

2. After four people have described a section in detail, another person identifies a new section of the artwork and the process starts over.

Artful Thinking by Project Zero is licensed under a Creative Commons AttributionNonCommercial 4.0 International License. Routine found here:

<http://pzartfulthinking.org/>

Teacher-to-Teacher

Before diving into the culminating activity for the lesson, it is worth noting that IF adequate class time has not previously been taken for deeper analysis of the two plays, that here is a perfect good place to stop the lesson plan and break off to parse individual scenes, descriptions, or dialogue interactions that relate to **gentrification** and **segregation** in both text.

Assuming that this has either already been done, or was adeptly addressed in earlier discussions - we can move on to the final creative/critical portion of the lesson!

MAIN ACTIVITY/PROJECT

Students will now use the texts of *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park* alongside class discussions to form EITHER an descriptive or argumentative essay relating to multiplicitous perspectives in the creation of narrative in literature.

Descriptive Essay Overview

- Students will take a *different* story or narrative read this year and - as *Clybourne Park* does with *A Raisin in the Sun* - explore the narrative from the perspective of a character who is not the original character of focus in the text.
- This shouldn't be a creative essay - but rather them setting up a description of the world of the play/novel from the eyes of the other character
- Examples:
 - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from the perspective of Jim
 - *Romeo and Juliet* from the perspective of Friar Lawrence
 - *The Giver* from the perspective of The Giver
 - *Fahrenheit 451* from the perspective of Captain Beatty

Argumentative Essay Overview

- Students take a stance on the narratives of *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park* either defending or admonishing the actions of a set of characters.
- Options include:
 - Admonishing/defending Karl Lindner's actions in *A Raisin in the Sun* as he tries to support the neighborhood in trying to kick out the Youngers
 - Defending/admonishing the Youngers for not selling their house and accepting the segregation imposed on them
 - Admonishing/defending Bev and Russ for selling their house in *Clybourne Park*
 - Defending/admonishing Steve and Lindsey's plan to buy and remodel a house in the neighborhood of *Clybourne Park*

CLOSURE

Presentations

Have students, after finishing their essays, present their research and writing to the rest of the class in a short 5-8 minute presentation.

This could take a number of shapes, but should highlight three features:

1. Their engagement with the original texts
2. Stance taken in their descriptive/argumentative essay
3. How reading these plays/learning about gentrification and segregation (or more broadly the existence of false narrative and multiplicitous perspectives) can strengthen our reading of future texts in this class and beyond.

SUBJECT: English

A Raisin in the Sun/ Clybourne Park Essay Rubric

THEME	CONTENT	ART
Who are we?	CCSS.ELA-LITE RACY.RL.11-12 .9	TH:Re9.1.HSI II

For use by teacher and students to adjudicate the the descriptive or argumentative essays written in dialogue with Hansberry and Norris' plays.

Descriptive Essay

- Students will take a different story or narrative read this year and - as Clybourne Park does with A Raisin in the Sun - explore the narrative from the perspective of a character who is not the original character of focus in the text.

Descriptive Essay Option	Vague or Missing	General and incomplete	Adequate	Adept and Thoughtful	Profound and Deep
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student successfully chooses the perspective of a new character from a given play/novel and develops a descriptive explanation of the world of the play/novel from that character's eyes 					20 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay includes vivid imagery and strong descriptive writing 					15 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay explores narrative creation, and either false narrative OR the development of the original character's perspective 					10 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic writing and grammar used throughout 					5 pts.
OVERALL SCORE					/50

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Argumentative Essay Overview

- Students take a stance on the narratives of *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Clybourne Park* either defending or admonishing the actions of a set of characters

Descriptive Essay Option	Vague or Missing	General and incomplete	Adequate	Adept and Thoughtful	Profound and Deep
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student successfully crafts an argument with <u>at least 4</u> supporting claims in defense or opposition to the given character's actions 					20 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay includes strong logical structures and defense 					15 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay explores narrative creation, and either false narrative OR the development of the original character's perspective 					10 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic writing and grammar used throughout 					5 pts.
OVERALL SCORE					/50

