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 **Prestwick House**
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A Raisin in the Sun
BY LORRAINE HANSBERRY



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All references come from the Vintage Books Edition of *A Raisin in the Sun*, copyright 1988.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Research: Lorraine Hansberry**

Objectives: Generating public interest in the author
 Understanding the author's literary goals

Activity

Pretend that you are a writer for the Sunday magazine section of your local newspaper. Your editor has asked you to research the life of Lorraine Hansberry because a production of *A Raisin in the Sun* is coming to town. He wants a solid article, with a catchy introduction, three or four well-developed paragraphs, and a strong conclusion.

Include significant facts about Hansberry's inspiration for *A Raisin in the Sun*. Find out if the author was of the same class as the people she wrote about in the play. If not, how was her upbringing different, and how did she learn about the lives of her characters? Also, consider key events in the lives of her parents that might have influenced her. Note that *A Raisin in the Sun* is inscribed "To Mama: *in gratitude for the dream.*"

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I, Scene One**Vocabulary Preparation****Objective:** Reviewing vocabulary**Activity**

We often encounter new words when we read and can understand them through their contexts or by looking them up in a dictionary. Reading is easier, however, if we already know the words' meanings.

Do the following matching vocabulary exercises by first seeing what words you already know, then look up the ones you don't. Keep the sheets as references while reading.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I, Scene One**Acting/Scene Work****Objective:** Discovering character interaction within a scene**Activity**

We tend to look at characters more carefully when we read their words aloud, which can be fun when done with a partner.

Directions:

1. After you have been assigned your partner, character, and scene, read through the scene carefully and silently, including both characters' lines, as well as the stage directions.
2. Facing your scene partner, read your character's lines aloud quietly, and have your scene partner answer, just as if you were performing the play. However, you do this with no emotion.
3. Jot down a few words that you think express how your character feels, e.g., frustrated, tired, angry, nervous, happy, etc.
4. Think of a time when you felt the same way. Take three to five minutes, and free write about your feelings at that time. If it helps, pretend that you are writing in your diary or to your best friend.
5. Do the scene again with your partner, but this time with emotion.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II, Scene One**History, Geography, Myth, and Culture****Objective:** Understanding textual references and their impact on the drama**Activity**

Listed below are a dozen historical, geographical, mythological, and/or cultural references that occur in Act II, Scene One. The impact of the scenes will be greatly enhanced if you know what is being referred to, suggested, or implied. For example, George, Beneatha's rich boyfriend, calls Walter "Prometheus." Knowing a little bit about that mythological figure will help you to understand George's implication. Is George complimenting Walter or insulting him? You must know who Prometheus is in order to begin to answer that question.

Use the library, the Internet, or both to find out some basic information about the following references. After you write down your information, write a sentence or two on why you think the reference is included. (Page numbers are listed for your convenience.)

1. "more like Butterfly than any Nigerian..." (Pg. 76)
2. Ethiopia (Pg. 77)
3. Jomo Kenyatta (Pg. 78)
4. "The lion is waking...Owimoweh" (Pg. 78)
5. Chaka (Pg. 78)
6. Uncle Toms (Pg. 81)
7. Ashanti empires (Pg. 81)
8. Songhay Civilizations (Pg. 81)
9. Sculpture of Benin (Pg. 81)
10. Poetry in the Bantu (Pg. 81)
11. Prometheus (Pg. 86)
12. Crackers (Pg. 93)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II, Scene Three**Dramatic Irony**

Objectives: Recognizing dramatic irony and understanding its impact
Creative writing employing dramatic irony

Activity

First, reread page 125 and answer the following questions:

1. What is Walter's mood?

2. What is Walter's first big action?

3. What are the first two lines of the song he sings?

4. What kind of song is this and what does it express?

5. Before Walter finishes his song, ("When I get to heaven gonna put on my wings,/Gonna fly all over God's heaven . . .") a man appears at the door. Read the stage directions. Who recognizes first that something is not right, the audience or Walter?

You have just seen an instance of dramatic irony, in which there is a discrepancy between what the character knows and what the audience or reader knows.

Now, write a small scene of your own, using the bottom half of page 125 as a pattern. Have your character singing a song, then write stage directions in which another character appears in the room in a different mood from the one your main character (the singing one) is in. However, have your character not be aware of that, and have him or her complete the verse of the song.