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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



A Raisin in the Sun
Lorraine Hansberry



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

A Raisin in the Sun

ACT I, SCENE 1

1. Considering the situation of each character that has been introduced, with which one do you sympathize the most? Write what you imagine a day in this person's life would be like. If you can, include aspects of this person's situation that aroused your sympathy.
2. Write a letter to a friend and describe the apartment and apartment house that this family lives in.
3. Ruth and Travis have an argument about leaving for school properly dressed and neat. Travis is very upset, but his mother straightens out the situation through humor. How would you have dealt with your son if he had a similar attitude? Do you think strictness or laughter is the best way to control a family?
4. Walter says to Ruth, "A man needs for a woman to back him up..." How do you feel about that? Can you describe an incident in which you saw a woman support a man or fail to support the man she was with?

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14. Beneatha says to her mother, "There simply is no blasted God - there is only man and it is he who makes miracles!" Write a letter to Beneatha responding to her comment.

ACT I, SCENE 2

15. What do you find comical in this scene?
16. In an argument about the future, Walter comments that money is life. To what extent do you agree with Walter that life really is all about money?
17. Consider the Saturday morning activities of the Younger household. In what ways are Saturday mornings in your home similar or quite different?
18. Walter is frustrated by his life, family, social position, and future. Write out the conversation that might take place if Walter went to a counselor. Walter says, "My family is driving me crazy!" Finish the dialogue.

A Raisin in the Sun

28. George tells Walter, “You’re all wacked up with bitterness, man.” If you were Walter, how would you respond?
29. Walter describes his anger as a volcano; he says he feels like “a giant surrounded by ants. Ants who can’t even understand what it is the giant is talking about.” Tell about a time in your life that you felt misunderstood and frustrated by the people around you.
30. Do you think Walter has a right to be angry with his mother for buying the house? Pretend that you are Walter’s counselor. Explain Walter’s position to Mrs. Younger and Ruth.

ACT II, SCENE 2

31. Describe a day in Walter’s life at this point in the play.
32. Mama makes the decision to “let” Walter become the head of the family. In your opinion, should the male be the head of the household? Write a job description of the responsibilities of a husband. What should a wife expect?

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42. At one time or other, we have all had an experience in which we deliberately excluded someone, or in which we were deliberately excluded. Write a short fictional account of such a scene and indicate how the one who was left out must have felt.
43. As you reread the section with Lindner, imagine what the expression(s) on each character's face would be. What body language do you "see"? Write a description of what you imagine.
44. If you were Bobo, what would you tell your wife before you go to Walter's house to give him the bad news?

ACT III

45. What advice would you give Beneatha about Asagai?
46. Reread Asagai's long speech. Write a description of Asagai's life in the future, as you see it.