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Teaching Unit™

Sample

Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Hoops

by Walter Dean Myers

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Hoops

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify the major conflicts in *Hoops*, list the major antagonists/protagonists, and account for the major actions leading to the resolution.
2. trace the development of the relationship between Lonnie and Cal, pointing out how each of them matures, how each struggles for power in the relationship, and what emotional satisfaction each gains from their time together.
3. discuss race relations as portrayed from the perspective of a black youth, including considerations of stratifications within the African-American population and overall black/white relations.
4. analyze the varying role of women in *Hoops*, using Lonnie's mother, Mary-Ann, and Aggie as examples.
5. discuss the author's use of basketball to achieve the following goals:
 - giving structure to the story
 - adding verisimilitude to the story
 - heightening the tension of the story
6. write a character sketch of O'Donnel, the white promoter, showing how he offers black athletes genuine opportunities on the one hand and uses or manipulates them on the other.
7. define and cite examples from the text for the following literary terms:
 - irony
 - protagonist
 - tone
 - verisimilitude
8. demonstrate an understanding of the difference between round/dynamic and flat/static characters, citing the following as examples:
 - Aggie
 - O'Donnel
 - Cal
 - Tyrone
 - Jo-Jo

Hoops

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Develop a character sketch of Lonnie, showing him as an individual reaching for a clear identity and as a symbol of ghetto youth.
2. How does the author portray the parents and their influence on their children in this story? Include the parents of Lonnie and Mary-Ann as examples.
3. How does the author represent success in the story? Discuss the following as examples of success: Sweet Man Johnson, O'Donnel, Tyrone.
4. What are the hallmarks of maturity in the story? Discuss the following characters as showing maturity: Aggie, Lonnie, Mary-Ann.
5. What has the author indicated about social conditions in Harlem? Consider how people make a living or fail to do so; what is available for recreational activities, and the overall quality of life of the characters in the novel?
6. Many critics believe that male authors create stronger male characters and female authors develop more interesting female characters. Evaluate whether this generalization holds true for the characters of Lonnie and Mary-Ann in this story.
7. If you were a book reviewer, how would you assess the novel *Hoops*?
8. Discuss the author's use of slang in this book. Does it help you understand the characters in their social setting? Does it distract you from the action? Does it make the story more or less believable?
9. If you worked in a book store, what kind of customer do you think would enjoy this book?
10. How do you think the characters are affected by the availability of alcohol and drugs in this story?

Hoops

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

get over – advance, get an opportunity

jiving – kidding, teasing

key – painted area on a basketball court; beyond the key baskets are worth 3 points

turnaround jumper – a basketball shot

wino – drunk

1. In the second paragraph of the story, the father says, “Then after a while you gonna start dreaming of this and that,…” What is the significance of the word “gonna”?

2. What is the narrator’s home situation? What clues do you see in these early passages about the narrator’s gender and economic situation?

3. How does the author use language to give early clues that this is the story of an African-American youth? How are people other than African-Americans identified?

Chapter 3

Vocabulary

Alvin Ailey dancers – a well-respected modern dance troupe

deuce – a two-point shot in basketball; a basket

jam – jamming the ball into the basket

NIT – National Invitational Tournament, a major college basketball tournament

scrubs – the second-string players

shaver – a person who manipulates the score of a game by shaving points

spread – the difference between the scores of two teams, as forecast by professional gamblers

1. What is happening when Lonnie says, “Everybody had dug how Cal had been on my case. I’d do something the same way that everybody else did it, but he would find something wrong with it”?

2. What do you expect when Lonnie says, “I didn’t give him a lot of static...even if he was wrong in some of the things he was putting down”?

3. Lonnie says that when he practices alone with Cal, “...I sensed that we were going through a manhood thing.” What does this mean?

4. What does Cal mean when he says Lonnie is his “cover”?

Chapter 7

Vocabulary

boards – backboard

bounds – rebounds

box out – establish a position between the opponent and the basket while the shot is in the air; this is intended to block the opponent from rebounding

Forty-deuce – 42nd Street, which is part of the theater district in New York

high post – a spot outside the lane and in front of the basket

J – a dunk, or a shot that does not hit the backboard, made famous by Dr. J (Julius Erving)

low post – a spot outside the lane and toward the side of the court

picks – screens set up for the player with the ball

post – the area outside the lane near the basket

stuffed – stuff the ball into the basket from above

T – technical foul, called at the referee’s discretion

1. Describe the scene when Cal and Lonnie visit O’Donnel. What change does Cal make in his use of language when he is with O’Donnel, and what does this show?

2. What does Cal explain to Lonnie after they leave O’Donnel’s office?

3. Why does the author refer to the promoter only by his last name, not as “Mr.” O’Donnel?

4. Why does Cal take Lonnie to the meeting?

Chapter 9

Vocabulary

dropped – a shot drops in the basket, or scores

one defense – one-on-one defense, so each offensive player is covered by one defender

tight box – defensive positioning that cuts off access to the basket

1. What does Cal tell Lonnie to do when they get to the gym?

2. What is Jo-Jo's assignment in the game?

3. Who does Cal spot in the crowd?

4. How does the second half start?

5. What does Cal tell Lonnie at the start of the second half?

6. What happens as Jo-Jo fouls out?
