

Harbor Me



By

Jacqueline Woodson

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on four chapters of *Harbor Me* and is comprised of five of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include racism and tolerance, bullying, people who learn differently than others, death of a close family member, forgiveness, accepting oneself, empathy, friendship, looking out for one another (harboring another person), personal growth.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat—by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for “A Room to Talk”), they discover it’s safe to talk about what’s bothering them—everything from Esteban’s father’s deportation and Haley’s father’s incarceration to Amari’s fears of racial profiling and Ashton’s adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives. [Courtesy of the publisher]

“Woodson’s spare, lyrical, and evocative prose carries the story seamlessly, weaving in themes of justice and family, friendship and courage. This is a timely and beautifully written story that should be on library shelves everywhere.”—*School Library Journal*

Author Biography

Jacqueline Woodson

Jacqueline Woodson (born February 12, 1963) is an American writer of books for children and adolescents. She is best known for *Miracle's Boys*, and her Newbery Honor-winning titles *Brown Girl Dreaming*, *After Tupac and D Foster*, *Feathers*, and *Show Way*. After serving as the Young People's Poet Laureate from 2015 to 2017, she was named the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, by the Library of Congress, for 2018–19. She was also a visiting fellow at the American Library In Paris in spring of 2017. [Courtesy of Wikipedia]



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By Jacqueline Woodson

Name: _____

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Chapters 1-4



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Harbor Me* is eleven-year-old Haley McGrath, whose father is in prison and her mother is dead. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *favorite* character? Why did you select this character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

infinite	knapsack	cranky	refrigerator
parole	handcuffs	metaphor	vague

1. Carole always kept her sneakers in her _____.
2. A _____ is a figure of speech in which a thing is symbolic of something else.
3. After spending eight years in jail, he was finally granted _____.
4. Lionel was kind of _____ about where he was last evening.
5. The bank robber was led away in _____.
6. There seems to be an _____ number of stars in the sky.
7. Mrs. Leonard is usually quite _____ when she doesn't get enough sleep.
8. Their _____ was almost empty by the time the pandemic ended.

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. According to Haley, how was she and her five friends like the tree in the novel, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*?

3. What two things were troubling Haley in Chapter One?

1	
2	

4. What is the significance of the sentence, *We think they took my papi*?

5. Why were Haley and the five other students considered *special*?

6. Haley thought that the school was considered one of the best in the city because it had nice teachers and lots of windows. What, however, was her uncle probably referring to when he called it *one of the best*?

7. Who stayed behind to talk with Esteban at the end of Chapter 3? _____
8. What happened to Haley's dad?

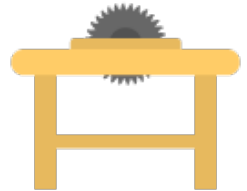
9. Why was the departure of Haley's uncle so upsetting for her?

Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first four chapters of *Harbor Me*.

Word	Anagram	Clue
hardest		Intense animosities.
stories		Cold cheeks that are red as red can be.
dresser		To make amends to.
words		An ancient weapon.
swallow		Rolls about in the mud.
tears		To look fixedly.
taped		Highly skilled.

B. Cinquain Poems

A Cinquain poem has five lines and most often does not rhyme. Write two Cinquain poems describing two of the characters from *Harbor Me* using what you know about them so far. With your teacher's permission you may wish to collaborate with a colleague in the creation of these poems.

Line 1 is one word. Line 2 is two words. Line 3 is three words. Line 4 is four words. Line five is one word.	<i>Santa Saint Nick Long white beard Christmas Eve present-giver Jolly</i>
--	--

Character 1 _____

Character 2 _____

C. The Metaphor

A metaphor is a literary device in which a comparison is made between two objects or ideas. In this section the growth of the tree in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a metaphor for the growth of Francie, despite all of the hardships she endured.

Create your own metaphor describing the following:

a)	An old woman's wrinkled face.	
b)	Your choice.	

D. Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human. The following is an example taken from Chapter Three: *As I watched Esteban that morning, I felt it, the fear coming around the corner, finding me.*

Describe how fear is personified in this example.

Create your own example of personification.

As you continue to read through the novel be on the lookout for other examples of this literary device. If you should find one, come back to this question and enter it below.

E. 5 Ws and an H.

Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



WHO?



WHAT?



WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

F. My 02¢ About Chapters 1-4.

What I Liked Best:

I Didn't Like The Part:

I Didn't Like It Because:

G. Caviar Words

The author of this novel is noted for her use of elegant, tasteful words. Someone once stated that some words have the sound of **caviar** (rich and elegant) and others are more are common (**peanut butter** words). With a colleague come up with 6 examples of each type of word. You may use any chapter of the novel to find these words.



Caviar Words	Peanut Butter Words

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first four chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6