



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

A Raisin in the Sun

based on the play by
Lorraine Hansberry

Written by
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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR
LORRAINE HANSBERRY

HANSBERRY, Lorraine (1930-65). Playwright. Born in Chicago on May 19, 1930. Father, a real estate broker, fought for years against restricted housing. Before his Supreme Court victory, family integrated a white neighborhood. Still disillusioned with prospects for black equality, relocated in Mexico. Before moving to New York City in 1950, Hansberry studied painting in Chicago and Mexico. In 1959 'A Raisin in the Sun'-produced, directed, and performed by blacks-was the first Broadway play by a black woman. Adapted as 'Raisin', it won a Tony for best musical in 1974. Second Broadway play, 'The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window' (1964). 'To Be Young, Gifted, and Black', based on her writings, was produced off-Broadway after her death in New York City on Jan. 12, 1965.

--Courtesy of Compton's Learning Company

INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. It includes eighteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lessons** introduce students to the historical background of the time just prior to the author's writing the play and to the main theme of having a dream of a better life. Following the introductory activities, students are given a transition to explain how the activity relates to the play they are about to read. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit. At the end of the lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 8 to 10 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice-matching-true/false version for occasional quizzes. If your school has the appropriate machinery, it might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the play. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 8 to 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have a good understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After reading the play, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the play.

After students complete reading the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the play.

There is a **group activity** in which students work in small groups to discuss several important ideas brought out in the play. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to these important ideas.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their ideas about the themes with the entire class; thus, the entire class is exposed to information about all of the themes and the entire class can discuss each theme based on the nucleus of information brought forth by each of the groups.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to inform (and to tie-in the introductory activity relating to Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech). Students compare *Raisin* to Dr. King's speech, finding ways in which the fictional play exemplifies many of the ideas Dr. King mentions in his speech. The second assignment is to persuade. Following the reports, discussion and library research, students pretend they are Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. alive today and write the speech they believe he would deliver to America this year. The third assignment is to give students a chance to simply express their own opinions. They are to write a composition in which they express their own personal "dreams" and outline a plan by which those dreams could realistically be obtained.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related to *A Raisin in the Sun*. The three general groups of topics to be read include: the current status of the civil rights movement, the current status of the Afro-American family, and biographical portraits of important Black Americans, past and present. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. Also, there is an advanced short answer unit test for students who need more of a challenge.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **extra activities section** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answerkeys** follow the **reproducible student materials** (which may be copied for classroom use without infringement of copyrights). No other portion of the units may be reproduced without the written consent of Teacher's Pet Publications, Inc.

UNIT OBJECTIVES - *A Raisin in the Sun*

1. Through reading Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, students will gain a better understanding of the importance of one's own dreams and values and the history of the civil rights movement in America.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
3. Students will discuss common problems in families today.
4. Students will be exposed to a different era of American life, showing many of today's conflicts are not new; they are rooted in our American past.
5. Students will consider their own dreams and how to achieve them.
6. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
7. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *A Raisin in the Sun* as they relate to the author's theme development.
8. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
9. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas
Note: Students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
 - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - d. To encourage logical thinking
 - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *A Raisin in the Sun*

Date Assigned	Reading Assignment	Completion Date
	Act One	
	Act Two Scene One	
	Act Two Scenes Two and Three	
	Act Three	

NOTE: Since *A Raisin in the Sun* is a play, it is really meant to be acted-out on the stage. If you and your students are so inclined and interested, a production with minimal props is possible. This unit is not planned for complete production. However, it is planned to have the parts spoken by various students during in-class reading. A list of characters needed for reading is provided, and a group reading practice is allowed for in Lesson Two.

If you have not graded students' oral reading this marking period, this would be an opportunity to do so. An evaluation sheet is included in this unit in case you wish to grade students.

UNIT OUTLINE - *A Raisin in the Sun*

1 Introduction	2 Introduction	3 Part Assignments PV Act One	4 Read Act One PV Act Two Scene One	5 Read Act Two Scene One PV Act Two Scenes Two and Three
6 Finish Reading Act Two PV Act Three	7 Read Act Three	8 Study Questions	9 Writing Assignment 1	10 Extra Discussion Questions
11 Vocabulary	12 Group Work & Discussion	13 Library	14 Reports	15 Writing Assignment 2
16 Family Day	17 Guest Speaker	18 Writing Assignment 3	19 Review	20 Test

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read

LESSON ONE

Objective

To familiarize students with the historical setting at the time Lorraine Hansberry wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*

Activity #1

Have music from the 1950's playing (tapes or records) as students enter the room. Listen to students' comments about the music.

Optional: If you have access to a video library, find some footage of some old TV shows or commercials from the 1950's. Show a few minutes of them (10 minutes or so) so students will get an idea of how things looked and how people dressed etc. in the 1950's.

Get students' reactions to your musical and video presentations. Ask students what they think it would have been like growing up in the 1950's and discuss their responses. Bring out the idea that many people view the 1950's as a golden time, a simpler time, a more prosperous time for Americans.

Activity #2

Using your opaque projector (or overhead if you have made transparencies) to show the "flip side of the coin." Show newspaper articles and photos of the Walk for Freedom in Montana in 1955-56, the federal troops in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957 forcing high schools to become integrated, and other articles showing the racial tension in the United States during this period. People generally think of the 1960's as the decade of change in the United States, but students should realize that there was a long history of events which built up to the major changes witnessed in the 1960's.

Explain that these kinds of things were going on just prior to the time when Lorraine Hansberry wrote the play *A Raisin in the Sun* (copyrighted 1958).

Point out that racial issues were a major part of the reason for the Civil War in the 1860's. Following that, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves began a long quest for freedom, equality and justice for Black people in America, a quest which continues today.

Ask students for other "milestone" events in history related to civil rights. Discuss their answers.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 - *A Raisin in the Sun*

PROMPT

You have read *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play about one man's dreams for himself and his family. You have read Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech in which he speaks of the realities of life and his dreams for the future for all Americans.

Although *Raisin* is fiction and Dr. King's speech is non-fiction, one can find many similarities between the two. In many ways *Raisin* exemplifies the points Dr. King made in his speech.

Your assignment is to compare--find the similarities between--*A Raisin in the Sun* and King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

PREWRITING

One way to begin is to look again at Dr. King's speech. Jot down on a piece of paper a little list of the main points he makes. Then, go down the list item by item. Next to each item write a note or two about ways in which the actions, characters, or ideas in *Raisin* are similar to Dr. King's points.

DRAFTING

Write an introductory paragraph in which you introduce the idea that *Raisin* and Dr. King's speech do in fact have similarities.

Use your list and notes to develop your specific points using specific examples from both texts to give substance to your paragraphs.

Write a concluding paragraph in which you state any conclusions you can derive from your study and comparisons.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, ask a student who sits near you to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.