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| **At a Glance – “february 12, 1963”*** **Lesson Objective**: Describe how Woodson connects herself to her family’s history.
* **In the Novel:** Woodson describes the day of her birth in the context of her family and America’s history.
* **Key Questions:** Questions 2-3, 5, and 7 are the most important questions of the day and should not be skipped.
* **Words to Watch For:**
	+ **dusk** (p. 1): the time after the sun has set but before night falls
* **Homework Options:**
	+ Creative writing assignment (attached)
	+ Knowledge Organizer or Vocabulary review
	+ Questions from the lesson that were skipped for time
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| **Agenda:** * Do Now (10 minutes)
* Explicit Vocabulary and Active Practice (10 minutes)
* Cycle 1 – Read Aloud: Pages 1-2 (15 minutes)
* Cycle 2 – Reread Part 1 and “Follow the Drinking Gourd” (15 minutes)
* Cycle 3 – Reread Part 2 (15 minutes)
* Cycle 4 – Reread Part 3 and “I Was Born” (15 minutes)
* Exit Ticket (10 minutes)
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| **Lesson Plan****Do Now (10 minutes)*** Give students 5-6 minutes to examine the map, read the embellishment, and answer the questions, then review using **Cold Call, share out,** or a **brief discussion**.
* **Q1:** **What did the Mason-Dixon line divide in the 1800s?**
	+ Free states in the North and slaveholding states in the South
* **Q2:** **The Mason-Dixon line is still frequently referred to today and holds significance as an “imaginary divider.” Why might it still have a lasting impact on the way people perceive different regions of the U.S.?**
* The Mason-Dixon line used to mark parts of the country in which people were free in and parts in which some could be enslaved. This would have meant that peoples’ way of life would be vastly different in the North and the South, and those differences might persist today even after slavery was outlawed.
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| **Explicit Vocabulary Instruction (10 minutes) — Emancipate, Evocative** * Teach each word to students, one at a time.
* Read or ask a student to read the example sentence that includes the vocabulary word.
* Shift focus to how the picture demonstrates the word (*while projecting the image*).
* Lead Active Practice questions
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| **Cycle 1 (15 minutes) — Pages 1-2*** **Read:** **Read Aloud** the opening poem, “february 12, 1963” on pp. 1-2.
* **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q1** to check for understanding.
* **[Optional] Discuss:** If there are no misunderstandings, you might choose to move directly on to the brief embedded text.
	+ **Key Ideas:**
		- **Q1: What happened on February 12, 1963?**
			* The author, Jacqueline Woodson, was born.
* **Read:** Use **Control the Game** to read the text, “More on Memoir.”
* **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q2**.
* **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** to surface the key ideas:
	+ **Key Ideas:**
		- **Q2: Why might Woodson have called this first poem “february 12, 1963” instead of “my birthday”? What might this suggest about her purpose in writing this memoir?**

“february 12, 1963” anchors us in a specific time—it’s not just about Woodson’s birthday, it’s about a particular time and place in America. This might suggest that Woodson not only wants us to understand her own stories, but also wants to give us a picture of what America was like in the year she was born.  |
| **Cycle 2 (15 minutes) – Reread Part 1** * **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q3**, cueing the **Turn and Talk** for **Q3b.** You might choose to **Control the Game** or call on one student to **reread** the excerpted stanza.
* **Discuss:** Lead an **extended discussion** to surface the following key ideas:
	+ **Key Ideas:**
	+ **Q3a: What is Woodson letting us know about her great-great-grandparents in this stanza? How do you know? Challenge: How might the rhythm of the poem emphasize this idea?**
		- * They were enslaved; Woodson tells us they worked “unfree” and “unpaid.” The shortened rhythm of “unfree” and “unpaid” on their own lines emphasizes this idea.
	+ **Q3b: What might Woodson be suggesting when she says she was born “not long from the time” of her great-great-grandparents enslavement?**
		- * Even though 100 years seems like a long time, Woodson might be suggesting that she still feels connected to this part of her family history, and that the influence of slavery feels “not long” or “not far” from the time of her own birth.
			* ***Note****: To support students in writing or discussion, you may wish to ask one or all of the following Break it Down questions:*
				+ *Does 100 years seem like a long or short time?*
				+ *What is surprising about the fact that Woodson calls it “not long”?*
				+ *Why might it seem like “not long from the time”?*
				+ *What does this suggest about Woodson’s connection to her great-great-grandparents?*
* **Read:** Ask students to independently read the embedded text, “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” then jot their responses in the box provided to note that Woodson is referring to the Big Dipper. Address any misconceptions that appear.
* **Write**: Ask students to **Turn and Task** to respond to **Q4**.
* **Discuss: Share out** a variety of responses.
	+ **Key Ideas**:
		- **Q4: In the stanza on p. 5, circle the words, phrases, or lines that you find most evocative. You might consider Woodson’s word choice as well as the rhythm and cadence. Share your annotations with a partner. Why did you choose these moments? What images or feelings did they evoke for you?**
	+ ***Note:*** *The purpose here is for students to start to notice and appreciate that different people can and will have different reactions to the same poem, and that part of the purpose of reading poetry is appreciating the thoughts and reactions of others.*
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| **Cycle 3 (15 minutes) — Reread Part 2*** **Reread:** Use **Control the Game** to reread the poem.
* **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q5**. You might choose to discuss each part before moving onto the next.
* **Discuss:** Lead an **extended discussion** to surface the following key ideas:
	+ **Key Ideas:**
		- **Q5a:** **What makes the phrase “emancipated but not free” a paradox? How could a person be “emancipated but not free”?**
			* This phrase is a paradox because emancipated means to set free, so the phrase seems to contradict itself. A person could be free from enslavement but still not be totally free; they might have limited rights or be restricted in other capacities.
		- **Q5b: What is Woodson suggesting about circumstances in the South in 1963?**
			* Woodson is suggesting that even though black people in the South are no longer enslaved, they are still “not free,” and this tension has caused the South to “explode” with conflict, as Woodson describes “people who look like me keep fighting and marching and getting killed.”
			* ***Note:*** *The next day’s lesson is going to build more context around the Civil Rights Movement, so teachers need not knowledge-feed or push for historical depth here. The purpose of this question is for literary analysis.*
* **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q6**, cueing the **Turn and Talk** for **Q6b.**
* **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** to surface the following key ideas:
	+ **Key Ideas:**
		- **Q6a: What is this technique called?**
			* Caesura
		- **Q6b: What words or ideas does are emphasized or separated here? Why?**
			* The caesura emphasizes both parts of the line—“free” and “can grow up”—by causing us to pause in the middle. This might emphasize the importance of the idea of freedom in Woodson’s memoir and also reminds us that this poem literally begins the story of her growing up.
			* ***Note:*** *It’s fine to cut discussion short here if students struggle and to note that there can—and, in poetry, often are—various interpretations of whether and how the form connects to the meaning.*
* **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q7.**
* **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** to surface the key ideas:
	+ **Key Ideas:**
		- **Q7: Why does Woodson have “the stories of South Carolina” in her veins, even though she was born in Ohio? Challenge: What might this suggest about the stories to come in Woodson’s memoir?**
			* Woodson’s great-great-grandparents were from South Carolina, so she is suggesting here that their stories are a part of her; their stories run through her veins just like their genes do. This might suggest that Woodson’s memoir will include not just stories of her own life, but of her family’s lives as well.
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| **Cycle 4 (15 minutes) — Reread Part 3*** **Reread:** Ask students to use **AIR** to reread the poem a final time.
* **Read: Control the Game** or **Read Aloud** the embedded text, “‘I Was Born’: American Slave Narratives.”
* **Write:** Ask students to respond to **Q8-10**. You might choose to discuss each question before asking students to move onto the next.
* **Discuss:** Lead a **discussion** to surface the following key ideas:
	+ **Key Ideas:**
		- **Q8:** **Review the definition of anaphora on your Knowledge Organizer, then skim the poem again. What anaphora do you notice?**
			* Each stanza begins, “I am born...”
		- **Q9: Why might Woodson have borrowed this phrase in her poem?**
			* Throughout our analysis, we’ve seen Woodson connect herself to the stories and history of her family’s enslavement. This language is another way in which Woodson connects herself to her past.
		- **Q10: How does the article above add to your understanding of the significance of the title of this poem?**
			* The title is Woodson’s exact birth date, which most enslaved people didn’t know for certain. While Woodson connects herself to the history of slavery, she also implies and suggests the difference in opportunity that she has being born in a time when “brown children like [her] can grow up free.”
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| **Exit Ticket (10 minutes)*** **Q1. Possible Sentences: Woodson is connected to South Carolina…**
	+ - * + **because** her great-great-grandparents were enslaved there.
				+ **but** she was born in Ohio.
				+ **so** her memoir will include stories from both the north and the south/from her family’s history.
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| **Homework Answers**1. **Write a stanza of your own “birthday poem” using “february 12, 1963” as inspiration.**
* This is a creative writing prompt, so responses will vary.
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