A close-up of a logo

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*Reading Reconsidered Curriculum brown girl dreaming Fluency Practice Student Materials*

**What is fluency?**

Reading fluently means reading words accurately, at a speed that matches normal conversation, and with expression in order to understand the text. Fluent readers pay attention to:

* **Punctuation** – Which punctuation marks appear in the sentence? What clues does punctuation give you about when you should pause or how you should convey emotion?
* **Important Words** – Are there any words that require special emphasis or give clues about the emotion of a sentence?
* **Dialogue** – How does the dialogue change what kind of expression you use? How is the person who is speaking feeling? What might they sound like?
* **Tone** – Are you capturing the intended meaning behind what you are reading? Are you capturing the voice of the narrator in your reading?

**Directions for students:**

1. Listen to the teacher read aloud the set of sentences. Pay attention to when the teacher’s voice pauses or changes.
2. Write your personal **reading goal** at the top of the page.
3. Now read the set of sentences 3-4 times with your partner following the directions in the box.

a. Partner 1 (reader) reads the first sentence.

b. Partner 2 (listener) listens while following along with a ruler.

c. Let the reader try to decode the words. If they are stuck, the listener can help after the reader has given it a try.

d. If neither student can read the word, jot it in your ‘Words to Practice’ box.

e. Switch roles for the next sentence and continue alternating through the set of sentences.

1. Listen for your teacher’s directions to see which **questions** you will be answering on the back of your sheet.

**When reading poetry you should:**

1. **Mark your poem**. Read the poem quietly to yourself first and circle any punctuation marks. Decide what needs to be loud or soft. Look at where you need longer pauses for emphasis.
2. **Notice the line breaks.** You don’t always need to pause at the end of a line, but sometimes, a short pause can increase emphasis on a line.
3. Try to **add emotion** by varying your tone. Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Words to Practice

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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brown girl dreaming

Set 1: Lessons 1-2 248 Total Words

Below are some sentences with information about poetry and memoir to help you better understand the genre of *brown girl dreaming*.

1. Prose is the ordinary language used in speaking and writing.
2. Poems are written in verse which means they have a rhythmic structure and often rhyme.
3. Poetic license is the understanding that a poet might change or break the rules of grammar.
4. An epigraphis a short quotation, phrase, or poem at the beginning of a piece of writing, usually included to suggest that work’s theme.
5. Analyzing a poem’s structure can help us uncover the deeper meaning.
6. A series of lines arranged together to create divisions in a poem is called a stanza.
7. One form of figurative language is metaphor, when something is described in a way that isn’t literally true but helps explain an idea or draw a connection.
8. To interpret a metaphor the first step is to identify the words, phrases, and feelings that come to mind.
9. Then the reader can use these words to draw a connection or explain an idea the author is conveying.
10. To help us hear the rhythm of a poem, it can be helpful to count the syllables in each line.
11. A memoir is nonfiction because the author tells the true story of their own life.
12. Memoirs are uniquely subjective because they are told from just one person’s experience and perspective.
13. Reading memoir gives us a peek into the lives of others and also helps us understand what life was like in a particular place during a particular time.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 1: Lessons 1-2

Below are some questions about the sentences you just read about poetry and memoir to help you better understand the genre of brown girl dreaming.

1. What is prose? What is verse?
2. What is an epigraph, and what is its purpose?
3. What are 2 literary terms you read about above? Pick one and give its definition.
4. What can a reader do to help them hear the rhythm of a poem?
5. What is a memoir?
6. Why are memoirs considered subjective?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Words to Practice

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brown girl dreaming

Set 2: Lesson 8: pgs. 50 - 51 231 Total Words

Below is an excerpt from *brown girl dreaming* where Woodson shares a memory of Gunnar coming home from work.



**gunnar’s children**

At dusk, just as the fireflies flicker on, my grandfather

makes his way

home.

We see him coming slow down the road,

his silver lunch box bouncing

soft against his leg. Now,

as he gets closer, we hear him

singing:



“*Where will the wedding supper be?*

*Way down yonder in a hollow tree. Uh hmmmm. . .* “

*Good evening, Miz Clara. Evening Miz. Mae.*

*How’s that leg, Miz Bell?*

*What you cooking, Auntie Charlotte, you thinking*

*of making me something to eat?*

His voice ringing down Hall Street, circling

Round the roads of Nicholtown

and maybe out into the big, wide world . . .



Maybe all the way up to New York,

Aunt Kay’s hearing it,

and thinking about coming home . . .

Then he is close enough to run to- the three of us

Climbing him like a tree until he laughs out loud

We call him Daddy.

This is what our mother calls him.

This is all we know now.

Our daddy seems taller than anyone else

in all of Greenville.

More handsome, too—

His square jaw and light brown eyes

so different from our own

narrow-faced, dark-eyed selves. Still,

his hand is warm and strong around my own

as I skip beside him,

the wind blowing up around us. He says,

*Y’all are Gunnar’s children.*

*Just keep remembering that.*

*Just keep remembering . . .*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 2: Lesson 8

Below are some questions from the poem, gunnar’s children, that you read on pages 50-51.

1. What time of day is dusk? Identify 1 piece of evidence from the poem to support your answer.
2. Choose one word to describe Gunnar’s personality. Identify 1 piece of evidence from the poem to support your answer.
3. How do the children feel about Gunnar?
4. At the end of section 3, Woodson writes, “This is all we know now.” What do you think she means?
5. At the end of section 4, Gunnar says, “Y’all are Gunnar’s children. Just keep remembering that.” What does he mean by that?
6. Choose 1 adjective to describe the relationship between the children and Gunnar. (Remember an adjective is a word that describes a noun.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Words to Practice

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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brown girl dreaming

Set 3: Lessons 10 - 11 248 Total Words

Below are some sentences about the civil rights movement in the United States.

1. During the civil rights movement people rallied for social, legal, political and cultural changes to prohibit discrimination and end segregation.
2. A sit-in, common during the civil rights movement, is a form of protest in which one or more people occupy an area in order to promote social, political, or economic change.
3. To gain visibility and spread awareness of their cause, protestors gather in a public place and refuse to move, thereby disrupting the normal function of the space.
4. In the segregated South, protestors often peacefully occupied public spaces where black people were not allowed in order to advocate for integration.
5. Many of the actions of the civil rights movement were grounded in the philosophy of nonviolent resistance, the idea that a person can resist, protest, and ultimately defeat an oppressive system without engaging in violence.
6. Sit-ins, marches, and boycotts are all examples of nonviolent resistance that were popular—and often successful—during the civil rights movement.
7. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote that nonviolent resistance is “a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love.”
8. Even in the face of violent retaliation, King argued, protestors must remain committed to peace as the means to enact change.
9. Throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, activists and protestors of the civil rights movement were trained in the principles and practices of nonviolent resistance.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 3: Lessons 10-11

Below are some questions from the sentences you just read about the civil rights movement in the United States.

1. Why did people protest during the civil rights movement?
2. What was a sit-in and what made it effective?
3. What is nonviolent resistance?
4. What are three forms of non-violent resistance used in the civil rights movement?
5. In your own words, what did Martin Luther King Jr. say about non-violent resistance?
6. In what decades were activists and protesters trained in nonviolent practices and principles?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Words to Practice

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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brown girl dreaming

Set 4: Lesson 14: pgs. 136-138 224 Total Words

Below is a poem from brown girl dreaming that describes when Woodson’s mother returns to Greenville and an excerpt from the poem roman that describes Woodson’s new baby brother.



**leaving greenville**

My mother arrives in the middle of the night,

And sleepily we pile into her arms and hold tight.

Her kiss on the top of my head reminds me

of all that I love.

Mostly her.



It is late winter but my grandmother keeps

the window in our room slightly open

so that the cold fresh air can move over us

as we sleep. Two thick quilts and the three of us

side by side by side.

This is all we know now –



Cold pine breezes, my grandmother’s quilts,

The heat of the wood-burning stove, the sweet

Slow voices of the people around us,

real dust wafting, then settling as though it’s said

all that it needs to say.

My mother tucks us back into our bed whispering,

*We have a home up North now.*

I am too sleepy to tell her that Greenville is home.

That even in the wintertime, the crickets

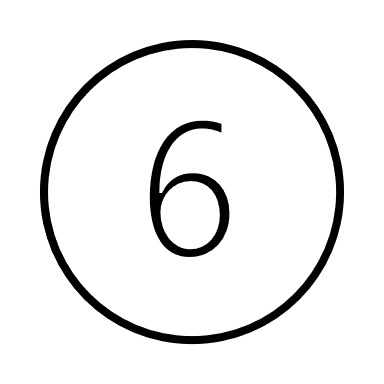
sing us to sleep.

*And tomorrow morning, you’ll get to meet*

*your new baby brother.*

But I am already mostly asleep again, two arms wrapped tight

around my mama’s hand.



**roman**

His name is as strange as he is, this new baby brother

So pale and quiet and wide-eyed. He sucks his fist,

Taking in all of us without blinking.

*Another boy,* Hope says,

*Now it’s even-steven around here.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 4: Lesson 14

Below are some questions from the poems you read in *brown girl dreaming on pages 136-138.*

1. Where was mama before returning to Greenville? Why has she come back?
2. What does Woodson mean when she writes, “This is all we know now –"
3. How does Woodson feel about leaving Greenville? Identify 1 piece of evidence from the poem to support your answer.
4. Give one example of figurative language from these poems. Give one example where Woodson uses poetic license in her poem “leaving greenville”.

1. What are two characteristics of Greenville that Woodson describes in the first poem?
2. In section 6, what does Hope mean when he says, “Now it’s even-steven around here?”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Words to Practice

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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brown girl dreaming

Set 5: Lesson 19 249 Total Words

Below are some sentences describing the song “We Shall Overcome.” Some of the themes and ideas in the song connect to the themes and ideas in *brown girl dreaming*.

1. Part IV of *brown girl dreaming* is titled, “deep in my heart, I do believe,” which is a quote from a famous some called, “We Shall Overcome.”
2. The song “We Shall Overcome” is a song of the civil rights movement, but a version of the song originated during slavery.
3. The song became the most widely known anthem of the civil right movement.
4. John Lewis, a leader of the civil right movement, says the song sustained him and his fellow activists through their years of struggle and protest especially when demonstrators who had been beaten or arrested would stand and sing it together.
5. “It gave you a sense of faith, a sense of strength, to continue to struggle, to continue to push on,” Lewis had said.
6. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recited some of the lyrics in his final sermon titled, “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution.”
7. Pete Seeger and other famous folk singers in the early 1960s, such as Joan Baez, sang the song at rallies, folk festivals, and concerts in the North and helped make it widely known.
8. President Lyndon Johnson, himself a Southerner, used the phrase "we shall overcome" in addressing Congress on March 15, 1965, in a speech delivered after the attacks on civil rights demonstrators during the Selma to Montgomery marches, thus legitimizing the protest movement.
9. Since its rise to prominence, the song, and songs based on it, have been used in a variety of protests worldwide.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 5: Lesson 19

Below are some questions from the sentences you just read about the song “We Shall Overcome.”

1. Why is the song “We Shall Overcome” so well known?
2. Where did the song “We Shall Overcome” originate? (Originate means to come into existence.)
3. Who is John Lewis?
4. Why might demonstrators choose to sing “We Shall Overcome?”
5. Some lyrics from” We Shall Overcome” were spoken in a well-known speech by who?
6. Who used the phrase “we shall overcome” in Congress and why did they do so?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Words to Practice

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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brown girl dreaming

Set 6: Lessons 19 - 20: pgs. 216-217 258 Total Words

Below is a poem from *brown girl dreaming* that describes Jacqueline Woodson trading dinner with her friend Maria. In the second poem titled “writing,” Jacqueline describes the challenges she felt when trying to write her stories.



**trading places**

When Maria’s mother makes

arroz con habichuelas y tostones,

we trade dinners. It it’s a school night,

I’ll run to Maria’s house, a plate of my mother’s

Baked chicken with Kraft mac and cheese,

sometimes box corn bread,

sometimes canned string beans,

warm in my hands, ready for the first taste

of Maria’s mother’s garlicky rice and beans,

crushed green bananas

fried and salted and warm . . .



Maria will be waiting, her own plate covered in foil.

Sometimes

we sit side by side on top of her stoop, our traded

plates in our laps.

*What are you guys eating?* the neighborhood kids ask

but we never answer, too busy shoveling the food we

love into our mouths.

*Your mother makes the best chicken,* Maria says, *The*

*best corn bread. The best everything!*

*Yeah,* I say.

*I guess my grandma taught her something after all*.



**writing’ #1**

It’s easier to make up stories

than it is to write them down. When I speak,

the words come pouring out of me. The story

wakes up and walks all over the room. Sits in a

chair, crosses one leg over the other, says,

*Let me introduce myself.* Then starts going on

and on.

But as I bend over my composition notebook,

only my name

comes quickly. Each letter, neatly printed

between the pale blue lines. Then white

space and air and me wondering, *How do I*

*spell introduce?* Trying again and again

until there is nothing but pink

bits of eraser and a hole now

where a story should be.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reading Comprehension Questions

Set 6: Lesson 19-20

Below are some questions from the poems you read on pages 216-217.

1. Who does Woodson trade dinner with? (Try to use an appositive in your answer.)
2. What does Woodson’s mother make for dinner, and how is it different than her friend’s mother?
3. Give three adjectives Woodson uses to describe her friend’s mother’s dinner.
4. Why do you think Woodson says. “*I guess my grandma taught her something after all*?”
5. How does Woodson describe telling? How Is this different from her experience writing a story?
6. How does Woodson use personification in her poem writing #1? (Personification is a literary technique in which something nonhuman is described as having human characteristics.)