

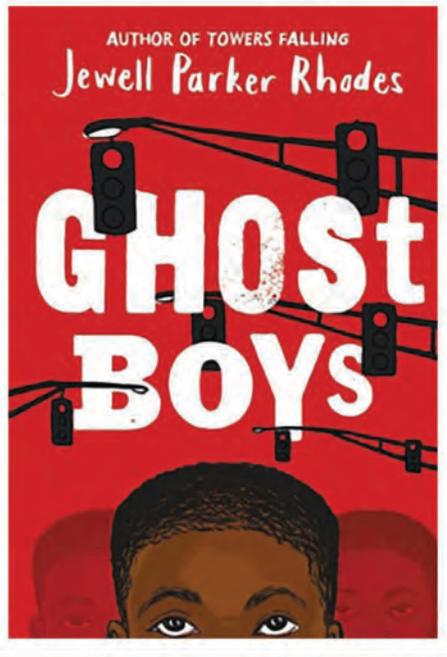
Reading ^{with} Relevance[®]

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

Ghost Boys

A novel by Jewell Parker Rhodes



Recommended for:
Grade Levels
5-7

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Ghost Boys

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Published BY

MOVING FORWARD[™]
I N S T I T U T E

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Little, Brown and Company paperback edition of this novel was used to create this teacher's guide.
If using another edition of the novel, page references may differ.

A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around an authentically engaging novel that builds students' literacy skills and supports their social and emotional development. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this standards-aligned curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!



Why **Ghost Boys?**

Meet Jerome, a 12-year-old Black boy who has just been killed by a White police officer, and bear witness to his powerful journey to understand his life and death. Follow along as Jerome meets and learns from the ghosts of other boys, like Emmett Till, who have lost their lives to racial violence, and explore his unlikely friendship with the only living person who can see him: the 12-year-old White daughter of the police officer. We chose this novel for its thoughtful attention to some timely social and emotional themes: systemic racism, telling one's story, police brutality, bullying, empathy, and understanding. Students will find themselves relating to and being inspired by Jerome's journey to understand social injustice; this curriculum will help students build connections between Jerome's story and the injustices they've witnessed in their own lives.

This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program
- 9 individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards
- A culminating essay-writing unit
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this novel

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Ghost Boys

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Lesson Plan Part One

Vocabulary:
Selected vocabulary from the reading is provided at the beginning of each session.

Session Number & Reading Pages:
The guide is divided into 8 reading sessions. The session number and pages appear at the top of each session.

Timing Reminder:
A timing reminder shows the percentage of time that should be spent on each section of the lesson plan.

Story Setup/Session Recap:
A short description of the previous session's reading allows facilitators to quickly recap the important details.

Today's Theme:
Themes for each session are highlighted to allow the facilitator to prepare for meaningful dialogue with students.

Reading/During Reading:
Provides background and contextual information for the instructor that may be necessary for students to understand the reading.

Discussion Questions:
Targeted discussion questions allow facilitators to invite meaningful conversations with students.

Guide at a Glance

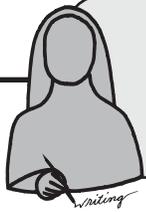
Ghost Boys

Lesson Plan Format

Here is an overview of the lesson plan layout. Each lesson plan is arranged in two double-spread formats to match the flow of the session. Each of these elements is explored in greater depth in the following section, *How to Facilitate*.



Checkpoint (where included):
Ideas for monitoring progress are provided for instructors to effectively assess student work.



Journal Prompts:
Thoughtful journal prompts provide an opportunity for students to connect the story to their own lives while developing their writing skills.

Extension Activity w/ Handout:

Help bring the story to life with creative extensions. Each handout is ready for students to use independently.

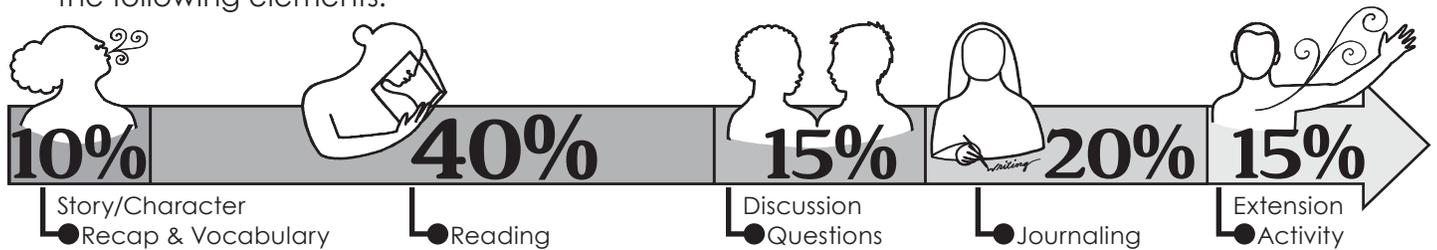


Lesson Plan Part TWO

How to Facilitate Ghost Boys

Timing & Structure

This curriculum includes 9 individual lesson plans. Each of these lesson plans may be condensed or expanded to meet your students' reading levels and your classroom or program structure. While we don't define the time constraints for each element of the lesson plan, we do recommend dividing your time in the manner shown below. Please feel empowered to modify this suggested time allocation to best meet the instructional needs of your students. Despite varying session lengths, this reading curriculum should always include the following elements:



This program can be facilitated in a small reading group or in a larger, after-school or school-day classroom setting. However, you will need to embrace different instructional practices depending on your group size. If you are able to create small reading groups, we suggest grouping students by their fluency levels. If you are unable to facilitate small reading groups, consider directing students into small groups for discussions and other activities.

Take a moment to read the "Today's Theme" section that precedes each lesson. Then, write your vocabulary words on the board with the definitions before you begin teaching; the best time to do this is right before the session starts so students have ample time to see the words. A list of vocabulary words will be provided for each session, and you may choose a few to focus on each week. You should also prepare any materials required to complete the day's extension activity.

Each lesson plan begins with a section that clearly describes the social and emotional themes highlighted in the day's reading. This is provided as an instructional resource to help you set your intentions about the social and emotional learning goals for each of your sessions. This is also an excellent opportunity to self-reflect on your own relationship with the novel's themes.

Creating Reading Groups

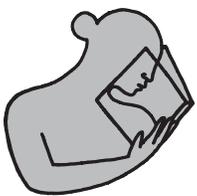
Before Starting a Session

Today's Theme

Story Recap & Vocabulary



Recap the story using the “Story Recap” section of your lesson plan. Begin by asking the students to share with you and each other what happened during the last session’s reading. Remind the students of the characters you have encountered; you can ask quick questions like, “Who are the main characters?” and “What were some of the major/most exciting events from the last section we read?” Point out what vocabulary words will be introduced in the upcoming chapters and remind students to look for these words while reading. Please encourage students to copy the day’s vocabulary words into their journals.



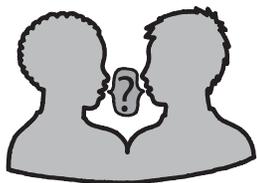
Reading

During this time, students will read the assigned pages defined in each lesson. You may have students read aloud in small groups or in a larger group, you may have students follow along while you read, or you may have students complete silent, independent reading. During training, you will be provided with a “Guided Reading Best Practices Manual,” including tips on how to facilitate this portion, depending on your facilitation structure.

During Reading

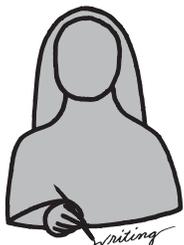
There may be times when unfamiliar themes, references, slang, or historical context are present during the reading. If you feel that it is important to provide definitions or context for your students, this information is included in the “During Reading” section of each lesson.

Discussion Questions



After you finish reading, ask the questions provided in the “Discussion Questions” section of your curriculum. These questions include reading comprehension, critical thinking, and social/emotional skill-building topics that will prepare students to connect with the story, write in their journals, and complete extension activities.

Journal Prompts & Writing



The journal prompts are designed to provide a safe space for students to develop and share their thoughts and ideas while they develop critical thinking and improve on writing skills. After discussion, students will respond to journal prompts designed to help them connect the story to their own lives. Each lesson includes two journal topics to choose from. You may use one or both, depending on your students and program.

Each lesson plan includes an extension activity students can complete independently. These activities are designed to be fun and engaging while helping students to improve their writing, vocabulary, critical thinking, and other English language arts standard skills.

Checkpoints are included throughout the guide to help support students and instructors, ensuring that students understand the material and are building appropriate skills. Checkpoints can be used to adapt a lesson or activity for varied strengths and abilities of students and are intended to offer additional benchmarks for student improvement.

Twice during the program, near the midpoint and at the end of the novel, students will have the opportunity to complete a short assessment to demonstrate their comprehension of the novel's plot and characters. Also, included in the Appendix is an end-of-program evaluation that may be used to collect students' feedback on this reading program.

This reading program culminates with students writing a final essay about the novel. Encourage students to use their previous journal entries and completed extension activities to think through their essays and find necessary information to support their opinion. There are sample graphic organizers in the Appendix that may be helpful for your students in the writing process.

Ask students to identify their favorite journal entries and/or completed activities and worksheets. Students should choose items that best demonstrate their understanding of the book and show their best work as readers and writers. Portfolios can be used as part of the final evaluation and to assess student improvement. This is a great way for students to show that they have risen to the challenge of writing complete paragraphs, demonstrated organization in their writing, and have a solid understanding of the story and its characters.

Extension Activities

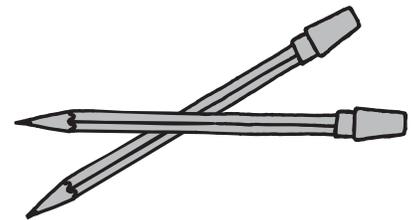


Checkpoints



Student Assessment & Evaluation

Supporting the Final Essay



Final Portfolio

Standards

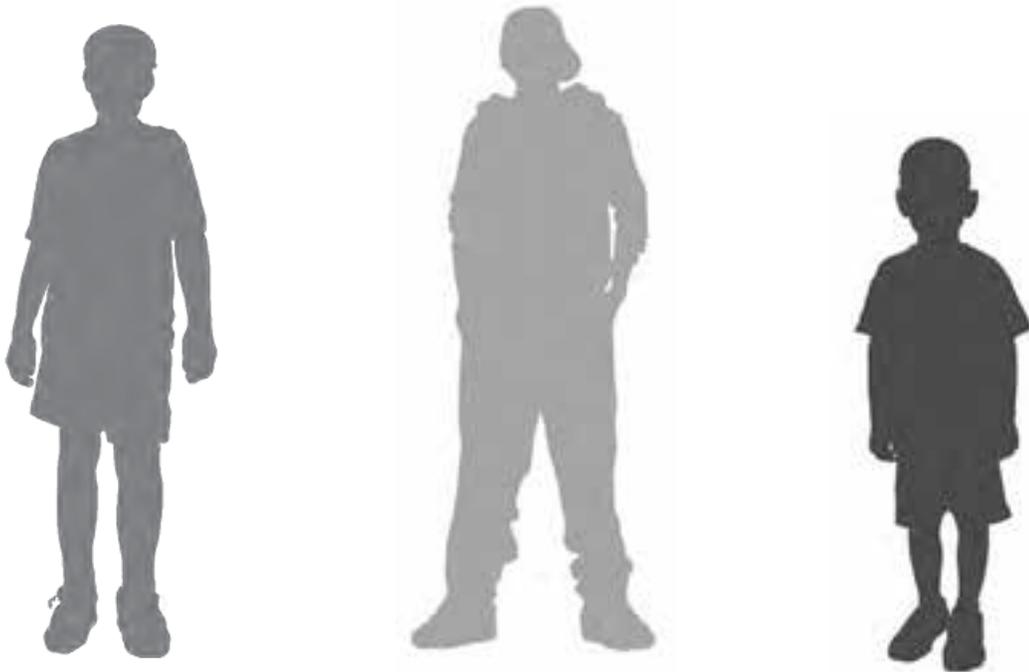
This guide has been written to support and build on Common Core Standards for English language arts. These standards can be found online at corestandards.org. Additionally, a chart of standards addressed by this curriculum can be found at the end of this introductory section.

Modifications

Individual classrooms, sites, and instructors may adapt the guide to fit the needs of their students. Each lesson offers a range of discussion questions, journal prompts, and extension activities to meet variations in grade level and reading ability. Instructors should review each lesson ahead of time to determine the best prompts for their group of students.

Resources for Teachers/ Appendix

Reading with Relevance is built to be responsive to your individual classroom and teaching needs. At the end of this guide, we have included an Appendix with additional, optional resources for your classroom, including: expository text readings with comprehension questions, resources to support the final essay, and additional extension activities. These resources can be used throughout the program as you see fit.



About the Book

Ghost Boys

Story Summary

Ghost Boys explores the story of 12-year-old Jerome, who is growing up in a poor neighborhood in Chicago. The story opens with Jerome's murder and shifts back and forth between the periods before and after his death to illuminate his story. In the before, Jerome accepts a toy gun from his new friend Carlos. When a police officer sees Jerome playing with the toy in an empty lot, he immediately shoots the boy. In the after, Jerome moves around Chicago as a ghost and meets other ghost boys, like Emmett Till and Trayvon Martin, who have lost their lives to racial violence. *Ghost Boys* makes connections to Emmett Till's life and death in order to highlight how systemic racism and state-sanctioned violence has persisted across time and history; the author uses Jerome's contemporary story to explore other relatable themes, like bullying, friendship, and family. As Jerome comes to terms with the reality of his death and the unjust circumstances that led up to it, he experiences some powerful revelations. Jerome calls on the living, like the police officer's young daughter, to see the impacts of racism and change the world, so stories like his do not keep happening.

Dr. Jewell Parker Rhodes has written several young adult and middle grade books, including *Ghost Boys*, *Towers Falling*, and the Louisiana Girls trilogy *Ninth Ward*, *Sugar*, and *Bayou Magic*. She is the winner of multiple awards for children's literature. *Ghost Boys* was named #1 Kids' Indie Next Pick and a New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association Book of the Year. She has also written six books for adults, including *Voodoo Dreams* and *Magic City*. She grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and now she lives in San Jose, California.

About the Author



Main Character List

Jerome, the narrator, a 12-year-old African American boy who is murdered by a White police officer

Ma, Jerome's mother

Kim, Jerome's sister, with whom he walks to school each day

Grandma, Jerome's grandma, who was raised in the South and can sense his presence after his death

Pop/James, Jerome's father

Reverend Thornton, the pastor who presides over Jerome's funeral

Mr. Meyers, Jerome's teacher

Carlos, Jerome's kind, quick-thinking best friend

Eddie, Mike, and Snap, Jerome's school bullies

Officer Moore, the police officer who kills Jerome

Sarah, Officer Moore's 12-year-old daughter, the only living person who can interact with Jerome

Emmett Till, a ghost boy who helps Jerome along his journey

Ms. Penny, the librarian Sarah consults to find out more about the ghost boys



Social and Emotional Themes

Because *Ghost Boys* covers several potentially sensitive topics for students, we want to prepare you with some information about, and ways to address, these topics.

Systemic racism, and its traumatic impact, is the central theme of *Ghost Boys*. Racism is more than simply hateful attitudes and individual acts of prejudice. *Ghost Boys* explores how racism is built into laws, policies, and practices that result in a society where people of color, and particularly Black people, are blocked from health, wealth, opportunity, justice, and safety. Rhodes illustrates the impacts of systemic racism in Chicago through her exploration of Jerome's life. The reader sees systemic racism in action through the income inequality his working parents struggle against, through Jerome's education in a segregated and underresourced school, and ultimately, in the way that Jerome loses his life to police violence. Students may recognize aspects of their own lives and identities in Jerome's narrative: they, too, may have experienced police violence in their communities, they may have heard the adults in their lives talk about how racism impacts their lives, and they may be able to articulate how systemic racism shapes their own experiences. Give your students space to describe their experiences and put words to the impacts of systemic racism. Encourage them to share their stories and empathize with each other about this oppressive reality of the Black American experience.

Systemic Racism

Through Jerome's narrative, Rhodes explores police brutality, a specific form of systemic racism. Jerome is murdered by Officer Moore, who shoots Jerome twice in the back and refuses to call for medical help; Moore claims he thought 12-year-old Jerome was an adult with a real gun and says that Jerome appeared big and scary. This narrative is a familiar one, which students may recognize from officer testimony surrounding the murders of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and other "ghost boys." The Mapping Police Violence project found that Black people are more likely to be killed by police, more likely to be unarmed, and less likely to be threatening someone. For example, in 2019, there were 1,098 people killed by the police in the United States; although Black people only make up 13% of the population, they represent nearly a quarter of those killed by police. Each year, only a handful of officers ever face charges for their actions, and convictions are even rarer. Your students have likely heard, read, and witnessed the deaths of many ghost boys and men since the Black Lives Matter movement began in 2013 with the aim of ending police brutality. Some of your students may have already had "the talk" with their parents, as Black parents have been discussing police brutality with their children for generations. They often have rules and tips for how to behave around the police in order to stay safe. Police brutality is a sensitive topic that can come with a lot of fear and anxiety. Reading Jerome's story may give students, especially Black students, anxiety about their own lives. Give students some space to write, draw, or think about those anxieties: naming them can give them less power. Ask students to imagine a future where there is no police brutality. What would that look like? How would that feel?

Police Brutality

Family Family relationships are central to many of the characters in the novel, who work to make meaning of their sometimes complicated connections. In life and in death, Jerome develops a chosen family alongside his biological family. When Carlos steps up and cares for Kim and Jerome's grandma after Jerome's death, he becomes part of Jerome's family. In the afterlife, Jerome feels a sense of family with the rest of the ghost boys, like Emmett Till. And Sarah struggles to reconcile her changing feelings about her father, Officer Moore. Encourage your students to think about the role of family in their own lives. Your students may be familiar with the idea of chosen family and recognize this in their own lives. Family may be a hard topic some students—families can bring up complicated feelings, and family members don't always act in the ways that we'd like or expect. Considering this, provide students with time to imagine and talk about the kinds of families they would like to have as they get older, which may include friends, mentors, pets, children, elders, and more.

Bullying Before his death, Jerome struggles with the bullying he experiences at school. Jerome works to avoid his bullies Mike, Eddie, and Snap, and has developed a system for avoiding their attention—eating lunch while perched over a toilet on the top floor bathroom. When Carlos comes to the school, Jerome knows he will also be a target for bullying because he is the new kid. Bullying is an incredibly common experience in schools — according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, one in every five students reported being bullied in 2019. While Jerome experiences physical bullying, relational bullying and cyberbullying are also common. It is likely that your students have been bullied, have witnessed bullying, or have even been bullies. Use the text to support your students to talk about why bullying happens in schools and what kinds of things they (and you!) can do to help end bullying.

Telling One's Story Throughout *Ghost Boys*, readers witness the power of telling one's story. Several of the characters have important stories that need to be told in order to heal. Carlos, for instance, needs to talk about his experience the day Jerome died. Telling his story is an important part of the grief process for him. Emmett also needs to tell Jerome his story, so that Jerome understands his role in a long lineage of ghost boys. And after Sarah experiences dawning consciousness around the realities of racism, she seeks out a way to share Jerome's story with the world. Using the novel's characters as inspiration, encourage students to think about the stories they need to tell in order to heal or help others better understand their experience. Talk with students about the power of listening to other people's stories, also. Ask them to consider who in their life might have a story to share that they could listen to and learn from.

Historical Context

There are many historically-specific references throughout the book. Help students navigate unfamiliar ideas by emphasizing learning about similarities and differences. The guide is designed to help students reach a deeper understanding of the story's context. When appropriate, encourage students to think about how the story is both different from and similar to stories they may have heard before or a situation in their own lives.

The book is set contemporary to its publication in 2018; the author wrote *Ghost Boys* to help young people talk about and make meaning of the history of racial violence in the United States and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. Part of this political landscape includes the increasingly frequent and highly visible killings of Black men, women, and children by American police officers, with many videos surfacing of police officers shooting unarmed Black teens and adults. The characters in the story live amidst this political backdrop, and they experience the impacts of racial injustice in their lives.



Final Essay

Ghost Boys explores several important social and emotional themes: education, violence, bravery, activism, and family. Throughout your lessons, help students think about, discuss, and share their thoughts on these critical themes by reflecting on how each is developed in the novel. This will prepare them to succeed in writing a final essay at the conclusion of the program on one of the following topics:

Topic #1

- Jerome tells Sarah, "You were right. It matters, you seeing me. Me, seeing you. Sharing my story." Sarah replies, "If people know more about other people, maybe they won't be scared" (pg. 181). Jerome and Sarah are talking about empathy — the ability to deeply understand someone else's feelings and perspective.

What does the relationship between Jerome and Sarah teach us about empathy?

- » Why do you think the author chose to have Sarah be the only living person who can see Jerome? What is so important about the connection between these two characters?
- » How does the empathy Sarah develops for Jerome drive her self-growth and developing awareness of racial injustice?
- » How did this book, and the empathy you developed for Jerome and Emmett, impact your understanding about the long legacy of ghost boys?
- » How does "bearing witness" to the stories of Emmett, Jerome, and the other ghost boys inspire you to stand up for change and ensure their stories are not forgotten?

Topic #2

- In the author's afterword, Jewell Parker Rhodes shares her goal in writing this novel: "My hope is that parents and teachers will read *Ghost Boys* with their children and students, and discuss racial prejudices and tensions that still haunt America. Through discussion, awareness, and societal and civic action, I hope our youth will be able to dismantle personal and systemic racism" (pg. 206).

What did *Ghost Boys* teach you about the history of racism and racial violence in America?

- » Write about the parallels you see between the book and this moment in American history, when so many people are stepping forward to demand an end to police brutality. What racial prejudices and tensions do you think still "haunt America"?
- » What do the characters in the story do to fight systemic racism? What can we learn from their developing awareness and actions to build a more just and inclusive world?
- » What can you do to stand up to personal and systemic racism in your community?



Standards Guide

Ghost Boys

Standards

Reading with Relevance is a socially and emotionally rich literacy curriculum that focuses on students' emotional well-being as a critical strategy for improving their academic achievement. This guide was developed in alignment with two sets of learning standards: *the Common Core Standards for English language arts* and *the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's Core SEL Competencies*.

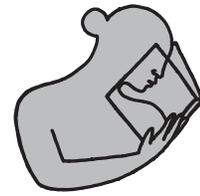
- Academic Standards emphasized in this guide are **Reading Standards for Literature**, **Writing Standards**, **Speaking & Listening**, and **Language Standards**. The reading standards for literature emphasize reading comprehension, understanding craft and structure, and developing critical thinking and analytical skills when reading and in discussing reading. This curriculum meets standards for writing "text type and purpose" through journal and essay activities of varied types. The program consistently develops speaking and listening "comprehension and collaboration" through group discussion, group work, student participation, and sharing of ideas. Language standards applied in the guide emphasize language conventions in writing, speaking, reading or listening, and vocabulary acquisition. This curriculum offers recurring opportunities for students to engage in each of these areas of English language development. Additionally, the Appendix includes an expository text and comprehension activity designed to promote students' ability to read, understand, and analyze informational text.
- This guide was explicitly created to embed CASEL's five Core SEL Competencies into classroom discussion, reflective writing, and creative activities centered around daily reading of culturally relevant and diverse texts. Each of the program's intentional lesson plans is designed to support teachers to meaningfully explore a social and emotional theme of the day, and provide students with concrete opportunities to develop, grow, and expand their skills around self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making.

Learning Goals & Objectives

- **Vocabulary:** Students understand and explain the use of words in context and can identify the part of speech.
- **Reading:** Students read narrative text aloud fluently and accurately with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.
- **Comprehension:** Students discern main ideas presented in narrative text and identify evidence that supports these ideas. Students also draw inferences and make predictions by supporting them with textual evidence.
- **Writing:** Students create multi-paragraph narrative and argumentative compositions and support their conclusions with evidence from the text.
- **Collaboration:** Students work collaboratively in groups, as well as individually, to develop communication skills and listening strategies.
- **Social and Emotional Learning:** Students demonstrate self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Additionally, students participate in a variety of activities and assessments, including discussion, note taking, brainstorming, visual representations, journal and essay writing, and building a final portfolio.

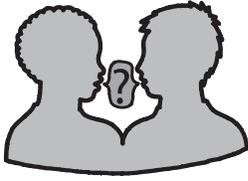


Vocabulary

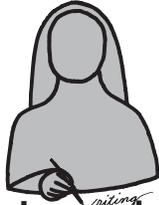


Reading

Reading Standards for Literature:			
Key Ideas & Details, 1-3	Grade 5		
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Reading Standards for Literature:			
Craft & Structure, 4-6	Grade 5	✓	✓
	Grade 6	✓	✓
	Grade 7	✓	✓
Reading Standards:			
Foundational Skills: Phonics and Word Recognition, 3	Grade 5		✓
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Reading Standards:			
Foundational Skills: Fluency, 4	Grade 5		✓
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Writing Standards:			
Text Type & Purpose, 1-3	Grade 5		
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Writing Standards:			
Production and Distribution of Writing, 4	Grade 5		
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Speaking & Listening:			
Comprehension & Collaboration, 1 & 2	Grade 5		
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Language Standards:			
Conventions of Standard English, 1, 2	Grade 5		
	Grade 6		
	Grade 7		
Language Standards:			
Knowledge of Language, 3	Grade 5		✓
	Grade 6		✓
	Grade 7		✓
Language Standards:			
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, 4 -6	Grade 5	✓	✓
	Grade 6	✓	✓
	Grade 7	✓	✓



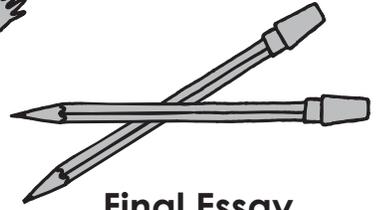
Discussion



Journal



Extension Activity



Final Essay

Discussion	Journal	Extension Activity	Final Essay
✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	
	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓ *1 only *1 only			
	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
	✓ ✓ ✓ *6 only *6 only *6 only	✓ ✓ ✓ *6 only *6 only *6 only	✓ ✓ ✓ *6 only *6 only *6 only

Session 1

pages 1-16

Vocabulary

wailing (pg. 3): v., crying loudly

pudgy (pg. 9): adj., chubby

premonitions (pg. 11): n., feelings about things that may happen in the future

optimism (pg. 12): n., a worldview that believes the best possible things will happen

perilous (pg. 13): adj., dangerous

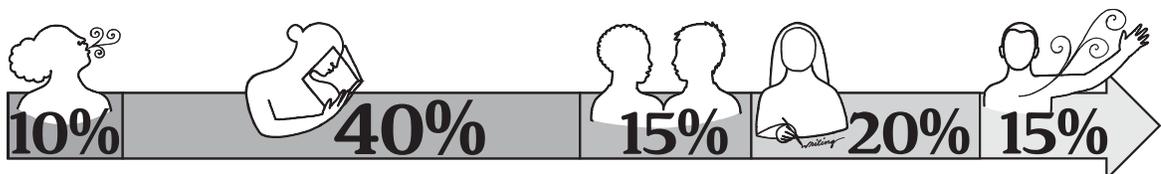
debris (pg. 14): n., the remains of something broken down or destroyed

Today's Theme

The theme of today's session, as we start *Ghost Boys*, is **safety**. Jerome's mother and grandma express great concern about Jerome's physical and emotional safety. Because the adults in his life show concern, Jerome learns how to watch after his own safety. The students in your class may, or may not, relate to these concerns about safety, which has much to do with our identities, privileges, and communities. Open up a discussion with your students about how they experience safety in their own lives. Who looks after their safety? What spaces and places make them feel especially safe? What precautions do they take to be safe while out in the world? How is their sense of safety connected to their identity?

Story Setup

Ghost Boys explores the final days and afterlife of 12-year-old Jerome. The novel is split into sections that describe Jerome's life before and after he is killed by a police officer. During the "Alive" sections, the novel focuses on Jerome's actions and feelings prior to his death. In the "Dead" sections, Jerome witnesses his family members, friends, and the police officer react to his loss.



During Reading

Motown (pg. 10): a type of popular music that was prominent in the 1960s, featuring predominantly African American artists, like the Temptations, the Supremes, Smokey Robinson, and more



Discussion Questions

- What do you think about how the book began? Did it surprise you to learn that this book is narrated by a character who dies on the first page?
- Who are the people who make up Jerome's support system? How do these people show up for Jerome?
- How would you describe the community where Jerome lives?
- What morning ritual does Jerome have with his mother? How do you think this ritual makes them feel?
- Do you have special rituals with any of your loved ones?
- Why do you think Jerome's grandma asks him to name three good things?
- Why is Jerome's education so important to his mother?
- What does Jerome mean when he says "getting a child to adulthood is perilous" (p. 13)?
- What do you think about Jerome's decision not to share with his family that he is being bullied at school?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- In today's initial reading session, we met Jerome and witness both the end of his life and then, in a flashback, join him and his family for an average morning around their home.

What are your first impressions of Jerome's character?

- » What impact does Jerome's family have on him?
- » What are Jerome's community and school like?
- » What questions about Jerome are you left with at the end of today's reading?

DECISION-MAKING

- Jerome feels pressure from the adults in his life to be on his best behavior. His parents want him to be well-educated and go to college, so he must do well in school. His little sister Kim watches him, so he must be a good role model. Jerome does not seem to mind this pressure, and it guides his decision-making.

What motivates you to make good decisions?

- » Write about a time when you made a decision you were proud of.
- » Why did you make that decision? What makes you feel so proud of yourself?
- » What kinds of support and guidance help you make good decisions?

Checkpoint

- Students should demonstrate a command of the standard written conventions of English.

- » Use capital letters appropriately: to start sentences, when referencing the book title, and when using proper nouns (like the names of characters or places). Remember to end every sentence with a period as well.
- » For example, "I can always ask my mom or **Mrs. Anderson** for help."

Extension Activity

Jerome's grandma asks him to tell her three good things about his life. This helps Jerome stay focused on the positive. **Handout:**

- » Three Good Things
- Have students use the "Three Good Things" worksheet to brainstorm the positive things in their own lives.

Name: _____

My Three Good Things

1

Name: _____

Describe:

Illustrate:

2

Name: _____

Describe:

Illustrate:

3

Name: _____

Describe:

Illustrate:

Jerome's grandma asks him to tell her three good things about his life. This helps Jerome stay focused on the positive. Use this worksheet to name, describe, and illustrate three good things in your own life.

Three Good Things

Session 2

pages 21-44

Vocabulary

superstition (pg. 24):
n., a belief in something magical

wispy (pg. 26): adj.,
delicate

misshapen (pg. 27): adj.,
having an ugly or deformed shape

whimpers (pg. 27):
v., to make a low whining plaintive or broken sound

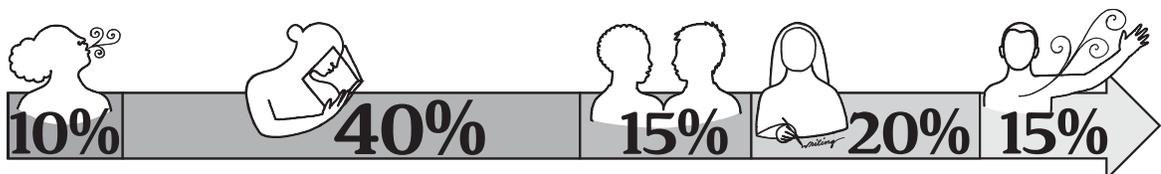
vestibule (pg. 30): n.,
entrance hall to a building

Today's Theme

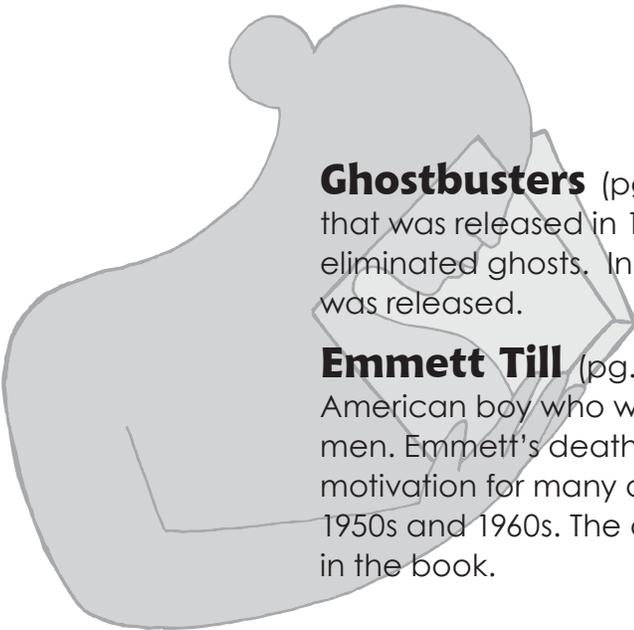
Today's theme is **bullying**. Jerome works hard during the school day to avoid and deescalate situations with his bullies, Mike, Eddie, and Snap, who regularly torment him. Bullying is an epidemic in American schools, impacting at least one in every five students. Because bullying is so pervasive, your students likely have some relationship to bullying—as witness, as victim, or even as perpetrator. There may be some strong feelings on this topic, including shame and regret. As you begin today's reading section, ask students to share how bullying impacts their school community. What does modern day bullying look and feel like? How do they react when they witness bullying? How can they stand up and become allies for those in their school who need support?

Session 1 Recap

We meet Jerome, and learn that he is dead — he has been killed by a police officer who says he had “no choice.” The story then flashes back to a normal morning in Jerome's life: eating breakfast with his family and walking to school through his community in Chicago. When Jerome arrives at school, we learn that he is being bullied, which Jerome hasn't shared with his family.



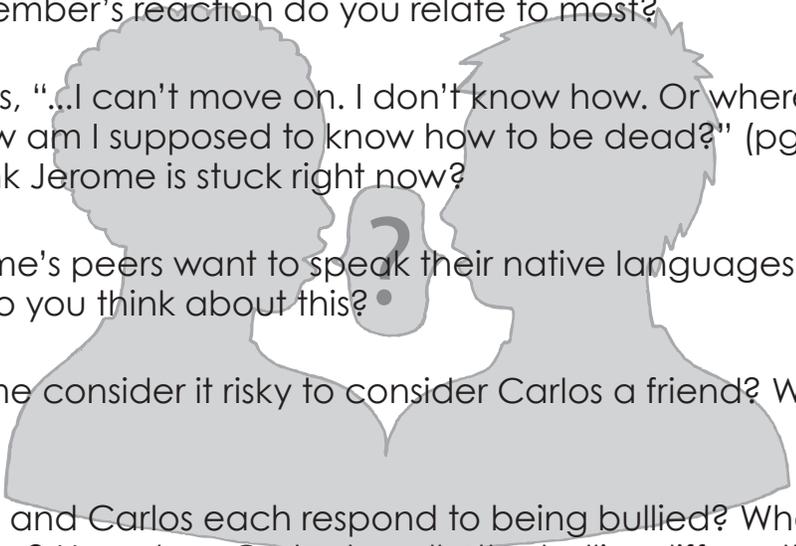
During Reading



Ghostbusters (pg. 21): *Ghostbusters* was a popular movie that was released in 1984 about a group of men who hunted and eliminated ghosts. In 2016, a new, all-female version of the film was released.

Emmett Till (pg. 24): Emmett Till was a 14-year-old African American boy who was murdered in 1955 by a group of White men. Emmett's death and his mother's words and actions became motivation for many activists of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The details of Emmett's story will be revealed later in the book.

Discussion Questions

- 
- On page 22, Jerome says “*Inside me hurts; outside me feels nothing.*” What does he mean by this? Can you relate?
 - How do Jerome's family members each react to his death?
 - Which family member's reaction do you relate to most?
 - Jerome wonders, “...I can't move on. I don't know how. Or where to move on to. How am I supposed to know how to be dead?” (pg. 29). Why do you think Jerome is stuck right now?
 - Why don't Jerome's peers want to speak their native languages at school? What do you think about this?
 - Why does Jerome consider it risky to consider Carlos a friend? What's the risk?
 - How do Jerome and Carlos each respond to being bullied? What is Jerome's strategy? How does Carlos handle the bullies differently?
 - Were you surprised when he pulled out a gun?
 - What do you think is the best way to deal with bullies?

GRIEF

- Jerome attends his own funeral, and witnesses his family try to cope with their intense loss and grief. The grieving is painful for everyone, including Jerome. He says, "it's awful spending days in the apartment, everybody angry and mourning" (pg. 27).

What is Jerome feeling as he watches his family grieve?

- » How does Jerome cope with the emotions he is experiencing?
- » Have you ever experienced grief or loss in your own life?
- » How do you care for yourself and others when coping with intensely sad emotions?

BULLYING

- Both Jerome and Carlos are targeted by the school bullies, Mike, Eddie, and Snap. They both end up hiding in the bathroom, hoping to avoid becoming targets of harassment and violence.

Why do you think people bully others?

- » Where do you think these ways of treating others come from? How are they learned?
- » Does this sort of behavior happen at your school? How does your school deal with it?
- » What do you think needs to happen to stop bullying in schools? Brainstorm a list of ideas that might make your school a safer place for all students.

Extension Activity

Today's activity gives students an opportunity to consider the questions they have about the story so far, make connections to their own lives and experiences, and use the text to make predictions about what might come next.

Handout:

- » Questions, Connections, and Predictions

Name: _____

Ask a Question

Page _____ Paragraph _____

What question do you want answered?

How will answering this question help you understand the story better?

Make a Connection to Your Experience

Page _____ Paragraph _____

How does this part remind you of an experience you've had or something you've heard about?

How does this connection help you understand the story better?

Make a Prediction

Page _____ Paragraph _____ What do you predict might happen?

What in the story made you predict that?

In today's activity, you have an opportunity to consider the questions you have about the story so far and make connections to your own life and experiences. Then, use the text to make predictions about what might come next.

Questions, Connections, and Predictions

Session 3

pages 49-70



Vocabulary

preliminary (pg. 49):
adj., introductory

clammy (pg. 49): adj.,
sweaty

hysterical (pg. 59):
adj., very upset

flutters (pg. 63):
v., moves with quick
wavering or flapping
motions

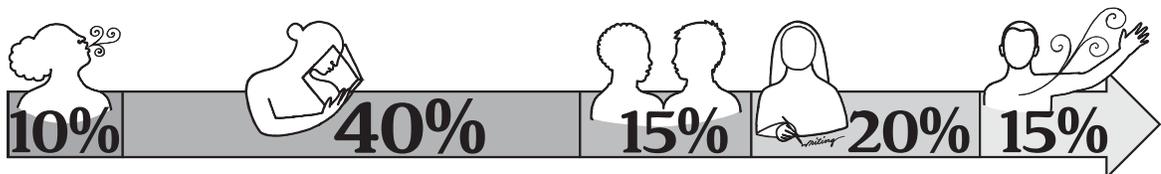
contradicting (p. 66):
adj., a word that implies
something is both true and
false

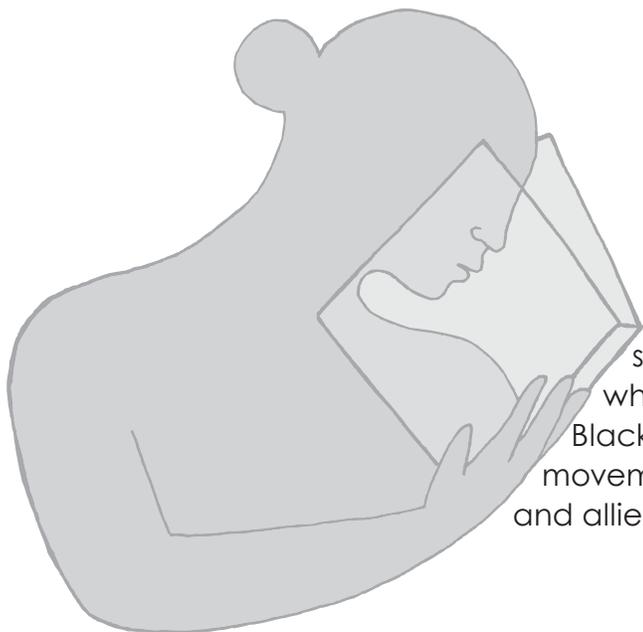
Today's Theme

In today's reading session, Jerome is processing a lot of **anger**. Students may have heard from the adults in their lives that anger is not a useful emotion for bringing about change—a calm head, and a peaceful demeanor are more valued. However, Jerome and his family have a lot to be angry about. As Jerome processes his anger, he becomes aware of the many ways that racial injustice has shaped his life and his death. Ask your students: What do you do when you feel angry? How do you process and cope with this feeling? How can anger be a catalyst for positive change?

Session 2 Recap

Jerome watches as his family reacts to his death: his sister reads, his father yells angrily, and his mother cries. His grandma is the only one who seems to sense Jerome's continued presence. Jerome meets another ghost, an unnamed boy, who tries to offer him some comfort. The story flashes back to describe the day Jerome met Carlos. Both Carlos and Jerome were easy targets for the bullies in their class. Jerome shows Carlos the best hiding spot in the school, but they are still found by Mike, Eddie, and Snap. In the fight that ensues, Carlos pulls out a gun.



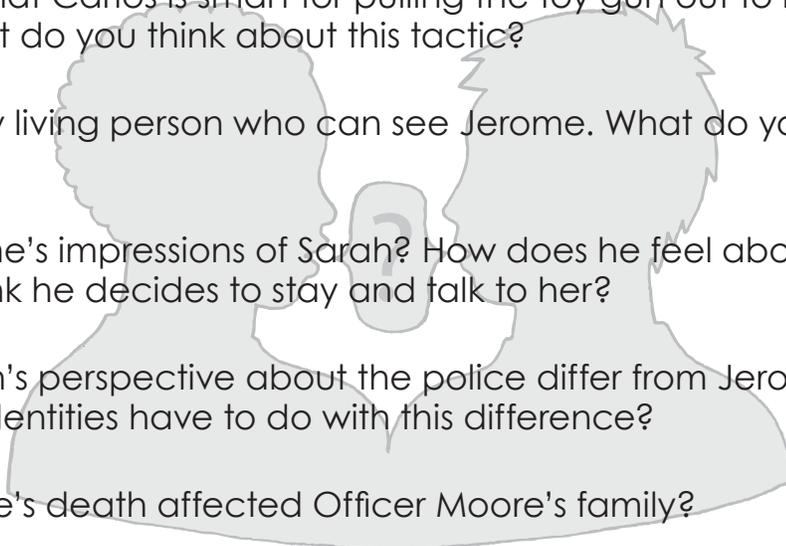


During Reading

Black Lives Matter (pg. 52): Someone in the courtroom shouts “Black lives matter!” in support of Jerome and in memory of the other boys who have lost their lives to racial violence. The phrase Black Lives Matter can refer to both the social justice movement and the rallying cry of many Black people and allies fighting for justice.

Discussion Questions

- What is the purpose of the preliminary hearing?
- How does Officer Moore describe Jerome? What do you think about this?
- Do you think it matters if Officer Moore is sorry? Why or why not?
- Jerome thinks that Carlos is smart for pulling the toy gun out to intimidate the bullies. What do you think about this tactic?
- Sarah is the only living person who can see Jerome. What do you think this means?
- What are Jerome's impressions of Sarah? How does he feel about her? Why do you think he decides to stay and talk to her?
- How does Sarah's perspective about the police differ from Jerome's? What do their identities have to do with this difference?
- How has Jerome's death affected Officer Moore's family?
- Sarah says that some people shout at her for what her dad did. Do you think she deserves that?



ANGER

- Jerome is angry. He is angry that his life was brought to such an early and violent end. He is angry that he is powerless to comfort his family in their grief. He is angry that Officer Moore lies at the preliminary hearing. And he is angry at Sarah because of her privilege, and her defense of her father's unjust actions.

Write about a time when you felt angry about injustice.

- » What happened to make you feel so angry? What was so unjust?
- » How did you respond to this feeling? What did you do about this injustice?
- » How can anger fuel us to make positive change in our lives and communities?

PERSPECTIVE

- At the end of today's reading, Sarah confronts her father about Jerome's death, asking him if it's true that Jerome was the same age and same height as her. Her father slams the door before she can ask if he made a mistake.

How has meeting Jerome begun to impact Sarah's perspective on what happened?

- » What must it have felt like for Sarah to confront her father about what happened?
- » What are the differences Sarah has seen between Officer Moore's story and Jerome's?
- » Jerome tells Sarah that his death was not a mistake, that Officer Moore killed him on purpose. Why does Jerome feel this way? What do you think about this?

Checkpoint

- Students should start each journal entry by clearly introducing the topic of their writing.
 - » Construct a focused topic sentence.
 - » For example, "Today, I am going to write about _____."

Extension Activity

In today's activity, students should scan through the text, and select three meaningful quotes from the story so far, writing a paragraph describing what each quote means, and how it relates to the themes of the novel.

Handout:

- » Quote Connector

Name: _____

Quote:

What this quote means to me:

Quote:

What this quote means to me:

Quote:

What this quote means to me:

Scan through the parts of the story you've read so far, and select three meaningful quotes from the text. Then, describe what each quote means to you, and how it relates to the book.

Quote Connector

Session 4

pages 75-103

Vocabulary

murmuring (pg. 77): v., making a half-suppressed or muttered complaint

slyly (pg. 79): adv., sneakily

taut (pg. 79): adj., tight

pityingly (pg. 93): adv., expressing sympathetic sorrow for one's suffering

quizzical (pg. 94): adj., mildly teasing or mocking

cloaking (pg. 95): v., enveloping or concealing

slayed (pg. 100): v., killed violently, wantonly, or in great numbers

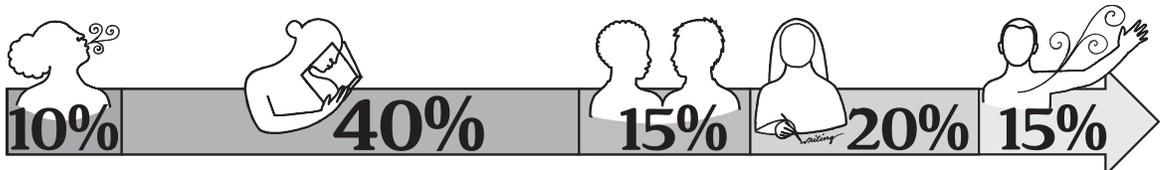
paralysis (pg. 102): n., a state of powerlessness or incapacity to act

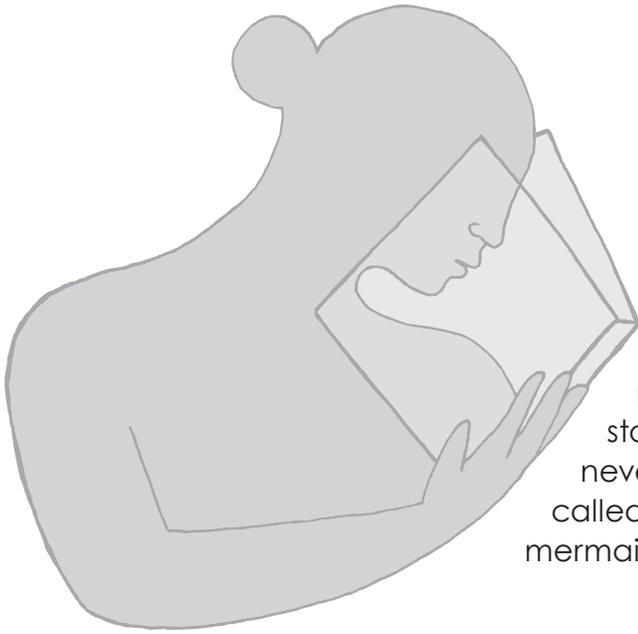
Today's Theme

The theme of today's reading is **racial trauma**: the stressful impact and emotional pain caused by racism and discrimination. Jerome and his family are struggling with the devastating impacts of racial trauma on their lives; the author uses Jerome's story to illustrate the widespread racial trauma that impacts the Black community. Ask students to consider how racial trauma has shown up throughout the story so far. What are some examples of ways that racial trauma impacts their own community and our nation?

Session 3 Recap

The story fast-forwards to the start of the preliminary hearing, where the court decides whether there is enough evidence to charge Officer Moore with a crime. Officer Moore speaks on the stand and says that he thought 12-year-old Jerome was a full-grown man and that he felt threatened. Officer Moore's daughter, Sarah, is in the courtroom during this testimony. She discovers that she can see Jerome, and later, Jerome visits her. Neither understands why Sarah can see Jerome, but they both figure it must be significant. Jerome makes notes about the differences between his life and Sarah's—how she has certain comforts and advantages that his family did not. Sarah struggles with wanting to support and be loyal to her father, yet feels confused about the inconsistencies in his story. For instance, though her father said Jerome was the size of a grown man, Sarah can see that he is no taller than she is. Jerome is angry with Sarah for her privilege and her defense of her father's unjust actions.

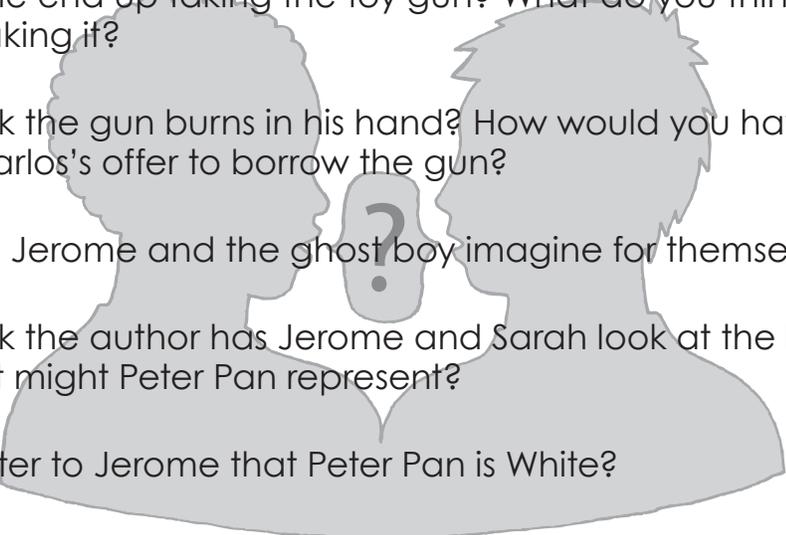




During Reading

Peter Pan (pg. 91): Peter Pan is a character created by J. M. Barrie, a Scottish novelist, who has appeared in many books, stories, movies, and plays. Peter is a boy who never grows up and lives in a magical place called Neverland, where he engages with fairies, mermaids, pirates, and more.

Discussion Questions

- 
- A stylized, grey-toned illustration of two people's heads and shoulders in profile, facing each other as if in conversation. A large question mark is positioned between their heads, symbolizing a question or discussion.
- Why does Jerome end up taking the toy gun? What do you think about his reasons for taking it?
 - Why do you think the gun burns in his hand? How would you have responded to Carlos's offer to borrow the gun?
 - What futures did Jerome and the ghost boy imagine for themselves?
 - Why do you think the author has Jerome and Sarah look at the book *Peter Pan*? What might Peter Pan represent?
 - Why does it matter to Jerome that Peter Pan is White?
 - What did you think of the army of ghost boys?
 - What do we learn about the ghost boy who has been following Jerome around? Why does Jerome describe Emmett as “dumber, stupider” than he is (pg. 97)?
 - Why does Emmett tell Jerome that it matters that Sarah can see him?
 - How do you think Jerome is supposed to help Sarah?

GHOST BOYS

- An army of ghost boys reveal themselves to Jerome and Sarah: "A shadow. Then, another. And another. Another and another. Hundreds, thousands of ghost boys standing, ever still, looking up, through the window into our souls" (pg. 95).

Who are the ghost boys? What do they represent?

- » How does Sarah respond to seeing them?
- » How does Jerome react?
- » How did this scene make you feel?

CHANGE

- Sarah is struggling with conflicting feelings about her father's actions, and her interactions with Jerome and Emmett Till have begun to change her perspective. Emmett says, "Sarah can change. She's changing" (pg. 94).

Describe the ways that Sarah has changed throughout the first hundred pages of the novel.

- » How do her relationships with Jerome and Emmett affect her perspective?
- » What do you think is going to happen with Sarah's relationship with her father?
- » How do you feel about Sarah's character?

writing

Extension Activity

The midpoint review is designed to gauge student comprehension to date. **Handout:**
Answer Key on pg. 67

- » Midpoint Review

Name: _____

#1 Why does Carlos move to Chicago?
A. His dad got a promotion at his job.
B. He moved in with his grandma.
C. His mother used to live in Chicago.
D. His parents loved the city.

#2 What were Jerome's fantasy future jobs?
A. Electrician or basketball player
B. Sanitation worker or baseball player
C. Business manager or baseball player
D. President or basketball player

#3 How was Jerome's life impacted by bullying?

#4 What is the purpose of the preliminary hearing?

#5 Why does Officer Moore say he had "no choice" but to shoot Jerome?

Complete the *Ghost Boys* review to reflect on what we have read so far in the story.

Midpoint Review

Session 5

pages 105-127

Vocabulary

recess (pg. 105): n., a break in a session or court proceeding

skitters (pg. 108): v., moves in a jittery or jerky way

bleak (pg. 109): adj., without much hope

yearning (pg. 109): n., tender or urgent longing

credibility (pg. 112): n., the quality or power of inspiring belief

unconscionable (pg. 123): adj., shockingly unfair or unjust

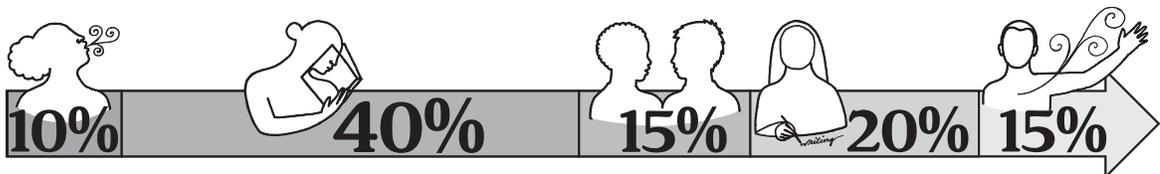
hover (pg. 126): v., linger close by

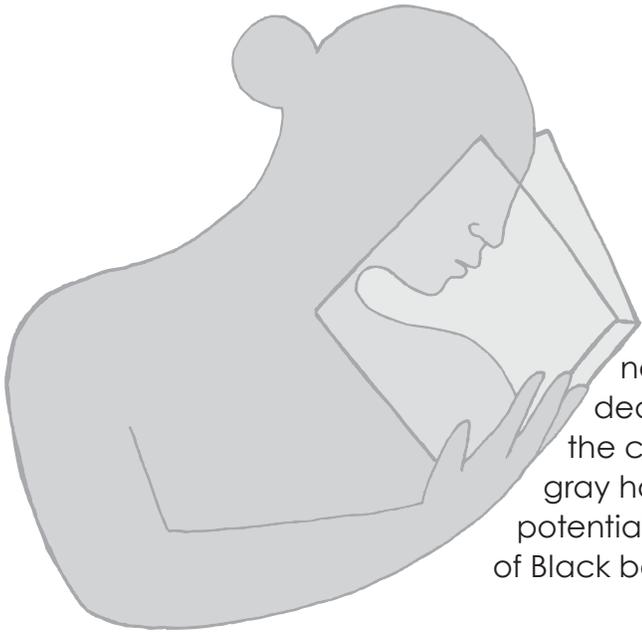
Today's Theme

Today's theme is **social awareness**. Sarah engages in a learning process, taking it upon herself to develop greater awareness about police brutality and how it has impacted the Black community. Sarah doesn't wait for an adult to teach her about these important topics — she asks questions and uses the resources available to her to learn more. Talk with your students about the kinds of injustices they would like to learn more about. What can they do to take charge of their own learning and better understand an important social justice issue?

Session 4 Recap

Carlos gives his toy gun to Jerome, even though Kim disapproves and Jerome knows his parents and grandma would also disapprove. Carlos convinces Jerome that taking the gun is a way to have fun and be carefree in a way Jerome does not often experience. Months later, during the preliminary hearing, Officer Moore testifies that Jerome was big and threatening, and the prosecutor points out that Jerome was only five feet tall and 90 pounds. When Jerome visits Sarah, she admits that her father is on paid leave and asserts how hard this has been on her family. Jerome thinks that it would have been nice for his family to have some version of paid leave. The ghost boy who has been following Jerome reveals himself to be Emmett Till. He explains that he died in the 1950s, and then he shows Jerome and Sarah the thousands of other ghost boys in Chicago. They are both shocked.





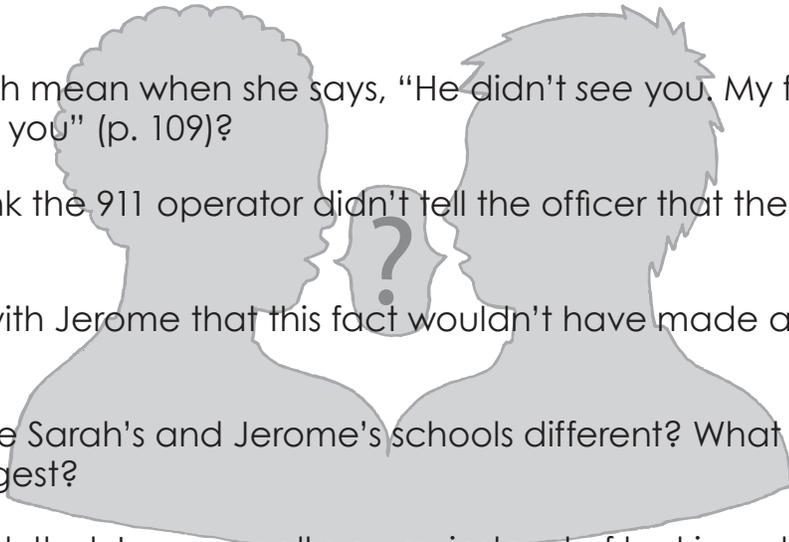
During Reading

“He’s graceful. Fly, hip. Wearing a gray hoodie.” (pg.

120): This is a reference to Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old Black boy who was killed in 2012 by a man who claimed he was defending his neighborhood from “suspicious” people. Trayvon’s death and the acquittal of his killer ultimately led to the creation of the Black Lives Matter movement. His gray hoodie, which was used to suggest that he was a potential criminal, became a symbol of the criminalization of Black boys.

Discussion Questions

- What was it like to learn the details of Jerome’s death? How did it feel to read this scene?
- Why does Jerome say “it’s awful being talked about” (pg. 105)? Can you relate?
- How was the experience of watching the video different for Jerome and Sarah? How was it similar?
- Why does Jerome consider Sarah “forever changed” after she watches the video?
- What does Sarah mean when she says, “He didn’t see you. My father didn’t really see you” (p. 109)?
- Why do you think the 911 operator didn’t tell the officer that the gun was a toy?
- Do you agree with Jerome that this fact wouldn’t have made a difference?
- In what ways are Sarah’s and Jerome’s schools different? What do these differences suggest?
- Why do you think that Jerome walks away instead of looking at the picture of Emmett in his casket? What would you have done?
- What do you think about Carlos helping out Jerome’s family?



PREDICTION

- In today's reading, we witness the video of Jerome's death and listen to the court proceedings in his case, including testimony from the 911 operator and Officer Moore.

Make a prediction. What do you think is going to happen in Jerome's case?

- » What inconsistencies have you heard in Officer Moore's testimony?
- » What questions would you ask Officer Moore if you were the prosecuting attorney?
- » Do you think Officer Moore will be held accountable?

LIGHT A CANDLE

- Sarah decides that she needs to educate herself about the circumstances that led to Jerome's and Emmett's deaths. Her process begins by watching the video of Jerome's shooting; she then turns to Ms. Penny, who is initially reluctant to share the photo of Emmett Till in his casket. But, after giving it some thought, Ms. Penny says that it's "better to light a candle than curse the darkness" (pg. 117).

What does Ms. Penny's quote mean? How is this quote connected to the stories of Emmett, Jerome, and Sarah?

- » Do you think 7th grade is too early to learn about the gruesome realities of racial violence in America? Why or why not?
- » When do you think this information should be taught? How do you think it should be taught?
- » Why do you think this part of American history isn't taught consistently in schools? What are the impacts of this "darkness"?

Checkpoint

• Students should end journal entries with a concluding sentence that follows from the main idea or opinion presented.

- » Student writing should focus on a central idea, and this idea should be clearly referenced not only in a topic sentence, but also at the conclusion of the writing passage.
- » For example, "In conclusion, I think that _____."

Extension Activity

Today's reading includes detailed accounts of the preliminary trial of Officer Moore. This activity asks students to put themselves in Jerome's shoes and imagine what it must feel like to be in the courtroom as Officer Moore's victim.

Handout:

- » Empathetic Imagination

Name: _____

Things you can see

Things you can touch or feel

Things you can hear

The Preliminary Hearing

Things you can taste

Things you can smell

Emotions in the story

Draw or write about what you imagine it's like for Jerome to witness the preliminary hearing.

Today's reading includes detailed accounts of the preliminary trial of Officer Moore. This activity gives you an opportunity to put yourself in Jerome's shoes and imagine what it must feel like to be in the courtroom as Officer Moore's victim.

Empathetic Imagination

Session 6

pages 129-147

Vocabulary

roam (pg. 133): v., wander, walk around without a set destination

tempered (pg. 138): adj., treated so as to impart increased strength

sentry (pg. 139): n., a soldier standing guard at a point of passage

truce (pg. 141): n., an agreement not to fight

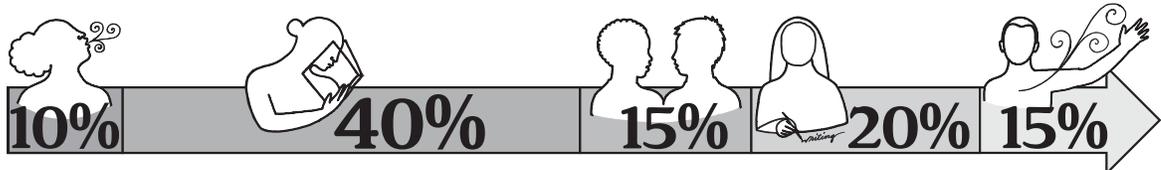
somber (pg. 143): adj., dark or serious

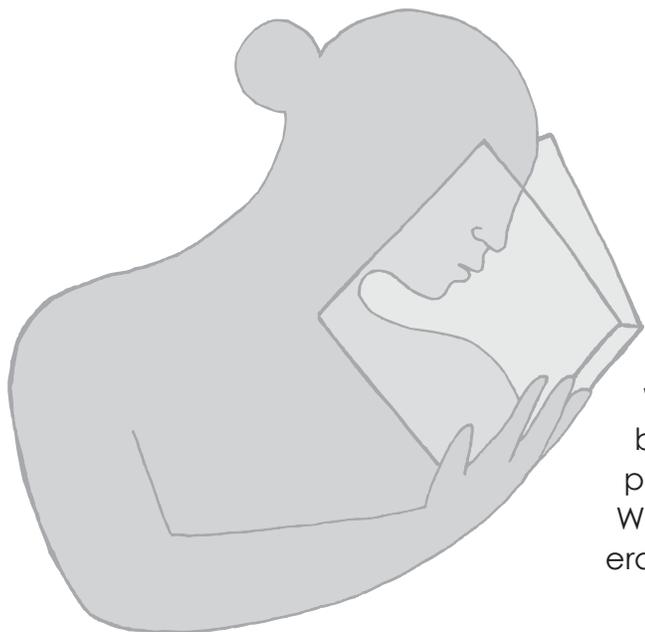
Today's Themes

The themes of today's session are **justice** and **accountability**. In today's reading, we learn the outcome of Officer Moore's preliminary hearing, a process which Jerome has been watching progress since his death. Ask students: What is justice? What does it mean to be accountable for one's actions? Do you think Officer Moore will be held accountable for his actions? What would justice for Jerome look like?

Session 5 Recap

On a day when the court takes a recess, Jerome stays with Sarah because it is the least stressful place for him to be. He and Sarah find the video footage of Jerome's murder. Sarah is appalled to see what happened: she's so affected by it that she decides to talk to her librarian, Ms. Penny, to find out more. At first, Ms. Penny is concerned that Sarah is too young to learn about Emmett Till and the history of racial violence in America. However, after she thinks about it more, she decides to show Sarah the infamous picture of Emmett Till's brutalized body. Jerome peeks in on Carlos, who walks Kim home from school every day. Jerome is pleased to find that Carlos treats Kim and Jerome's grandma like they are family.





During Reading

manslaughter (pg. 138): the unlawful killing of a human being without express or implied malice

KKK (pg. 147): The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is a White supremacist organization that believes White people are an elite race. The KKK has been responsible for violent actions against Black people and other people of color for decades. While they are most associated with the Jim Crow era, the KKK is still a practicing hate group today.

Discussion Questions

-
- A stylized, grey-toned illustration of two people's heads and shoulders in profile, facing each other as if in conversation. A large question mark is positioned between them.
- How does it feel for Jerome to witness his family's continued mourning?
 - What does Jerome mean when he says that the answer to the question "Why did you shoot?" "unlocks the universe" (pg. 131)?
 - Can you relate to Jerome's wish that he'd "known the world was so much bigger and better than [his] neighborhood" (pg. 134)?
 - What is the verdict in the preliminary hearing? How do you feel about this?
 - What do you think happened between Carlos's and the bullies? Did their truce surprise you?
 - What does Carlos have to tell Jerome's grandma? How do you imagine he is feeling?
 - How do you think Jerome's grandma will respond to Carlos' confession?
 - What kind of stories does Jerome describe on pg. 145? Do you agree that these stories are important? Why?
 - What does Jerome mean when he says, "I understand now. Everything isn't all about me" (pg. 147)?

TRUTH

- Jerome deduces that the preliminary hearing was, in some ways, about perspective. Officer Moore's perspective, the perspective shown by the video, and the perspective of the law all play a role in the outcome of the trial. When the judge decides there is not enough evidence to charge Officer Moore with a crime, Jerome comments that his version of the truth is different than Officer Moore's. He wonders, "When truth's a feeling, can it be both? Both true and untrue?" (pg. 132)

What do you think about Jerome's quote? Do you think that truth is a feeling? Can a feeling be untrue?

- » What led to the results of the trial? Was this process guided by the truth?
- » How do you feel about the trial's outcome?
- » What do you think would've been an outcome based on truth and justice? What could have gone differently to get to this outcome?

GHOST BOYS

- It is both comforting and eerie for Jerome to be surrounded by all of the ghost boys. Jerome continues to wonder why he and the other ghost boys are there — not alive, but also not passing on.

Why do you think that Jerome and the other ghost boys remain in the world of the living?

- » Why are these boys stuck here? What are they here to do?
- » What are they trying to learn?
- » What do you think it will take for them to finally be able to move on?

Extension Activity

Today's activity asks students to make meaning of all they've learned through their reading thus far, including Jerome's narrative and the testimony at the preliminary hearing, and use their analysis to write a newspaper headline and story about what really happened to Jerome.

Handout:

- » Rewrite the Headline

Volume 12, No. 179

THE GHOST BOYS

50¢

TITLE OF YOUR NEWSPAPER

THE GHOST BOYS

INSIDE

Sports | pg. 4

| pg.

| pg.

OTHER HEADLINES

HEADLINE (make sure it's catchy!)



photo by

photo caption

by

Multiple horizontal lines for writing the article text.

Look back at the newspaper headline that opens the book on pg. 5 and consider all that you have learned from Jerome and the preliminary hearing. Rewrite the headline and story that you think people really need to read to understand what happened to Jerome.

Rewrite the Headline

Session 7

pages 149-176

Vocabulary

scornful (pg. 154): adj., disrespectful

petrified (pg. 157): adj., terrified

menace (pg. 160): n., threat

keens (pg. 160): v., utters with a loud wailing voice or wordless cry

listless (pg. 163): adj., characterized by lack of interest, energy, or spirit

vacant (pg. 163): adj., empty

billows (pg. 165): v., rises or rolls in waves or surges

sable (pg. 167): adj., black

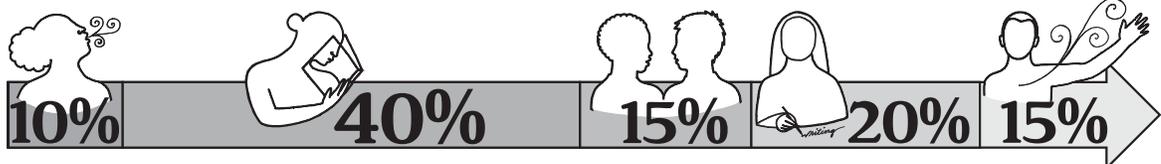
Today's Theme

Today's theme is **bearing witness**. In this session, Emmett finally shares his story, impacting both Jerome and the novel's readers with the tragic, graphic, and unjust details of his death at a very young age. Carlos also finally has the opportunity to share the story he's been holding onto; Carlos' father and Jerome's grandma listen open-heartedly. Part of building a more empathetic, connected community is holding space for others' stories, bearing witness to their pain, their joy, and their feelings. Have your students consider why it's important to "bear witness." Ask your students: who do they turn to when they have a story they need to tell? How do they show up for the people in their lives and offer them the opportunity to share their stories?

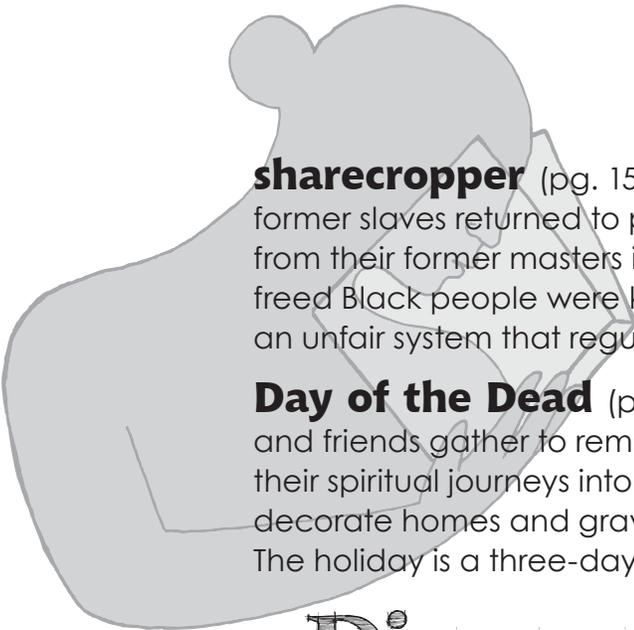
Note: Pages 157-160 in the text detail the graphic murder of Emmett Till; these pages are very difficult to read. Please refer to the Social and Emotional topics section of this teacher's guide for more support.

Session 6 Recap

At the preliminary hearing, the prosecutor says for the first time that Jerome was shot in the back, which contradicts Officer Moore's story that Jerome was threatening him. Jerome talks about how it feels to roam through Chicago. As a ghost, he spends his day moving through neighborhoods and spaces he never had access to before. He wonders about how his life would have been different if he lived in a neighborhood like Sarah's or if he had been able to see much of the beauty in Chicago instead of just his own neighborhood. The preliminary hearing concludes with the judge's verdict — that there is not enough evidence to charge Officer Moore with a crime. Jerome watches his family move on, and he begins to talk about the importance of everyone, including the ghost boys, sharing their stories.



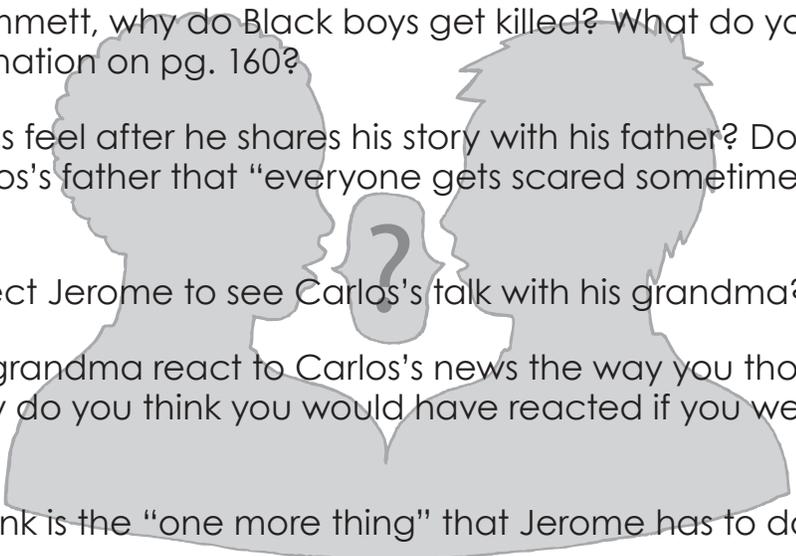
During Reading



sharecropper (pg. 150): After the Civil War and emancipation, many former slaves returned to plantations and rented out land and equipment from their former masters in order to make a living by farming. These newly freed Black people were known as sharecroppers, and they were caught in an unfair system that regularly took more money than it gave.

Day of the Dead (pg. 170): This Mexican holiday is a time when family and friends gather to remember loved ones who have died and support their spiritual journeys into the afterlife. Families will often create altars, decorate homes and graves with marigolds, and bring gifts to the graves. The holiday is a three-day long celebration that begins on Halloween.

Discussion Questions

- 
- What did we learn in today's reading about Emmett's story? How did it make you feel?
 - Did you know about Emmett's story already, or was this the first time you had heard about him?
 - Why do you think Emmett waited for Jerome to be "ready" to bear witness to the events that ended his life?
 - How does Emmett's story reveal the ugly realities of racism in Emmett's time?
 - According to Emmett, why do Black boys get killed? What do you think about his explanation on pg. 160?
 - How does Carlos feel after he shares his story with his father? Do you agree with Carlos's father that "everyone gets scared sometimes" (pg. 169)?
 - How does it affect Jerome to see Carlos's talk with his grandma?
 - Does Jerome's grandma react to Carlos's news the way you thought she would? How do you think you would have reacted if you were in her shoes?
 - What do you think is the "one more thing" that Jerome has to do before he is gone?

BEARING WITNESS

- Emmett asks Jerome to bear witness—both to his story and to the stories of the other ghost boys. He shares, “Everyone needs their story heard. Felt. We honor each other. Connect across time” (pg. 161).

How did it impact Jerome to bear witness to Emmett's story?

- » What do you think about Emmett's quote? Do we all have stories that need to be heard?
- » How does holding space for each other's stories help us connect more deeply?
- » How did it impact you to read Emmett's story?

CARLOS

- With the support of Kim and his father, Carlos finally tells Jerome's grandma what really happened on the day that Jerome was killed.

How does it feel to Carlos to open up and share the guilt and shame he has been feeling about his role in Jerome's death?

- » What makes it so hard to open up about things that we regret or feel ashamed of?
- » What do you think about how Jerome's grandma responds?
- » Can you relate to Carlos? What is something you've done that you would like to make peace with?

Checkpoint

- Student writing should include details that describe actions, thoughts, and feelings.

- » Students should convey a clear understanding of the character, both through describing their actions and their internal state.
- » For example, “When the character said _____, she seemed to be feeling _____.”

Extension Activity

By this point, you and your students have met many of the characters in Ghost Boys whose stories intersect with Jerome's. Each character is very different, with a distinct identity, personality, and background. Today's activity allows students to think through how four of these characters have been represented throughout the text.

Handout:

- » Character Analysis

Name: _____

Sarah

How would you describe this character?

What effect does this character have on the story? How do they impact our main character?

Select a quote from the text that illustrates something important about this character.

Emmett

How would you describe this character?

What effect does this character have on the story? How do they impact our main character?

Select a quote from the text that illustrates something important about this character.

Carlos

How would you describe this character?

What effect does this character have on the story? How do they impact our main character?

Select a quote from the text that illustrates something important about this character.

Grandma

How would you describe this character?

What effect does this character have on the story? How do they impact our main character?

Select a quote from the text that illustrates something important about this character.

We have been introduced to a number of characters that all intersect with Jerome and his story. Each character has a distinct personality, allowing them a unique presence in the book. In today's activity, you will think through how four of these characters have been represented throughout the text.

Character Analysis

Session 8

pages 177-203

Vocabulary

quivering (pg. 184): v., shaking

contorting (pg. 186): v., twisting into a different shape

wisps (pg. 190): n., thin strips or fragments

evade (pg. 196): v., avoid

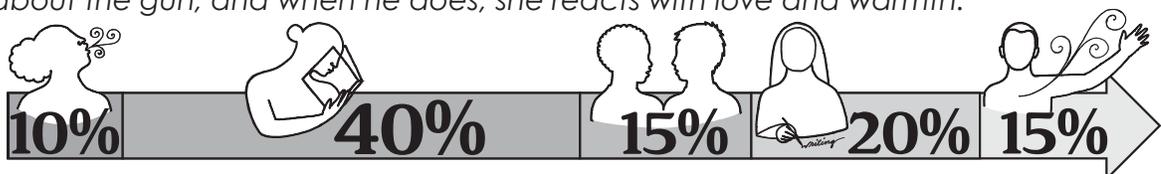
Today's Themes

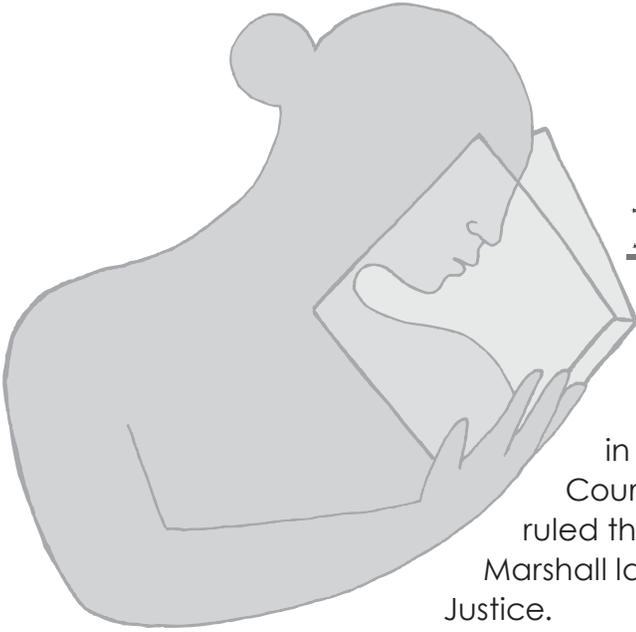
Today's themes are **empathy** and **growth**. Empathy is the ability to deeply understand another's perspective and experience—a theme we've seen developed throughout the novel. As we come to the end of the story, reflect on the ways that the characters have grown and changed, often inspired by the empathy they feel for others. Ask your students to consider how characters like Jerome and Sarah have grown throughout the text. In what ways have they changed? How has empathy supported their evolution and development? As students reflect on the book's characters, have them think about the ways in which their own perspectives have shifted and grown as they've learned about other people's experiences and circumstances.

Note: The author includes an afterword for readers on pages 205-210. These additional pages will support students to make deeper meaning of the themes of the novel; please encourage students to explore the afterword as part of their reading.

Session 7 Recap

Emmett finally shares his story with Jerome. He describes how he left his Chicago home to visit family in Mississippi. Even though his cousins warned him about how to behave around White people, Emmett behaved as he would at home in Chicago: In a store, he placed money in a White woman's hand and said goodbye to her. He thought everything was fine until the woman's husband and some other men came at night and took Emmett away. They brutally murdered him and mutilated his body. The story then shifts to focus on Carlos. Carlos finally opens up to his father, explaining how he feels guilty because he gave Jerome the toy gun. Carlos's father helps him unpack those emotions. Then, Carlos feels ready to tell Jerome's grandma about the gun, and when he does, she reacts with love and warmth.





During Reading

Thurgood Marshall (pg. 191):

A famous civil rights attorney, Marshall became nationally known when he helped end school segregation as a lawyer in the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case. In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that schools could not be separate and equal. Marshall later became the first Black Supreme Court Justice.

Discussion Questions

-
- A stylized, grey-toned illustration of two people's heads in profile, facing each other as if in conversation. A large question mark is positioned between them, overlapping their faces.
- Why is this chapter called "Silence"? Can you find a double meaning in the title?
 - Why does Sarah start the website about Jerome? Do you think a webpage can "make change" (pg. 178)?
 - Jerome tells Sarah that her dad made a mistake. Do you believe it was a mistake and do you think he deserves forgiveness?
 - Do you think Sarah did the right thing in reaching out to her dad? Why or why not?
 - What did Jerome need to see and hear from Sarah and her dad?
 - Why does the narrator sign the last words "Ghost boy" and not Jerome? What does this say about his character?
 - What do you think about Jerome's last words?
 - What do you think about the author's choice to tell the story from the perspective of a ghost? Did you like the way the story went back and forth in time?
 - How do you feel about how the book ended?

CHANGE

- Jerome shares, "I realize ghost boys, thousands of ghost boys, are trying to change the world. That's why we haven't said goodbye. Why we aren't really gone" (pg. 190).

What would it take to create a world where there are no more ghost boys?

- » How has witnessing the evolution of the characters impacted your thoughts about our ability to build this kind of world?
- » Do you think that this book, and others like it, can make a difference and change the world for the better?
- » What can you do in your own life to make the world more just and inclusive?

REFLECTION

- We've just finished reading *Ghost Boys*, which digs under the surface of a violent, tragic incident, allowing readers to see how racism has shaped the lives and experiences of Black boys across generations.

What lessons have you taken from reading Jerome's story?

- » What did you learn by getting to know Jerome? How does reading from his perspective impact your feelings about police brutality and the fight for racial justice?
- » What did you learn by watching Sarah's evolution as a character? What does Sarah's story tell us about how to increase awareness and understanding about the impacts of racism?
- » How did reading this book help you better understand personal and systemic racism?

Extension Activity

This quiz is intended to review basic events and concepts in the book to be sure students understand the novel's plot. **Handout:** » Final Review

Answer Key on pg. 67

Name: _____

#1

Where did Emmett Till go to visit family the summer he was killed?

- A. Georgia
- B. Pennsylvania
- C. Illinois
- D. Mississippi

#2

What holiday do Carlos's and Jerome's families celebrate together?

- A. Christmas
- B. Easter
- C. New Year's Day
- D. Day of the Dead

#3

Who does Sarah turn to when she wants to learn more about Emmett Till?

- A. Ms. Penny
- B. Jerome's grandma
- C. Jerome
- D. Her mother

#4

What information does Carlos finally share with Jerome's grandma? How does Grandma respond?

#5

What was the verdict in the preliminary hearing?

#6

What is Jerome's call to action in his final words?

Great job on finishing the book! Please answer these questions to the best of your ability.

Final Review

Session 9

Final Essay

Topic #1

- Jerome tells Sarah, "You were right. It matters, you seeing me. Me, seeing you. Sharing my story." Sarah replies, "If people know more about other people, maybe they won't be scared" (pg. 181). Jerome and Sarah are talking about empathy — the ability to deeply understand someone else's feelings and perspective.

What does the relationship between Jerome and Sarah teach us about empathy?

- » Why do you think the author chose to have Sarah be the only living person who can see Jerome? What is so important about the connection between these two characters?
- » How does the empathy Sarah develops for Jerome drive her self-growth and developing awareness of racial injustice?
- » How did this book, and the empathy you developed for Jerome and Emmett, impact your understanding about the long legacy of ghost boys?
- » How does "bearing witness" to the stories of Emmett, Jerome, and the other ghost boys inspire you to stand up for change and ensure their stories are not forgotten?

Topic #2

- In the author's afterword, Jewell Parker Rhodes shares her goal in writing this novel: "My hope is that parents and teachers will read *Ghost Boys* with their children and students, and discuss racial prejudices and tensions that still haunt America. Through discussion, awareness, and societal and civic action, I hope our youth will be able to dismantle personal and systemic racism" (pg. 206).

What did *Ghost Boys* teach you about the history of racism and racial violence in America?

- » Write about the parallels you see between the book and this moment in American history, when so many people are stepping forward to demand an end to police brutality. What racial prejudices and tensions do you think still "haunt America"?
- » What do the characters in the story do to fight systemic racism? What can we learn from their developing awareness and actions to build a more just and inclusive world?
- » What can you do to stand up to personal and systemic racism in your community?

Appendix

Additional Activities

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Name: _____

Bun — Introduction: Your main argument
Introduces the topic to the reader

Thesis Word Bank

In my opinion
In my view
From my perspective
To me
I think
I believe
I feel

Examples Word Bank

For example
Such as
In other words
To illustrate
For instance

Tomato — Detail #1: Helps prove your argument

Lettuce — Detail #2: New detail

Showing Effect Word Bank

Therefore
As a result
For this reason
This shows that
This is important because
Thus
Consequently
The reason why

Patty — Detail #3: Final detail to prove your argument

Adding Information

Furthermore
In addition
Also / And
Moreover
Similarly
Likewise
As well as
What's more

Bun — Closing: Sums up main points; leaves reader with lasting impression

Conclusion Word Bank

To summarize
In conclusion
Lastly / Finally
To conclude with
As I have shown

Use this Hamburger Essay guide to create your own outline. Use the word banks to turn your hamburger outline into a full first draft.

Hamburger Essay

Name: _____

Paragraph 1: Main Point/Thesis:

Paragraph 2: Detail #1 & WHY this is important:

Paragraph 3: Detail #2 & WHY this is important:

Paragraph 4: Detail #3 & WHY this is important:

Paragraph 5: Conclusion:

Complete the essay graphic organizer to help put your thoughts into a structured essay.

Final Essay Outline

	6 Exemplary	5 Strong	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Beginning
Ideas & Content main theme, supporting details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptionally clear, focused, engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident main idea with some support that may be general or limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main idea may be cloudy because supporting detail is too general or even off-topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks central idea; development is minimal or non-existent
Organization structure, introduction, conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively organized in logical and creative manner Creative and engaging intro and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong order and structure Inviting intro and satisfying closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is appropriate, but conventional Attempt at introduction and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts at organization; may be a "list" of events Beginning and ending not developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of structure; disorganized and hard to follow Missing or weak intro and conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coherence; confusing No identifiable introduction or conclusion
Voice personality, sense of audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressive, engaging, sincere Strong sense of audience Shows emotion: humor, honesty, suspense, or life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate to audience and purpose Writer behind the words comes through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evident commitment to topic Inconsistent or dull personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice may be inappropriate or non-existent Writing may seem mechanical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing tends to be flat or stiff Little or no hint of writer behind words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is lifeless No hint of the writer
Word Choice precision, effectiveness, imagery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Precise, carefully chosen Strong, fresh, vivid images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Descriptive, broad range of words Word choice energizes writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language is functional and appropriate Descriptions may be overdone at times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words may be correct, but mundane No attempt at deliberate choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monotonous, often repetitious, sometimes inappropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited range of words Some vocabulary misused
Sentence Fluency rhythm, flow, variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High degree of craftsmanship Effective variation in sentence patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy flow and rhythm Good variety in length and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally in control Lacks variety in length and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some awkward constructions Many similar patterns and beginnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often choppy Monotonous sentence patterns Frequent run-on sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to follow or read aloud Disjointed, confusing, rambling
Conventions age-appropriate spelling, caps, punctuation, grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptionally strong control of standard conventions of writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong control of conventions; errors are few and minor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of most writing conventions; occasional errors with high risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited control of conventions; frequent errors do not interfere with understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent, significant errors may impede readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numerous errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read

Writing Checklist

Name: _____

Use the following checklist to revise your own writing, and to edit the writing of one of your peers. Place a checkmark (✓) in the box if you think the writing meets the standard.

Avoid these common errors!

- * All writing should be in the same verb tense
- * No "text message" writing such as: &, w/, b/c (Write the full word: and, with, because.)
- * They're = they are, there = place, their = possession

Ideas and Content	Self Edit	Peer Edit
The writing is clear and focused.		
The writing is supported with strong details.		
Organization		
The writing is effectively organized in a logical manner.		
There is a creative and engaging introduction and conclusion.		
Voice		
The writing is expressive and engaging.		
The writing shows personality: humor, honesty, etc.		
Word Choice		
The words used are precise and carefully chosen.		
The vocabulary used in the writing produces strong, fresh, vivid images.		
Sentence Fluency		
All sentences are complete and relate to the topic.		
Sentence patterns are varied effectively.		
Conventions		
Spelling is correct throughout the writing.		
Correct grammar is used throughout the writing.		
Correct punctuation is used throughout the writing.		

Select an entry from your journal to revise and edit. After selecting which journal entry you will be editing, use this checklist to revise your writing. Next, trade with a peer, and do a peer edit of their journal entry using the same checklist. After you receive edits back from your peer, write a final draft of your entry.

Editing Tool

Name: _____

Stages of Grief

- 1. Denial:** "This cannot be happening."
- 2. Anger:** "Why is this happening to me?"
- 3. Bargaining:** "I'll do anything to fix this."
- 4. Depression:** "Why should I go on?"
- 5. Acceptance:** "I'm going to be okay."
- 6. Healing:** "I am finding meaning and moving on."

It is normal for someone to go through these stages in a random order and return to previous stages.



Throughout the story, Jerome struggles to come to terms with his death, working through the stages of grief. In this activity, think about each of these six stages and locate a quote from the text that illustrates how Jerome handled this feeling.

Stages of Grief

Name: _____

Item Number	Item	Yes (0 points)	No (1 point)	Points (0 or 1)
1	When I go to the store, people believe that I am trustworthy and I will not steal something. People in the store do not follow me around.			
2	As a boy, I can play with dolls or as a girl, I can play with trucks without anyone questioning my choice.			
3	I can walk after dark in public places without fear. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in most public spaces.			
4	When I am taught about American history or about contributions made, I am sure that I will see and hear stories about people who look like me.			
5	The majority of the staff at my school look like me.			
6	My school has plenty of books in the library, computers for students, and additional resources for students and teachers.			
7	I will not be teased because of my last name.			
8	I am encouraged to excel in every subject in school.			
9	When a question about my race is asked, I am not the only one singled out to answer or speak my opinion.			
10	When I watch television, there are a lot of people in positive roles that look like me.			
11	My intelligence is not questioned because of the way I speak.			
12	Using public bathrooms and going up and down the stairs in public spaces are easy for me.			
		Total Points		

How did you feel about this activity? What emotions did you experience while responding to the prompts?

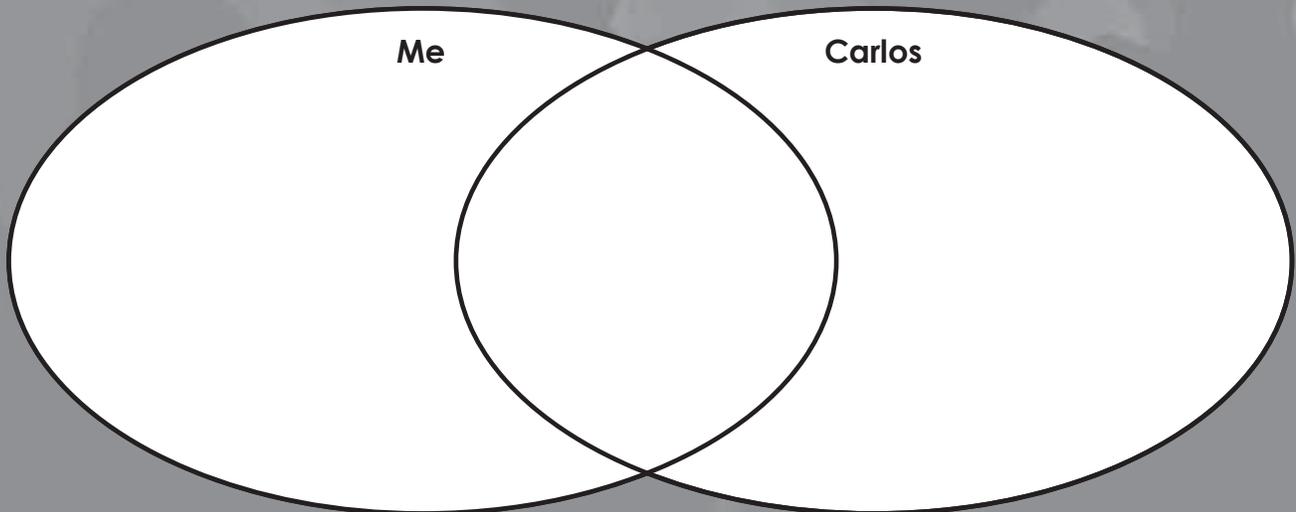
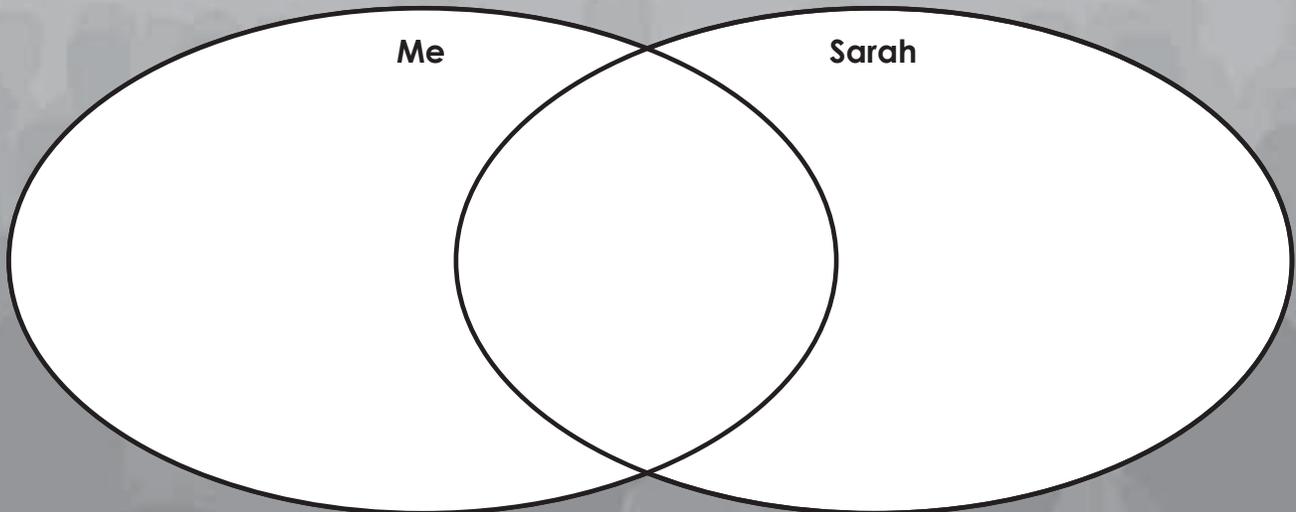
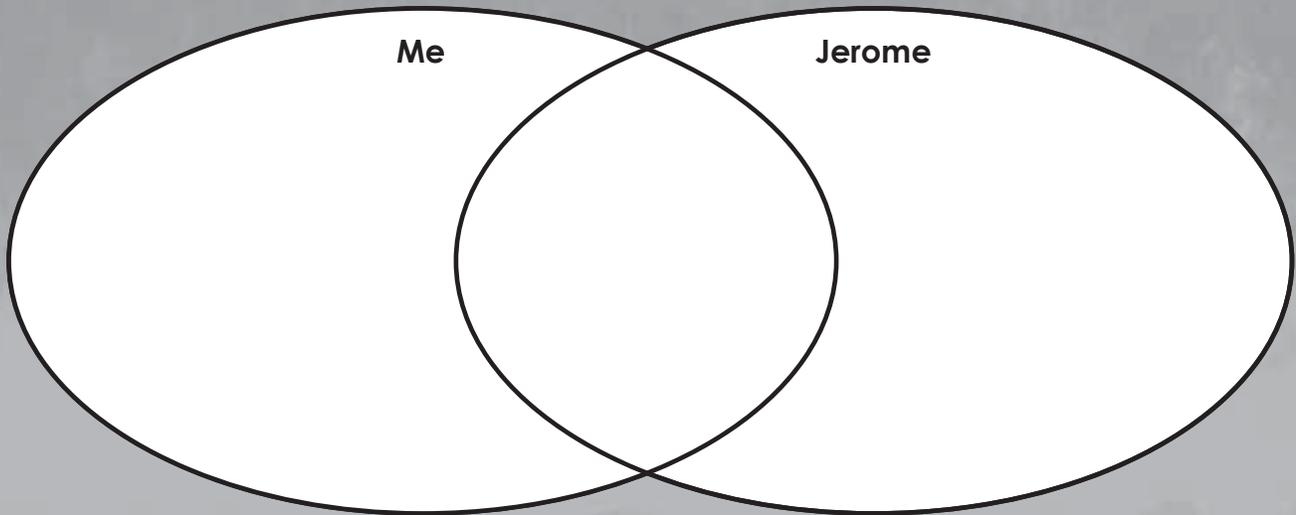
As you were reading the questions, can you think of other questions that should have been asked? Why do you think these questions should be included in a privilege survey?

How does your score compare to those of other students in your class? Why do you think the scores are different? What does this say about your own experiences with privilege?

Ghost Boys is about racism, and it is also about privilege. In this activity, you will have the opportunity to explore how privilege has impacted your own life and experience. Review the list of prompts; respond to each with a Yes or No, giving yourself a point for each Yes response, and adding up your point total after you've responded to all 12 prompts. Then, reflect on your experience by answering the guiding questions about the activity

Privilege

Name: _____



Take a moment to find commonality and recognize differences between your own life and three main characters from *Ghost Boys*. As you think about Jerome, Sarah, and Carlos, consider their personality traits, feelings, and actions. How are they like yours? How are they different?

Name: _____

Oscar Grant
Michael Brown
Philando Castile
Freddie Gray

Eric Garner
Tamir Rice
Sandra Bland
Alton Sterling

Breonna Taylor
George Floyd
Ahmaud Arbery
Or
select your own name

The person I chose is: _____

What I learned about their life and story:



Jewell Parker Rhodes was inspired to write this novel after 12-year-old Tamir Rice was shot and killed in 2014 by police in Cleveland, Ohio. *Ghost Boys* tells the story of Jerome, but also of the many generations of Black people who have lost their lives to racial violence. In the book, Sarah's dawning awareness of racial injustice inspires her to research and learn more about this history, and in particular, the life and death of Emmett Till. Today, you will do your own research and writing to reflect on the life of a victim of racial violence.

Say Their Name

Name: _____

In July 2013, George Zimmerman was acquitted of Trayvon Martin's murder. After hearing the news, activist Alicia Garza went on Facebook and wrote a love letter to Black people. At the end of her post, she wrote, "Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter." Her friend and fellow activist Patrisse Cullors responded to the love letter with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Opal Tometi, another activist, offered to create a platform for the hashtag on Facebook and Twitter. Together, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi founded the Black Lives Matter movement.

At first, the movement was mostly a hashtag. #BlackLivesMatter was a cry against violence against Black people. It was not successful at first. In fact, few people paid attention to #BlackLivesMatter until Michael Brown was killed by police in August 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri. After that, the hashtag went viral and protests in Ferguson sparked an uprising. The Black Lives Matter movement was now known across the nation.

When Black Lives Matter began, it focused on a critical social justice issue in the United States: rampant police brutality. For example, from 2007 to 2013, 80 percent of the people shot by the Philadelphia Police Department were Black, despite the fact that less than half of Philadelphia's population is Black. This example reveals the overwhelming disproportionality of police violence against Black people. Inciting further anger, very few police officers face consequences for these kinds of shootings. Because of these statistics and many more from around the country, the United Nations issued a statement condemning the United States for persistent police violence against African Americans. In addition to the United Nations, Palestinian organizations and Indigenous organizations in Canada have expressed their solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Today, Black Lives Matter is an organization that helps activists fight police violence and other forms of systemic racism in cities across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. In addition to their focus on ending police brutality, they have also taken up issues like voting rights and income inequality. While political protest is their primary form of action, the organization also uses art as a way to express their vision of a brighter future for Black people.

One of the most striking things about the Black Lives Matter movement is that it is truly inclusive. When Alicia, Patrisse, and Opal wrote the organization's mission statement, they said that queer, trans, disabled, and all other kinds of Black people matter too. This makes the Black Lives Matter movement different from racial justice movements at other points in history, like the civil rights movement, which often excluded women and gay people from visible leadership roles. In fact, many people attending protests today hold up signs that read, "All Black Lives Matter."

In recent years, Black Lives Matter has joined a network of other organizations working toward a more just and inclusive future, and they work together to bring racial justice to America.

Read this passage carefully, and answer the questions on the following page.

Expository Article: Black Lives Matter

Reading with Relevance Curriculum: Ghost Boys © 2020 Moving Forward Institute

Name: _____

1. Who started the Black Lives Matter movement?

2. How did the movement begin?

3. Organizations from which countries outside of the United States support the Black Lives Matter movement?

4. What is the primary racial justice issue that Black Lives Matter focuses on?

5. What sets Black Lives Matter apart from other prominent racial justice organizations of the past?

Please answer these questions based on the article.

Expository Article: Comprehension Questions

Name: _____

premonitions
perilous
superstition

preliminary
hysterical
slyly

taut
bleak
tangible

petrified
vacant
evade

1. Gerald closed the window to avoid looking at the _____ view with the gray, cloudy sky.
2. Throwing salt over your shoulder to get good luck is a kind of _____.
3. When Tali found out her dog died, she was _____.
4. In order to avoid Ms. Johnson seeing her, Molly _____ slid an important note across her desk.
5. During the busy Christmas holiday, it was hard for the Rodriguez family to find a hotel with a _____ room.
6. Amado knew he was in trouble when he saw his mother's _____ lips and hand on hip.
7. I have a _____ that something bad is going to happen today.
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

Fill in the blanks with the words from the word bank at the top. Write your own sentences for the words that did not fit in any of the blanks.

Name: _____

Midpoint Review

1. A
2. D
3. Jerome wanted to have some fun and feel powerful, so he accepted Carlos's toy gun for protection.
4. The purpose of the hearing is to decide whether there is enough evidence to charge the officer with a crime.
5. Officer Moore says Jerome was threatening to him and that he was large and scary.

Final Review

1. D
2. C
3. A
4. Carlos tells Jerome's grandma that he gave Jerome the gun, and Grandma responds with warmth and love.
5. The judge decided there was not enough evidence to charge Officer Moore with a crime.
6. Jerome asks that the living make the world different enough that stories like his no longer happen.

Expository Article: Extension Activity Questions

1. Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi started Black Lives Matter.
2. It started on social media as a Facebook post and a hashtag.
3. Organizations in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Palestine have all shown support for Black Lives Matter.
4. The main issue Black Lives Matter focuses on is police brutality.
5. Two answers are acceptable. 1) Black Lives Matter is different because it includes all Black people, including queer, trans, and disabled people. 2) Black Lives Matter is different because of its use of social media..

Vocabulary Fill In

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. bleak | 5. vacant | 9. Answers will vary |
| 2. superstition | 6. taut | 10. Answers will vary |
| 3. hysterical | 7. premonition | 11. Answers will vary |
| 4. slyly | 8. Answers will vary | 12. Answers will vary |

Name: _____

What is your opinion of *Ghost Boys*?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. This book was interesting and engaging to read.				
2. There was a character or situation in this book I could relate to.				
3. The vocabulary in the book was just right for me.				
4. The discussion questions helped me to understand what was happening in the plot.				
5. I was able to express my opinions and thoughts with the journal prompts.				

Reading the novel in this program helped me improve in:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My reading skills				
2. My writing skills				
3. My ability to plan and write an essay				
4. My ability to form connections between the plot and my own life				

Please complete this student evaluation about *Ghost Boys*.

What Did You Think?

Name: _____

What I liked the MOST about *Ghost Boys* was . . .

Blank response area for the most liked aspect of the book.

What I liked the LEAST about *Ghost Boys* was . . .

Blank response area for the least liked aspect of the book.

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Blank response area for the recommendation question.

Teacher Reflection

Were my instructional goals met? Are my students reading with increased fluency? Discussing reading with greater comprehension? Writing with more organized thoughts?

Were my students engaged with this reading program? Why or why not?

Did I make changes to the lesson structure in order to best meet my students' needs? What did I change, and why?

If I taught this curriculum again, what might I do differently?

What kind of support, resources, or training might have enhanced my teaching of this curriculum?

What outcomes from this program made me particularly proud?

Which student made the most progress throughout this program, and why did they do so well?

Did my students improve their ability to recognize and articulate their emotions and values?

We would love to hear your feedback about this curriculum! Please [complete this reflection online](#), or [email](#) your completed reflection to us. We'll use your thoughts to continually improve this teaching tool.



Our Story

We are a collective of progressive educators on a mission: sharing and scaling the program we've built for (and with!) our students over the last decade, to inspire relevant reading experiences, heartfelt conversations, and instructional breakthroughs in classrooms across the nation. We wrote *Reading with Relevance* because we couldn't find the tool we needed to effectively teach our students. Most of the young people in our classrooms not only came to us two to four years below their grade level, but also with very real social and emotional struggles that sometimes felt more important than school. We came to believe that meeting students' social and emotional needs was the key to unlocking their academic potential.

Reading with Relevance leverages student interest in highly engaging social and emotional learning activities to develop crucial academic skills: reading fluency, comprehension, and critical thinking. We turn barriers to learning into the very tools that accelerate literacy.

Training and Professional Development Services

While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula. Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services.

Contact Us

Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!

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Emeryville, CA 94608

Follow us on Twitter: [@RelevantReading](https://twitter.com/RelevantReading)

Please subscribe to our [newsletter!](#)

If your students liked *Ghost Boys* . . .

they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out [Harbor Me](#), [One Crazy Summer](#), and [The Hate U Give](#). Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula.

a tool to inspire change

This reading curriculum improves students' **literacy skills** and builds their **self-confidence**. Students are **motivated to read** because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected novels, and because each session gives them the opportunity to **connect** what they've read to their own lives.



- Common core standards-aligned
- Researched and results-based
- Socially and emotionally rich
- Character building
- Culturally relevant
- Highly engaging for reluctant readers
- Includes 9 fully-developed lesson plans

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