

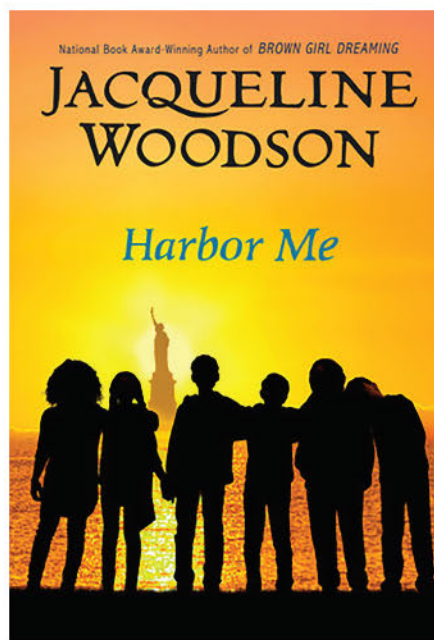
Reading ^{with} Relevance[®]

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

Harbor Me

A novel by Jacqueline Woodson



Recommended for:
Grade Levels
5-7

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 *Harbor Me?*

Meet Haley, Holly, Esteban, Tiago, Amari, and Ashton — six students who are given a space to talk each week without adults in the room. Listen in as these young people open up about their experiences of hardship, marginalization, and identity, developing greater compassion for and understanding of each other, and themselves, through their storytelling. We chose this book for its thoughtful attention to some powerful social and emotional themes: empathy and friendship, grief and loss, immigration and deportation, and racial identity and privilege. Students will find themselves relating to and being inspired by the stories of these students; this curriculum will help students build connections between the six students' experiences and their own.

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
- 10 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

Session 1

pages 1–21

Today's Theme

Vocabulary

spiraling (pg. 5): v.,
circling around in a coil

vague (pg. 9): adj., not
specific

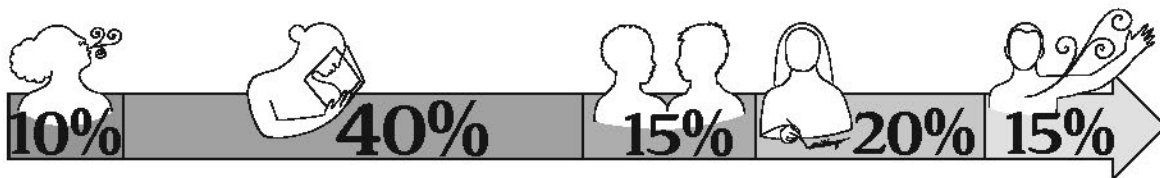
smirked (pg. 13): v.,
smiled in an annoying way

acronym (pg. 18): n., an
abbreviation using the first
letters of each word in a
phrase

The book begins with the story of Esteban, whose father has been taken, most likely by Immigration; now, Esteban and his family are worried about their father's safety, and that Immigration may come to take them, too. **Immigration and deportation** are highly politicized topics in the United States, and yet also have a very personal effect of many people's lives and experiences. Encourage your students to talk about issues of immigration and deportation with compassion and empathy. You may have students who have undocumented family members—some of whom may have been taken and deported by Immigration. Some of your students may be undocumented. Begin the session by asking students what they already know about immigration and deportation in the United States. What have they heard, and how do they feel, about these topics? Help your students think about immigration and deportation by viewing these experiences from Esteban's perspective: How would they feel if they lost a family member without warning? What must it be like to fear you also might have to leave the only home you've ever known? Please refer to the Social and Emotional Topics section of this guide's introduction for more instructional guidance and support.

Story Setup

Harbor Me explores the story of six fifth- and sixth-grade students who are brought together, each with a story to tell. While these students come from diverse backgrounds and struggle with different issues, they learn through their storytelling that they actually share many of the same feelings, values, hopes, and fears.



During Reading

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (pg. 2): a novel written in 1943 by Betty Smith that follows the life of 11-year-old Francie, who lives with her family in Brooklyn, New York, in cheap immigrant housing during the early 1890s

metaphor (pg. 2) and simile (pg. 3): Two figures of speech. A metaphor states that one thing is another thing; it equates these two things not because they are actually the same, but to make a comparison between them. A simile uses “like” or “as” to draw a comparison, like when the narrator says that the notes of music were “Rising up like prayer” (pg. 3).

“That old song about having a hammer” (pg. 13): a reference to If I Had a Hammer, an American folk song about peace and understanding made popular in the early 1960s

Discussion Questions

- What does Haley's uncle say is the hardest part of telling a story? What do you think he means by this?
- How is Francie like the tree in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*?
- What does it mean to “learn differently”? What does this look and feel like for the characters in the book?
- What do you think happened to Esteban's father? How do you think he is feeling about this?
- What does Haley want to tell Esteban?
- According to Ms. Laverne, why do the students need “A Room to Talk” each Friday afternoon, without an adult listening in? Would you like that kind of space at your school?
- Why do you think the students are so resistant to the ARTT room?
- Why do you think Haley hasn't told anyone about her dad being in prison?

Journal Prompts

SCHOOL

- Haley and her ARTT peers each have their own complex relationship with school and learning. For Haley and the others, learning often “felt like a race we were losing” (pg. 6). She and the other ARTT students have struggled to find their place in the classroom.

How do you feel about school and learning?

- » What do you like about school? What are your favorite subjects?
- » What parts of school challenge you the most? What feels hard for you?
- » How do you learn best? Are you more visual? Hands on? What style works best for you when learning something new?

IMMIGRATION

- As we are introduced to Esteban, the first thing we hear are his words: “They took my Papi.” Esteban’s father has been taken by Immigration Enforcement, and Esteban doesn’t know what will happen next.

Put yourself in Esteban’s shoes. How is he feeling throughout today’s reading?

- » How does Esteban cope with these feelings?
- » Who shows up for Esteban? How do they offer him support and empathy?
- » How could you support someone who is experiencing what Esteban is going through?

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

At the base of the Statue of Liberty is a poem by Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus,” which she wrote in 1883 to raise money for the pedestal of the statue. Have students use the worksheet to explore the poem’s meaning and how it connects to Esteban’s story and immigration in the United States today.

Handout:

- » “The New Colossus”

Name: _____

"The New Colossus"

By Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
 Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
 The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
 With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Reflection Questions

1. How does the poet's choice of words suggest that the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of refuge and freedom?
2. Why does the poem end with "I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"?
3. What is the poem saying to new immigrants? What important words does it use to say this?
4. Why do you think this poem was chosen to grace the Statue of Liberty?
5. How does this poem connect to the conversations about immigration taking place in America today?

At the base of the Statue of Liberty is a poem by Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus," which she wrote in 1883 to raise money for the pedestal of the statue. In today's activity, you'll explore the poem's meaning and think about how it connects to Esteban's story and immigration in the United States today. Read the poem to yourself and then respond to the reflection questions.

"The New Colossus"

Appendix

Additional Activities

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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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Follow us on Twitter: @RelevantReading

If your students liked *Harbor Me*. . .

they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out *One Crazy Summer*, *Holes*, and *Ghost*. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!