

Approved for use in all levels of English III instruction

Summary of the Work:

Mama Younger, the matriarch of a struggling black family living in Southside Chicago in the fifties, receives \$10,000 from a life insurance settlement following the death of her husband. Her family members have lots of dreams for how the money should be spent, but she decides to use part of the money on a down payment for a home, which just happens to be in a white neighborhood. The drama's tension occurs in a crowded home, strained by poverty and lack of resources, as the family members strive to make wise choices and overcome differences of opinions.

Rationale:

This play provides an in-depth view of the newly emerging middle class African American family struggling to achieve their dreams during the 1950s. Since an over-arching theme for the English III study of American literature is the American dream, this piece examines one family's struggle to define that dream. As a social realism drama, the play depicts the trials of an inter-generational family who discovers the importance of family, their heritage, and a collective hope for a better future. This is excellent reading for any student with a serious interest in United States drama or African American literature.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Wilson's Senior High School 11/01/02

New York Drama Critics Circle Award 1961

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Gary Cooper Award 1961
- Tony Awards for Best Play 1961

Readability:

- Lexile Score: Not available at this time
- Readability Level: 6.8

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: *(link)*

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 2001

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The drama *A Raisin in the Sun* is an early example of Americans' acceptance of the experience of black Americans as part of contemporary middle class society. First presented at the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, *A Raisin in the Sun's* poignant presentation of the unique difficulties of black Americans in fulfilling their dreams within middle class society presented a strong statement of how far this group of people had come and the challenges that would yet face them.

Connection to the Curriculum:

A Raisin in the Sun is an appropriate selection for juniors studying American literature for themes of the American dream, prejudice, and individual courage.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

A Raisin in the Sun has appeared as a choice on the open-ended question for the AP Literature exam.