

# 10

## Lesson 10

### FOCUS: A Great Novel

The topics in this guide reflect the fundamental elements of the novel. The writer's voice, rhythm, and sense of poetry enchant us, providing literary pleasures while making statements about our humanity. The pacing of the novel's plot allows us insight into the tempos of another life. As the protagonist navigates challenges and triumphs we are guided through our own adventures.

#### Discussion Activities

What elevates a novel to greatness? Ask students to list ten characteristics of a great novel. Ask students to identify ten reasons why *Their Eyes Were Watching God* might be considered a great American novel as well as a work of art. Share these qualities with the class. Write all contributions on the blackboard, discuss them, and allow students to vote for their top five characteristics.

In his Afterword to the novel, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., asserts that Hurston's "work celebrates rather than moralizes; it shows rather than tells." What does he mean by this? Use the novel to support your ideas.

A great writer can be the voice of a generation. What kind of voice does Hurston employ and why would she use a novel to express this voice? What does her voice reveal about her generation? Is it still relevant? If you were the voice of your generation, what would be your most important message? Why might you choose to convey this in a fictional novel rather than a speech or essay?

#### Writing Exercise

Have students work on their essays in class. Be available to assist them with their outlines, ideas, and arguments. Have them partner with another student to edit rough drafts. For this editing, provide students with a list of things that they should look for in a well-written essay.

#### Homework

For the next class, students should turn in their essays. Students will present their paper topics and interpretations to the class. Celebrate by participating in a Big Read community event.