AP

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Student _____ **Parent** _____

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Check off study guide questions as you answer / discuss them.

____ Welcome to a great novel that broadens your perspective of a subculture within twentieth century America. As you read, remember that this is the story of one black woman's struggle to find herself, her role in marriage, and her place in society. You will vicariously experience the dilemmas of a woman who faced tragedy yet triumphed. These questions are for guidance as you read so that you focus on the significant events and themes. You do not need to answer these to be handed in or graded, but obviously they would be good to have for review right before you take the AP Exam. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at home this summer.

____ 1. Read aloud the first two paragraphs. Account for the author's distinction between how men and women view what happens to them. How would this section have been viewed in the thirties, when the book was first published, and now in the twenty-first century?

____ 2. The people on the porches, with "mass cruelty," criticize Janie, whereas Pheoby begins to listen to Janie's story with sincere interest. How do you account for each of these attitudes?

____ 3. What sort of person is Janie? Be able to support your judgment.

____ 4. What is Janie's experience, as she tells Pheoby about her early life, with her own blackness? How does this experience affect her immediate future as a teenager?

____ 5. What are Janie's reasons for leaving Logan Killicks? Does the author seem to approve of her action?

____ 6. Relate the following quotations to Janie, and describe why they happened.

____a. "Long before the year was up, Janie noticed that her husband had stopped talking in rhymes to her."

____b. "Joe didn't make many speeches with rhyme to her…."

____ 7. What does the mule-baiting incident show you about human nature? Why does Jody buy the mule? What significance do you attach to the mule's funeral?

____ 8. In Chapters 5 & 6 Janie's expectation crests but then falls. Detail each point of her disillusionment. How much is she able to rebound from each disillusionment?

____ 9. What is the meaning of each of the following similes or metaphors from Chapter 9: "the out-stretched hand of power," "Janie starched and ironed her face," "pinched (the horizon) in to such a little bit of a thing that she could tie it about her granddaughter's neck tight enough to choke her," "she had found a jewel down inside herself," and "They's jes lak uh pack uh hawgs, when dey see uh full trough."

____ 10. What characterizes the social mix of people in the Everglades-Bahamans, Seminoles, Blacks, and Whites?

____ 11. What are the elements of the racism of Mrs. Turner, and how do they affect others?

____ 12. What is the significance of the following quotations?

____a. "If the castles thought themselves secure, the cabins needn't worry."

____b. "Six eyes were questioning God."

____c. "Ah wuz fumblin' round and God opened de door."

____d. "Look lak dey think God don't know nothin' 'bout de Jim Crow law."

____ 13. Think about Janie's loss. Name as many facets of that loss as you can.

____ 14. What is the attitude of the blacks toward Janie and her acquittal? Is there forgiveness? Why?

____ 15. Reflecting on the work as a whole, what statement is Hurston making about life as a black woman, the nature of relationships, and the sense of community?