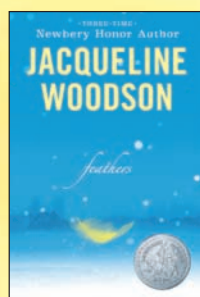
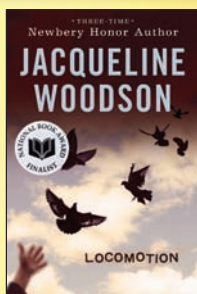
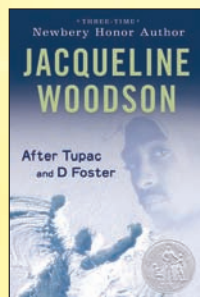
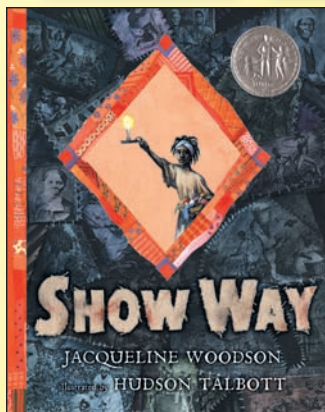


INSIDE THE BOOKS OF AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

JACQUELINE WOODSON

A Classroom Guide for Teachers





PRAISE FOR JACQUELINE WOODSON

Winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement

Three time Newbery Honor Award Winner

Winner of the Coretta Scott King Award and Three Coretta Scott King Honors

Two time National Book Award Finalist

After Tupac and D Foster

- ★ "As always, Woodson's lyrical writing rings true. . . . A thought-provoking story about the importance of acceptance and connections in life."

—Voice of Youth Advocates, starred review

I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This

- ★ "Wrenchingly honest and, despite its sad themes, full of hope and inspiration."

—Publisher's Weekly, starred review

The Other Side

- ★ "Manages to plumb great depth with understated simplicity."

—School Library Journal, starred review

Show Way

- ★ "An outstanding tribute, perfectly executed in terms of text, design, and illustration."

—School Library Journal, starred review

Last Summer With Maizon

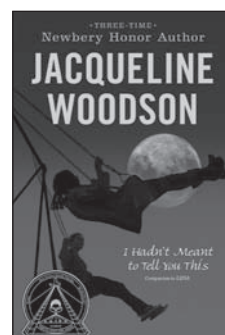
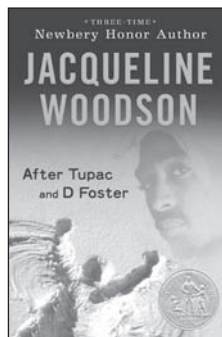
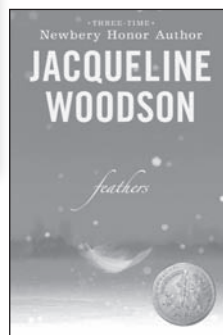
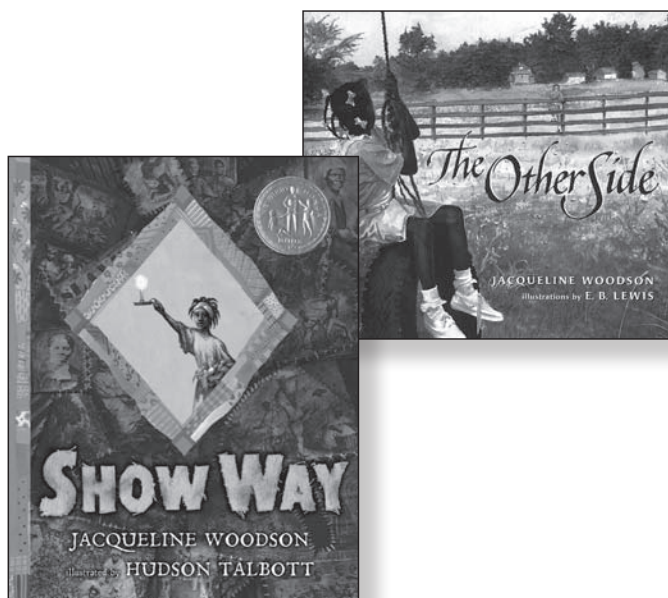
- ★ "Ms. Woodson writes with a sure understanding of the thoughts of young people, offering a poetic, eloquent narrative that is not simply a story of nearly adolescent children, but a mature exploration of grown-up issues: death, racism, independence, the nurturing of the gifted black child and most important, self-discovery."

—The New York Times

Feathers

- ★ "With her usual talent for creating characters who confront, reflect, and grow into their own persons . . . the story ends with hope and thoughtfulness."

—School Library Journal, starred review



INSIDE THE BOOKS OF JACQUELINE WOODSON

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, ACTIVITIES, AND THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Author Information

A Note from Jacqueline Woodson and About the Author

Shared Reading

Instructions and Prompts

Picture Books

The Other Side, Show Way, Coming On Home Soon, and Pecan Pie Baby

The Maizon Series

Last Summer With Maizon, Maizon at Blue Hill, and Between Madison and Palmetto

Locomotion and *Peace, Locomotion*

I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This, Lena,
and *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*

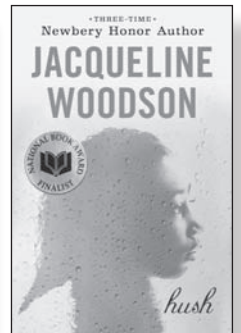
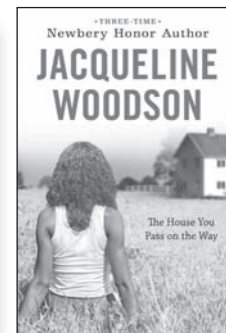
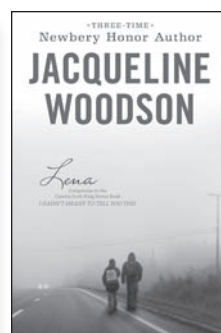
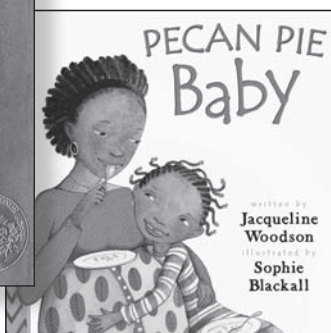
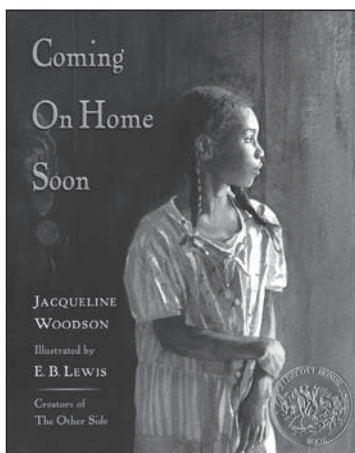
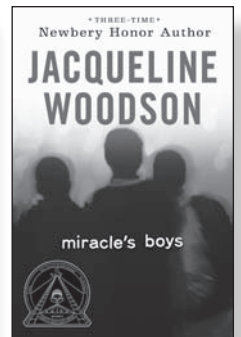
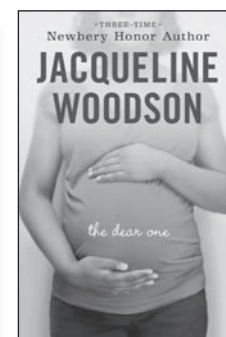
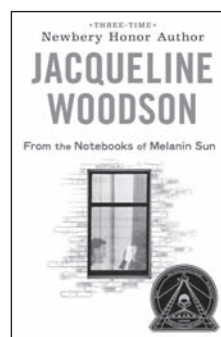
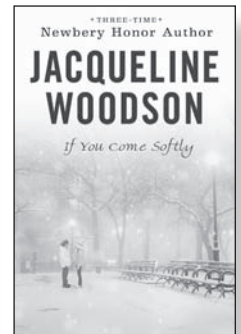
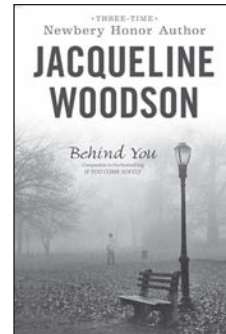
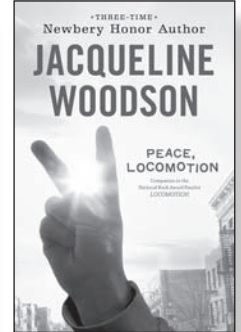
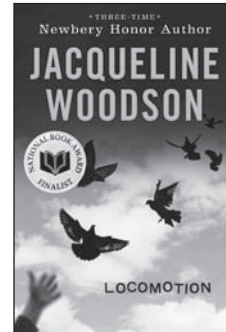
Miracle's Boys, Hush, and *If You Come Softly*

Feathers and *After Tupac and D Foster*

Thematic Connections

Post-Reading Activities

Making Connections,
Considering Character,
and Writing Mentor



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JACQUELINE WOODSON



Jacqueline Woodson was raised and educated in Greenville, South Carolina, and Brooklyn, New York. Woodson graduated from college with a B.A. in English, and now writes full-time in Brooklyn where she lives with her family. Writing with poetic simplicity, she has garnered much critical acclaim and many honors for her work. Woodson won a Newbery Honor in 2006 for *Show Way*, a Newbery Honor in 2008 for *Feathers* and a third Newbery Honor in 2009 for *After Tupac and D Foster*. *Hush* and *Locomotion* were both National Book Award finalists. Her work has often appeared on numerous Best Books and Notable lists. She has been recognized by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee for *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun* and *Locomotion*, all Coretta Scott King Honor Books. Her highly acclaimed novel *Miracle's Boys* won the Coretta Scott King Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and was made into a mini-series for Nickelodeon. In 2006, she won the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement in writing for young adults from the Young Adult Library Services Association. Her citation for that esteemed award says, "Woodson's sensitive and lyrical books reveal and give a voice to outsiders often invisible to mainstream America."

Visit her at <http://www.jacquelinewoodson.com>

~ A LETTER FROM JACQUELINE ~

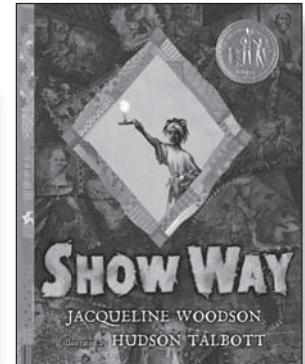
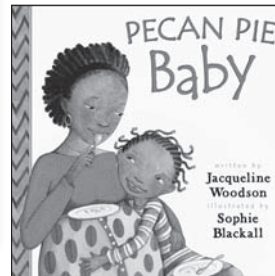
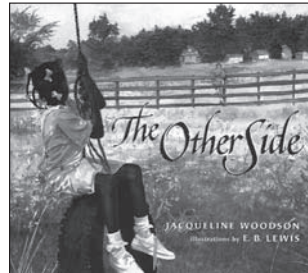
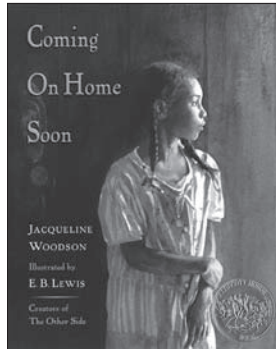
I'm often asked what I'd like for young people to learn from my novels and picture books. It's hard not to flinch when I hear this. I always say that I write to entertain, not to teach. But I know too, that it goes deeper than this. No, I don't want young people to come to one of my books hoping to learn a few new vocabulary words, a different way to compose a sentence, character, theme, setting... What I would love is this: That each time a reader closes a book of mine, he or she continues to think not only about the characters on the page but also, the bigger world, the greater good. I would love knowing that readers meet the people in my books and grow to love them. And if the reader loves the character, he or she will want to keep that character and by extension, people like that character, safe.

Reading has always been a way for me to grow—emotionally, intellectually, philosophically... My hope is that my books offer others this same opportunity. Young people are told over and over again to 'follow their dreams' while at the same time being warned against 'dreaming too big, too unrealistically. My childhood circumstances in so many ways, pointed away from writing—which seemed to the elders in my life more of a hobby than a career choice. The constant refrain of my childhood was "Choose something more realistic". And so I did. Realistic Fiction.

Enjoy!

~ SHARED READING ~

Tips for reading and understanding



SHARED READING

Shared reading is an experience that makes it possible for children to join in or share the reading of story. Select one of Jacqueline Woodson's picture books as a read-aloud and follow the instructions below.

During shared reading, it is imperative that children be able to see the text in the book. If it is not possible to enlarge or magnify the text for the whole class to see, then conduct this strategy with a small group of students.

BEFORE

The teacher introduces the story by talking about the title, cover, endpapers, and title page. This is the time to engage students in talking about the cover illustration and what they think it tells them about the story. Don't forget to show the endpapers and back covers of these books, as they may also contain interesting pictures to discuss.

Then conduct a brief picture walk through the book, making sure to point out how specific characters and their actions are shown in the pictures. Also, pose questions to encourage children to think about the story without trying to tell the story and talk about what the illustration style might indicate about the story. Ask children to relate any experiences they have had that are inspired by the pictures.

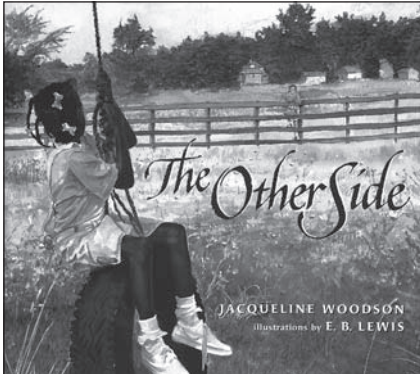
DURING

The very first time the book is read is generally for enjoyment. Pause from time to time and invite children to predict a word or phrase, or to make predictions about what might happen next.

AFTER

At the conclusion of the story, the teacher can ask about the predictions that were made and if they were right. The teacher should ask open-ended questions to assist students in making connections. Subsequent readings of the book will allow children an opportunity to make further connections. If you are incorporating *Show Way* or *Coming On Home Soon* into a social studies curriculum, you can ask your students to make connections between historical events and the progression of the story.

~ PICTURE BOOKS ~



The Other Side

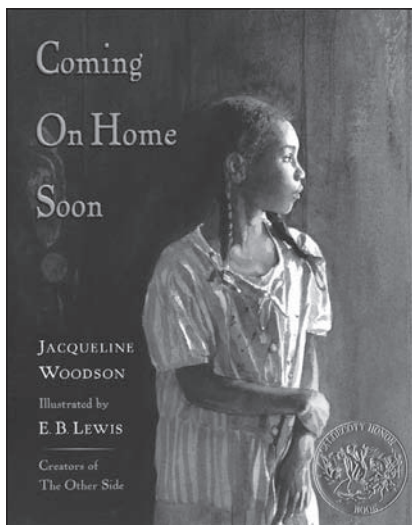
Clover has to accept the fence that separates the white and African-American communities in her town from one another. However, when a new girl comes to town, they find a way to turn a fence into a bridge.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Clover's mother warn her about the fence?
- Why is Clover interested in Annie?
- How do Clover and Annie overcome the instructions of the adults?
- How does Clover feel about the other girls' response to the new girl?
- How do Clover and Annie's actions affect the other girls?

ACTIVITIES

- Create a model of the setting of the story and the fence that is at the center of the action.
- Play a jump rope game like the girls in the story.
- Pretend to interview the adults in the story after the girls begin to play together. Do you think their ideas will be different?



Coming On Home Soon

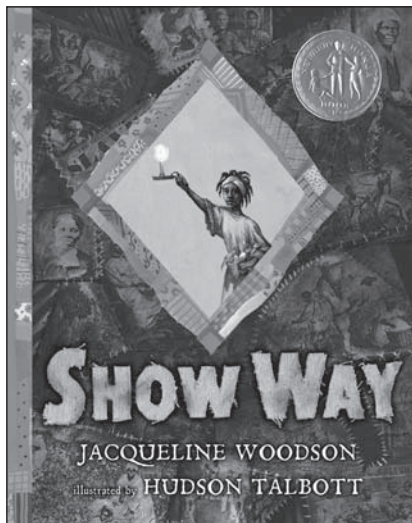
Ada Ruth lives with her grandmother when her mother goes to Chicago to find work during World War II. As the days go by without any word, Ada Ruth copes with her sadness by caring for a stray kitten and hoping for some news from her mother.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Ada Ruth's mother decides to leave home to find work? Why is there more work available than before?
- How has the war affected the family?
- How do Ada Ruth and Grandma differ in their reactions to the stray kitten? List the positives and negatives of keeping the kitten.
- What could be some reasons for Mama's delay in writing to Ada Ruth and Grandma?
- How have communications changed since the time of this story?

ACTIVITIES

- Research the kinds of jobs women were able to perform during World War II. Find out if the jobs were different for African American women.
- Write the letter you think Ada Ruth would write back to her mother.
- Make a list of the ways Ada Ruth would spend her time during the winter during this time period.



Show Way

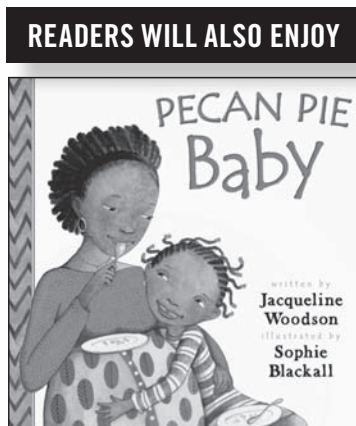
Each generation of a family, from the days of slavery until now, uses quilts, sewing and stories to find courage and determination through times of struggle and triumph.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

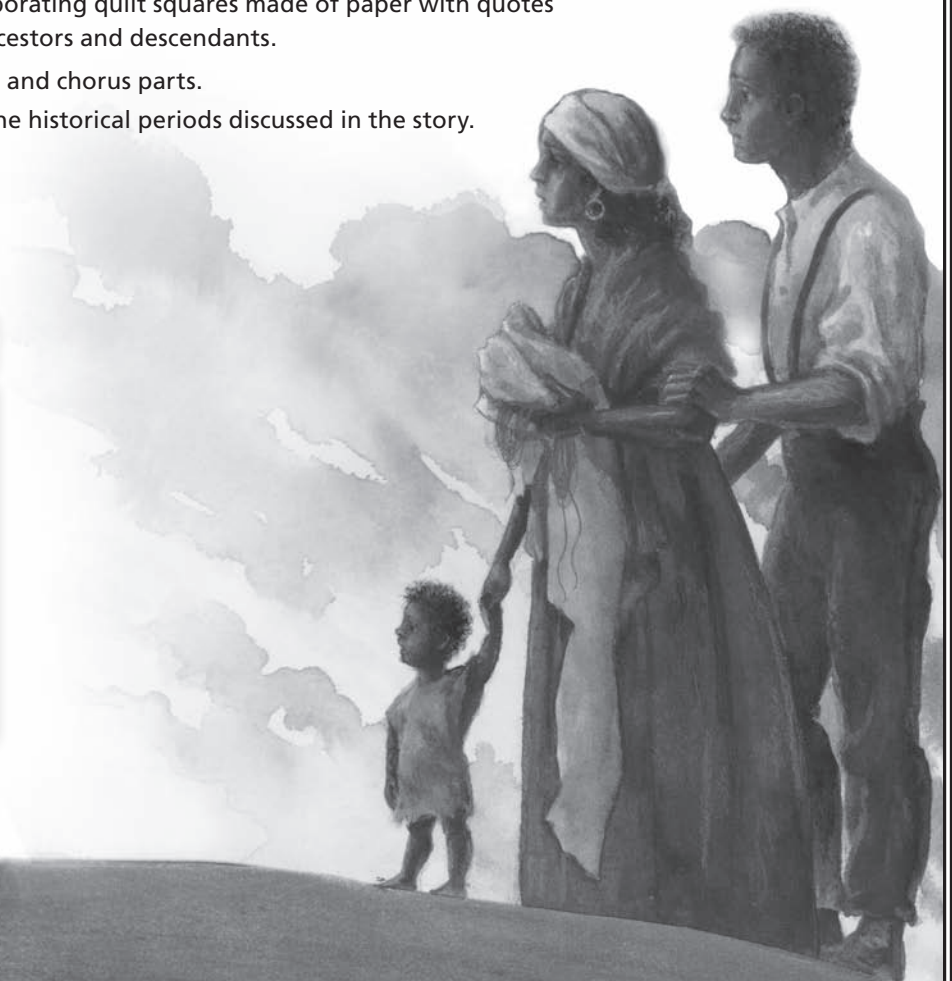
- Why were the stories told around the fire so important to children during slavery?
- How did the sewing skills that were passed down help each generation?
- How did Soonie use quilts to “live” and to “remember”?
- How did Caroline and Ann carry on the family traditions?
- What did the family traditions of sewing, reading, and writing have in common?

ACTIVITIES

- Develop a patchwork quilt project incorporating quilt squares made of paper with quotes that illustrate the journey of Soonie’s ancestors and descendants.
- Read the text as a choral poem with solo and chorus parts.
- Make and dress dolls in the clothing of the historical periods discussed in the story.



A heartwarming story about adjusting to the idea of a new family member.



~ THE MAIZON SERIES ~

This trilogy of remarkable books explores the unique friendship between two girls. Margaret Tory and Maizon Singh are best friends who share everything, and their bond sees them through distance and life-changing events.

Last Summer with Maizon

Margaret can't help hoping her best friend, Maizon, won't be accepted to the fancy boarding school out of state. When Margaret's father dies and Maizon learns she is going away, summer vacation becomes more important than ever.

Maizon at Blue Hill

Maizon soon learns there is more to fitting in at Blue Hill than academic success. As she becomes more familiar with her new school and her fellow students, her longing for home intensifies.

Between Madison and Palmetto

Margaret and Maizon are reunited in the old neighborhood but things are no longer the same. Will their bond survive changes in their friendship and the new people in their lives?



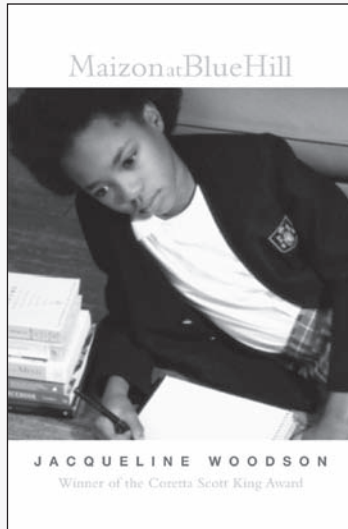
Last Summer with Maizon

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Maizon and Margaret have very different types of families. How do you think that has influenced their personalities?
- Both girls experience a big change in their lives. How do they each handle what happens? How does change bring them together or drive them apart?
- How are Maizon and Margaret different at the end of the book than they were in the beginning?

ACTIVITIES

- Writing and poetry are very important to Margaret. Write a poem or essay about a special person in your life.
- Letters are important in the story, both the ones Margaret sends and the ones that Maizon does not. Pretend you are one of the other characters and write letters to both girls.



Maizon at Blue Hill

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the things Maizon worries about as she prepares to leave for Blue Hill?
- How do the girls at Blue Hill show what they think of Maizon and where she comes from?
- Maizon has conflicts with some of the other African American girls at the school. How are these girls different from her friends back home?
- Why does Maizon leave Blue Hill?

ACTIVITIES

- Pretend you are Maizon and write a diary entry for your last day at home and your first day at Blue Hill.
- Maizon recommends one of her favorite books to her English class. Select a book you would recommend the girls at Blue Hill read and give a brief summary of the title, including why it was chosen.



Between Madison and Palmetto

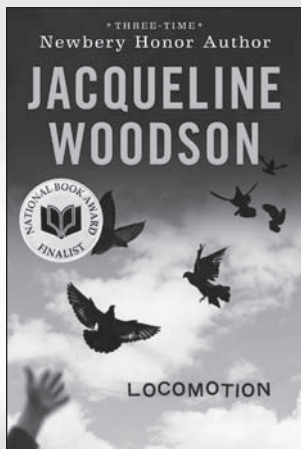
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- "Life," Ms. Dell had said to Maizon and Margaret the summer before Maizon left for Blue Hill, "moves us through all the time changes. All kinds of changes. And we're made so that we roll and move with it. Sometimes somebody gets stuck in the present and the rolling stops—but the changing doesn't." What are some of the changes facing the residents of the Madison Street neighborhood? How are these changes affecting their lives?
- Maizon has a very strong reaction to the return of her father. Why is his return so difficult for her?
- How does the new girl, Caroline, affect the friendship between Margaret and Maizon?

ACTIVITIES

- The students at the Pace Academy prepare to put on a play. Select an event in the book that would make a good drama and write a short scene.
- Make a collage that illustrates the Madison Street neighborhood.
- Write an essay that describes what you think Maizon and Margaret will do in the future.

LOCOMOTION



Eleven-year-old Lonnie Collins Motion, aka Locomotion, is trying to sort out his emotions following the deaths of his parents. He is living with a new foster mother, Miss Edna, separate from his sister, Lili. Inspired by his teacher, Lonnie writes poems that tell the truth about his life, his sadness, and his family.

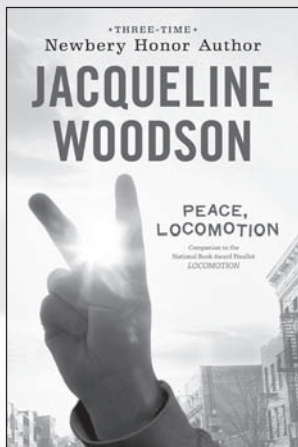
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe Lonnie. What three words do you think say the most about him? Would you be friends with Lonnie? Why or why not?
- Why is Ms. Marcus so important to Lonnie? Do you think she deserved a Teacher of the Year award? What are the qualities of a good teacher?
- What is Lonnie's experience of race? What do you think about his ideas in the poem "Commercial Break" on pages 12-13? What do you think this book says about race?
- Why do people laugh at Clyde in "New Boy" (page 29)? Have you experienced or witnessed a similar situation? How did you feel? What did you do? What could you have done?
- Why do you think Lili's foster mother is so watchful of Lonnie? Do you think she needs to be?
- What do you think Rodney was doing before he came back to live with his mother? Can you relate to what he says about trees?
- How does Lonnie change from the beginning of the story to the end?
- Lonnie and Lili lose their parents. Eric has sickle cell disease. Do you feel the same for each of them and their situations? Explain.
- At the end of *Locomotion*, Lonnie and Lili are together in the park. Lili says they're together because she gave him the Bible and told him to find God. Do you agree? Why do you think good things happen to people? Why do you think bad things happen to people?

ACTIVITIES

- Lonnie tells his story through poems in *Locomotion*. Did they all seem like poems to you? Explain. What is a poem? Which of Lonnie's poems did you like most? Explain.
- In the poem "Visiting," Lonnie writes that sometimes he can't imagine living anywhere but with Miss Edna. Write a short essay on "What makes a place home?"
- Ms. Marcus asks Angel, "Do you think poor people aren't happy?" (page 69). What do you think? Explain your answer. What are some things that make a person rich or poor?
- Through poetry, Lonnie records his experiences, remembers his past, and sorts through his emotions as he begins his life with a foster mother, separate from his younger sister. Can you write a poem, remembering a certain time in your life?

∞ PEACE, LOCOMOTION ∞



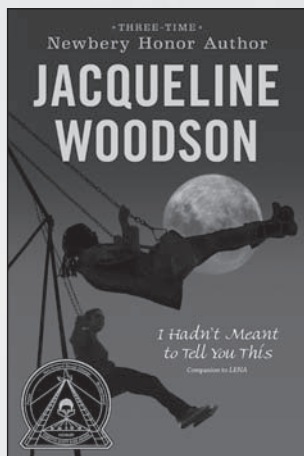
Twelve-year-old Lonnie is finally feeling at home with his foster family, but because he's living apart from his little sister, Lili, he decides it's his job to be the "rememberer." Lonnie's musings are bittersweet; he's happy that he and Lili have new families, but though his new family brings him joy, it also brings new worries. With a foster brother in the army, concepts like peace have new meaning for Lonnie.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is family? What are some of the ways this story explores the idea of family? Clyde tells Lonnie that "There's all kinds of mamas" (page 35). Lili tells Lonnie that she wants the mama she used to have and the mama she has now (page 64). Lonnie is at first skeptical of their ideas about mothers. What do you think?
- Have you experienced a teacher like Ms. Cooper or Ms. Alina? Describe your experience. What do you think Rodney would be like as a teacher?
- What do you imagine peace to be? Is Lonnie's idea about peace on page 77 possible: "everybody putting down their weapons and no more wars anywhere"?
- Consider Lonnie's poem "Little Things" on page 96. What does the poem mean to you? What little things are important to you?
- What does the saying "sometimes you gotta laugh to keep from crying" mean (page 127)? Do you agree or disagree?
- Why would Miss Alina say to try to write, think or talk about one true thing every day (page 42)? Do you agree that this is a worthwhile goal?
- In one letter to Lili, Lonnie comments on wants and needs (page 88). What's the difference between a want and a need? What does Lonnie want? What does he need? What do you want? What do you need?
- Clyde is Lonnie's best friend. What are the qualities you look for in a friend or a best friend? Does everyone have to have a best friend? Why or why not?

ACTIVITIES

- In *Peace, Locomotion*, Lonnie tells his story through letters. Can you write a letter that tells a story from events past? Be creative in your writing (i.e., vivid descriptions).
- Is it important to hold on to memories? Discuss why it is important to remember events, times and places. What do memories mean to you?
- Keep a journal to remember things that happen on a daily basis. Write down your thoughts. At the end of the year, look back and see what has changed throughout the course of the year. What have you learned? How have you changed?



I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This

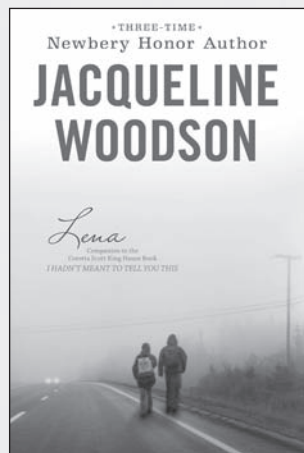
Twelve-year-old Marie is popular with the other girls in her African-American middle class community and appears to have everything she needs. Her friends are surprised when she befriends Lena, a poor white girl from the wrong side of the tracks, but both girls have lost their mothers, and that is a bond bigger than race or class. When Lena trusts Marie with a terrible secret, Marie wonders if she is capable of being the friend Lena really needs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is the friendship between Marie and Lena so unusual? What kinds of things do they have to overcome in order to be friends?
- Why did Marie's mother leave? How has Marie's relationship with her father been affected by her mother's absence?
- Describe the differences between Marie and Lena's lives. What are the negative things in Marie's life? Are there any positives in Lena's life? What do you think they are?

ACTIVITIES

- Marie's mother sometimes sends postcards from faraway places. Find out about some of those places and describe what she might see.
- Lena feels better when Marie reads from Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals*. Write a short essay about how reading from this book helps her cope with her mother's death from cancer.
- Marie quotes from Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Respond to what that speech says about race relations and what that means for Marie.



Lena

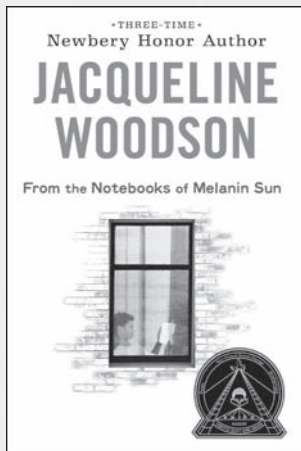
Lena and her eight-year-old sister, Dion, flee their abusive father, seeking a different life. Both girls use their quick minds and sharp instincts to make their difficult and uncertain journey. When they are taken in by kindly Miz Lily, Lena begins to doubt her choice to run away. By reaching back to her friend Marie, she is finally able to find the support she and Dion desperately need.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do Lena and Dion disguise themselves as boys when they run away from home?
- Describe the differences between Lena and Dion. Why do you think they are different?
- Why does Lena call Marie?

ACTIVITIES

- Write a poem or essay that describes how the girls felt before they began their journey and one that describes how they felt as they were returning to Chauncey.
- Pretend you are interviewing Lena and Marie three years after the story ends. What would you ask each of them?



From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun

Melanin Sun cares about many things: the environment, the notebooks he uses to write everything down, his friends, and a certain girl. Most of all, he cares about his mother. But when his mother tells him that she is gay and in love with someone new, a white lawyer named Kristin, Melanin Sun's world turns upside down. Eventually, it is their strong bond that reminds him of his love for her and helps him accept Kristin.

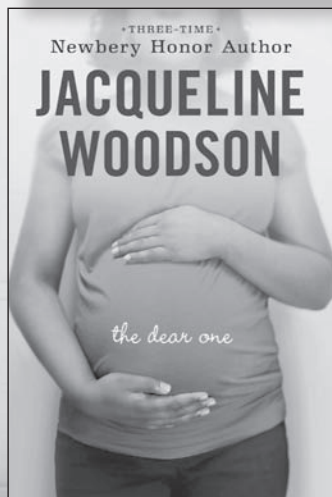
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- One of the first things people notice about Melanin Sun is his name. What does it mean? Why did his mother give him that name?
- Melanin constantly writes in his notebooks. What kinds of things does he write about? Why is it sometimes easier to write about things than to talk about them?
- What does Melanin's interest in the environment mean to him?
- Melanin gets very angry and uses anti-gay language when his mother explains her relationship with Kristin. Discuss how this episode comes between Melanin and his mother.
- How does Melanin come to accept his mother's relationship with Kristin?

ACTIVITIES

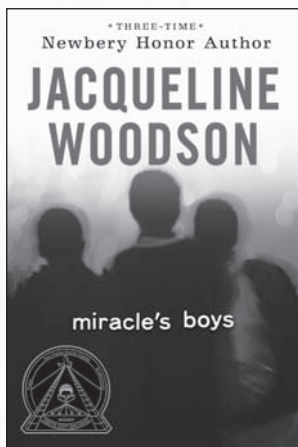
- Keep a notebook like Melanin Sun for a week. At the end of the week, write about the experience. Think about the following: was it easy to write every day? Did you sometimes forget? Did you write about your observations, your feelings, or both?
- This novel opens with a poem about John Muir. Research his life and write an essay on why he is relevant to the story.
- Melanin's mom reminds him that she raised him to be tolerant. What is tolerance? Find examples of ways students can be more tolerant of differences.

READERS WILL ALSO ENJOY



Two girls from very different backgrounds come to understand each other, despite their opposing viewpoints.





Miracle's Boys

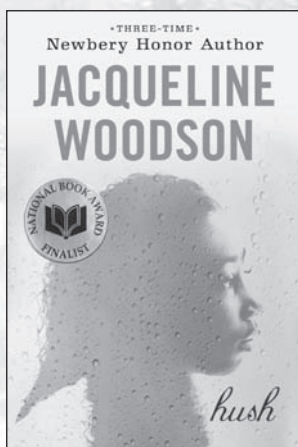
Lafayette, Charlie, and Ty'ree are three brothers struggling to stay together as a family after the death of their mother. Ty'ree gave up his scholarship to MIT to take the role of head of the family but Charlie, recently out of juvenile detention, seems unable to resist the lure of the streets. Lafayette fears it is just a matter of time before Charlie gets into trouble again and destroys their fragile family. Somehow, the spirit of their mother's love sustains them, against the odds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Each of the brothers is haunted by a past incident involving their parents. Describe each incident and tell how it continues to bother each of the boys. How do they each deal with what Ty'ree calls "a monkey on their back"?
- Why does Charlie act so hostile to his brothers when he returns from Rahway Home for Boys?
- Describe Charlie's friend Aaron. How does he interact with Lafayette? What kind of choices is he making in his life?
- Lafayette has strong memories of his mother as a reader, particularly reading Toni Morrison. How does the quote "The function of freedom is to free someone else" relate to the three main characters?
- What do you think will happen to Miracle's boys?

ACTIVITIES

- Choose several passages of *Miracle's Boys* to read aloud. Choose the style of music you think would fit each passage.
- Write a diary entry for each of the brothers for the first night Charlie returns home from juvenile detention.
- Write an essay about how the brothers' lives would change if they went to live with their Aunt Cecile.
- Research Milagro's home, Puerto Rico. What kinds of things would she have liked her sons to experience if she had been able to afford to take them to visit?



Hush

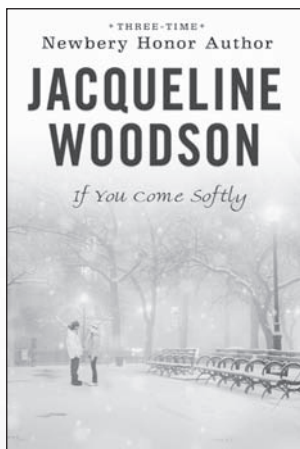
Toswiah and her sister, Cameron, have always lived in Colorado, where their father is a popular and decorated police officer. When he witnesses the shooting of an innocent black teen by two of his fellow officers, his testimony results in death threats. The entire family is relocated, and together, they have to learn how to accept their new life and identities and move on.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe Evie's life in Denver before her father witnessed the shooting. Why is her real name important to her?
- Why was it so important for her father to testify in this case? What other actions could he have taken?
- Each member of the family leaves something behind when they are forced to leave Denver. Describe what each leaves behind and why it matters.
- How are Evie and her father able to reach each other again? What understanding does Evie gain when she is finally able to speak openly with her father again?

ACTIVITIES

- Write a newspaper account of the trial where Evie's father testified.
- Write a diary entry for Evie before her life changes and a diary entry for after the family moves away from Denver.
- Think about what you would miss if you had to leave your current home and move far away, ending all contacts with friends and family. Make a list of the things you would miss and the things you would not mind giving up.



If You Come Softly

Elisha Eisen (Ellie) and Jeremiah Roselind (Miah) meet on their first day at Percy Academy and have an immediate connection, despite their racial differences. Ellie and Miah are happy together, but they keep their budding romance hidden from their families. Both have to deal with how society treats each of them and how they will fit into each other's lives.

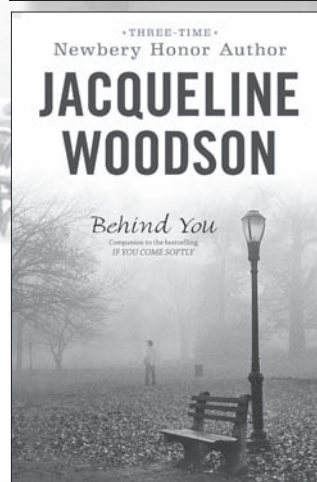
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe Ellie's relationship with her parents. How has it been influenced by things that happened in the past?
- Why does Ellie fear her parents' reaction to Miah?
- How does having famous parents impact Miah's life? How does he handle reactions of his peers when they learn about his father? How does Ellie react?
- Miah is close to both of his parents. How have they tried to build his self image? How is he affected by their separation?
- Ellie doesn't have any close girlfriends from her old school at Percy Academy. What do you think a girlfriend would have advised her about her relationship with Miah? What advice would you have given to Ellie and Miah? Why?

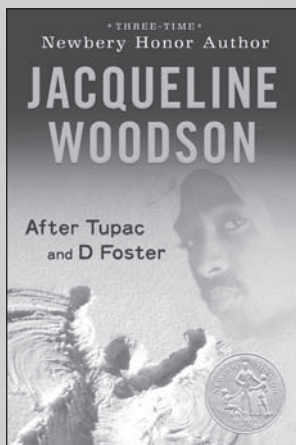
ACTIVITIES

- Imagine you are a reporter writing about the events in the story. Prepare a list of questions to ask the major characters.
- Miah's father is a filmmaker. Choose a scene from this novel that you would like to film or turn into a play.
- Write an essay comparing *If You Come Softly* to *Romeo and Juliet*.

READERS WILL ALSO ENJOY



*A story about loss
and learning how
to move on.*



After Tupac and D Foster

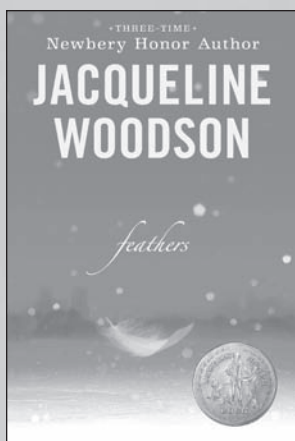
The unnamed narrator and her best friend, Neeka, meet D Foster when they are 11, right when Tupac Shakur is shot for the first time. They are jealous of the freedom D Foster has, but D wishes she had a real home rather than being a foster child. In the years they are together until they turn 13, framed by Tupac and his music, the three African American girls become steadfast friends and begin to find the Big Purpose in their lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Explain why D is so mesmerized by Tupac in chapter one.
- Explain how, in chapter one, Neeka and the narrator want what D has, and D wants what they have.
- How does the narrator feel connected to D yet jealous of her, too?
- What do you think the narrator means: "Some days D smiled at me and felt like my missing half"? (page 43)
- How do Neeka's and the narrator's mothers try to protect them?
- Describe Tash's experience and how he tries to be strong for the rest of his family. How do we know that Tash is unlikely to have committed the crime he was found guilty of?
- Why, would you say, does the author never name the narrator?
- The narrator says, "Maybe that was *our* Big Purpose—to figure ourselves on out" (page 134). By the end of the story, are any of the characters closer to finding their Big Purpose?
- The novel's title is *After Tupac and D Foster*. What do you feel will happen next for Neeka and the narrator? How did D Foster affect them and their way of seeing the world?
- Who do you think is most affected by the songs of Tupac Shakur and most affected by the shootings and his death? Why do you think that is?
- In "If My Homie Calls," Tupac says, "Time goes on, and everybody grows/Grew apart, had to part, went our own ways." Explain how these lines relate to this novel.

ACTIVITIES

- Listen to "Brenda's Got a Baby" and "Dear Mama" and read the lyrics. Examine the connection that D Foster feels with these songs.
- Reread page 22 and write an "I Remember" poem about memories of a person or place in your neighborhood. You might start each line with "I Remember" or let the title set up the idea. Each line should be a separate memory.
- Research the various aspects of Tupac Shakur's life referred to in the novel and write a brief report: why he was shot; his early days with Digital Underground; his mother and the Black Panthers; and the second shooting.
- Woodson writes evocatively about this Queens neighborhood and the people in it. Write a portrait of your own neighborhood and the people in it.
- Write a journal entry D might have written, reflecting on the meaning Tupac's songs had for her, especially "Brenda's Got a Baby," "Dear Mama," and "If My Homie Calls."
- Visit Jacqueline Woodson's website at www.jacquelinewoodson.com and use the "teaching books" link to videos of the author talking about the work.
- Reread chapter 11 and use it as a model for writing your own memory of a special moment.



Feathers

Frannie's life in school takes an unexpected turn when a new boy comes to her classroom. Even though it's 1970, it is still unusual to have a white student in her school—and this one is very different. In addition to everything that's happening at school, Frannie has things to deal with at home and with friends, all of which cause Frannie to look at the world in a different way.

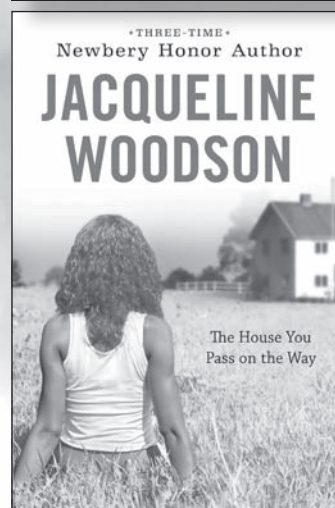
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- "Hope is the thing with feathers." That's how the Emily Dickinson poem they are studying begins. The poem is hard for Frannie to understand. What do you think it means? Why do you think it was important enough for part of it to become the title of the book?
- Frannie sometimes feels jealous of her brother, Sean. What is her unique role with her family and with her friends?
- Although the world views Sean as handicapped, Frannie sees her brother as gifted and strong. In what ways is this true? Can the same be said about any other differences, such as skin color? What strengths and/or advantages are there in belonging to a "minority"?
- Religion is a subject that comes up throughout the book. What is its role in the story? What is the difference between religious faith and the idea of hope in Emily Dickinson's poem? Are they mutually exclusive or can one play a part in the other?

ACTIVITIES

- Read Dickinson's poem "Hope" and discuss how lines from the poem have meaning throughout the story.
- The neighborhood and its layout are well described in the story. Make a drawing of the surrounding community.
- Learn more about the sign language that Sean uses to communicate with everyone.
- Make a list of all the things you and your classmates have in common, similar to the list Frannie and her classmates compile.

READERS WILL ALSO ENJOY



Stagger Lee and Trout begin to understand their place in a world that isn't always tolerant.

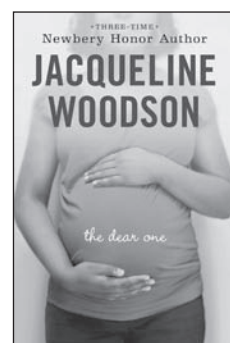
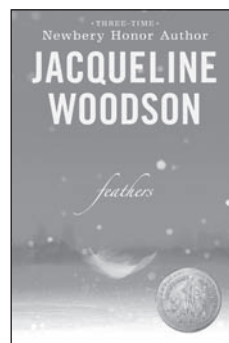
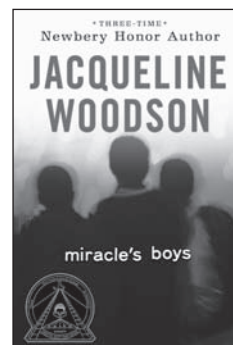
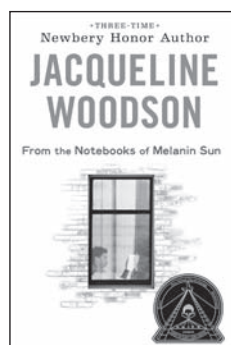
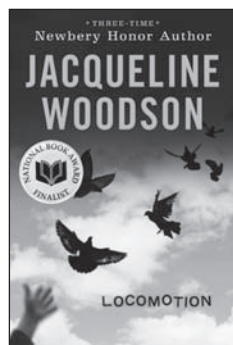
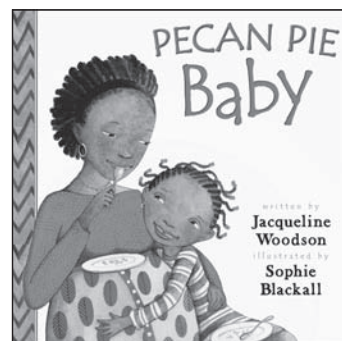
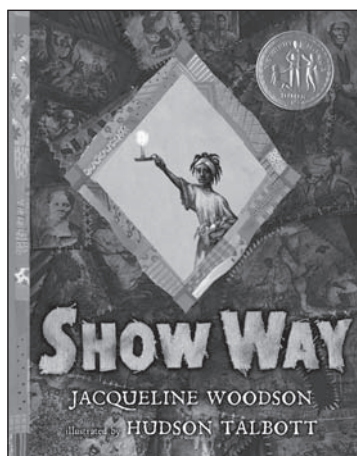
~ FAMILY TIES ~

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Woodson explores the various types of families and the many different ways families connect to provide nurturing and support for young people. Ask students to choose a small moment that meant something to them, a family member they feel a special connection with, or a story passed down through the family. Have them write a short piece about what makes their moment, relative, or family story stand out as unique and special.

RELATED TITLES

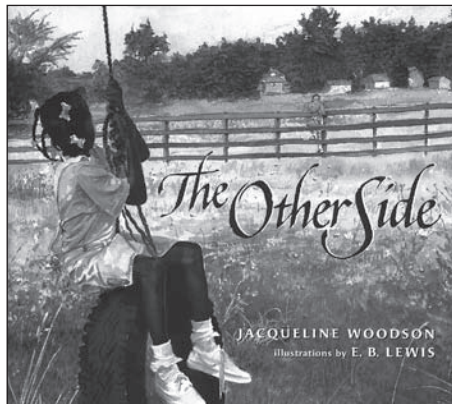
- *Show Way*
- *Pecan Pie Baby*
- *Locomotion*
- *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*
- *Miracle's Boys*
- *Feathers*
- *The Dear One*



~ FRIENDSHIP ~

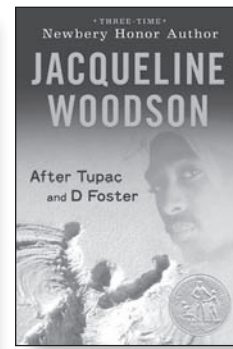
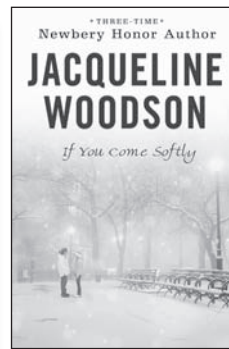
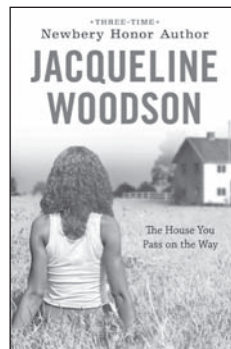
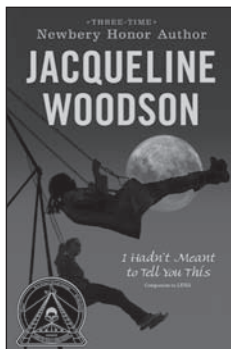
THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Making and strengthening friendships is a critical area of development for young people. Woodson uses friendships that are both traditional and unusual to provide insight and understanding. Ask your students to define friendship. What does the word mean to them? Have your students make a list of adjectives and nouns that describe and represent their idea of friendship and use these words to create a poem



RELATED TITLES

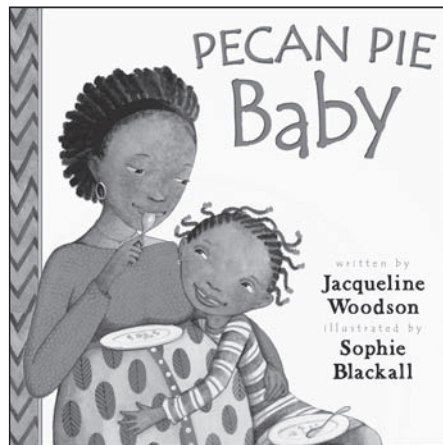
- *The Other Side*
- *Last Summer with Maizon*
- *Between Madison and Palmetto*
- *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*
- *The House You Pass On the Way*
- *If You Come Softly*
- *After Tupac and D Foster*



~ IDENTITY ~

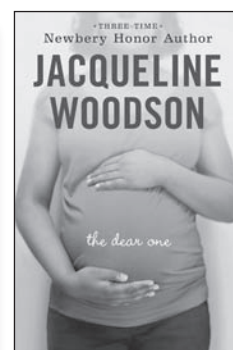
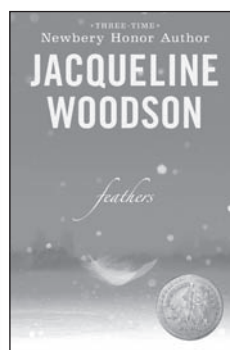
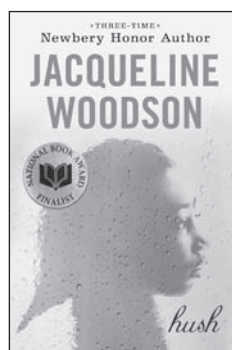
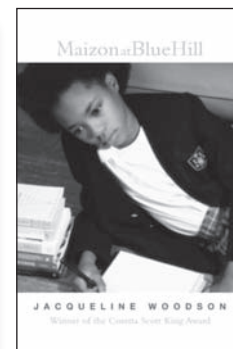
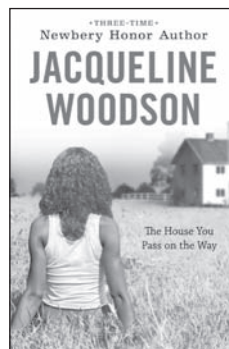
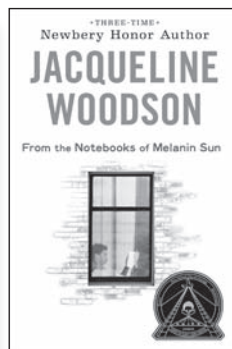
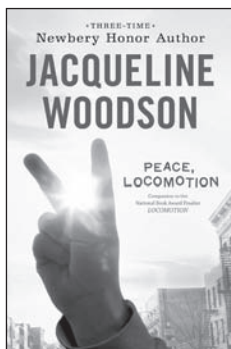
THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Determining who you are, where you fit in your family and community, and developing a way of seeing the world is an important task on the road to adulthood. Woodson's work presents clear examples of characters facing and solving this issue. Have your students choose a character in one of the books below and write a poem or paragraph from that character's point of view, identifying some of the things that the character would consider part of his or her identity. Among other things, have students consider important friends, family, hobbies, interests, and communities.



RELATED TITLES

- *Pecan Pie Baby*
- *Peace, Locomotion*
- *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*
- *The House You Pass On the Way*
- *Maizon at Blue Hill*
- *Hush*
- *Feathers*
- *The Dear One*



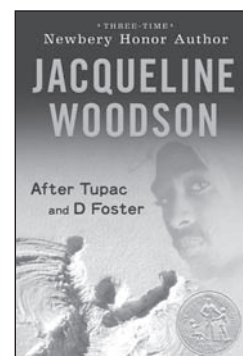
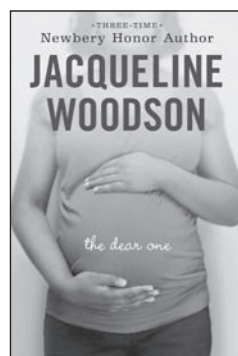
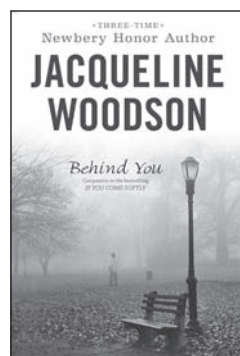
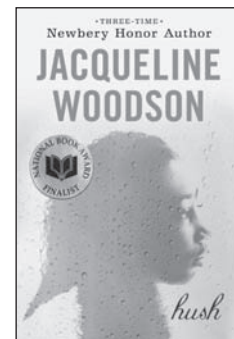
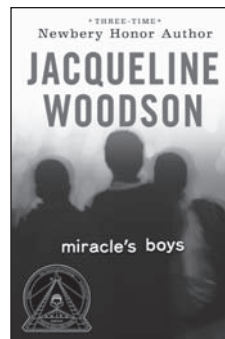
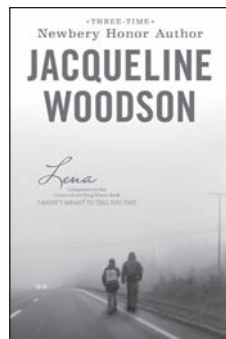
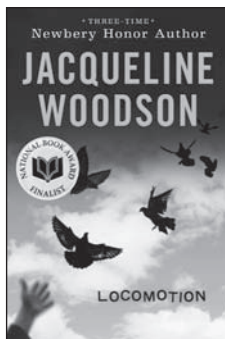
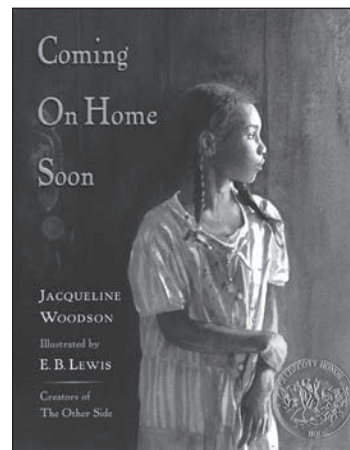
OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Woodson's narratives provide reassuring messages of the capabilities and resilience of young people to overcome some of the harsh circumstances of society. With honest portrayals of life's difficulties and the inner resources her characters use to cope with and defeat them, Woodson provides hope that resonates with readers. For a journaling activity, students can outline one of the situations that confronts a character in one of the books listed below and write a journal entry from the point of view of the character discussing and evaluating the possible courses of action.

RELATED TITLES

- *Coming On Home Soon*
- *Locomotion*
- *Lena*
- *Miracle's Boys*
- *Hush*
- *Behind You*
- *The Dear One*
- *After Tupac and D Foster*



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Making Connections and Considering Character

PURPOSE: Students make connections between characters or events in Jacqueline Woodson's books with people and events in their own lives.

DIRECTIONS: Have students read one of Jacqueline's books. After reading, ask students to complete the chart below considering the ways in which the story relates to their life and the world at large.

After reading _____ by Jacqueline Woodson

I OBSERVED _____

I WONDERED _____

I LEARNED _____

Sensory descriptions (smell, hear, touch, sight, taste) included in _____
by Jacqueline Woodson are _____

If I could change one event in the plot of the book, I would _____

If I could be any character in the book, I would be _____
because _____
_____ **by Jacqueline Woodson is similar to my life because** _____

Writing Mentor

One way to help students learn how to write is to use a skilled author like Jacqueline Woodson as a writing mentor. By using the author's texts as a model for language and phrasing, students will acquire techniques and strategies they can mimic in their own writing. Have students pick a Jacqueline Woodson title and write a chapter of a book or a short story that emulates her style of writing, but integrates their own ideas and plots. Some titles to start with are: *Locomotion*, *Peace*, *Locomotion*, *Show Way*, *Feathers*, and *Miracle's Boys*.

~ LANGUAGE ARTS ~

Considering Character

"I Am" and Biopoems are great ways to practice descriptive writing, to demonstrate reading comprehension, and to perform character analysis. Selecting a character from one of Jacqueline's books, have students complete the prompts about that character by following along on the worksheets provided in this booklet or, alternatively, students may create an original slideshow using PowerPoint or Movie Maker. Before students begin, model one version of each type of poem on the board or on chart paper and explain the elements that should be added to each line.

"I AM" POEM

FIRST STANZA

I am _____
(name the character)

I wonder _____
(something the character is actually curious about)

I hear _____
(an imaginary sound the character might hear)

I see _____
(an imaginary sight the character might see)

I want _____
(something the character truly desires)

SECOND STANZA

I pretend _____
(something the character actually pretends to do)

I feel _____
(a feeling about something imaginary)

I touch _____
(an imaginary touch)

I worry _____
(something that really bothers the character)

I cry _____
(something that makes the character very sad)

I am _____
(character's name repeated)

THIRD STANZA

I understand _____
(something the character knows is true)

I say _____
(something that the character believes in)

I dream _____
(something the character might actually dream about)

I try _____
(something the character really makes an effort about)

I hope _____
(something the character actually hopes for)

I am _____
(character's name repeated)

BIOPOEM

(first name)

(three traits that describe the character)

Relative of _____

Lover of _____

Who feels _____

Who needs _____

Who fears _____

Who gives _____

Who would like to see _____

Resident of _____

(last name)

CONNECT WITH ALL THESE TITLES BY JACQUELINE WOODSON

PICTURE BOOKS

Coming On Home Soon

978-0-399-23748-5 (HC) • \$16.99

Ages 5 up • Grades K up

- A Caldecott Honor Book
- An ALA Notable Book
- A *Booklist* Editor's Choice

Show Way

978-0-399-23749-2 (HC) • \$16.99

Ages 5 up • Grades K up

- A Newbery Honor Book
- An ALA Notable Book

The Other Side

978-0-399-23116-2 (HC) • \$16.99

Ages 5 up • Grades K up

- An ALA Notable Book
- A Texas Bluebonnet List Selection
- A *School Library Journal* Best Book Selection
- A *Booklist* Editor's Choice

Pecan Pie Baby

978-0-399-23987-8 (HC) • \$16.99

Ages 5-8 • Grades K-3



NOVELS

Between Madison and Palmetto

978-0-698-11958-1 (PB) • \$5.99

Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7

Maizon at Blue Hill

978-0-698-11957-4 (PB) • \$5.99

Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7

Last Summer with Maizon

978-0-698-11929-1 (PB) • \$5.99

Ages 8-12 • Grades 3-7

Feathers

978-0-399-23989-2 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-241198-8 (PB) • \$6.99

Ages 8 up • Grades 3 up

- A Newbery Honor Book
- An ALA Notable Book

Locomotion

978-0-399-23115-5 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-241552-8 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

- A National Book Award Finalist
- A Coretta Scott King Honor Book
- A *Horn Book* Fanfare List Selection
- A *School Library Journal* Best Book
- An IRA-CBC Children's Choice Book

Peace, Locomotion

978-0-399-24655-5 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-241512-2 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

After Tupac and D Foster

978-0-399-24654-8 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-241399-9 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

- A Newbery Honor Book
- An ALA Notable Book

If You Come Softly

978-0-399-23112-4 (HC) • \$17.99

978-0-14-241522-1 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

Behind You

978-0-399-23988-5 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-240390-7 (HC) • \$5.99

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

- An ALA YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers
- An ALA YALSA Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults Selection

The Dear One

978-0-14-250190-0 (PB) • \$6.99

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun

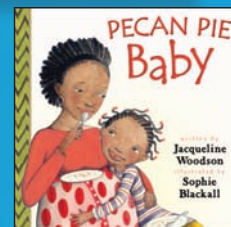
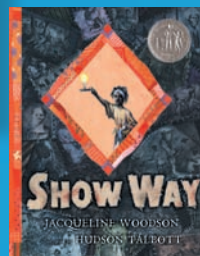
978-0-14-241641-9 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

The House You Pass On the Way

978-0-14-250191-7 (PB) • \$5.99

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up



Hush

978-0-399-23114-8 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-241551-1 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

- A National Book Award Finalist
- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- A *School Library Journal* Best Book
- A *Booklist* Editor's Choice
- A Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year Selection

I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This

978-0-14-240555-0 (PB) • \$5.99

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

Lena

978-0-14-240616-8 (PB) • \$5.99

Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

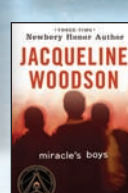
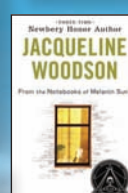
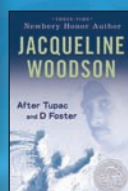
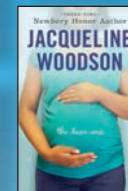
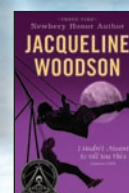
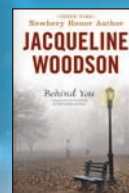
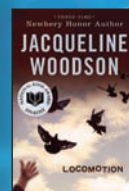
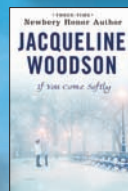
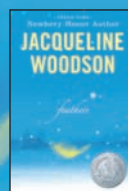
Miracle's Boys

978-0-399-23113-1 (HC) • \$15.99

978-0-14-241553-5 (PB) • \$7.99

Ages 10 up • Grades 5 up

- A Coretta Scott King Award Winner
- A *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize Winner
- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults



G. P. Putnam's Sons • Puffin Books

Divisions of Penguin Young Readers Group www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians • www.jacquelinewoodson.com
9783001165107