



11AP – Socratic Circle
Their Eyes Were Watching God

1. Hurston believed that “African Americans didn’t need approval or help from Caucasian Americans to succeed.” Do you see this mindset present in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* or do you think the novel contradicts this opinion?
2. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is concerned with issues of speech and how speech is both a mechanism of control and a vehicle of liberation. Yet Janie remains silent during key moments in her life. Discuss the role of silence in the book and how that role changes throughout the novel.
3. What do you think of Hurston’s decision to tell Janie’s story through the use of flashback? How does her choice affect the audience’s reaction/reception of the novel? Does it strengthen her message or weaken it?
4. Little of Hurston’s work was published during the Harlem Renaissance, yet her ability to tell witty stories and to stir controversy made her a favorite guest at elite Harlem parties. Can you think of some of the passages of wit and humor in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*? What purpose do they serve?
5. How does Janie’s journey – from West Florida, to Eatonville, to the Everglades – represent her and the novel’s increasing immersion in black culture and traditions?

Tips for Success:

1. Textual evidence is key to developing quality responses. Look for just the right quotes to use.
2. Review the “Socratic Circle Preparation Guide” (blue sheet) for detailed instructions on how to complete your assignment.
3. Submit the completed document to Turnitin.com.
4. Your typed responses and Turnitin originality report are due together on the assigned due date. Any late assignment will be a 70% prior to grading.