

Columbus City Schools
English Language Arts Curriculum
Reading

<p>Course/Grade English 11</p>	<p>Genre/Text Selection Fiction: “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker Poetry: “For My Sister Molly Who in the Fifties” by Alice Walker; “The Century Quilt” by Marilyn Nelson Waniek</p>	<p>Pacing 11 days</p>
<p>Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension</p> <p>The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts. (CCSS, Introduction, 8)</p>		
<p>Note on range and content of student reading</p> <p>To become college and career ready, students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries. Such works offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students’ own thinking and writing. Along with high-quality contemporary works, these texts should be chosen from among seminal U.S. documents, the classics of American literature, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts. (CCSS, College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, 35)</p>		
<p>An integrated model of literacy</p> <p>Although the Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity, the processes of communication are closely connected, as reflected throughout the Common Core State Standards document. For example, Writing standard 9 requires that students be able to write about what they read. Likewise, Speaking and Listening standard 4 sets the expectation that students will share findings from their research. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)</p>		
<p>Research and media skills blended into the Standards as a whole</p> <p>To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today’s curriculum. In like fashion, research and media skills and understanding are embedded throughout the Standards rather than treated in a separate section. (CCSS, Introduction, 4)</p>		

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Strands/Topics

Standard Statements

Reading Literature/Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Reading Literature/Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Reading Literature/Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing/Text Types and Purposes

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Writing/Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Writing/Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Writing/Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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Speaking and Listening/Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Speaking and Listening/Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Language/Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Language/Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Language/Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

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Instructional Strategies

Day One: Creating a Frame for Alice Walker's "Everyday Use"

Marcus Garvey Quotation and Poster Analysis

Project the image of the Black History Month Tribute Design poster of Marcus Garvey by Slim the Phenomenon:

<http://diasporicroots.tumblr.com/image/20039353485>

Ask students to write a personal response to the claim "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." Instruct them to explain Garvey's claim and then provide examples from their own lives, history, or other works of literature and film that illustrate their understanding of this claim. You may wish to give students some background information about Marcus Garvey and the United Negro Improvement Association. (National Humanities Center website on Marcus Garvey (<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/garvey.htm>) and NPR's American Experience website on Marcus Garvey (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peopleevents/e_unia.html) are rich sites for further information. Additionally, UCLA's African Studies Center has a website that includes many Garvey papers which may be of use for analyzing primary source documents: <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/>.

Have students meet in small groups to share their responses and examples. Come back as a whole group and share the responses creating a class list of examples on the overhead, whiteboard, or document projector.

Return to the prompt image and examine how the artist's depiction of the quotation reveals his understanding and support of its meaning.

Have students speculate on the intended effect of the following design choices:

1. The image of Garvey emerging from the top of the African continent
2. The quotation left justified to follow the border of the eastern side of the continent
3. The yellowish background paper with what appears to be water stains
4. The purpose and treatment of the colors red, green, black, yellow, orange, and brown
5. The image of the roots extending below the continent and reaching into the name of Marcus Garvey
6. The varying size of the font
7. Any other design element students may discover

EXIT TICKET:

Ask students to explain what they think Garvey means by "people," "history," "origin," and "culture." Each of these concepts is loaded with meaning. Have them identify at least two associations for each. For example: "people" could mean one's race, one's ethnicity, one's nationality, one's religion, one's family (among other associations). Encourage students to generate as many associations as possible.

Day Two: Extending the Frame: Alice Walker Poem

Revisit the exit ticket responses from the day before. The aim of the exit ticket and the follow-up discussion is for students to begin to grasp how complicated such a claim really is. How do we define who we are? What does "history" mean? What does "culture" mean? Who decides these meanings? What power do the definitions have in shaping our understanding of who we are?

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Have the students read the poem “For My Sister Who in the Fifties” by Alice Walker (**appendix: “Walker Poem and Questions”**). Read the poem out loud (or have strong readers read the poem) and then work through the questions together.

Days Three and Four: Preparing for Symbolic Analysis: Exploring Quilt Culture

Explain that the story the class is about to read includes a quilt as its central symbol. Ask students to share what they know about quilts and the history of the craft. Perhaps some of their family members make quilts or have quilts within the family. Discuss the practical, aesthetic, and historical value of quilts. Then assign a research activity where students explore quilts by investigating the Library of Congress website for American Memory: Quilts and Quiltmaking in America 1978-1996.

Break the class into small groups and have each group research one of the subjects below:

1. The aesthetics of quilt making
2. Quilts as commemoration
3. Quilts and economics
4. Quilts and heritage
5. Quilts as pastime
6. Traditional quilt design
7. African quilt tradition
8. Quilts and legacy

Each research group must provide information about their topic and include three sources: at least one image of a quilt that exemplifies a key element of their research, a transcribed recording of a testimonial by a quilter, and secondary source for information found in one of the essay sections or biography sections on the website. Students may also incorporate sources from outside research.

After the groups present, conclude with the image and personal statement of Laquita Tummings who won the judges’ award for her quilt entitled *My Heritage*: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/qlt:@FIELD\(SUBJ+@od1\(+pattern++broken+star+\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/qlt:@FIELD(SUBJ+@od1(+pattern++broken+star+)))

After projecting the image of the award-winning quilt, have the students read her personal statement and answer the following questions:

1. What is the significance of Tummings’ color choices?
2. What is the significance of her fabric choices?
3. Explain the significance of Tummings’ childhood experiences with quilts.
4. How is this quilt different from those of her childhood?
5. How is her quilt a commemoration of and tribute to her grandmother?
6. How has her design blended her personal history and family with a broader cultural history?
7. How is quilting both a utilitarian craft as well as the expression of deep personal and cultural aesthetic?

EXIT TICKET: Have students write down three things they learned about quilts and quilt making as a result of the research project.

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Day Five: Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use,” Draft One Reading

Briefly introduce the story (you may wish to provide some background information about Alice Walker as provided in the Pearson text on page 1311 and ask students to discuss the Activating Prior Knowledge activity described on page 1312). Then ask students to read the story (1312-1320) either silently or together as a class. Instruct students to use the following questions as a guide to their first reading. At the conclusion of the first reading, they should be able to discuss these initial questions:

1. Where does the story take place?
2. Who is the narrator? How does her voice shape the events of the story she narrates?
3. What are the differences between Dee and Maggie?
4. What are some of the conflicts that emerge as the story progresses?
5. What is the turning point in the story?

Days Six and Seven: In-Progress Skill

Second-Draft Reading: Close-Reading of the first half of the story.

After students have discussed their answers to the first-draft reading questions, begin a second-draft reading together as a class, reading aloud and discussing the text-dependent questions in the table below:

Text Under Discussion	Vocabulary	Text-Dependent Questions
<p style="text-align: center;">Everyday Use by Alice Walker</p> <p>I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so clean and wavy yesterday afternoon. A yard like this is more comfortable than most people know. It is not just a yard. It is like an extended living room. When the hard clay is swept clean as a floor and the fine sand around the edges lined with tiny, irregular grooves, anyone can come and sit and look up into the elm tree and wait for the breezes that never come inside the house.</p> <p>Maggie will be nervous until after her sister goes: she will stand hopelessly in corners, homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs, eying her sister with a mixture of envy and awe. She thinks her sister has held life always in the palm of one hand, that "no" is a word the</p>	<p>homely: plain; unattractive</p>	<p>(Q1) From what point of view is the story told? Who is the narrator? What limitations or affordances should we consider regarding this narrative stance? <i>We have a first person, unreliable narrator in Mrs. Johnson. We must be aware that the story she is telling is from her point of view, with her values, biases, and perceptions (or misperceptions) informing her story-telling. We should also be aware that readers tend to identify with the narrator, championing her attitudes, perhaps uncritically.</i></p> <p>(Q2) Walker opens the story with a description of the setting. What atmosphere does Walker create through this description? Cite the details that contribute to the atmosphere. (Compare the opening description with the story’s closing.) <i>Critics have compared Walker’s description of the narrator’s yard in the first paragraph to a Zen garden insofar as it suggests a peaceful, tranquil place of contemplation and stillness. Maggie and the narrator have swept the “hard clay” making it clean and creating a wave-like pattern along the edges. The narrator also celebrates the special “comfort” of the “extended living room” that has the added benefit of “breezes that never come inside the house.” Such a serene atmosphere contributes to the frame of the story that encloses the scene of conflict heralded by Dee’s arrival. By the close of the story, Walker will return the reader to a state of serenity as she describes Maggie and the narrator sitting on the porch “just enjoying, until it was time to go in the house and go to bed.”</i></p>

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<p>world never learned to say to her.</p> <p>You've no doubt seen those TV shows where the child who has "made it" is confronted, as a surprise, by her own mother and father, tottering in weakly from backstage. (A pleasant surprise, of course: What would they do if parent and child came on the show only to curse out and insult each other?) On TV mother and child embrace and smile into each other's faces. Sometimes the mother and father weep, the child wraps them in her arms and leans across the table to tell how she would not have made it without their help. I have seen these programs.</p> <p>Sometimes I dream a dream in which Dee and I are suddenly brought together on a TV program of this sort. Out of a dark and soft-seated limousine I am ushered into a bright room filled with many people. There I meet a smiling, gray, sporty man like Johnny Carson who shakes my hand and tells me what a fine girl I have. Then we are on the stage and Dee is embracing me with tears in her eyes. She pins on my dress a large orchid, even though she has told me once that she thinks orchids are tacky flowers.</p> <p>In real life I am a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. In the winter I wear flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day. I can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man. My fat keeps me hot in zero weather. I can work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing; I can eat pork liver cooked over the open fire minutes after it comes steaming from the hog. One winter I knocked a bull calf straight in the brain between the eyes</p>	<p>tacky: crass; tasteless</p>	<p>(Q3) Notice that Walker withholds the name of Dee, instead referring to the ambiguous "her." What is the effect of this delayed identification? <i>It creates suspense in the mind of the reader. We learn of the narrator and Maggie's attitude toward the sister, their preparations and anxieties related to her arrival, before we know anything concrete or factual about Dee.</i></p> <p>(Q4) How does the narrator characterize Maggie's attitude toward her sister? <i>Maggie is both envious and somewhat intimidated by her sister. Walker characterizes her attitude as a mixture of "envy and awe." The word "awe" in particular contributes to a larger than life quality in Dee. She seems to be endowed with special qualities that exacerbate Maggie's feelings of shame and inferiority.</i></p> <p>(Q5) What is the significance of the television show? How does it contribute to the narrator's attitude toward the reunion with her daughter? <i>The television show represents an idealized image of family reunion. It, by contrast, highlights the less than ideal version the narrator expects to have with her daughter.</i></p> <p>(Q6) Examine the imagery of the narrator's dream. How has she been transformed in this dream sequence? What is her attitude toward this transformation? <i>The narrator has been transformed into the image of the mother she believes her daughter would like her to be: thinner, lighter, wittier, and more conventionally attractive. The narrator does not value this transformed image of herself, for it is unrealistic.</i></p> <p>(Q7) How does Walker draw on cultural norms in this dream sequence? What might she be implying is the source of our perceptions of family? Identity? <i>Walker draws on the media's presentations of family and reunion. By referencing "Johnny Carson," Walker implies that these images are derived in the white male power structures that dominate social construction of family, race, and identity.</i></p> <p>(Q8) How does the narrator describe herself in "real life"? What is her attitude toward her own capabilities? <i>The narrator describes herself in terms of her capabilities: she is strong and self-sufficient and takes pride in these attributes.</i></p> <p>(Q9) How does Walker's syntax in this section contribute to the narrator's tone of self-regard? <i>Walker uses largely short simple sentences with strong action verbs to</i></p>
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<p>with a sledge hammer and had the meat hung up to chill before nightfall. But of course all this does not show on television. I am the way my daughter would want me to be: a hundred pounds lighter, my skin like an uncooked barley pancake. My hair glistens in the hot bright lights. Johnny Carson has much to do to keep up with my quick and witty tongue.</p> <p>But that is a mistake. I know even before I wake up. Who ever knew a Johnson with a quick tongue? Who can even imagine me looking a strange white man in the eye? It seems to me I have talked to them always with one foot raised in flight, with my head turned in whichever way is farthest from them. Dee, though. She would always look anyone in the eye. Hesitation was no part of her nature.</p> <p>"How do I look, Mama?" Maggie says, showing just enough of her thin body enveloped in pink skirt and red blouse for me to know she's there, almost hidden by the door.</p> <p>"Come out into the yard," I say.</p> <p>Have you ever seen a lame animal, perhaps a dog run over by some careless person rich enough to own a car, sidle up to someone who is ignorant enough to be kind to him? That is the way my Maggie walks. She has been like this, chin on chest, eyes on ground, feet in shuffle, ever since the fire that burned the other house to the ground.</p> <p>Dee is lighter than Maggie, with nicer hair and a fuller figure. She's a woman now, though sometimes I forget. How long</p>	<p>barley: a common cereal grain</p> <p>witty: clever; humorous</p> <p>sidle: creep; slink</p>	<p><i>characterize the narrator's simple strength. Additionally, Walker employs anaphora by repeating the clause "I can" to create a refrain-like effect that emphasizes her capacities: "I can kill....I can work...I can eat."</i></p> <p>(Q10) When the narrator describes dismissing the idealized image of herself as clearly the stuff of dreams, she does so by contrasting her actual relationship to white men. How does she interact with whites as reflected in this passage? How does she contrast her daughter Dee's interaction with whites? What is her attitude toward Dee's interactions?</p> <p><i>The narrator describes her fear and "hesitation" with whites. She describes a tableau in which she does not make eye contact and "always with one foot raised in flight." By contrast, her daughter Dee "would always look anyone in the eye." The narrator admires her daughter's spirit and self-confidence.</i></p> <p>(Q11) How does the narrator's description of Maggie highlight her reserve? <i>Maggie is "thin" and "enveloped" in her clothing. She appears "almost hidden by the door." This description in concert with the narrator's earlier description of Maggie as "nervous," "homely," and "ashamed" paint a picture of a young woman who is not just reserved, but weak and abashed.</i></p> <p>(Q12) How does the narrator describe Maggie's gait? To what does she compare Maggie and how does this characterization further contrast with the image Walker has created so far of Maggie's sister? <i>The narrator compares Maggie to a "lame animal" who "sidle[s]" and "shuffle[s]." This image contrasts with the image of a confident, straightforward young woman who feels equal to those whom others find superior.</i></p> <p>(Q13) What earlier experience may have contributed to Maggie's fear and insecurity? <i>The narrator traces Maggie's shy demeanor back to the time when their first home burned during which Maggie was severely burned herself and still shows scars.</i></p> <p>(Q14) Notice the narrator's description of Dee and how it contrasts with that of Maggie.</p>
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ago was it that the other house burned? Ten, twelve years? Sometimes I can still hear the flames and feel Maggie's arms sticking to me, her hair smoking and her dress falling off her in little black papery flakes. Her eyes seemed stretched open, blazed open by the flames reflected in them. And Dee. I see her standing off under the sweet gum tree she used to dig gum out of; a look of concentration on her face as she watched the last dingy gray board of the house fall in toward the red-hot brick chimney. Why don't you do a dance around the ashes? I'd wanted to ask her. She had hated the house that much.

I used to think she hated Maggie, too. But that was before we raised money, the church and me, to send her to Augusta to school. She used to read to us without pity; forcing words, lies, other folks' habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice. She washed us in a river of make-believe, burned us with a lot of knowledge we didn't necessarily need to know. Pressed us to her with the serious way she read, to shove us away at just the moment, like dimwits, we seemed about to understand.

Dee wanted nice things. A yellow **organdy** dress to wear to her graduation from high school; black pumps to match a green suit she'd made from an old suit somebody gave me. She was determined to stare down any disaster in her efforts. Her eyelids would not flicker for minutes at a time. Often I fought off the temptation to shake her. At sixteen she had a style of her own: and knew what style was.

organdy: a cotton fabric with a crisp finish that is often used in dress making

The narrator describes Dee as a “woman” whereas she compares Maggie to a dog. Dee is lighter and more traditionally feminine than Maggie, who is thin and of a darker complexion.

(Q15) Contrast the reaction each daughter has to the burning of the house. What might the burning of their first house symbolize?

Maggie was nearly consumed by the fire. Walker describes her as being held by the narrator with her “hair smoking and her dress falling off in little papery flakes.” The description of Maggie’s eyes reveal a state of shock and horror as they were both “stretched” and “blazed” open. By contrast, the narrator recalls Dee standing apart and aloof from the fire, not in a state of shock, but in a state of smug satisfaction.

(Q16) Explain the significance of the narrator’s desire to ask Dee, “Why don’t you do a dance around the ashes?” What does this question reveal about the narrator’s attitude toward Dee? What does it reveal about Dee’s attitude toward the burning of the house? The fact that the narrator did not ask Dee this question reveals what about their relationship that has been hitherto hinted at? *The narrator recalls this traumatic event with bitter resentment. She recognizes that Dee “hated the house” and that hate separated her from the family that was victimized by the fire—namely, Maggie. The narrator’s suppression of this question supports the earlier statement made about Dee that she “held life always in the palm of one hand, that ‘no’ is a word the world never learned to say to her.”*

(Q17) The narrator’s thoughts turn after this recollection to the occasion of Dee’s schooling. What is the narrator’s attitude toward Dee’s education and her literacy in particular? Note in particular the diction that reveals this attitude. How do the narrator’s actions complicate her attitude toward Dee’s education? *The narrator characterizes Dee’s education as a weapon she used to further differentiate herself from her mother and sister. Walker’s language reveals the narrator’s critical attitude toward both education and Dee’s attempt to engage her mother and sister with the stories she was learning. Walker portrays Dee as reading “without pity; forcing words” which the narrator sees as “lies” upon her and Maggie. Words such as “trapped,” “burned,” “pressed,” and “shove” characterize this exchange as oppressive and hostile. However, despite this critical portrayal of education and literacy, the narrator nevertheless raised money to help send Dee to college. The narrator, while she herself doesn’t see the value in education, does recognize Dee’s desire and aptitude and lovingly*

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I never had an education myself. After second grade the school was closed down. Don't ask me why: in 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now. Sometimes Maggie reads to me. She stumbles along good-naturedly but can't see well. She knows she is not bright. Like good looks and money, quickness passes her by. She will marry John Thomas (who has mossy teeth in an earnest face) and then I'll be free to sit here and I guess just sing church songs to myself. Although I never was a good singer. Never could carry a tune. I was always better at a man's job. I used to love to milk till I was hooked in the side in '49. Cows are soothing and slow and don't bother you, unless you try to milk them the wrong way.

I have deliberately turned my back on the house. It is three rooms, just like the one that burned, except the roof is tin; they don't make shingle roofs any more. There are no real windows, just some holes cut in the sides, like the portholes in a ship, but not round and not square, with rawhide holding the shutters up on the outside. This house is in a pasture, too, like the other one. No doubt when Dee sees it she will want to tear it down. She wrote me once that no matter where we "choose" to live, she will manage to come see us. But she will never bring her friends. Maggie and I thought about this and Maggie asked me, "Mama, when did Dee ever have any friends?"

She had a few. **Furtive** boys in pink shirts hanging about on washday after school. Nervous girls who never laughed. Impressed with her they worshiped the well-turned phrase, the cute shape, the scalding humor that erupted like

Furtive: secretive; stealthy

sacrifices to help her daughter realize her ambitions.

(Q18) What does the narrator's description of Dee's desire for "nice things" reflect about Dee's values?

Dee is concerned with fashion and style. She values social trends.

(Q19) How does Walker's description of Dee's eyes develop a motif? *Walker repeatedly portrays Dee's eyes as open and confident. She will "stare down" any confrontation without "flicker[ing]" an eyelid. Not only is Walker developing the motif of eyes to convey Dee's confidence and superiority, she also repeats the narrator's diffidence in the face of Dee's strength. No one, not even her own mother, will stand up to Dee.*

(Q20) Compare the narrator and Maggie's experience with education to that of Dee's.

The narrator acknowledges that she did not go beyond the second grade in education nor does she know why. The school closed and nobody in 1927 seemed to object. Similarly, Maggie has not received an advanced education for "she is not bright." Both the narrator and Maggie have accepted their current levels of education as somehow natural whereas Dee has pursued higher education and values it greatly.

(Q21) Why does Walker include the detail about the narrator's affinity for cows?

Once again Walker employs animal imagery to characterize the narrator's acceptance of the status quo. She identifies with cows, for they, like her, and by extension Maggie, "are soothing and slow." However, Walker foreshadows the rising action and climax of the story by including the detail about cows being "milk[ed] the wrong way." If pushed, cows will "hook" you.

(Q22) Notice how similar the narrator's current house is to the one that burned down. What does this similarity reveal about the narrator?

The similarity reveals two qualities: one, that the narrator and Maggie are creatures of habit; they have grown accustomed to a way of life and find satisfaction in the status quo. Additionally, the description of the house reveals that they are impoverished and have little means to upgrade their living conditions.

(Q23) Why does Walker put the word "choose" in quotation marks?

The punctuation reveals the narrator's disdain towards her daughter's attitude toward the house. The quotation marks reveal that Dee believes that the narrator intentionally chooses this lifestyle—which, in part, she does, while the

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<p>bubbles in lye. She read to them.</p> <p>When she was courting Jimmy T she didn't have much time to pay to us, but turned all her faultfinding power on him. He flew to marry a cheap city girl from a family of ignorant flashy people. She hardly had time to recompose herself.</p> <p>When she comes I will meet—but there they are!</p> <p>Maggie attempts to make a dash for the house, in her shuffling way, but I stay her with my hand. "Come back here," I say. And she stops and tries to dig a well in the sand with her toe.</p> <p>It is hard to see them clearly through the strong sun. But even the first glimpse of leg out of the car tells me it is Dee. Her feet were always neat-looking, as if God himself had shaped them with a certain style. From the other side of the car comes a short, stocky man. Hair is all over his head a foot long and hanging from his chin like a kinky mule tail. I hear Maggie suck in her breath. "Uhhnnh," is what it sounds like. Like when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road. "Uhhnnh."</p> <p>Dee next. A dress down to the ground, in this hot weather. A dress so loud it hurts my eyes. There are yellows and oranges enough to throw back the light of the sun. I feel my whole face warming from the heat waves it throws out. Earrings gold, too, and hanging down to her shoulders. Bracelets dangling and making noises when she moves her arm up to shake the folds of the dress out of her armpits.</p>	<p>lye: a strong chemical used in soaps</p> <p>recompose: restore; rearrange</p>	<p><i>narrator's attitude suggests that their socio-economic status severely limits their ability to live elsewhere.</i></p> <p>(Q24) What is the significance of the description of Dee's friends? How does this description reinforce a central quality of Dee? <i>The friends admire Dee much like the narrator and Maggie do. They look up to her confidence but seem intimidated by her intellect.</i></p> <p>(Q25) To what does Walker compare Dee's humor? What is Walker suggesting about Dee's humor through this comparison? <i>Walker uses metaphor to compare Dee's humor to something that burns like hot water, for it is "scalding humor." She extends this comparison through simile by evoking the image of bubbles in lye. This extended comparison suggests Dee's humor is sarcastic and hurtful.</i></p> <p>(Q26) What does the anecdote about Jimmy T reveal about Dee's personality? <i>Dee can be overbearingly critical. Walker's description of Jimmy T flying "to marry a cheap city girl" suggests that he could not tolerate Dee's "faultfinding power."</i></p> <p>(Q27) Notice the pattern of flight diction in the story. What is the purpose of this pattern? <i>Walker has used flight to characterize the narrator and now Jimmy T. This pattern evokes the concept of "fight versus flight." Dee, as a predatory force, initiates the survival instinct in others. Instead of standing up to Dee and fighting, they instead choose to flee in order to protect themselves.</i></p> <p>(Q28) Notice how Maggie reacts to Dee's arrival. How does it extend the flight pattern? <i>Maggie "attempts to make a dash for the house" as if to protect herself from the arrival of Dee.</i></p> <p>(Q29) How do the narrator and Maggie react to the appearance of Dee and the visitor? <i>Both are shocked by their unusual appearance. Maggie, in particular, finds the appearance of Hakim-a-barber objectionable. The narrator explains Maggie's expression of "Uhhnnh" is "like when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot." Clearly the attitude is one of distaste.</i></p> <p>(Q30) How does the narrator's attitude toward Dee's dress change through the description? <i>At first the narrator registers aversion to Dee's dress. It strikes her as impractical "in this hot weather," and the bright colors "so loud it hurts my eyes." Yet, when</i></p>
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<p>The dress is loose and flows, and as she walks closer, I like it. I hear Maggie go "Uhhnnh" again. It is her sister's hair. It stands straight up like the wool on a sheep. It is black as night and around the edges are two long pigtails that rope about like small lizards disappearing behind her ears.</p> <p>"Wa-su-zo-Tean-o!" she says, coming on in that gliding way the dress makes her move. The short stocky fellow with the hair to his navel is all grinning and he follows up with "Asalamalakim, my mother and sister!" He moves to hug Maggie but she falls back, right up against the back of my chair. I feel her trembling there and when I look up I see the perspiration falling off her chin.</p> <p>"Don't get up," says Dee. Since I am stout it takes something of a push. You can see me trying to move a second or two before I make it. She turns, showing white heels through her sandals, and goes back to the car. Out she peeks next with a Polaroid. She stoops down quickly and lines up picture after picture of me sitting there in front of the house with Maggie cowering behind me. She never takes a shot without making sure the house is included. When a cow comes nibbling around the edge of the yard she snaps it and me and Maggie and the house. Then she puts the Polaroid in the back seat of the car, and comes up and kisses me on the forehead.</p> <p>Meanwhile Asalamalakim is going through motions with Maggie's hand. Maggie's hand is as limp as a fish, and probably as cold, despite the sweat, and she keeps trying to pull it back. It looks like Asalamalakim wants to shake hands but wants to do it fancy. Or maybe he don't know how</p>	<p>Wa-su-zo-Tean-o: African greeting Asalamalakim: Islamic saying meaning "Peace be with you"</p> <p>cowering: cowering; recoiling</p>	<p><i>the narrator sees Dee emerge from the car and shake the dress loose, she admits, "I like it."</i></p> <p>(Q31) What is the significance of the hair style of Dee and Hakim-a-barber? <i>Both Dee and Hakim-a-barber wear their hair in natural styles. Their hair has not been relaxed by chemicals like the image present in the Johnny Carson dream sequence. Their hair reflects their political ideology.</i></p> <p>(Q32) Compare and contrast the greetings of Dee with that of Hakim-a-barber. <i>Dee greets her family with an African expression that they do not understand. She comes toward them but makes no effort to embrace them. Instead, she goes to the car to retrieve a camera with which she takes several pictures of her family and the house. While Hakim-a-barber also greets them with an expression that they likely do not understand, he is warm and acknowledges them as family.</i></p> <p>(Q33) What is ironic about Dee's desire to photograph the house? <i>Dee has always expressed contempt for the house yet now she wants to document it.</i></p> <p>(Q34) What is the significance of Hakim-a-barber's attempt to shake hands with Maggie? <i>Again, we see him trying to connect with Maggie and her reluctance and fear in the presence of strangers. We also see him giving up rather quickly in his attempt to shake hands with Maggie. Perhaps this acquiescence reveals his insincerity.</i></p>
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<p>people shake hands. Anyhow, he soon gives up on Maggie.</p> <p>"Well," I say. "Dee."</p> <p>"No, Mama," she says. "Not 'Dee,' Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo!"</p> <p>"What happened to 'Dee'?" I wanted to know.</p> <p>"She's dead," Wangero said. "I couldn't bear it any longer, being named after the people who oppress me."</p> <p>"You know as well as me you was named after your aunt Dicie," I said. Dicie is my sister. She named Dee. We called her "Big Dee" after Dee was born.</p> <p>"But who was she named after?" asked Wangero.</p> <p>"I guess after Grandma Dee," I said.</p> <p>"And who was she named after?" asked Wangero.</p> <p>"Her mother," I said, and saw Wangero was getting tired.</p> <p>"That's about as far back as I can trace it," I said. Though, in fact, I probably could have carried it back beyond the Civil War through the branches.</p>		<p>(Q35) Why has Dee changed her name? <i>Dee rejects her given name as a yoke of oppression. She signifies her liberation by assuming a new African identity.</i></p> <p>(Q36) Notice the shift from present tense to past tense. Why does Walker choose this moment to shift tenses and what is the effect of telling the rest of the story in past tense? <i>Dee's rejection of her family as symbolized by the name change marks a turning point in the narrator's consciousness. Up to this point the narrator has been telling the story as it occurs but from here on out, Walker uses the past tense to emphasize the narrator's growing control. Walker's use of tense in the first part of the story reveals a conflicted psyche on the part of the narrator. She wants to be accepted by her sophisticated daughter but also wants to accept herself and her lifestyle without internalizing the judgment of her daughter or society at large. From this point on, we see a narrator that is less ambivalent and more self-righteous.</i></p> <p>(Q37) How does the narrator's account of Dee's naming conflict with Dee/Wangero's account? <i>The narrator explains that Dee's name is one that has been passed down through the family; it, therefore, represents familial history, unity, and legacy. Dee/Wangero rejects this account, instead claiming that despite this family tradition, it is nonetheless a tradition originated in slavery and should therefore be rejected.</i></p> <p>(Q38) Ask students to evaluate both arguments. <i>Answers will vary.</i></p>
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Day Eight: In-Progress Skill: Examining Characterization

This assignment is designed to help students appreciate Walker's complex characterization. In this story, she creates foil characters not only to highlight the qualities of the sisters Maggie and Dee/Wangero, but also to highlight qualities in the narrator. Students will examine the different methods of characterization outlined with evidence and explain what each reveals about the character. They will conclude their analyses with an exploration of the purpose of the foil technique. See the handout entitled "Character Foils" (**appendix**) for a graphic organizer, teacher example, and outlined evidence ready for student analysis.

Day Nine: In-Progress Skill: Examining Symbolism

Like characterization, a key literary technique Walker employs to great effect is symbolism. While Walker deftly uses several symbols in this story—including the butter churn and dasher, the benches, the yard, and Johnny Carson—the most complex of these is that of the quilt. This assignment is designed to guide students through key passages that develop the symbolism of the quilt. See the handouts on quilt symbolism for both teacher and student (**appendix**) that will guide students through this activity.

EXIT TICKET: What other symbol in the story is most consistent with the quilt? Explain the comparable qualities of both symbols.

Day Ten: Seminar Discussion

As a culminating discussion activity, assign students the following seminar prompt and devote one to two days for a rich discussion of the following critical stances. The seminar may also be easily adapted into a final essay assessment.

SEMINAR: The following excerpts reflect a spectrum of critical positions on Walker's short story. Prepare for seminar by first reading through the critics' eyes: support the claim made by each critic by citing three to five pieces of evidence you believe warrant their view. Then choose one critical stance to either support, challenge, or qualify in a more developed response. This is the position you will represent and argue in seminar.

- "In her name, her clothes, her hair, her sunglasses, her patronizing speech, and her black Muslim companion, Wangero proclaims a deplorable degree of alienation from the rural origins and family."
-David Cowart, "Heritage and Deracination in Walker's 'Everyday Use'" (172)
- "In contemporary writing, the quilt stands for a vanished past experience to which we have a troubled and ambivalent cultural relationship."
-Elaine Showalter, "Piecing and Writing" (228)
- "The story ends without any resolution between Dee/Wangero and her mother. Dee/Wangero brusquely leaves without the quilts and without any understanding of her mother's sense of heritage. And while the mother and Maggie retain the quilts, they remain bound by economic disparity and unenlightened about the way the Black Pride movement is giving voice and form to the very values they already hold. Consequently, both sides of the conflict remain impoverished both materially and spiritually."
-Joe Sarnowski, "Idealism and Pragmatism in 'Everyday Use'" (284-285)
- "Finally, then, in 'Everyday Use,' Walker shows that Mama's moment of triumph is achieved because she is able to attain a balance between the two types of her heritage represented by her very different daughters—at the end Mama combined Maggie's respect for tradition with Dee's pride and refusal to back down, the combination Walker seems to feel is necessary if true social change is to come about."
-Susan Farrell, "Fight vs. Flight: A Re-Evaluation of Dee in Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use'" (186)
- "But Walker's main purpose in the story seems to be to challenge the Black Power movement, and black people in general, to acknowledge and respect their American heritage."
- David White, "'Everyday Use': Defining African-American Heritage" <http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/alicew/davidwhite.htm>

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The Teaching Channel website has helpful videos and scoring guides for teacher use regarding Socratic seminars and their utility in helping students master the Common Core Standards: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/bring-socratic-seminars-to-the-classroom>.

Day Eleven: Essay Assessment

As a final written assessment, have students read the poem below (**appendix**) and write a well-organized and developed essay in which they compare and contrast the functions of the quilt symbolism in each piece of literature. How does each author employ literary techniques to develop the meaning of the quilt? How are these meanings similar and how do they differ? The following linked rubric may be easily adapted to function for poetry/short story comparative analysis: <http://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?code=V59AAC&sp=yes&>

The Century Quilt
for Sarah Mary Taylor, Quilter

by Marilyn Nelson Waniek

My sister and I were in love
with Meema's Indian blanket.
We fell asleep under army green
issued to Daddy by Supply.
When Meema came to live with us
she brought her medicines, her cane,
and the blanket I found on my sister's bed
the last time I visited her.
I remembered how I planned to inherit
that blanket, how we used to wrap ourselves
at play in its folds and be chieftains
and princesses.

Now I've found a quilt
I'd like to die under;
Six Van Dyke brown squares,
two white ones, and one square
the yellowbrown of Mama's cheeks.
Each square holds a sweet gum leaf
whose fingers I imagine
would caress me into the silence.

I think I'd have good dreams
for a hundred years under this quilt,

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as Meema must have, under her blanket,
dreamed she was a girl again in Kentucky
among her yellow sisters,
their grandfather's white family
nodding at them when they met.
When their father came home from his store
they cranked up the pianola
and all of the beautiful sisters
giggled and danced.
She must have dreamed about Mama
when the dancing was over:
lanky girl trailing after her father
through his Oklahoma field.
Perhaps under this quilt
I'd dream of myself,
of my childhood of miracles,
of my father's burnt umber pride,
my mother's ochre gentleness.
Within the dream of myself
perhaps I'd meet my son
or my other child, as yet unconceived.
I'd call it The Century Quilt,
after its pattern of leaves.

Instructional Resources

- "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker. Prentice Hall's *Literature: The American Experience* 2010
- Poster of Marcus Garvey <http://diasporicroots.tumblr.com/image/20039353485>
- National Humanities Center website on Marcus Garvey <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/twenty/tkeyinfo/garvey.htm>
- NPR's American Experience website on Marcus Garvey http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/garvey/peoplevents/e_unia.html
- UCLA's African Studies Center <http://www.international.ucla.edu/africa/mgpp/>
- *My Heritage*: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/qlt:@FIELD\(SUBJ+@od1\(+pattern++broken+star+\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/qlt:@FIELD(SUBJ+@od1(+pattern++broken+star+)))
- David White, "Everyday Use": Defining African-American Heritage" <http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/alicew/davidwhite.htm>
- Socratic Seminar <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/bring-socratic-seminars-to-the-classroom>
- Comparative analysis rubric <http://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?code=V59AAC&sp=yes&>
- Website about the history of African American quilting: http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history/afam.htm

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Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (Strategies for Diverse Learners)
See support materials at Pearsonsuccesnet: New Voices, New Frontiers

- <https://www.pearsonsuccesnet.com/snpapp/learn/navigate>

Professional Articles

- Alice Walker’s 1974 essay entitled “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: The Creativity of Black Women in the South”:
<http://www.msmagazine.com/spring2002/walker.asp>
- “In Spite of It All: A Reading of Alice Walker’s ‘Everyday Use’” by Sam Whitsitt: <http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/Bulgozdilmola/3744820.pdf>

English Language Arts Connections

Reading	Language	Speaking and Listening
Incorporate Reading (Literary or Informational Texts) standards as students conduct analysis of various print and non-print autobiographical texts. http://www.corestandards.org	Incorporate Language standards as students construct writing in terms of writing conventions, knowledge of language, and acquisition and use of vocabulary. http://www.corestandards.org	Incorporate Speaking and Listening standards as students engage in one-on-one, small group, and teacher-led collaborative discussions. http://www.corestandards.org

Appendix

NAME:

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**For My Sister Molly Who in the Fifties
by Alice Walker**

Once made a fairy rooster from
Mashed potatoes
Whose eyes I forget
But green onions were his tail
And his two legs were carrot sticks
A tomato slice his crown.
Who came home on vacation
When the sun was hot
And cooked
And cleaned
And minded least of all
The children's questions
A million or more
Pouring in on her
Who had been to school
And knew (and told us too) that certain
Words were no longer good
And taught me not to say us for we
No matter what "Sonny sayd" up the
road.

For my sister Molly who in the fifties
Knew Hamlet well and read into the night
And coached me in my songs of Africa
A continent I never knew
But learned to love

Because "they" said she could carry
A tune
And spoke in accents never heard
in Eatonton.
Who read from *Prose and Poetry*
And loved to read "Sam McGee from Tennessee"
On nights the fire was burning low
And Christmas wrapped in angel hair
And I for one prayed for snow.

Who in the fifties
Knew all the written things that made
Us laugh and stories by
The hour. Waking up the story buds
Like fruit. Who walked among the flowers
And brought them inside the house
And smelled as good as they
And looked as bright.
Who made dresses, braided
Hair. Moved chairs about
Hung things from walls
Ordered baths
Frowned upon wasp bites
And seemed to know the endings
Of all the tales
I had forgot.

Analysis and Discussion Questions:

1. Why does the speaker recall the anecdote about her sister making a "fairy rooster"? What trait of her sister does this memory reveal?
2. How do we know that the speaker and her sister were separated in youth?
3. How do the children interact with Molly? Why are they so eager to ask her so many questions? What do these questions reveal about their own level of education?
4. What has Molly learned about language as a result of her education?
5. What competing authorities on language does Walker reveal in this poem? With which does the speaker side? Why?
6. Why is the expression "Sonny sayd" in quotation marks?
7. Why is the word "they" within quotation marks?
8. Molly learns about Hamlet, *Poetry and Prose* as well as songs of Africa at her school. What does each of these subjects reveal about Molly's education?
9. How has this education changed Molly? In what ways are these changes desirable? In what ways are they undesirable?
10. Explain the significance of the line: "And I for one prayed for snow."
11. How does the speaker respond to the stories Molly tells?
12. Explain the metaphor and simile in the lines: "Waking up the story buds / like fruit."
13. Why does Molly rearrange the furniture, hang decorations on the walls, and order baths? What do these actions reveal about her character and her attitude toward her home?
14. What is the speaker's attitude toward her sister? Provide specific support for your determination of tone.
15. Explain the significance of the title of the poem.

CHARACTERIZATION: UNDERSTANDING FOILS

NAME:

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This assignment is designed to help you appreciate Walker's characterization. In this story, she creates foil characters to not only highlight the qualities of the sisters Maggie and Dee/Wangero, but also to highlight qualities in the narrator. Examine the different methods of characterization outlined with evidence in the chart below and explain what each reveals about the character. Conclude your analysis with an exploration of the purpose of the foil technique.

The term 'foil' refers to a literary device where the author creates a character whose primary purpose is to create a contrast to another character by laying emphasis or drawing attention to the latter's traits and characteristics through the former's obviously contradictory ones.

- Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms

CHARACTERIZATION	Maggie	Dee/Wangero	Narrator/Mama
Focus Area	Quotation / Explanation	Quotation / Explanation	Quotation / Explanation
Physical Description EXAMPLE	<p>"...homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs..."</p> <p>Maggie's physical description reflects past trauma and her present shy and meek demeanor.</p>	<p>"Dee is lighter than Maggie, with nicer hair and a fuller figure."</p> <p>Dee's description reflects that she more closely fulfills the gender roles of her society.</p>	<p>"...I am a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands."</p> <p>By contrast, the narrator is both stronger than either of her daughters and characterizes her strength in male terms. Her physical description conflicts with the gender expectations for women of her time period.</p>
Name	Maggie	Dee & Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo	Mrs. Johnson, Mama
Actions	"Maggie attempts to make a dash for the house, in her shuffling way..."	"Wa-su-zo-Tean-o!" she says, coming on in that gliding way the dress makes her move."	"Since I am stout, it takes something of a push. You can see me trying to move a second or two before I make it."

Speech	<p>"Uhhnnh."</p> <p>"I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts."</p>	<p>"You ought to try to make something of yourself, too, Maggie. It's really a new day for us."</p>	<p>"I reckon she would," I said. "God knows I been saving 'em for long enough with nobody using 'em."</p>
Relationship to men	<p>"She will marry John Thomas (who has mossy teeth in an earnest face)..."</p>	<p>"They didn't tell me, and I didn't ask, whether Wangero (Dee) had really gone and married him."</p>	<p>"...then I'll be free to sit here and I guess just sing church songs to myself."</p>
Relationship to past	<p>"'Maggie's brain is like an elephant's,' Wangero said, laughing."</p>	<p>"You just don't understand....Your heritage," she said.</p>	<p>"It is three rooms, just like the one that burned....The house is in a pasture, too, like the other one."</p>
Relationship to quilt	<p>"The truth is...I promised to give them quilts to Maggie, for when she marries John Thomas."</p>	<p>"I didn't want to bring up how I had offered Dee (Wangero) a quilt when she went away to college. Then she had told they were old-fashioned, out of style."</p> <p>"But they're priceless!"</p>	<p>"God knows I been saving 'em for long enough with nobody using 'em."</p>
<p>Conclusions: What is the significance of these methods of characterization? How do the contrasting characterizations of Maggie and Dee highlight attributes of the narrator?</p>			

QUILT SYMBOLISM: TEACHER VERSION

Quotation	Explanation of significance
<p>“They had been pieced by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee and me had hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them.”</p>	<p><i>It is significant that the quilts in question were made by the members of the family who share Dee’s birth name: her Aunt Dee and her Grandma Dee. While Dee/Wangero is willing to cast off her name, she wishes to reclaim other artifacts of the family that have more cultural cachet. The quilt, because it is a folk art that goes back to African textile traditions and which also reflects the African- American cultural past, are worth more to her than her individual family traditions.</i></p>
<p>“In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell’s Paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny match box, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra’s uniform that he wore in the Civil War.”</p>	<p><i>Walker describes the patches and pieces that make up the quilt as having belonged to earlier members of the family including grandparents and great grandparents going all the way back to the Civil War. Of note is the color of the uniform: Great Grandpa Ezra was a member of the Union army. The quilt, therefore, is symbolic not just of the familial past—as is valued by the narrator, but it also represents the nation’s history.</i></p>
<p>“‘Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts!’ she said. ‘She’d probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use.’”</p>	<p><i>Walker highlights the conflict in values between the narrator and Dee/Wangero by evoking the story’s title in Dee/Wangero’s exasperated comment. Maggie and the narrator value what is practical and useful; whereas Dee/Wangero values what is ideologically fashionable at the moment. Earlier in her life, she placed no value on the objects of the home including the quilts and the butter churn. But now that she sees these objects as representing her African heritage, she seeks to possess and display them as artifacts within her own home.</i></p>
<p>“‘She can always make some more,’ I said. ‘Maggie knows how to quilt.’”</p>	<p><i>Walker highlights Maggie’s connection with the traditions of her past not just through her memory of the family but also with her mastery of the arts that have been handed down through the family. Dee/Wangero, on the other hand, despite all her apparent valuation on her heritage, has no practical knowledge of her culture’s arts and crafts.</i></p>
<p>“When I looked at her like that something hit me in the top of my head and ran down to the soles of my feet. Just like when I’m in church and the spirit of God touches me and I get happy and shout. I did something I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero’s hands and dumped them into Maggie’s lap.”</p>	<p><i>In this climactic moment, the narrator refuses to submit to Dee’s wishes as she has done so in the past. Instead, she finally stands up to Dee and in effect, tells her “no” for the first time in her life. The narrator recognizes that Dee/Wangero’s desire for the quilts is not out of respect for her family or her claim to value her “heritage.” Instead, it is rooted in her desire to appear fashionable by co-opting the objects that will grant her acceptance into her new circle of friends. The narrator will no longer participate in her own exploitation by her daughter and severs her subordinate status by denying Dee/Wangero the quilts and giving them back to her daughter Maggie.</i></p>

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QUILT SYMBOLISM: While Walker deftly uses several symbols in this story—including the butter churn and dasher, the benches, the yard, and Johnny Carson—the most complex of these is that of the quilt. Carefully examine the excerpts below and explore the multiple layers of meaning Walker incorporates into her treatment of the quilt. How, ultimately, does this quilt function as a complex symbol in this story? How does it support characterization, action, mood, and theme? Use the example as a guide to your responses.

Quotation	Explanation of significance
“They had been pieced by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee and me had hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them.”	<i>It is significant that the quilts in question were made by the members of the family who share Dee’s birth name: her Aunt Dee and her Grandma Dee. While Dee/Wangero is willing to cast off her name, she wishes to reclaim other artifacts of the family that have more cultural cachet. The quilt, because it is a folk art that goes back to African textile traditions and which also reflects the African- American cultural past, are worth more to her than her individual family traditions.</i>
“In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell’s Paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny match box, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra’s uniform that he wore in the Civil War.”	
““Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts!’ she said. ‘She’d probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use.”	
““She can always make some more,’ I said. ‘Maggie knows how to quilt.”	
“When I looked at her like that something hit me in the top of my head and ran down to the soles of my feet. Just like when I’m in church and the spirit of God touches me and I get happy and shout. I did something I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero’s hands and dumped them into Maggie’s lap.”	

The Century Quilt
for Sarah Mary Taylor, Quilter

by Marilyn Nelson Waniek

My sister and I were in love
with Meema's Indian blanket.
We fell asleep under army green
issued to Daddy by Supply.
When Meema came to live with us
she brought her medicines, her cane,
and the blanket I found on my sister's bed
the last time I visited her.
I remembered how I planned to inherit
that blanket, how we used to wrap ourselves
at play in its folds and be chieftains
and princesses.

Now I've found a quilt
I'd like to die under;
Six Van Dyke brown squares,
two white ones, and one square
the yellowbrown of Mama's cheeks.
Each square holds a sweet gum leaf
whose fingers I imagine
would caress me into the silence.

I think I'd have good dreams
for a hundred years under this quilt,
as Meema must have, under her blanket,
dreamed she was a girl again in Kentucky
among her yellow sisters,
their grandfather's white family
nodding at them when they met.
When their father came home from his store
they cranked up the pianola
and all of the beautiful sisters
giggled and danced.
She must have dreamed about Mama
when the dancing was over:
lanky girl trailing after her father
through his Oklahoma field.
Perhaps under this quilt
I'd dream of myself,
of my childhood of miracles,
of my father's burnt umber pride,
my mother's ochre gentleness.
Within the dream of myself
perhaps I'd meet my son
or my other child, as yet unconceived.
I'd call it The Century Quilt,
after its pattern of leaves.