

JACQUELINE WOODSON

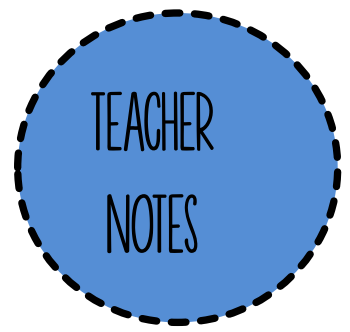
# BROWN GIRL DREAMING



GRADES  
9-12

BOOK CLUB  
DISCUSSION GUIDE

41  
QUESTIONS



## SUMMARY

*Brown Girl Dreaming* is the memoir of Jacqueline Woodson, a poet who deals with the prejudice faced as a young African American in a time of civil turmoil. Moving from the North, to the South, and finally to New York City,

## THEMES

This book is perfect for grades 9-12. There are themes of identity, a changing culture, self-identity, family relationships, and finding your own voice.

## PART I

1. Into what type of world was the narrator born?
2. What do you know about Martin Luther King, Jr, Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, James Baldwin, or Ruby Bridges? If you do not know about these individuals, take some time to research who they are.
3. What is the narrator's name? How did she come to have this name?
4. What is the history of Jacqueline's family?
5. In your opinion, is it important to know our family history? Why or why not?
6. What stories does the narrator share about her family?
7. Why does Jacqueline's father insist upon living in the north? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
8. Despite the prejudice she faces, why is Jacqueline's mother more comfortable in the south than in the north?
9. What happens to the narrator's parents?

## PART II

10. In your opinion, why does Jacqueline's mother move back to the south with her children? Do you think the move was what she expected? Why or why not?
11. According to the narrator, in what ways is southern society changing?
12. In what ways does Jacqueline's family work together to support each other both financially and emotionally?
13. How do Jacqueline's siblings react to living in the south?
14. In what ways does Jacqueline's mother teach her children about words and their importance?
15. What is the "war" going on in South Carolina? In what ways does Jacqueline's family contribute to the war?
16. Why do the blacks begin to leave the south?
17. What does Jacqueline's mother do in order to establish a life for her family in New York?

18. How does life change for Jacqueline once her mother leaves for New York?
19. What does Jacqueline think about religion?
20. When Jacqueline's mother says she will come for her children, what other news does she share?
21. How do Jacqueline and her siblings feel about moving to NYC?

## PART III

22. What is Jacqueline's initial impression of NYC?
23. What happens to Aunt Kay?
24. How does the narrator feel about writing?
25. How does the narrator's religion impact her schooling and her relationships with her peers?
26. Why does the narrator lie about what happened to her father?
27. After moving to Brooklyn, what happens to the relationships between the narrator and her immediate family? What happens to their relationships with their extended family?
28. What happens to Roman?

## PART IV

29. Describe the narrator's relationship with Maria. How does each girl grow as a person because of their friendship?
30. In what ways does Jacqueline live in her sister's shadow?
31. In what ways does Jacqueline's family still face discrimination in the south?
32. How is the narrator inspired by Langston Hughes?
33. What happens to Jacqueline's uncle?
34. In what ways does Jacqueline's uncle change while in prison?

## PART V

35. Why does Jacqueline's grandmother come to live with her?
36. What is the symbolic meaning of the mimosa tree?
37. What is the revolution?
38. How does Jacqueline's dream of being a writer guide her actions as a child?
39. In what does Jacqueline believe?

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

40. *Brown Girl Dreaming* is a personal reflection of the author's own life. Does this impact the way in which you understand the novel? Why or why not?
41. What is the effect of the narrator using poetry to write her memoir?

THANK YOU

BOSTONS

&

BOOKS

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INSTAGRAM

RESOURCES FOR  
GRADES 4-12