



A Raisin in the Sun WebQuest

Read directions for each task carefully, making sure that you fully complete each part and finish with a quality end product.

Task 1: Defining the American Dream

End product: Personal definition of the American Dream

Everyone has a dream, or goal, in life. Our dreams are the hopes that make our lives worth living. We have a dream; we set a goal; we plan a strategy; and we follow the path to lead us to success. Oftentimes there are obstacles in our way. The determined do not let those obstacles stop us. We will reach our destination no matter what.

In Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, the Younger family faces several obstacles that come in the path of their goals. The setting of the story is Chicago in the 1950's. During this time, African American families dealt with blatant issues of poverty, segregation, and racism.

The web-quest will help you to identify and understand some of the obstacles the Younger family faced.

What is the American Dream?

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american-dream/students/thedream.html>

Read the article at the link above. After reading, **write your own definition** of the American Dream.

Task 2: Getting to know playwright Lorraine Hansberry

End Product: Create a biography book jacket

Follow the links below to read about/listen about Lorraine Hansberry.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRqWB_tdPs0

<http://www.biography.com/people/lorraine-hansberry-9327823>

After you have read/watched and analyzed each source, write your own 2-3 paragraph biography of Lorraine Hansberry that you might include on the inside jacket cover of the book. Include important biographical connections she had to her plays, and her purpose for becoming a writer.

Task 3: Examining Chicago Southside Setting

End product: Journal Entry "Putting Yourself in their Shoes"

Examine the websites; read the articles and analyze the images featured on the sites. They capture what life was like for African Americans living in the South Side of Chicago during the 1940's and 1950's. What do they tell you about the society at the time? What might life have been like?

When you have finished reading the articles and viewing the photos, write a journal entry from the point of view of one of the figures you have seen in the photos. Your entry should describe what you have learned. Describe the picture you are writing about and the person in it. Use a photo from either City at a Crossroads or Chicago's Historic Southside. For this assignment, you may copy and paste the image onto a Word/Pages doc. and complete your writing on the same document.

1. Bronzeville Story <http://greatchicagostories.com/bronzeville/>
2. City at a Crossroads - <http://life.time.com/history/city-at-a-crossroads-chicago-confronts-urban->
3. Chicago's Historic Southside
<http://disembedded.wordpress.com/2008/01/17/chicagos-historic-south-side/>
4. Racial Restrictive Covenants
<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1761.html>
5. South Side <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1177.html>

Task 4: Considering Historical Context

End Product: writing about context through critical theory lenses

A Raisin in the Sun takes place in the 1950's, during the Civil Rights Movement, a time of great social unrest. Billy Joel wrote a song that talks about some of those major events in "We Didn't Start the Fire." You can find the lyrics here: <http://www.teacheroz.com/fire.htm>

Choose five events from "Truman" to "Edsel is a no go." Click on the hyperlink to find out more about that person, thing, or event from the 1950's and briefly tell who/what it was and why it was important.

From your own knowledge of history, what was happening in the world of 1959...
Socially--Politically--Economically--Culturally--

Now, considering info. gathered in both task 3&4, write about your impressions of the nation at this time in terms of socioeconomic circumstances and attitudes, feminist progress, and racial tensions.

Task 5: Examine the Opening Poem

End Product: Model poem

The title "A Raisin in the Sun" comes from Langston Hughes' poem entitled "Harlem."

"Harlem"

*What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?*

Use the following website to learn more about the poem.

<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides4/harlem.html>

According to this website, what is the theme of "Harlem"?

Do you think this theme fits with the poem? Why or why not?

List two literary elements that can be found in the poem and give an example of each:

Based on the poem and the analysis, explain what you think most likely happens to a "dream deferred" and explain why.

Read the poem "Harlem" by Langston Hughes and answer the questions. Then, write your own version of the poem below.

Questions:

1. What does the poem say?
2. What images does this poem create in your mind?
3. What emotions does this poem evoke?
4. What is the dream Hughes refers to in "Harlem"?
5. Why might it rather explode than dry up?
6. Why is the poem called "Harlem"?