

Essay Topics

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Write an essay arguing a thesis statement developed from ONE of the following topics. You MUST use quotations and support your literary argument. All thesis statements must be cleared before beginning your rough draft. (Length: Let's shoot for 1200 words or so.)

1. Discuss Hurston's use of the imagery in the novel—the pear tree, the horizon, the sky, the sun, the moon. Where does she use such strong imagery in the novel? What symbolic meaning might this imagery hold? How does the imagery contribute to the theme and message of the novel?
2. Compare and contrast the figures of Logan Killicks, Jody Starks, and Tea Cake. What does Janie expect from each relationship and how do those expectations change with each relationship? How does the reality of each relationship differ from her expectations? Does Janie ever find “true love?” If not, will she? What is Hurston trying to say about “true love” with the example of Janie Crawford?
3. Discuss Hurston's use of the art of storytelling among the characters in the novel. Why does she reference the telling of stories and people's voices, mouths and tongues so often through out the work? Why does Hurston believe it is so important for Janie to be able to tell her own story? You may wish to begin with Janie's retelling of the events to Pheoby (Chapter 1).
4. Zora Neale Hurston was a anthropologist and folklorist by trade. There are many elements of folklore used in this story (dialect, the root-doctor, music, storytelling, the personification of death, etc.). Explain why Hurston uses these elements of folklore and what purpose they serve in the novel. What is Hurston trying to convince the reader of in regards to the importance and relevance of folklore to life?
5. In Janie Crawford we see a woman on a quest for self-awareness. Discuss Janie's journey, what it is she is seeking to find, what she really finds, and what lesson the reader is supposed to learn from her example.

Their Eyes Were Watching God Essay

Topic # _____ Thesis:
