

Grade 7: **Unit 6**

Brown Girl Dreaming: Whole Class Novel Seminars

Seminar 2: Whole Class Novel

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars envision the setting and characters Woodson introduces. They understand the historical context of the initial poems and analyze how Woodson portrays her roots.

Seminar 2: *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 1–35

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today they will enter Woodson’s world. What makes her world unique isn’t just the setting (New York and South Carolina in the 1960s and ’70s). Rather, it’s the way she tells her story — through a series of poems!

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 3–6, 00:02–02:32):** Pages 1–12

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Based on the opening poems, how would you characterize Jackie? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: Why does Woodson include historical references in these poems?

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 7–11, 00:00–00:16):** Pages 13–20

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Based on “the woodsons of ohio,” “the ghosts of the nelsonville house,” “it’ll be scary sometimes,” and “football dreams,” what makes the Woodson family unique? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does Ohio represent for the Woodsons?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on *Brown Girl Dreaming*, what does Woodson want readers to understand about her background? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (15 minutes):

- Pages 21–35

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What do the poems in this section reveal about Jackie’s parents? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What moves does Woodson make to vividly portray Ohio and South Carolina in *Brown Girl Dreaming*?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on *Brown Girl Dreaming*, compare life in Ohio to life in South Carolina at this point in history. Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 3: Whole Class Novel

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand Jackie’s experience in the South and the lessons she learns from her grandparents. They begin to uncover Woodson’s overarching message about the power of language and storytelling.

Seminar 3: *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 36–71

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today they will learn more about Jackie’s grandparents and discuss the way in which their stories help Jackie define her own world.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 21–23, 00:00–01:27):** Pages 36–41

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is the main idea of the poem “rivers”? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Jackie describe her parents’ divorce?

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 24–30, 00:00–00:46):** Pages 45–58

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: What does Jackie’s grandmother mean when she says, “it’s the way of the South” (page 54)? How does this statement

relate to Gunnar’s experience at work? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.

- If scholars nailed the previous questions, ask: What poetic devices does Woodson use to make her memories of Nicholtown come alive?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on these poems, how does skin color impact life in Nicholtown? Justify your argument with at least two concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Pages 59–71

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How do the Woodson siblings react to grandma’s stories in “bible times”? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does Jackie mean when she says that her sister promised her “infinity” (page 63)?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What does Woodson suggest about the power of words and storytelling in these poems? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 72–131.

Seminar 4: Whole Class Novel

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars discuss Jackie’s move to New York City and her feelings about having a new sibling. They understand Jackie’s perspective on these changes and the moves Woodson makes to mark important shifts in Jackie’s narrative. They also understand the role that writing and storytelling play in Jackie’s life.

Seminar 4: Brown Girl Dreaming: Pages 132–168

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Build excitement for today’s reading by telling scholars that today’s poems show how writing and storytelling help Jackie make sense of her new surroundings.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 74–78, 00:00–01:05):** Pages 132–138

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does Jackie react to the news that she will have a younger sibling? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Jackie feel about leaving Greenville? Why does she feel this way?

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 79–83, 00:00–00:39):** Pages 143–148

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why does Woodson write, “Maybe it’s another New York City/ the southerners talk about” (page 143)? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Woodson characterize Roman?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on Jackie’s experiences, do you believe her when she says that New York is “nowhere I’m ever going to call/ home” (page 143)? Why or why not? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (15 minutes):

- MPages 149–168

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is Jackie’s point of view on school? Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does being a Jehovah’s witness impact Jackie?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Explain the significance of Jackie’s first composition notebook. Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*: Friday, 10 September, 1943–Wednesday, 22 December, 1943 (pages 108–122).

Seminar 5: Whole Class Novel

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars discuss Jackie and her siblings’ trip back to Greenville and continue to analyze Jackie’s perception of “home.” They understand why Jackie claims, “our feet are beginning to belong/ in two different worlds — Greenville/ and New York” (pages 194–195).

Seminar 5: *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 169–203

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today’s reading will reveal how Jackie’s definition of home continues to develop as she returns to Greenville.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 95–100, 00:00–01:15):** Pages 169–178

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does Jackie feel about her sister’s intelligence? Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Uncle Robert influence Jackie?

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Section 101–104, 00:00–00:36):** Pages 179–185

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: Why is “halfway home #2” an appropriate title for this poem? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does the poem “our father, fading away” reveal about the way Jackie thinks of her father?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- How does speaking with her grandmother in “halfway home #2” affect Jackie? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Pages 186–203

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How does Woodson show that Hall Street (in Greenville) is the place Jackie and her siblings “belong to” (page 192)? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How does Woodson use line breaks in the last stanza of “mrs. hughes’s house” to highlight Jackie’s internal conflict?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Why does Jackie say, “our feet are beginning to belong/ in two different worlds — Greenville/ and New York” (pages 194–195)? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Homework

- Read *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 204–261.

Seminar 6: Whole Class Novel

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars discuss the impact of Uncle Robert’s incarceration on Jackie and its influence on her writing. Scholars deepen their understanding of Jackie by analyzing her writing.

Seminar 6: *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 262–292

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today they will discuss the impact of Uncle Robert’s actions on Jackie and her writing.

Read and Discuss 1 — 30 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Sections 150–154, 00:00–00:52):** Pages 262–269

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What is Jackie’s perception of her writing in “too good”? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is the tone of “on the bus to dannemora”?

Read:

- **Play Audiobook (Section 155–160, 00:00–00:15):** Pages 270–278

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following questions in pairs: How does Uncle Robert’s incarceration impact Jackie as a person? How does it influence her as a writer? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous questions, ask: What is the significance of Jackie’s “mountain song”?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What situation or person has the greatest impact on Jackie as a writer? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 25 minutes

Independent Reading (15 minutes):

- Pages 283–292

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: What might the mimosa tree symbolize? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What is the effect of Woodson’s repetition in “after greenville #2”?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- What does “the stories i tell” reveal about Jackie? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Seminar 7: Whole Class Novel

What Does Success Look Like?

Scholars understand how Jackie comes to terms with her once-divided identity. They analyze how all of Jackie’s unique experiences shape her into a writer who has harnessed the power of words.

Seminar 7: *Brown Girl Dreaming*: Pages 293–320

Do Now — 10 minutes

- Show an exemplary Exit Ticket from the previous seminar. Have scholars discuss what makes it exemplary. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they will apply to their revisions.
- Scholars revise their Exit Tickets from the previous seminar based on the feedback you gave them.

Launch — 2 minutes

- Tell scholars that today they will finish reading *Brown Girl Dreaming* and will discuss the ways in which Jackie grew, both personally and as a writer, throughout the book.

Read and Discuss 1 — 35 minutes

Read:

- **Play Audiobook, Sections 167–172 (00:00–01:24):** Pages 293–303

Discuss:

- Scholars respond to the following question in pairs: What does Jackie learn by watching Angela Davis? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: In “bushwick history lesson,” what does Jackie mean when she says, “I was a long time coming” (page 298)?

Read:

- **Play Audiobook, Section 173–177 (00:00–02:12):** Pages 304–312

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How do the political and social issues of her time impact Jackie? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: What does Jackie mean when she writes, “I am ready for the ride” (page 309)?

Write — 10 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Describe Jackie’s emotions when she shares her poem with the class in “a writer.” Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.

Wrap-up — 5 minutes

- Show an exemplar essay to scholars. Have scholars discuss what makes the claim clear and compelling. Have scholars articulate the transferable takeaway from the work study that they need to apply to their own work moving forward.

Read and Discuss 2 — 20 minutes

Independent Reading (10 minutes):

- Pages 313–320

Discuss:

- Scholars discuss the following question in pairs: How are the final poems of *Brown Girl Dreaming* similar to and different from the rest of the book? Call on pairs to share out. Insist that scholars back up their claims with evidence from the text.
- If scholars nailed the previous question, ask: How do the concluding poems provide the reader with a sense of closure?

Exit Ticket — 8 minutes

Write an essay of no more than 200 words:

- Based on the final two poems, “what i believe” and “each world,” what is Woodson’s message to readers about identity? Justify your argument with at least **two** concrete pieces of evidence from the text.