

Name: _____ Date: _____

Holding Fast to Dreams

Directions: After reading the play *Hold Fast to Dreams*, answer the following questions.

1. What does it mean to “hold fast” to dreams?

2. What were Langston Hughes’s dreams?

3. How did Hughes hold fast to his dreams? Give three examples from the play. Be sure to cite the scene number.

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:

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Close-Reading Questions

Hold Fast to Dreams

1. Why might Kristin Lewis have chosen to open Scene 1 with the line of poetry that she did?
(text structure)
2. In the lines of poetry at the beginning of Scene 2, what does the speaker mean when he says that a “fenced-off narrow space” is assigned to him? How is this idea reflected in Scene 2 and in the photos and captions throughout the play? (figurative language, text structure, text features)
3. How does the question asked in the lines of poetry at the beginning of Scene 4 relate to what happens in the scene? (Note that *deferred* means “put off or delayed to a later time.”)
(key ideas, text structure)

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Critical-Thinking Questions

Hold Fast to Dreams

1. Throughout his early life, Langston repeatedly finds himself an outsider. How might this have influenced his work as a poet?
2. Langston wrote several poems about dreams. Why might this have been a particularly powerful topic for African-Americans in the 1920s and 1930s?
3. How do the lines of poetry in the play add to your understanding of the story? How would the play be different without them?

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Drama Vocabulary

1. **discrimination** (dis-krim-ih-NAY-shuhn) *noun*; Discrimination is the unfair treatment of a group of people because of their race, gender, religion, age, or other characteristic.
2. **feverishly** (FEE-vur-ish-lee) *adverb*; To do something feverishly is to do it with intense emotion—like strong excitement or worry—and/or activity. If you say that Lena and Ruth worked feverishly to prepare for the grand opening of their restaurant, you mean that they worked long hours, racing from one task to the next, as they tried to get everything ready in time.
3. **fleeting** (FLEET-ing) *adjective*; Something that is fleeting lasts only a short time; it passes by quickly. For example, if you spotted a deer just as it darted into the woods, you could say that you caught a fleeting glimpse of the deer.
4. **prejudice** (PREHJ-uh-diss) *noun*; Prejudice is an unfair dislike of a person or a group of people because of their race, religion, nationality, or other characteristic. It is *prejudgment*: making a judgment before you have information on which to base your judgment.
5. **prolific** (pruh-LIF-ik) *adjective*; If you are prolific, you produce a large quantity of something. If Eric posts several entries to his blog each day, you could say that he is a prolific blogger. Plants and animals can also be described as *prolific*.
6. **renaissance** (REN-uh-sahnss) *noun*; If something that was declining in popularity and importance becomes popular and important again, it is said to be having a renaissance. If you see a reference to “the Renaissance,” with a capital R, it’s a reference to the period in European history from the 14th century through the 16th century, when there was a great revival of art, literature, and learning. *Renaissance* means “rebirth” in French.
7. **resentment** (rih-ZENT-mint) *noun*; Resentment is a feeling of deep, bitter anger toward someone who has treated you unfairly or in a way that is hurtful or insulting.
8. **segregate** (SEG-ruh-gayt) *verb*; To segregate is to separate one type of thing from another. *Segregate* is most commonly used to describe separating one group of people from another—in particular, separating black people from white people.

Directions: In the space below, list any other words from the play with a definition you are unsure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence.

Vocabulary Practice:

Hold Fast to Dreams

Directions: Underline the boldfaced word in each pair that best completes the sentence.

1. Star Wars fans **fleetingly/feverishly** awaited the release of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.
2. **Prejudice/discrimination** is an unjustified attitude; **prejudice/discrimination** is an unjustified action or behavior.
3. Zach says the key to becoming a successful songwriter is to be **fleeting/ prolific**—in other words, to write a lot of songs. He says you should write every day, even when you don't feel like it.
4. "I understand why you feel **resentment/prejudice** toward Ann," said Chelsea. "But I don't think she even knows that she offended you. You really should talk to her."
5. The company was accused of **resentment/discrimination** against women because female employees were paid less and received fewer promotions than male employees.

Directions: Fill in the circle next to the best answer to each question.

6. Which of the following is an example of discrimination?

- Ⓐ Mr. Smith believes that people under the age of 40 make better employees.
- Ⓑ Ms. Jones never hires anyone over the age of 40.

7. Which of the following is an example of someone having a fleeting thought?

- Ⓐ As Peter stood in line at the coffee shop, he briefly considered that maybe he should cut back on how much coffee he was drinking—but he quickly dismissed the idea.
- Ⓑ Jordan sat at a table drinking his coffee, thinking over and over about the conversation he'd had with Isaac that morning.

8. Which of the following is an example of segregation?

- Ⓐ In the 1950s, black children and white children had to go to separate schools.
- Ⓑ A man at a party told offensive jokes about certain groups of people.

9. Which of the following is an example of a renaissance?

- Ⓐ The art museum is having a show featuring 16th-century paintings from France and Germany.
- Ⓑ Many new restaurants, shops, and galleries opened in Pittsburgh, and a large number of people moved into the city from the suburbs.

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Hold Fast to Dreams Quiz

Directions: Read *Hold Fast to Dreams*. Then answer the questions below.

1. In Scene 1, N1 says, “The setting sun casts long shadows, making the boys seem taller than they are.” What is the symbolic meaning of this line?
 - (A) The kids in Langston’s neighborhood are not as important or powerful as they seem.
 - (B) The boys across the street are younger than Langston thinks.
 - (C) The night is full of danger.
 - (D) In the morning, Langston will understand why his grandmother stopped him from playing.
2. Which best summarizes the meaning of the poetry at the beginning of Scene 3?
 - (A) The world is a harsh place where dreams are easily destroyed.
 - (B) Many people have rough fingers.
 - (C) Dreams are as fragile as clouds.
 - (D) The world needs more dreamers.
3. Why does Langston’s mom want him to give up his dream of being a poet?
 - (A) She doesn’t think he is talented.
 - (B) She doesn’t want him to move to Harlem.
 - (C) She doesn’t think he’ll make enough money to live on as a poet.
 - (D) When she was younger, she also wanted to be a poet—but she failed.
4. The photo caption on page 19 describes Harlem as a “vibrant” place, meaning that
 - (A) brightly colored buildings lined its streets.
 - (B) Harlem was full of life and energy.
 - (C) Harlem was overcrowded.
 - (D) Harlem was an expensive neighborhood.
5. According to the play, how did Langston’s grandmother affect him?
 - (A) She helped him understand his mother’s point of view, even if he didn’t agree with it.
 - (B) She encouraged him to become a poet.
 - (C) She instilled pride in him and helped him rise above those who tried to bring him down.
 - (D) She taught him that family is the most important thing in life.
6. What is the main purpose of the Epilogue?
 - (A) To inform readers that Langston wrote plays, novels, and essays as well as poems.
 - (B) To compare Langston’s work to the work of other poets.
 - (C) To provide readers with information about Langston’s success and his effect on the world.
 - (D) To inform readers of Langston’s death.

Constructed-Response Questions



Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. Why did Langston want to move to Harlem? Does the play suggest that he found what he was looking for there? Support your answer with text evidence.
8. What obstacles did Langston face as he pursued his dream of becoming a poet? How did he cope with these obstacles? Use details from the text in your answer.

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Hold Fast to Dreams Quiz

Directions: Read *Hold Fast to Dreams*. Then answer the questions below.

- Which is the most likely reason author Kristin Lewis included the discussion between Langston and his grandmother in Scene 1?
 - to show that Langston's grandmother taught Langston to be proud of who he is
 - to show that Langston's grandmother inspired him to become a poet
 - to explain why Langston had a hard time getting along with other kids
 - to show that Langston missed his parents
- Which best describes the role of the poetry in each scene?
 - It provides a flashback.
 - It contrasts the mood of the scene.
 - It is connected to what happens in the scene.
 - It reveals what the characters are thinking.
- What can you infer is the reason Langston writes poetry during recess at the end of Scene 2?
 - He wants to win a poetry contest being held at the Children's Day party.
 - He is trying to hide the fact that he can't run as fast as the other kids think he can.
 - His classmates don't want to race him.
 - He writes to express his feelings of anger and hurt about the discrimination he faces.
- The poetry in Scene 4 asks, "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?" What do these lines suggest might happen to a dream that is put off until later?
 - It might get warm.
 - It might be given up on.
 - It might get stronger.
 - It might get sweeter.
- In the Epilogue, N1 says that Langston went on to become "one of the most celebrated and prolific voices of the Harlem Renaissance." As used in this line, *celebrated* most closely means?
 - festive
 - famous
 - proud
 - happy
- What is the main purpose of the Epilogue?
 - To inform readers that Langston wrote plays, novels, and essays as well as poems.
 - To compare Langston's work to the work of other poets.
 - To provide readers with information about Langston's success and his effect on the world.
 - To inform readers of Langston's death.

Constructed-Response Questions



Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

- Throughout the play, Langston struggles with the feeling of being an outsider. Give three examples of Langston feeling like he does not belong.
- What are two obstacles that Langston faced as he pursued his dream of becoming a poet? Support your answer with text evidence.

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Literary Elements and Devices

Identifying the basic elements of a literary work can help you understand it better.

Use this activity to help you understand *Hold Fast to Dreams*.

See *Scope's* "Glossary of Literary Terms" for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Section 1: Characters

1. For the characters of Langston Hughes, Old Langston, and one other character of your choice: (1) decide whether the character is **major** or **minor**; (2) briefly describe the character, including his or her appearance, personality, and background; and (3) decide whether the character is **static** or **dynamic** and explain why.

A. **LANGSTON HUGHES** is a ☐ **major** ☐ **minor** (check one) character.

Description: _____

He is a ☐ **static** ☐ **dynamic** (check one) character. I think so because _____

B. **OLD LANGSTON** is a ☐ **major** ☐ **minor** (check one) character.

Description: _____

He is a ☐ **static** ☐ **dynamic** (check one) character. I think so because _____

C. _____ is a ☐ **major** ☐ **minor** (check one) character.

Description: _____

He/She is a ☐ **static** ☐ **dynamic** (check one) character. I think so because _____

2. The following character traits could all be used to describe Langston:

observant creative resilient determined brave

Underline one of the character traits above. Then find an example in the play where Langston demonstrates that trait. Write the example below and explain your answer.

Section 2: Setting

3. A. When and where does the play take place?

B. Pick one of the locations in the play. What does the reader learn from the play (including photos and captions) about what life was like there?

C. Is the setting important to the story? Why or why not?

Section 3: Text Structure

4. What type of information does the prologue provide? How does it relate to what happens in Scenes 1-6?

5. What kind of information do the poems provide? What is the purpose of the poems?

Section 4: Figurative Language

6. Find one example of figurative language used in the play or poems and explain what it means.

Section 5: The Conflict

7. A. What is the main **conflict** the **protagonist** faces? Explain it briefly.

B. Is the conflict **internal** or **external**? _____

C. Another way to describe this **conflict** is: person vs. _____. Choose the best word from the list below, to fill in the blank.

Choices

self person nature society
technology the supernatural

8. How is the main conflict resolved?

Langston Hughes Contest

Consider the title of the play, *Hold Fast to Dreams*. What does it mean to “hold fast” to dreams? In what way does Langston Hughes hold fast to his dreams? Explain, using text evidence to support your ideas. Five winners will each get *Harlem Stomp!* by Laban Carrick Hill.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ use of supporting evidence
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name: _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this sheet with your written entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
Or mail to: Langston Hughes Contest, c/o Scope, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 15, 2016!