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Study Guide

for

**The
Autobiography
of Miss Jane
Pittman**

by Ernest J. Gaines



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

Meet Ernest J. Gaines



We didn't have running water, and my responsibility from the time I was 8 years old was to get the water.

—Ernest Gaines, on his own childhood

Ernest Gaines, born in 1933, was the eldest of twelve children. Though he moved to California as a teenager, his stories and novels all draw upon his boyhood experiences in and remembrances of Louisiana, where he was born.

In 1950 Gaines tried to get his first novel published:

I was 17 when I thought I could write a novel and send it to New York and get it published. But I didn't know a . . . thing about doing it; I didn't even know how to type. I started in longhand, but my mother rented me a typewriter, which I typed on with one finger. . . . I thought it was pretty good. I wrapped it in brown paper, tied a string around it, and sent the thing off. It came back, of course.

Fourteen years later Gaines did publish his first novel, *Catherine Carmier*.

Gaines says the stories in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* have been inside him for years:

Probably I couldn't have written it had I not come from Louisiana. I grew up listening to the old people in the quarter, and all that I heard, in some way, I buried in my subconsciousness. I just didn't begin putting it down on paper until I was 35.

To supplement his experience and memories, Gaines conducted research for the novel in libraries in Baton Rouge, taking two and a half years to complete the manuscript.

Like Jimmy, a character in Book 4 of *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, Gaines listened to adults tell stories and wrote letters for those who could not write. Also like Jimmy, Gaines had an aunt who helped raise him. Gaines's aunt was his inspiration for the character of Miss Jane. He notes some differences, however, between Miss Jane and his own Aunt Augusteen:

Miss Jane goes everywhere and does everything, and my aunt, who was crippled and could only crawl, could not. I never saw Aunt Augusteen in front of me when I was writing, but I felt her spirit.

Some of Gaines's work has been criticized because it does not dwell enough on the problems of African Americans or the problems caused by relationships between blacks and whites. His response is that too many African American writers have focused on just those issues.

Gaines prefers to look at the people, not the issues. In general, he claims that he doesn't write with a specific audience in mind. When pressed, however, Gaines said:

. . . I write for the black youth of the South, to make them aware of who they are . . . [and] the white youth of the South to make them aware that unless they understand their black neighbors they cannot understand themselves.

Introducing the Novel

I had been trying to get Miss Jane Pittman to tell me the story of her life for several years now, but each time I asked her she told me there was no story to tell. I told her she was over a hundred years old, she had been a slave in this country, so there had to be a story.

—Introduction, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*

It is difficult to remember while reading *The Autobiography of Jane Pittman* that it is indeed a novel. The introduction, the characters, their dialect, and the events work together to involve the reader in the lives of people who seem real.

Jane survives slavery and many other hardships and tragedies to tell her stories, not with horror or outrage, but with the evenness of age and time. Her narrative voice flows from one recollection to another. She has the benefit of years of distance through which to filter anger and grief. Nonetheless, her affections and concerns, her love and devotion ring through.

Ernest Gaines creates a memorable character whose life encompasses slavery, Reconstruction, the Democratic era, two World Wars, and the mid-twentieth-century civil rights movement. Her experience is that of the body of African Americans who lived in the Deep South from the Civil War on. The novel, however, is not a story of social protest. It is a human story—a story of Jane and of the people around her. Jane's story is set apart because, at age 110 or so, she has lived through the entire cycle, from slavery to emancipation to oppression to freedom again.

THE TIME AND PLACE

The physical setting of *Miss Jane Pittman* is relatively static. The whole of the story takes place in southern Louisiana. The sweeping passage of time in the novel, however, carries the story from one century to the next. By mentioning events that occur in the outside world, the author provides a backdrop—and therefore historical context—for Jane's life.

The freedom of Jane and other enslaved people was first ordered by President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which was to go into effect January 1, 1863. In reality, the proclamation did not free a single slave because Southern States in the Confederacy did not recognize Lincoln as their president and therefore did not obey the order.

After the Civil War ended, however, the proclamation went into effect. It was not at all unusual for African Americans in the Deep South to get the news many months later. In the early months of emancipation, Southerners were confused and unsure of themselves. The rules had changed, and no one had had any time to prepare for this new way of life. At first, the presence of Union soldiers provided some reassurance and protection for the now free blacks. The Northern soldiers went home in 1877, however, leaving a still unsettled South to fend for itself.

The South did so aggressively. The still-wealthy white planters once again controlled both plantation and government. They took measures to make sure that African Americans remained in positions of servitude and dependence. Decades passed in this manner, and the separation of the races continued.

Blacks in the South still lived separately from whites. Lunch counters, public bathrooms, and public transportation and other such facilities had a special place for whites and a separate, usually inferior, place for blacks. In the 1950s, African Americans questioned the authority of whites and the constitutionality of having separate facilities for blacks and whites. Because the races had been segregated in the South for so long, many white people couldn't imagine society being organized any other way.

Leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took their places at the front of demonstrations and rallies. Strong leadership led to greater participation. By the late 1950s, even the Deep South felt the full rumblings of the civil rights movement. By the time Rosa Parks refused to give up

her seat to a white woman on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus, waves of African Americans were demanding their rights.

Years of hard work, anger, and protest finally led to legislation that addressed the inequality.

At last, African Americans were assured of their voting rights and of their right to a quality education. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 also ensured equal housing and employment opportunities.

Did You Know?

Miss Jane Pittman believed African American athletes were sent as inspiration for their race at a time when inspiration was needed the most.

Joe Louis was one such athlete. One of the greatest boxers in the history of the sport, Louis was born in 1917. He became a professional boxer in 1934 and won his first twenty-three fights, nineteen by knockout. In 1937 Louis knocked out James J. Braddock to become the world heavyweight boxing champion, a title he held until 1949.

In Miss Jane's eyes, Jackie Robinson was another heroic figure of this time. Robinson

made his first appearance with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, when he was twenty-eight years old. He was the first African American ever to play on a major league baseball team. Robinson's ten-year career with the Dodgers was a success in nearly every way, and in 1962 he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Louis and Robinson had both been soldiers during World War II. Troops of black soldiers commanded by white officers were the norm in the American military, just as they had been in previous wars. In 1948, however, President Truman signed an executive order

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Books 1 and 2

FOCUS ACTIVITY

What does the word *freedom* mean to you? the absence of rules? the ability to make your own decisions? something else?

Discuss

With a partner, brainstorm a list of phrases that describe your idea of freedom. Then, together, write a definition of the word.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out how a young girl and boy struggle to find freedom in the Old South.

BACKGROUND

Plantation Culture

Louisiana, like its Southern neighbors, depended on the plantation culture—and the enslaved labor force—for its economic success. Southern plantation owners feared complete economic ruin if they had to pay workers to labor on their plantations. The use of unpaid, enslaved workers made labor-intensive farming economically feasible. The idea of changing the system was incomprehensible to many members of the society.

Did You Know?

After the Civil War, the South was in a state of upheaval. Many whites who had left their lands to escape battle returned to find their homes in ruins. Most formerly enslaved people were homeless, penniless, and illiterate. To help Southerners, Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. (Miss Jane calls it “the Freedom Beero.”) The agency provided food and other supplies to displaced people, founded a number of black schools, and strove to protect the rights of freed men and women. Prejudice still ran high, however, and some Southern states passed laws restricting the rights of formerly enslaved people. These “black codes” banned freed men and women from owning land and allowed states to jail jobless African Americans. Congress struck back by prohibiting any Southern state from rejoining the Union until it ratified the Fourteenth Amendment. The amendment conferred citizenship on freed men and declared that all federal and state laws apply equally to blacks and whites. In 1868 the amendment became law, but many Southern states found ways around it and continued to deny blacks their rights.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

bayou [bɑː ˈoʊ] *n.* a marshy or sluggish creek or small river that feeds into a larger river

chattel [ˈtʃætəl] *n.* personal property; enslaved person

gallery [ˈɡæləri] *n.* an outdoor balcony; a covered porch

headland [ˈhɛdˈlənd] *n.* unplowed land at the ends of furrows or near a fence

pallet [ˈpælɪt] *n.* a small, hard, or temporary bed

proclamation [ˌprɒkˈləməʃən] *n.* an official, formal public announcement

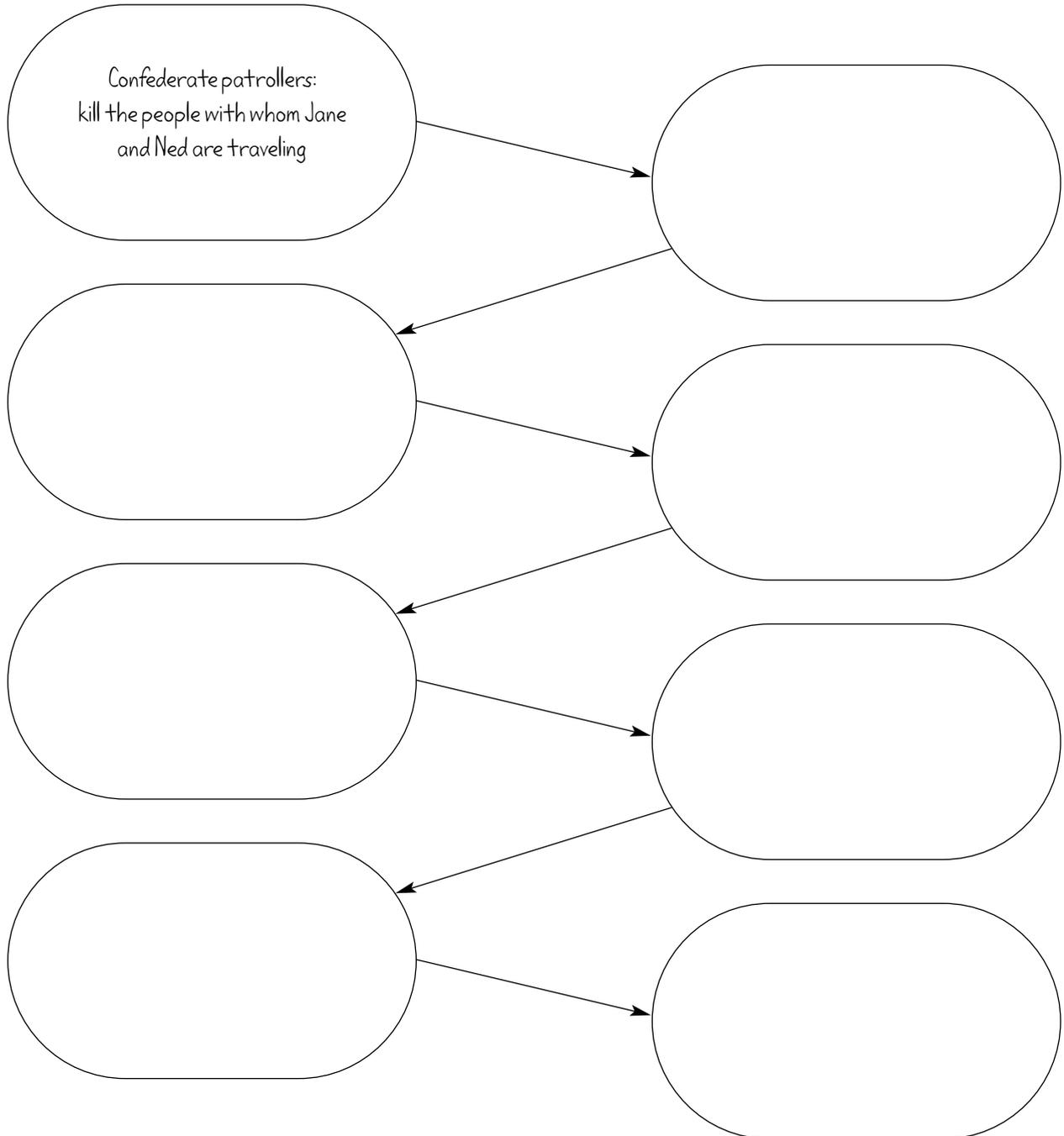
quarters [ˈkwɔːrtərs] *n.* lodging; living accommodations

thicket [ˈθɪkɪt] *n.* a dense growth of trees

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Books 1 and 2

As Jane and Ned try to reach Ohio, they meet several people who either help or hinder their progress. Use this sequence of events chain to record their meetings and to sum up the effects of each meeting.



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Responding

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Books 1 and 2

Personal Response

How do you feel about Jane and about what she has endured?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What is Jane originally called? Why does Colonel Brown rename her? What might the name represent to Jane?

2. What decision does Jane make upon hearing that she is free? During her travels, why do people try to make her change her mind? What do her responses to them suggest about her personality?

3. Sum up Jane's first meeting with Mr. Bone. What does her behavior suggest about her?

4. Compare and contrast Jane and Ned's lot in life before and after the Civil War. In what ways do their lives change? In what ways do their lives remain the same?

5. What does Ned talk about in his sermon at the river? Why does that speech serve as the reason for his assassination?

Responding

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Books 1 and 2

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

6. In your opinion, why does the author spend so much time describing Albert Cluveau and his relationship with Jane? How does this information affect your response to Cluveau's assassination of Ned?

7. Think about your response to the **Focus Activity**. How might Miss Jane answer the question? How does her answer compare to yours?

Literature and Writing

Analysis of Historical Fiction

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman is a historical novel that portrays fictional characters against the backdrop of real events. What kinds of information does a novel provide that history books ordinarily do not? What are some of the limitations of learning about history through novels?

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

What is Miss Jane's philosophy of life? In a small group, list the hardships and tragedies she experiences and briefly describe her response to each. Then sum up her philosophy of life in a sentence and share it with others in your class.

Art Connection

Jane vividly describes her flight from slavery to freedom. The setting—the fields and swamps of the Mississippi River delta—provides a sometimes threatening, sometimes picturesque backdrop for the action of the story. Using a medium of your choice, create your own visual interpretation of Jane's flight through the woods.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 3

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Most social and work groups develop their own culture—a set of unspoken rules about the right and wrong way to speak, dress, and behave. To what social groups do you belong? What are the unspoken rules of the group, and who sets them?

Journal

In your journal, briefly describe the unspoken rules that you and the people in your circle of friends generally follow. Then explain how these rules came about.

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out the unspoken rules that Jane observes in black and in white societies.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

Louisiana's earliest settlers were Spanish and French in origin. Their descendants are called Creoles. The term *Creole* is also used to refer to French-speaking people of mixed black and white ancestry. Mary Agnes LeFabre, the teacher Miss Jane speaks of in Book 3, was a Creole of mixed ancestry.

Time and Place

When Miss Jane comments on Huey Long's election as governor of Louisiana in 1928, she says, "Nothing better could 'a' happened to the poor black man or the poor white man no matter what they say." Not everyone would share her opinion.

Long was born into a poor, rural Louisiana family in 1893. Working against the odds, he managed to get an education and to enter politics. In 1928 Long became governor of Louisiana through the overwhelming support of poor white people. In return, he passed legislation for distributing free textbooks, improving roads and bridges, and building a state hospital for free treatment of all patients.

Long won a seat in the United States Senate in 1932. To maintain his hold on Louisiana in his absence, he assumed unprecedented powers, appointing his own people to serve in the state government and controlling elections and taxation issues. His opponents called him a dictator.

In the Senate, Long called for a national program of wealth redistribution. The idea was intriguing to a nation struggling with the Depression. In 1935, at the peak of his political career, Long was shot and killed by the son of a man whose name and career Long had ruined.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

beckon [bɛ'kən] v. to summon or call

faculties [fæk'əl tē] n. abilities; mental powers

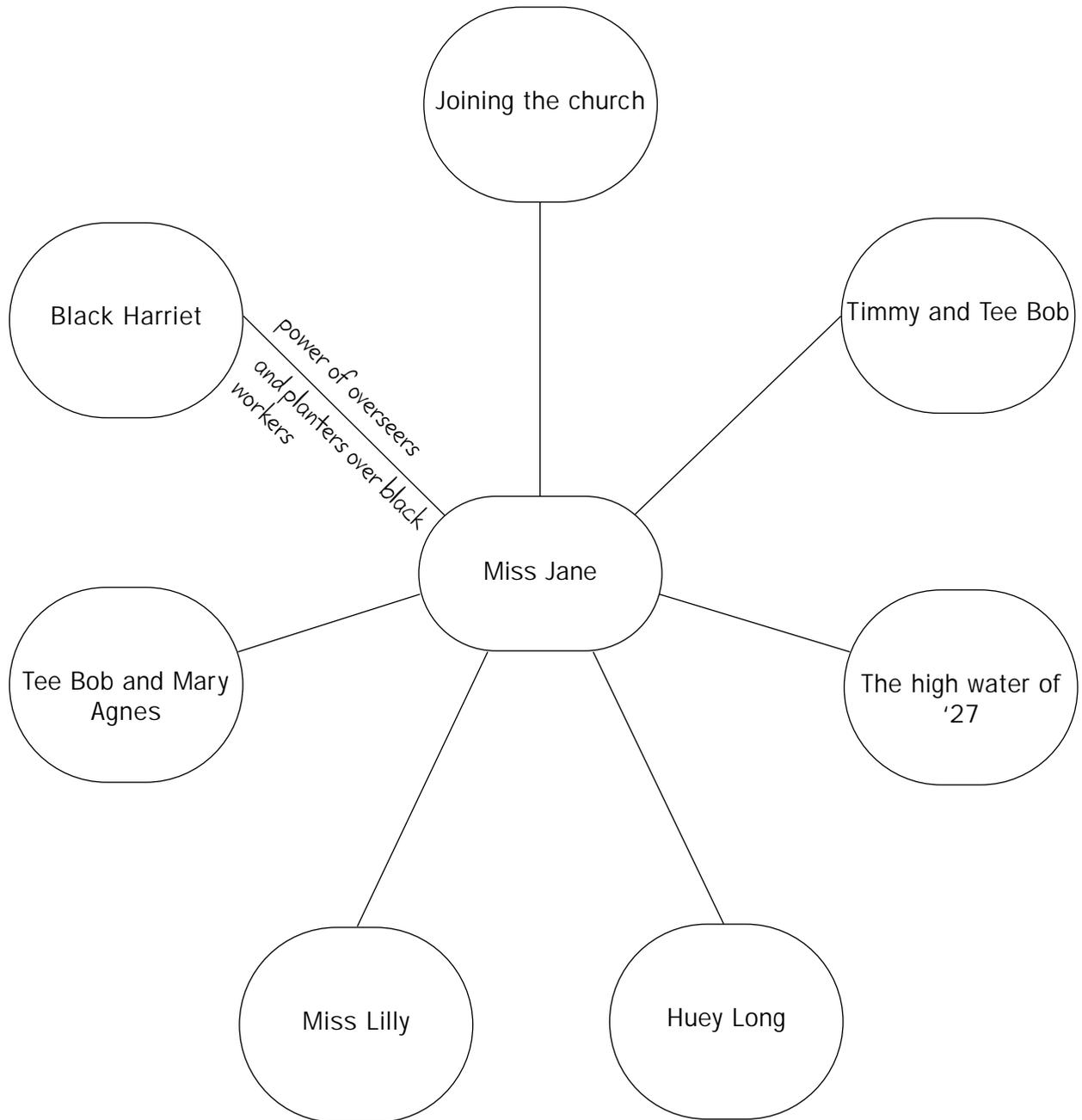
parish [pə'rɪʃh] n. a Louisiana political division, equivalent to a county in other states

spare [spār] adj. lean; skinny

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 3

Book 3 is made up of a series of stories about the people around Miss Jane on the Samson plantation. The stories provide little direct information about Miss Jane's life, but readers do learn about her, nonetheless. As you read Book 3, think about what point Miss Jane is making or what she reveals about herself by relating each story. Write your ideas or conclusions on the lines in the diagram below.



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Responding

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 3

Personal Response

If you could meet any of the characters in Book 3, which would you choose to talk to? Why?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Who are Timmy and Tee Bob? Why does Timmy have to leave the plantation?

2. What do Miss Lilly, Joe Hardy, and Mary Agnes have in common? Why are they important figures in the quarters?

3. On whom does Miss Jane blame Huey Long's death? What does her opinion say about her experiences as a member of the poor?

4. Whom does Tee Bob come home from college to see? Why do other people on the plantation disapprove?

Responding

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 3

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

5. Do you think Miss Jane feels she is “above” the happenings in the quarters because she works inside the Samson’s home? Or do you think she views herself as part of the quarters community? Citing evidence from Book 3, explain your answer.

6. Look back at the **Focus Activity**. By what unspoken rules do Miss Jane and her friends live? How did these rules come about? What happens to people who break them?

Literature and Writing

Character Analysis

What does Miss Jane reveal about herself in Book 3? Review the notes you took for the **Active Reading** activity, and use them to answer the question and support your answer.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

Is Gaines’s portrayal of whites and blacks balanced, or does he portray black people as good and white people as evil? In your group, review the characters that Miss Jane describes and come to a consensus of opinion about Gaines’s portrayal. Then defend your opinion to others in your class.

Speaking and Listening

What recent historical events have you witnessed, seen on TV, or heard about? Jot down what you remember about the event, and “fill in any blanks” in your memory by doing research in the library or on the Internet. Then relate the event to a classmate or to your class as a whole without using notes or other aids.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 4

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Whom do you know who possesses some extraordinary quality?

List Ideas

Make a list of the characteristics of that person. What was it about that person that gives you the sense that he or she is somehow special?

Setting a Purpose

Read to find out what happens to a young man whom everyone feels is destined to be a leader.

BACKGROUND

Integration

Jimmy goes to New Orleans to attend school “the same year they passed that law in Washington.” This is likely a reference to the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, in which segregated schools were deemed unconstitutional. For sixty years, black students had been required to go to schools that were invariably inferior to the schools open to white students. In the mid-1950s, however, schools across the nation were ordered to integrate—to allow all students to attend, regardless of race.

Many southern states resisted integration in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Some districts were simply slow about enacting change. Some districts ignored the ruling and publicly denied entry to African American students. Twenty years after the Supreme Court’s decision, only 44 percent of African American students in the South attended integrated schools.

Did You Know?

Following Reconstruction, the dominant white society did nearly all it could to return the South to its pre-Civil War status. The African Americans who remained in the South were not allowed to vote, had little if any access to education, and continued to exist in a virtual master-and-slave relationship with the white plantation owners. The cultural and geographical isolation of the Deep South fostered these conditions for decades.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

chifforobe [ʃɪfɪˈrəʊb] *n.* a chest of drawers and wardrobe combined

clabber [kləbˈɛr] *n.* thick, sour milk

clodhoppers [klɒdˈhɒpˈɔːs] *n.* large, heavy shoes

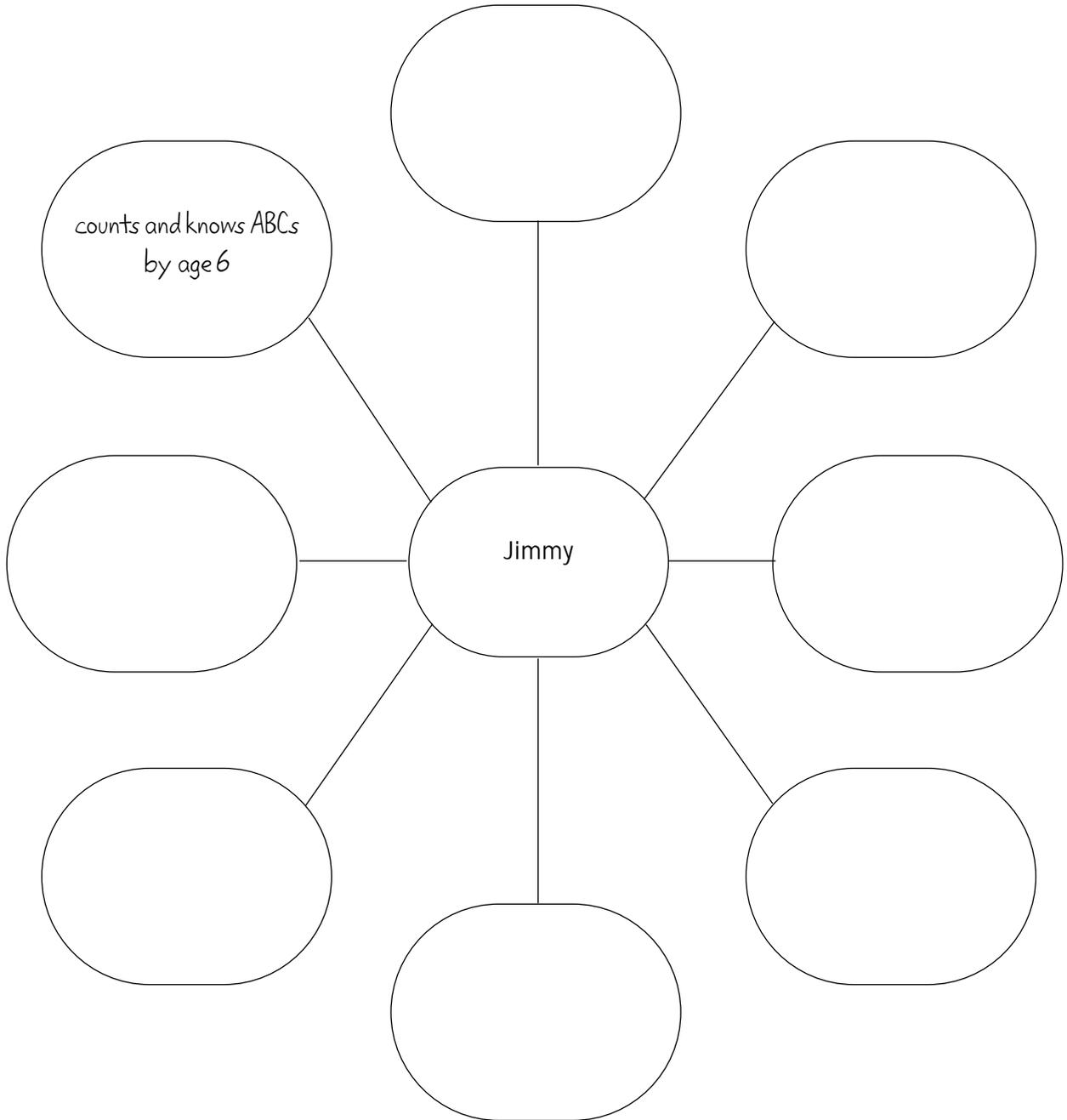
desegregate [dɪˈsegˈrɛɡət] *v.* to cease to require isolation of one race from another; to integrate

jumper [ˈdʒʌmpər] *n.* a loose shirt or jacket usually worn by workers over other clothes

Active Reading

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 4

Miss Jane says that they chose Jimmy as “the One.” In the cluster diagram below, record the notable characteristics and events that distinguish Jimmy from the other children on the Samson plantation.



Responding

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 4

Personal Response

Why do you think Miss Jane goes to Bayonne, even though Jimmy has been killed?

What does she hope to prove or accomplish?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. What happened to Jimmy's mother? How did the event affect the way he was raised?

2. How does Jimmy make himself useful to the adults in the quarters? Why does Miss Jane particularly like him to write her letters for her?

3. How do the people in church respond to Jimmy's plea for them to "join the fight"? According to Miss Jane, why do the people respond this way?

Responding

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman Book 4

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. What does Miss Jane mean when she says they had chosen Jimmy as “the One”?

5. Do you think it likely that Miss Jane and all the others would have agreed to join Jimmy in Bayonne in real life? Explain.

Literature and Writing

Compare and Contrast

Miss Jane and the others choose Jimmy as the One. Make a list of Jimmy’s qualities that are revealed through Miss Jane’s stories. Look back at the list you made in the **Focus Activity** on page 20. Compare Jimmy’s qualities with the qualities you identified on the list. In a short paragraph, explain how Jimmy and your own special person are similar and how they are different.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In Book 4, Miss Jane says, “People and time bring forth leaders. Leaders don’t bring forth people.” In your group, discuss this statement. Decide whether, as a group, you agree or disagree. Look for other statements Miss Jane makes about human nature or about groups of people. Discuss whether they still apply or whether they are outdated.

Internet Connection

Search the Internet for information about the Freedom Riders. What had the Freedom Riders hoped to accomplish? What did they accomplish, if anything? What were the circumstances surrounding the destruction of their bus?



Save your work for your portfolio.

I Want Women to Have Their Rights. . . .

Sojourner Truth

The Progress of Colored Women

Mary Church Terrell

Before You Read

Focus Question

Would you ever feel so strongly about an issue that you would be willing to suffer ridicule by expressing your opinion? Why or why not?

Background

In 1867 Sojourner Truth, a formerly enslaved person, delivered her “I Want Women to Have Their Rights” speech. Nearly forty years later, in 1904, equal rights activist Mary Church Terrell spoke on “The Progress of Colored Women.” In her speech, Terrell addresses the advances made in gender and racial equality and the many prejudices that African American women still have to overcome.

Responding to the Reading

1. Give examples of the progress made by African American women between the time Sojourner Truth gave her speech and the time Mary Terrell gave hers.

2. What does Truth mean when she says, “And now when the waters is troubled, and now is the time to step into the pool”?

3. Sojourner Truth and Mary Church Terrell were advocates for the rights of African American women. If Truth and Terrell were alive today, what issues do you think they would focus on as African American women?

4. **Making Connections** How do you think Miss Jane Pittman might have reacted to Truth’s and Terrell’s speeches?

Analyzing Speeches

On a separate sheet of paper, prepare a chart to analyze the effectiveness of each of these speeches. Your chart should list elements that you think are necessary to make a speech effective and a column for rating these elements in each speech. Compare your chart and ratings with those of other students.

Ernest Gaines

Tom Carter

Before You Read

Focus Question

What kinds of things shape a person's character?

Background

In this 1975 interview with Ernest Gaines, *Essence Magazine* writer Tom Carter provides the reader with insight into the life and times of the novelist. Carter details the struggles the writer had, both as an African American man and as an African American author.

Responding to the Reading

1. What do you think Ernest Gaines means when he says, "The peasantry of America is Black"?

2. What authors influenced Gaines's writing?

3. **Making Connections** Ernest Gaines has incorporated certain elements of his life into *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. Name two of these elements and their fictional parallels.

Creating a Cast of One

Choose someone who has been special in your life (a grandparent, a sibling, a parent, a friend), and create a fictional character that is based on this person. Include some of this person's distinguishing traits in the character. On a separate sheet of paper, write a script for this character and have different classmates play the role.

from Everybody Says Freedom

Pete Seeger and Bob Reiser

Before You Read

Focus Question

What songs make you feel hopeful? sad? energetic?

Background

In her more than 100 years of life, Miss Jane Pittman not only witnessed the end of slavery in the South, but the beginning of the civil rights movement. In their book *Everybody Says Freedom*, songwriter Pete Seeger and writer Bob Reiser have attempted to document some of the personal struggles and achievements of the civil rights movement. They have gathered first-person accounts, and Seeger, who has championed many causes in his music, takes a closer look at some of the music that emerged during this period. The reading begins as four young black men sit down at an all-white lunch counter in North Carolina and ask to be served.

Responding to the Reading

1. What was the purpose of the sit-in in Greensboro? What were the risks for those who participated?

2. Select one of the songs from the reading and analyze it by answering the following questions: What is the message of the song? What feeling or emotion does it evoke? How do the lyrics make it effective or not effective as a protest or civil rights song?

3. What was Jim Keck's first impression of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.? What happened to change his opinion?

4. **Making Connections** Many of the people involved in the civil rights movement wanted to encourage change through nonviolent protest. Had she been able, do you think Miss Jane Pittman would have joined their ranks? Explain.

Music Connection

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman was made into a television movie. Think of existing lyrics or write new lyrics for what you think would make a good theme song for the movie.

Jackie Robinson

Hank Aaron

Before You Read

Focus Question

Who inspires you to do your best? Why does this person inspire you?

Background

On the night of April 8, 1974, baseball fans in Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium jumped to their feet to watch a line drive sail over the left-field fence. The batter, “Hammerin’ Hank” Aaron, wept as he circled the bases. He had just broken Babe Ruth’s career record of 714 home runs to make baseball history. In this selection, Aaron fondly recalls baseball great Jackie Robinson, whose achievements on and off the diamond inspired Aaron and countless others.

Responding to the Reading

1. Sum up Hank Aaron’s description of the relationship between blacks and whites in the United States during 1947. What did Jackie Robinson do to change that relationship?

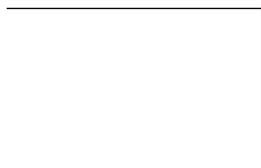
2. Why does Aaron say that Robinson “sacrifice[d]” his pride for his people’s?”

3. According to Aaron, what influence did Robinson have on African American baseball players of the 1950s and 1960s?

4. **Making Connections** After reading Aaron’s description of Robinson and his achievements, would you say that *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* accurately portrays African Americans’ feelings about the ballplayer? Why or why not?

Personal Writing

Describe a famous person or unsung hero who inspires you. Be sure to explain what the person has achieved and why you find the person inspiring. If appropriate, model your essay on Aaron’s and begin by describing your first meeting with the person.



from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

Before You Read

Focus Question

Why do so many people admire sports heroes?

Background

In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, author Maya Angelou recalls the early years of her life and the time she lived in Stamps, Arkansas, with her grandmother. Momma Henderson, the owner of the only black general store for miles around, was a well-known figure in the local African American community. On a summer evening in 1935, friends, neighbors, and family crowded into the store to listen to a radio broadcast of a boxing match between Joe “the Brown Bomber” Louis and Primo “the Ambling Alp” Carnera. The fight was an important one, drawing more than 60,000 fans to New York’s Yankee Stadium to see whether the 196-pound Louis could beat the 266-pound Carnera.

Responding to the Reading

1. Why is the match of such importance to the African Americans in Stamps?

2. How does Angelou create a sense of suspense about the outcome?

3. What does the final paragraph suggest about the lives of African Americans in Stamps during the 1930s? What is ironic, or unexpected, about their situation?

4. **Making Connections** Does Angelou’s portrayal of small-town Southern African Americans support or conflict with Gaines’s portrayal in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*? Explain your answer.

Social Studies Connection

On June 22, 1938, black and white Americans alike listened intently to radio broadcasts of Joe Louis’s rematch with Germany’s champion boxer, Max Schmeling. Why was this fight so important to people in the United States? Use a sports encyclopedia or the Internet to find out what this match meant to people of the 1930s and why Joe Louis is remembered as one of the finest boxers of all time. Present your findings in an oral report.