

Worksheet 3. Figurative Language in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

Directions: Reread the following passages. 1) Use the chart to record your answers. 2) Use evidence and quotations from the text in your answers.

Chapter 2:

- The first paragraph beginning “Janie saw her life like a great tree in leaf ...”
- The two paragraphs that begin “it was a spring afternoon ...”

List in the first column below as many words and phrases that relate to the senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) as you can from these three paragraphs.

Word or phrase	Type of imagery

Now go back and identify the type of imagery for each word or phrase you have listed: visual (sight); auditory (hearing); tactile (touch); gustatory (taste); olfactory (smell); or kinesthetic (movement). Write the type of imagery in the second column.

What kinds of imagery predominate? _____

1. How does the imagery affect the narrative?

2. While nature has its idyllic side, it can also be frightening. Go to Chapter 18, which depicts the coming of the hurricane. Locate the paragraph toward the middle of the chapter that begins, “They stepped out in water almost to their buttocks ...” which describes the dike around the lake breaking down. Read the paragraph as far as “on a cosmic scale,” and list the sensory images you find.

How effective are these images in giving the reader a sense of what is happening?

Hurston’s uses the word “monstropolous” to describe the lake. What is the impact of this word choice?

How is this section an example of *personification*?

3. Read each of the following passages. What figures of speech do you find in each one? What is the impact of the figurative language on the passage as a whole?

A. Chapter 1, paragraphs 4, 5 (Description of Eatonville town folk)

Word or phrase	Figure of speech/literary technique	Impact on the passage
The sun was gone but he had left his footprints in the sky.		
It was the time for sitting on porches. ... It was the time to hear things and talk		
These sitters had been tongueless, earless, eyeless...		
They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed nations through their mouths.		
... they chewed up the back parts of their minds and swallowed with relish.		

B. Chapter 9, the long paragraph that begins “Most of the day she was at the store...” (Janie’s analysis of her feelings about Nanny and her own status)

Word or phrase	Figure of speech/literary technique	Impact on the passage
[the house] creaked and cried		
She had been whipped like a cur dog.		

[Nanny] pinched [the horizon] in to such a little bit of a thing that she could tie it about her granddaughter's neck tight enough to choke her.		
She had found a jewel down inside herself.		
Like all the other tumbling mudballs, Janie had tried to show her shine.		

C. Chapter 16: The paragraph beginning “Mrs. Turner, like all other believers ...” (The description of Mrs. Turner’s “worship” of whiteness)

This is an extended metaphor. What words and phrases contribute to this extended metaphor?

What is the impact of this passage on the reader?