Teacher Edition

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Welcome to Amplify ELA’s Novel Guides

We created a series of Novel Guides to provide you with a flexible resource for the books you most want to teach. Some of the titles are in the digital library while others will need to be accessed through your school, public, or classroom libraries. We selected one strong aspect of each novel and are having students focus on this element as they explore and analyze a key theme.

Rather than fully built-out lessons, these guides offer lean, targeted instruction that follows Amplify ELA’s pedagogy as students explore great literature. Each Novel Guide provides activities and questions with sample answers for the Teacher Edition, including:

- A complete close reading session, including the text excerpt
- Connected excerpts to extend reading and skill practice
- Guiding questions and activities to support reading the whole book
- An introduction to the book and the author
- Activities that focus on a range of literacy skills
- Project-based learning
- Discussion questions
- Writing Prompts
- Exploration of Writer’s Craft
- Role-playing opportunities
- Collaborative learning
- Social-emotional learning discussion questions, Writing Prompts, or activities
- Standards alignment

The diverse selection of books we chose comprises a range of genres from mystery to non-fiction, and themes from social justice to identity and courage. Students explore classics and contemporary award winners, expand their literacy skills, and discover the rewards that come with close reading compelling texts. The guides are designed to be used flexibly and offer suggestions for implementation.

All the guides are housed in the Amplify Library as downloadable, printable PDFs. They include student worksheets and instructions for the teacher that will take students through a close reading of a passage all the way to the end of the novel.
Part 1

Introduction

About the story

Jacqueline Woodson’s memoir of her childhood, *Brown Girl Dreaming*, is written entirely in verse. Woodson weaves together her own memories with those of her family members for a deeply personal portrayal of growing up between Ohio, South Carolina, and New York. While the book explores where home is for Jacqueline, it also illuminates the experiences of an African American child during the Civil Rights Movement and her burgeoning passion for words and stories.

Themes that align with this guide

This guide focuses on word choice and theme, prompting students to analyze descriptive language to make inferences. It also offers extended activities to help students make connections to the author’s purpose and the sources or ideas that were used to develop the narrative.

About the author

Though born in Ohio, Jacqueline Woodson spent her childhood in Greenville, South Carolina and Brooklyn, New York. From a young age, and despite reading difficulties, Woodson knew that stories and words were her brilliance. Woodson has published over 30 titles, including adult and young adult novels, middle grade novels, and picture books. Her works often focus on gender, African American identity and history, and other themes and issues relevant to her readers. Woodson’s writing has won many awards and prizes, including the National Book Award, the NAACP Image Award, the Coretta Scott King Author Award, and Newbery Honors. Woodson’s writing has also been nominated for various other awards and included in critics’ and educators’ lists of notable or best books.
When and how to use the Novel Guide

Amplify ELA’s Novel Guides can provide flexible teaching options. They can be used at any point in the year or paired with thematically related core units, before or after teaching the units. Or, if you would like to build out lessons, the guides can be used as the foundation for a more fully developed curriculum based on the titles.

The *Brown Girl Dreaming* Novel Guide aligns with the following core unit:

**6E: Summer of the Mariposas**

In *Summer of the Mariposas*, Guadalupe Garcia McCall uses a first-person narrator to tell a coming of age story that focuses on family and overcoming obstacles.
Part 2

Text Excerpt and Close Reading Activities

Excerpt: Brown Girl Dreaming
“leaving greenville,” pages 136–137

1. My mother arrives in the middle of the night, and sleepily, we pile into her arms and hold tight.

2. Her kiss on the top of my head reminds me of all that I love.

3. Mostly her.

4. It is late winter but my grandmother keeps the window in our room slightly open so that the cold fresh air can move over us as we sleep. Two thick quilts and the three of us side by side by side.

5. This is all we know now—

6. Cold pine breezes, my grandmother’s quilts, the heat of the wood-burning stove, the sweet slow voices of the people around us, red dust wafting, then settling as though it’s said all that it needs to say.

7. My mother tucks us back into our bed whispering, We have a home up North now.

8. I am too sleepy to tell her that Greenville is home. That even in the wintertime, the crickets sing us to sleep.

9. And tomorrow morning, you’ll get to meet your new baby brother.

10. But I am already mostly asleep again, two arms wrapped tight around my mama’s hand.

Focus Standard for Part 2:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2
Skill: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
Step 1: Close Reading Activity (with sample responses)

Optional: To align with the second part of the standard, have students write an objective summary of the text excerpt before they examine meaning and specific word choice in the close reading activity.

Jacqueline’s mother has just returned to Greenville to tell her children that they are leaving for New York the next day. Examine the text to determine where home is for Jacqueline.

1. In blue, highlight language that includes details of what it’s like for Jacqueline to live in her grandparents’ house.

Sample responses:

“It is late winter but my grandmother keeps the window in our room slightly open so that the cold fresh air can move over us as we sleep. Two thick quilts and the three of us side by side by side.” (4)

This is all we know now — (5)

“Cold pine breezes, my grandmother’s quilts, the heat of the wood-burning stove, the sweet slow voices of the people around us, red dust wafting, then settling as though it’s said all that it needs to say.” (6)

“...Greenville is home. That even in the wintertime, the crickets sing us to sleep.” (8)

2. In yellow, highlight language that includes details of Jacqueline’s interaction with her mother.

Sample responses:

“My mother arrives in the middle of the night, and sleepily, we pile into her arms and hold tight. Her kiss on the top of my head reminds me of all that I love.

 Mostly her." (1–3)

"My mother tucks us back into our bed whispering, We have a home up North now." (7)

"And tomorrow morning, you’ll get to meet your new baby brother.” (9)
“...two arms
wrapped tight
around my mama’s hand.” (10)

3. Look at the text that you’ve highlighted in blue. What does this language reveal about how Jacqueline feels about living in her grandparents’ house?

Sample response: Jacqueline seems to feel safe and warm within her grandparents’ house. She talks about the cold outside, but highlights the fresh air, the warmth of her grandmother’s quilts and the wood-burning stove, and the sweetness of the voices surrounding her. She also highlights the way the crickets lull her to sleep and the comfort of the red dust settling. These images suggest that inside her grandparents’ house, Jacqueline feels comfortable.

4. Look at the text that you’ve highlighted in yellow. What does this language reveal about Jacqueline’s relationship with her mother?

Sample response: Jacqueline relishes the closeness of her mother and the affection she shows her. Her mom’s kiss reminds her that the person she loves the most is her mother, and she demonstrates this love by wrapping her arms “around...mama’s hand” (26).

5. When you think of the “word” home in a positive way, what images or adjectives come to mind?

Sample response: When I think of the word home, I think of the smell of chili cooking and the sounds from the football game my dad is watching. I also think of the sound of my siblings’ voices while they play games and the way the light comes in the window and warms a rectangle of couch. Home is safe and comfortable. It’s a place where I am surrounded by people I love and where I enjoy the physical surroundings.

6. Is home for Jacqueline in her grandparents’ house or with her mother?

Sample response: Jacqueline says that her home is in Greenville, and she clearly feels safe and comfortable there. She is familiar with the sights and sounds, and they make her feel content. However, Jacqueline’s love for her mother is strong, and she seems to have missed her presence. This suggests that her mother’s absence has kept Greenville from feeling completely like home. Jacqueline seems to be torn between two possible homes: her grandparents’ house and with her mother.
Step 2: Connected Excerpts to Continue Close Reading

Continue to investigate Jacqueline’s struggle to identify where home is. Examine Jacqueline’s descriptive language to determine how much each place feels like home.

- **Part I, “home”**: Jacqueline and her siblings arrive in Greenville.
- **Part I, “the cousins”**: The family has a birthday party for Jacqueline’s mother.
- **Part II, “lullaby”**: What it sounds like at night in Greenville.
- **Part II, “the blanket”**: While their mother goes to New York, the children stay with their grandparents.
- **Part II, “changes”**: The children are counting down to their own departure from Greenville.
- **Part II, “the letter”**: The children’s mother sends word that she’s coming for them.
- **Part III, “herzl street”**: The Woodsons get to know their neighbors.
- **Part III, “the johnny pump”**: The children play in the water on hot days.
- **Part III, “brooklyn rain”**: Jacqueline compares a rainy day in Brooklyn with one in Greenville.
- **Part III, “halfway home #2”**: The children talk to their grandmother on the phone.
- **Part III, “home again to hall street”**: The Woodson children return to their grandparents’ home and not much has changed.
- **Part III, “mrs. hughes’s house”**: The children are mocked by their peers.
- **Part III, “home then home again”**: Summer is ending, and the children prepare to go back to New York.
- **Part IV, “maria”**: Jacqueline spends time with her best friend.
- **Part V, “mimosa tree”**: Jacqueline’s grandmother brings seeds to Brooklyn.
Step 3: Writing Prompt

Analytical

How has Jacqueline’s understanding of home changed over the course of the novel? By the end, where is home for her? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Part 3

Additional Guiding Questions and Projects

Step 4: Guiding Questions to Read the Whole Book (with sample responses)

Use the discussion questions below to guide reading throughout the whole book. Students should come prepared to discuss their answers by referring to evidence from the text. Students should also be prepared to respond to comments made by classmates.

Part I: i am born

1. What came before Jacqueline’s birth that she believes may shape the person she will become?

   **Sample response:** Jacqueline believes that even though she was born in Ohio, the stories of South Carolina and the experiences of African Americans there “...run / like rivers / through [her] veins” (2). She also believes that those who have come before her to “change the world” (5) have forged a path that she might also follow. She also has the Woodson side of her family that has lived free in Ohio for generations and has found professional success through the years.

2. How do the differences between Jacqueline’s mother and father affect their relationship?

   **Sample response:** Jacqueline’s mother longs for the South, bringing plants indoors and traveling to Greenville during the winter. For Jacqueline’s mother, “Ohio will never be home” (27). On the other hand, Jacqueline’s father doesn’t like the South at all because of how African Americans are treated there, and he wants his children to have the freedom “to be / as good as [they] already are” (29). These differences cause Jacqueline’s parents to fight, and ultimately, they cause her mother to leave with the children and not return to Ohio.
3. What makes South Carolina feel immediately like home? How does Jacqueline’s mother deal with the negative aspects of that place?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1

**Sample response:** South Carolina feels like home as soon as they enter the loving home of their grandparents. Cousins come over and they spend the evening dancing and laughing. Though the comforts of home are many, there is still a lot of racism in Greenville. To deal with it, Jacqueline’s mother has the children follow antiquated etiquette to avoid having any run-ins with white people, but she also whispers that they’re “as good as anybody” (31) to ensure that they realize how wrongly they are being treated.

**Part II: the stories of south carolina run like rivers**

4. How do the children adjust positively to their lives in South Carolina and in what ways do they still feel like outsiders?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2

**Sample response:** The children grow close to their grandparents. They start to call their grandfather Daddy and crowd around him on his way home from work. After their grandmother returns from her day job, the children crowd around to hear her stories. They feel safe and loved in Greenville. However, Hope has a negative physical reaction to the South and its heat, and he suffers from anxiety about leaving Ohio, so he retreats into his comics. Also, Hope uses the word “ain’t” likely in an effort to fit in, but his mother hits him with a switch to remind him that he shouldn’t speak like a Southerner. The children’s cousins don’t feel like playing with them, in part, because the Woodson children speak too quickly and are hard to understand.

5. While in Greenville, what do the children learn about the Civil Rights Movement in the South?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2

**Sample response:** Daddy tells the kids that they were supposed to be made free in 1863, but since they weren’t, people are angry and marching for their rights. He also tells the kids that they have to “...insist / ...gently” (73) but “...be ready to die” (73). The children learn from Dorothy that there are trainings for how to attend sit-ins and other protests where they teach you how to act “when...people come at you” (76) and how to “…sit tall, not cry, swallow back fear” (76). Additionally, the children watch as Miss Bell hosts a meeting for marchers in her home. They see that she must disguise the meeting as a gathering of friends for dinner. She does this to avoid getting fired from her job, and she is careful to keep up the facade in case anyone watching has an issue with a marchers’ meeting.
6. In what ways are Jacqueline’s feelings about leaving Greenville different from those of her mother?

**Sample response:** Jacqueline’s mother wants to leave Greenville to find “...a place of her own” (104). She believes that New York holds hope for a better future. Jacqueline wonders whether they will always feel divided between different places, and she and her siblings dread leaving Greenville. The children try to memorize every sound, smell, and feeling that they experience within the loving home of their grandparents. When the children get word that their mother is coming for them, they wonder how to “…leave / all that [they’ve] known—” (132).

**Part III: followed the sky’s mirrored constellation to freedom**

7. What do the children miss about Greenville and what helps fill those voids?

**Sample response:** They miss the food, the way their “…grandparents talked” (145), and the nature that surrounded them. One thing that helps fill the void is that on Saturday nights people from Greenville and other South Carolina towns come over to the apartment. They cook southern food and talk with their southern accents, making the children feel like they have returned to the “…red dirt and pine trees” (145) of Greenville. Also, on hot summer days, someone opens the johnny pump, and the kids run through barefoot, supplementing the children’s desire to feel the red dirt on their feet.

8. What clues reveal that stories and words are becoming increasingly important to Jacqueline? How do others respond?

**Sample response:** Jacqueline envies how well Odella can read, but when she tries, “…the words twist / twirl across the page” (169). However, Jacqueline loves words and stories immensely. Jacqueline starts making up stories to explain her father’s absence, but Odella “…shakes her head” (170) and tells people the truth. When Jacqueline tells Uncle Robert stories, he participates and smiles as she adds to the narrative. While Uncle Robert likes and encourages her stories, her mother “…accuses [her] of lying” (176). Jacqueline starts to wonder about the way that her brain works, noting how she hears stories and starts changing them to become “…a thing / that happens, / in some other way / to me…!” (176). Already she is starting to recognize the role of other people’s stories and memory in her own storytelling.
9. At the end of Part III, how does having two places they consider home affect the children during their visit to Greenville?

**Sample response:** When the children get to the house on Hall Street, everything is as they remember and they feel that this is "...the place [they] belong to" (192). However, at Mrs. Hughes's house, the kids are bullied, in part because they speak quickly and "...don't know how to come / home / and leave / home / behind [them]" (195). When it’s nearly time to head back to New York, the children miss Roman and grow a bit bored of the swingset in their grandparents’ backyard. However, they also know that they will spend their winter telling stories from Greenville over and over because they miss it.

**Part IV: deep in my heart, i do believe**

10. In what ways do the Woodson children feel different from their peers?

**Sample response:** The Woodson children have to go inside at twilight, while their friends are able to stay out "...till dark" (213), and the neighborhood kids call their mother mean. They aren’t allowed to use any unpleasant language, so their friends laugh when they whisper "You stupid dummy" (258) at someone, pushing them to curse and laughing when they can’t. Finally, they aren’t allowed to listen to music that contains the word "funk," so Jacqueline listens to those songs at Maria’s house. Also, their mother insists that the children follow the rules of Jehovah’s Witnesses, even though she does not, so they can’t say the Pledge or eat cupcakes when it’s someone’s birthday.

11. How is each of the older Woodson children brilliant?

**Sample response:** Odella is an avid reader and interested in academics. She impresses every teacher with how diligently and quickly she learns. Though Hope is typically quiet with his nose in a book or immersed in a chemistry experiment, the family discovers that Hope can sing beautifully when they attend a school performance. Jacqueline earns high praise from her teacher when she recites *The Selfish Giant* and realizes that her gift is that "...words are [her] brilliance" (248).
12. What process does Jacqueline use to start crafting songs and stories?

Sample response: Jacqueline writes down lyrics to songs and memorizes words to books, reading slowly and repeatedly to commit the story to memory. On the way to visit Robert, Jacqueline hears an O’Jays’ song and starts to imagine the story of a bus load of people going to visit a prison housing a family member. The words come to her quickly on the way to the prison and back again. She repeats the words over and over to commit them to memory, like she has done with so many other stories, so that she can really “...be a writer” (274).

Part V: ready to change the world

13. How does Daddy’s death impact the family?

Sample response: Jacqueline’s grandmother sells the house, gets rid of their possessions in South Carolina, and moves to Brooklyn. When Jacqueline and Maria play with candy cigarettes, Odella points out that cigarettes killed Daddy, and the girls stop playing with them immediately. Jacqueline also spends time with her grandmother, remembering Daddy and talking about the traits she shares with him. Finally, the summer trips to South Carolina also stop, so Jacqueline starts making up wild stories about her summer adventures when asked what she did.

14. What does Jacqueline realize is similar about her relationship with Maria and the evolution of Bushwick? How might this realization affect her writing?

Sample response: Jacqueline realizes that for her friendship with Maria to have happened and for Bushwick to become what it is today, there were a series of events that had to occur. If things had happened differently, the outcome might have been different. Also, she realizes that in the way that things played out, everyone has a place to belong in Bushwick and she also feels like she belongs with Maria and Maria’s family. Jacqueline now understands that she “...didn’t just appear one day / ... [and that she] was a long time coming” (298). Realizing that she is a person who is made from all of the events and people that preceded her will likely mean that her writing will incorporate more memories and experiences of her own as well as those of people who came before her.
15. What revolution is taking place and how does Jacqueline make sense of it?

**Sample response:** Jacqueline refers to the revolution of African Americans fighting to gain equality. People like Angela Davis and the Black Panthers are speaking out and trying to change the world, and Shirley Chisholm runs for president. Jacqueline compares the revolution to a carousel because "The revolution is always going to be happening" (309). In other words, she recognizes that somewhere "...history [is] always being made" (309). She explains that during your ride, you are part of history, then your ride is over and the next group gets their turn.

16. According to the author, how do worlds and beliefs shape who you are?

**Sample response:** There are countless worlds in which you are able to imagine yourself, putting yourself into the shoes of others and seeing things through their eyes. Many of those worlds are based on your memories and those of the people who came before you. Your many beliefs, which can vary widely and even contradict themselves at times, and the worlds that you know help you determine your own path.

### Step 5: Extended Discussion Questions
(with sample responses)

1. There are times when the Woodson children feel like they don’t fit in, whether it be in Greenville or New York. What advice would you give a person who is struggling to find their place in your location?

   **Sample response:** I would tell that person that it’s okay to not be exactly like the other people here. It is important for people to bring their own experiences to a place and share them with others. Doing this helps people to learn about other places and cultures, making a place richer and more interesting.

2. Jacqueline struggles to read at first, with the words twisting on the page, and she gets frustrated when teachers tell her the books she is reading are too easy for her age group. How have you dealt with a subject or concept that is difficult during your schooling?

   **Sample response:** I had a really hard time with fractions in math. I got really frustrated at first and would cry whenever I had to sit down at home to do math homework. However, I kept working at it, and eventually, I got it. Sometimes I think I might understand them better than my friends because I spent such a long time trying to figure them out.
3. Jacqueline’s mother, grandmother, and grandfather all subscribe to different belief systems and religions, and throughout the book, Jacqueline works to identify her own beliefs. How have you worked to understand your own beliefs when faced with the belief systems of others?

**Sample response:** I try to listen to what everyone around me believes. I am still not really sure what I think, but I like that I keep learning about different options. Sometimes my mom pressures me to believe what she does, but I am keeping an open mind and trying to learn as much as I can.

4. After Diana moves into the neighborhood, Jacqueline is concerned that Maria may not be her best friend anymore. How do you avoid jealousy and self-doubt when your friends make new friends?

**Sample response:** When my friends make new friends, I sometimes worry that I’ll be left out. In order to avoid this feeling, I try to make sure that I am open to becoming friends with the new person, too. If we don’t mesh well together, I let my original friend know that I still want to spend time with him, and we work together to make sure that happens. I also remind myself that I have other people in my life, and my friend deserves to have that, too.

5. When Jacqueline reveals that her dream is to be a writer, her family pushes her to consider other options. What would you do if your family wanted you to pursue a dream that was not yours?

**Sample response:** If my family wanted me to pursue a dream that was not mine, I might be upset at first and feel disappointed that they weren’t supportive of me. After that, I think that I would stay true to myself and pursue my passion. I think that once my family saw that I really meant to follow my dreams, they would have my back.

**Step 6: Writer’s Craft (with sample responses)**

**Similes and Metaphors**

Throughout *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Jacqueline Woodson uses figurative language, including similes and metaphors, to create strong images and convey deeper meanings.

**Example 1:**

- “I am born in Ohio but the stories of South Carolina already run like rivers through my veins.” (2)
Example 2:

- “So many years have passed since we last saw our father, his absence like a bubble in my older brother’s life, that pops again and again into a whole lot of tiny bubbles of memory.” (103)

1. In example 1, stories are being compared to rivers. How would you typically describe rivers?
   **Sample response:** Rivers run fast and usually are quite large.

2. Does the comparison between rivers and the stories of South Carolina make sense in this context? Explain.
   **Sample response:** Yes, because if the stories of South Carolina run like rivers through her, it means that they are a big part of who she is and where she came from.

3. In example 2, the Woodsons’ father’s absence is being compared to bubbles. How would you describe bubbles?
   **Sample response:** Bubbles unexpectedly spring up a lot of the time and when they pop, more usually appear.

4. Does the comparison between bubbles and the Woodsons’ father’s absence make sense in this context? Explain.
   **Sample response:** Yes. If their father’s absence is like a bubble, it means that the memories of their father appear unexpectedly for Hope, and even though those memories fade, others spring up in their place.

5. Find three more examples of similes or metaphors that Woodson uses throughout the book. Complete the same process as above to understand the meaning of each comparison.

   **Sample responses:**

   “Maybe the memory of my mother was a painful stone inside my father’s heart.” (40)

   “...my sister’s voice wafts over the kitchen, past the smell of hair and oil and flame, settles like a hand on my shoulder and holds me there.” (84)

   “...you can still see the words, right there like a ghost standing in front still keeping you out.” (92)
"It always smelled like this, my mother says.
Wet grass and pine.
Like memory." (96)

“Here there is only gray rock, cold and treeless as a bad dream.” (143)

“so they were red dirt and pine trees they were fireflies in jelly jars and lemon-chiffon ice cream cones.” (145)

“How can I explain to anyone that stories are like air to me, I breathe them in and let them out over and over again.” (247)

“Darkness like a cape that we wear for hours, curled into it and back to sleep.” (267)

Part 4

Summative Projects

Step 7: Writing Prompt

In Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson uses rich imagery to describe the places that she thinks of as home. Identify a place where you feel most at home and describe it using sensory images and specific word choice to convey the feelings you have in and about that place.

Step 8: Final Project

Dreams

Jacqueline Woodson includes the poem “Dreams” by Langston Hughes just before Part I. In part, this memoir tells the story of Woodson’s journey to achieve her dream to become a writer.

Langston Hughes was an African American writer and poet most often associated with the Harlem Renaissance. Hughes’s writing sought to represent the African Americans of his time and give voice to their experiences.

Find Langston Hughes’s poem “Dreams” online, copy and distribute to students.
• Read “Dreams” by Langston Hughes.
• In one color, highlight lines that are repeated exactly.
• In another color, highlight lines that start the same but are slightly different at the end.
• In another color, highlight lines that are unique.
• Why might Hughes have structured his poem in this way?
• Look carefully at the simile in the 3rd and 4th line of each stanza. What adjectives would you use to describe the image being compared to life in these examples?
• Jacqueline Woodson was able to pursue her dreams. Rewrite this poem to reflect what life is like when dreams are followed. Use the same structure as Hughes and consider your images carefully.

Step 9: Challenge

Memories and Who We Become

Much of Brown Girl Dreaming focuses on Jacqueline’s realization that her memories and experiences contribute to a greater understanding of self and illuminate what her future might hold. During Jacqueline’s childhood, there were many people who acted bravely in the face of racism and segregation. Some of those people were neighbors and friends, but others loomed larger and had an impact on the entire nation.

Choose a person from the list of names provided on pages 3 and 4 in “second daughter’s second day on earth.” Conduct research to determine what memories and experiences may have driven the person you selected to try to change the world:

• What was happening socially and politically during your person’s life that they found problematic and wanted to change?
• What did your person do to try to change the world?
• What events or situations did your person experience in their youth that might have helped them decide to try to change the world?
• Who helped to foster the confidence and belief system that made it possible for your person to try to change the world? How?
• What has Jacqueline Woodson done to try to change the world?
Return to *Brown Girl Dreaming* and write an answer to the following:

What memories and experiences drove your person to try to change the world? In what ways are your person, the memories and experiences that drove them, and their actions similar or different from Jacqueline Woodson, her memories and experiences, and her actions? Use evidence from your research and *Brown Girl Dreaming* to support your answer.

**Step 10: Extra**

In “writing #2,” Jacqueline describes how she hears Sly and the Family Stone’s “Family Affair” on the radio and that “it’s / [her] mother’s favorite, the one she plays again and again” (221). The song seems to speak to the Woodsons because Jacqueline also remarks that “the song makes me think of Greenville and Brooklyn / the two worlds my heart lives in now” (221).

Listen to the song, which can be found on Spotify or by searching online, and follow along with the written lyrics, which can be found on sites such as lyrics.com.

- **Research:** On a sheet of paper, paraphrase the lyrics stanza by stanza. Next to each paraphrased version of the stanza, jot down a few ideas as to how this part of the song relates to the Woodsons and their experiences.
- **Discuss:** Share the notes you wrote in the previous step with a small group. Record your classmates’ ideas if you think they make sense.
- **Write:** Why was “Family Affair” a meaningful song to Jacqueline and her mother? How do the lyrics relate to the Woodsons and their experiences? Use evidence from the song lyrics and *Brown Girl Dreaming* to support your answer.

**Step 11: Extended Reading**

- *How I Discovered Poetry* by Marilyn Nelson
- *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia
- *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
- *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo