American Female Writers Text Set: English Grade 11

Introduction

Text sets are used as an innovative differential instructional strategy, which allows the instructor to provide different supplemental texts to students in accordance to the student’s reading skills. It is essential to provide texts with varying readability levels because it will ensure that each student is given the appropriate text according to his/her reading skills and interests. In content areas, text sets are used to enhance the understanding of the text book, but in English literature courses, the text sets are used to replace the texts that are used in the core curriculum. Therefore, the text sets used in English classes must illustrate how they relate to the focuses of the Standards of Learning (SOLs).

Though these supplemental texts must concentrate on a SOL goal, it is also important that these texts invoke some creativity in the students in order to remain attentive to the text. It is particularly important to provide fictional, creative texts in the English classroom because literature is an expression of creativity. Having creative, fictional texts will encourage critical thinking skills because it allows the student to think in a different lens, which ultimately exercises the “why” part of the brain and not just the memory.

I chose the theme “American Female Writers” for the text set because female writers are often overlooked in literature courses, yet many of these female authors contributed immensely to different literary genres and periods. My specialized concentration in literature is American literature, so it is best fitting to study American Female Writers. The text set that I have compiled best suits eleventh grade English Literature curriculum, according to the SOLs.

The SOLs assert that eleventh grade students should be familiar with classic and contemporary American literature and varying literary genres (11.3/11.5 specifically poetry). Students must also highlight prominent themes in American literature, as well as identify the overarching relation between the theme in the text and American history and culture (11.3). Eleventh grade literature students must also be able to make the connection that other cultures are contributors to American literature (11.3). They will also examine the intended purpose of the text and the reader’s own purpose to read the text (11.4). Lastly, though there are no playwrights in this selection, some texts contain “verbal, situational, and dramatic irony” that the students will be asked to examine (11.6).

It is important to note that in public education, students in the same grade have different reading and analyzing skills, come from varying cultures and socioeconomic status, and have different interests. An instructor must be readily able to adapt to the diverse classroom. I plan to teach at an inner city public institution, which has a low socioeconomic status. The inner city public school will have a more diverse classroom, having African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian students primarily. This classroom will have many different reading levels, but are probably on the lower end of the spectrum due to lack of resources. Because there is a diverse classroom, it is inevitable that students have different reading skills as well as interests, but more than likely, they are more interested in texts that they can relate to through their everyday life.
“A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor

Introduction and Summary: This short story is considered Southern Grotesque writing, in which authors used “dramatic irony” to imply something about the grotesqueness of southern society and particular societal and gender roles. This text encompasses many of the SOL’s goals, like literary genres, Southern Grotesque writing (11.3), uses “dramatic irony” (11.6), and reveals an aspect of American culture and history through the “dramatic irony” of the text and diction (11.3). This text is a great selection to apply to the Standards of Learning because it allows students to make connections of genre and technique (Southern Grotesque writing using “dramatic irony” to reveal a depiction of culture).

In this short story, a family is driving through the southern countryside on their way to Florida. The family consists of a mother, father, grandmother, a baby, and two children. The grandmother is portrayed as a southern belle because she had many gentlemen callers, which she spoke about the entire way to Florida. On the way to Florida, the grandmother recognizes an old plantation entrance, and she insists on visiting the manor, but she realizes that this may not be the plantation she remembered. The sudden realization of her mistake created a ruckus, and the father lost control of the car. All of the passengers were alright, and once they got out of the car, another car slowly approached, containing three passengers. The car stopped, and the passengers got out; one of the passengers was the infamous criminal called the Misfit. The Misfit had a long conversation with the grandmother, as the other two passengers shot and killed the rest of the family. Then the grandmother was shot, and her body was thrown with the other bodies of her family.

Rationale: This text will engage the most reluctant readers because the language is quite simple, and contains an interesting plot line, in which the ending concludes with a senseless mass murder. Because the ending is so gruesome, it allows readers to make the connection that this text is an example of Southern Grotesque writing. What may be even more interesting to readers is that this grotesque piece was written by a female writer, who is often discouraged to write about such gruesome events due to gender expectations. Some students may not “see themselves in these characters,” but they may see some similar gender and societal roles that are still prevalent today, which allows students to think in a more collective, interdisciplinary manner.

Usage: This text is great example of a text to be used in the classroom, and will replace the original text, which is probably an anthology. Because the language is so simple, this text could be read independently at home or during a selected quiet reading time during class. After students read this text independently, I would use this text during the Review phase in PAR because it is written simply, so students do not need much instruction or assistance in understanding the plot of the short story. However, to identify genre, the relation to history and culture, and the usage of “dramatic irony,” it is necessary to review and discuss the material that they read.

Readability: According to Fry Readability Grade Equivalent, this text is meant for eighth graders, due to the simplistic language. However, the content of the text is not meant for eighth grade students, and better suited for eleventh graders. According to
Bader, the words are easily decodable, the writing style is appropriate because it contains some dialect, the content is more appropriate for older adolescents due to the violence, and the format of the narrative is also appropriate in length, font, and genre.

**Bibliographic information:**

**Fair and Tender Ladies by Lee Smith**

*Introduction and Summary:* This novel is written in letters, which allows students to read a novel using a different format than the typical novel format. By using a different genre, students are able to see the wide array of fictional, creative American literature (11.3). What is interesting about this narrative is that the reader can see how the main character, Ivy, becomes a better writer and learns to understand herself through her writing, which provides a bridge for students to examine the purpose of the text, and how the purpose relates to themselves (11.4). This text also reveals a depiction of Virginian life and the gender roles placed on women during the 1900’s (11.3).

Ivy, the protagonist, lives in the mountains of Virginia, in a small cabin, where she ran wild with her siblings and neighbors. Ivy’s letters were often simple and had incorrect grammar, but as time went on the letters became more complex and grammatically correct. She often wrote to her sisters about what has been going on in her life as she grows older and becomes more educated. She continues to write to one of her sisters, who was mentally disabled, which suggests that she was more writing to understand herself, and less to tell her sister what is going on and how she feels. Ivy had great expectations placed on her to receive a good education after the death of her father, and the family moved into the valley town below the house. However, Ivy’s aspirations of leaving the Virginia town and mountains became more distant with the other responsibilities placed on her, like manual labor to provide extra income for her family. She then marries, has children of her own, and moves back to the house that belonged to her family on top of the mountain.

*Rationale: Fair and Tender Ladies* provides an alternative to the typical novel, but still maintains a narrative plot. The format of the novel provides a nice spin to the average novel, which will encourage even the most reluctant readers. What is great about this novel is that the main character, Ivy, writes like how she speaks, in her own voice, which encourages students to think that their dialect or speech is just as intelligent. The text contains poor grammar and spelling errors, but conveys a very deep meaning, which encourages students to think more about the content and the essence of the novel. Because Ivy writes in her own voice, I think many students can identify with this character because the reader can visually see how she progressed in writing and in her own life.

*Usage:* This text would be best used as a read along with the instructor because of the length of the novel. However, I think it is important to read excerpts of this novel throughout the unit, along with a copy for students to read along. It is necessary to
provide a copy of the passages to the students because they can visually see Ivy’s voice through misspelling and grammatical errors. This text should enhance the discussion of American female writers and not replace the official text altogether because it would be used as a preparation activity for class. At the beginning of classes, the instructor should read a passage in order to prepare students to think about what it means to write in one’s own voice, and why it is important to know one’s own voice. By reading the excerpts throughout the unit, students may feel more confident in their own writing skills and encourage them to find their own voice. Because students will not be able to read this novel in its entirety, this is a supplemental text.

**Readability:** According to the Flesch-Kincaid formula, it placed this text at the 5.4 reading level, which means a fifth grader or sixth grader should be able to read this text because of its simple language and sentence structure. However, this novel is a coming of age story and would better suit a young adult. The linguistic structure of the novel is undemanding, and could be used as independent work, but I think students need to hear the text to hear the voice, along with seeing the voice. New vocabulary is minimal, so there would be no need for explanation of words in this novel, unless there are questions about certain words. The content of this novel really appeals to young adult because the reader can see Ivy’s progression in life, much like what a young adult is going through as well. The diction of this novel is exceptional because it provides a distinct voice and dialect, which frames the depiction of a woman in the south during the 1900’s. Due to the length of the novel, it would be impossible to read the novel in its entirety in only unit, which makes this a great candidate to read aloud.

**Bibliographic Information:**

“The Ballad of the Sad Café” by Carson McCullers

**Introduction and Summary:** Carson McCullers is also a female Southern Grotesque writer like Flannery O’Connor, and so it compliments “A Good Man is Hard to Find” and the understanding of Southern Grotesque writing. Though this short story is a little longer than “A Good Man is Hard to Find,” it provides more depth into the diction and imagery associated with Southern Grotesque writing (11.3) as a literary genre. This text contains “dramatic irony” like that of O’Connor’s piece because it is an essential component to Southern Grotesque writing (11.6).

The beginning of the story is actually the end of the short story, but the narrator flashes back to the story of the “giant” Miss Amelia and her “dwarf” cousin Lymon. Miss Amelia owned a store in a small town in the south, where she ruled with an iron fist and did not take kindly to anybody at all. But one evening, a small traveler, by the name of Lymon came to Miss Amelia, introducing himself as her cousin. Miss Amelia became fond of her counterpart, Cousin Lymon, and they changed the desolate store into a thriving café. Miss Amelia trusted Cousin Lymon with all of her prized possessions, but that was soon to change. Marvin Macy, once considered a criminal, fell in love with Miss Amelia and married her several years before her encounter with Cousin Lymon. But only after ten days of marriage and no “relations” Marvin Macy became infuriated and swore
that he would have revenge, and soon became the criminal he was underneath his façade. And upon Marvin’s return to the small southern town, Marvin had his revenge by taking all of Miss Amelia’s prized possessions, even her companion, Cousin Lymon. And she sits alone in her “sad café.”

_Rationale:_ The use of imagery truly exposes the grotesqueness of this short story, which many readers might find interesting. These visual representations are extraordinary and could be used with multiple in-class exercises, whether discussion or actually drawing a picture of this odd couple. Carson McCullers is also a female Southern Grotesque writer, like O’Connor, but uses imagery rather than plot like in O’Connor’s example. By using these texts as comparisons, it will create a better understanding of that particular literary genre and female writers. I think all students can relate to these characters because though they seemed grotesque and almost “deformed” on the outside, the characters still reacted like anyone else would, though maybe a little exaggerated. If students are able to make that connection, they may see reality a little differently and think more critically about situations concerning outer appearances.

_Usage:_ This short story may also be taken home to read independently; however, I would also like to provide time in class for struggling readers so they may ask questions as they read because of the more complex imagery and meaning in this short story, as compared to O’Connor’s piece. There are some important passages that I would also like to read aloud so as to emphasize key parts or images to the students. This text is more appropriate for the assisted phase in PAR because I feel that I will need to spend plenty of time on discussing and creating activities that look at the complexity in meaning and imagery. Because this is a great compliment to O’Connor’s piece, I would also like to replace this text with the official text.

_Readability:_ The Flesch–Kincaid formula suggests that this narrative is at the 8.7 level, which means that eighth and ninth grade students are able to read this text, but I do not think that the complete comprehension is there at that stage because of the complex imagery and meaning concealed in the text. The sentence structure is more complex than that of O’Connor or Smith, which would be a great text to do after O’Connor and between passages of Smith. Bader would suggest that the vocabulary is appropriate for the eleventh grade because there should be little explanation of definitions of words by the instructor. The words are also easily decodable because the text has a natural flow or rhythm. The concepts are little hard for an eleventh grader to grasp, which is why discussion, read alouds, and exercises must be performed in the classroom as the students read independently at home and in the classroom. The words are easy to grasp, but the complexity of the word choice maybe difficult for students to understand, and the grim, grotesque tone is stimulating. This text is longer than that of O’Connor’s piece, but it is still possible to assign during the unit.

_Bibliographic Information:_
The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton

Introduction and Summary: Edith Wharton is a great example of an American female writer because she realistically depicts the life of a woman in the 1900’s, as well as the influence of society and class during that time. This novel allows readers to make the connection of the emphasized themes in the novel to American history and culture (11.3). This novel is even more complex than any other piece of writing chosen in this text set and should only be given or suggested to advanced or accelerated readers.

Lily Bart, the main character, is a single female woman, living the high class life because of her financial stability from her aunt. She admits to her “lover” Lawrence Selden that she does not want to marry, but she must in order to maintain her high class lifestyle. This encourages Lily to flirt with rich, powerful men, yet she never actually acts on her desire to marry for wealth. Instead, she finds herself in a slow decline into the working class, when she eventually accidentally kills herself. But before her death, she realizes that the only way out of the working class is through marriage, even if it is not for love.

Rationale: This novel is a slice of life because it reveals the dark reality of the upper class, female gender roles, and ill fated love. Many students, especially female readers, would enjoy this novel because it intermingles a love story with societal and gender roles, but also provides a realistic ending to the love affair. The ill fated love story is a story that everyone can identify with, but becomes more complex with the beautiful character development of Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden. This novel has the most realistic character development because the reader can always make a suggestion on Lily’s motivations because of the balanced positive and negative characteristics. This allows students to identify not only with her, but also her tragic story. By seeing Lily’s motivations and thought processes, the reader is able to look at themselves in a more critical light, seeing that we all have positive and negative qualities, yet provide a somewhat balance in character. Students know little about gender roles of the 1900’s, but they probably know a little about class because it is something that is still prevalent today. Therefore, they will understand societal and class roles, but will build their knowledge of gender roles.

Usage: This text will only be suggested for advanced, independent readers because of the complexity of language and meaning. The length of the novel is also a little bit of an issue, which means that students would need either entire unit or longer to read this novel and may not be able to read any of the short stories by McCullers or O’Connor. Therefore, if the text is used in this way, it would replace the official text as well as other texts. If I decided not to assign this novel to advanced readers, I would do read alouds of particular excerpts in the novel as a way to incorporate this novel into the unit. In this case, the text is supplemental. If this novel was to be used for advanced readers, there is a plausible chance that I could use this as review, to just highlight key concepts, imagery, meaning, etc. However, I feel that I may have to be very interactive with the advanced readers during the reading of this novel. If I chose to read excerpts
from this novel, I would use the assisted phase by reading aloud and directed class discussion or exercises.

**Readability:** The readability level is ninth grade, according to Edward Fry’s Readability formula. I do not think that this novel is on a ninth grade reading level because the meaning and imagery is much more complex. The reason why Fry’s readability equivalent is only ninth grade is because it is only measuring the amount of syllables and the number of sentences in three 100 word passages. It does not look into the vocabulary or the complexity in imagery and meaning. The Bader formula is a much better formula in this case because it looks not only at the text linguistically, but also at content, format, and writing style. There would have to be some preparation with vocabulary in this novel because there are a lot of words that we do not use today that may seem confusing to contemporary readers. The content is appropriate for eleventh graders because it deals with love, society, and gender. My one concern is the length of the novel, I am unsure on how long students would need in order to finish this novel.

**Bibliographic Information:**

**Poem “449” by Emily Dickinson**

**Introduction and Summary:** Poetry is emphasized in the goals of the SOLs (11.5), and it is important that we look at some female poets because of the impact that many had on American poetry and literary genres. Emily Dickinson was a transcendental poet, like Walt Whitman, though she had a much different approach to her writing (11.3). Poetry is so complex, and many times students are not interested in poetry at all, which makes this section of the text set to be difficult, but I think with some guided discussion and read alouds, poetry may become interesting to many students.

It is hard to summarize a poem because it is more of a complex expression or emotion that is hard to grasp without prose of poetry (so I’ll try my best here). What makes it even harder is that poetry can be interpreted in so many different ways, so I’ll provide a short summary of what I think this poem is about. To begin, transcendental writing is going back to the essence of nature and beauty, which this poem truly captures. I think Dickinson is saying that truth and beauty go hand in hand, and we often fail to see that there is beauty once we stop speaking truthfully of it.

**Rationale:** What is great is that this poem could mean something completely different to another reader, yet still have the same impact on the reader. By suggesting to students that there are multiple interpretations of poems or literature, it allows them to think more critically, and look for evidence of why they think a particular way. Because there is not really an established character, there is no character attachment to the poem, but I think it is a great poem to just get students thinking.

**Usage:** This poem would be read aloud by the instructor because of the complexity of the poem, and would be either a great preparation activity or review, just to
get the creative juices flowing. I think it is essential to point out to students that this poem has multiple interpretations, but one must provide evidence as to why they think that way. I would ask questions like, what words struck you the most and why, what do you think Dickinson is saying about beauty and truth, is she speaking about beauty and truth, etc. This would not replace the official text; it is merely a supplement to other texts.

Readability: Using the Leveled Texts formula, I would estimate that this poem is made for either eleventh or twelfth grade students due to the complexity in vocabulary and meaning. Bader would also suggest that this poem is appropriate for eleventh or twelfth grade students because the content, diction, structure (or format), and tone is very complex. The length is very short, as most poems, which makes it good for the beginning or end of class. An instructor could also read this poem at the beginning of the unit and at the end of the unit to see if student’s opinions changed about the poem.

Bibliographic Information:

Poem “501” by Emily Dickinson

Introduction and Summary: I wanted to use two poems from Emily Dickinson because poems are very short, and students will only get a taste of her writing, rather than a comprehension of her writing (11.5). What is interesting is that many people would not consider Emily Dickinson as a transcendental writer because of her morose tone and diction, unlike that of Emerson, Thoreau, or Whitman (11.3). However, she still maintains the ideals of transcendental writing because of her emphasis on nature and human’s connection to nature. One might say that she sounds more like a Southern Grotesque writer than a transcendental writer, but the content is much different, which is why I want students to read more than one poem by Dickinson (11.3).

I have a more defined interpretation of Poem “501” because I understand this content a little more. Dickinson is writing on the afterlife, basically suggesting that though we physically die, it is not the “Conclusion.” Life and death are enigmas that not even “scholars” can understand, even after “Generations.” What I like about this poem is that structure is crucial in understanding how it makes one feel as they read the poem. I want to reemphasize that this is strictly one interpretation, and that will be an idea that I will emphasize with the students.

Rationale: I chose this poem because this captures the transcendental idea of the afterlife, a key concept in that particular genre or writing style. This will provide a comparison to other transcendental writers, specifically Whitman because he is also a poet. I think more students would understand this poem more fluidly than the other poem because of the line structure makes it easier to see the beginning and ending of ideas and sentences. Students will be hesitant with poetry because of the complexity of poetry, but I think that if I encourage students to just think about everyone else’s interpretation, those reluctant readers/learners might think that their own interpretation is just as correct as the other students. There are no finite characters in this poem, but everyone has an opinion to
the afterlife, which would be a great jumping off point in this instance. By steering students to think about the afterlife, it encourages students to think critically about life and death, which is not often talked about in a classroom setting.

Usage: This text will be read aloud by the instructor, along with students reading his/her copy of the poem. Students need a copy of the poem to visually see the hyphens, line structure, capital letters, etc. This poem would be a supplemental text because of its complimenting quality, as like the other Dickinson poem. This poem would be a good poem to use either after O’Connor’s piece or Wharton’s piece because both deal with death, so it would be a complimenting review exercise.

Readability: Flesch-Kincaid formula suggests that this poem is at the 2.8 reading skill level, which is completely incorrect. I do not think a second or third grade student will be able to understand this poem because it is much complex in content and structure. Having no sentences and short lines may be the reason that this formula is incorrect. So it is imperative that I also use another readability formula like Bader. I think the content of this poem is very appropriate for eleventh grade students because adolescents are at time in their life when they actually comprehend death; whereas a third grader does not fully comprehend death. The structure is very complex because Dickinson uses different techniques to manipulate her readers to feel a certain way, and I think eleventh grade students will better understand the structure, unlike a third grade student. Dickinson also provides a very distinct tone that many students should be able to hear.

Bibliographic Information:

Passing by Nella Larsen
Introduction and Summary: Nella Larsen is a female African American writer of the Harlem Renaissance. Many students are unfamiliar with the Harlem Renaissance literary movement, which is why I wanted to incorporate female African American writers of this literary period/genre. What is also great about this novella is that Larsen uses the “tragic mulatta” literary tradition that has been the common literary strand to portray people of mixed descent (11.3). Therefore, this text is a great text to use in discussing female writers because for female African American writers, this was the only way to depict African American women in a more positive fashion. This text will provide a good comparison to other female writers because there is a difference in race/ethnicity (11.3).

Passing’s main character, Irene is a mulatta woman who volunteers for many African American social movement boards and is married to a well known African American doctor in Harlem. She sometimes “passes” for a white identity at her convenience. She happens to run into an old friend, Clare, who also passes for white, but all of the time. Clare is married to a racist white man, who does not know about her African American descent. Irene believes that there is an affair going on between Clare and Irene’s husband. Irene hints to Clare’s husband that Clare is not all white, but rather
mulatta, which in turn brings Clare’s husband into a frenzy at a party for the up rise of African Americans. Clare mysteriously “falls out” of the window. The ending is so ambiguous that either Clare fell by accident or Irene pushed her.

**Rationale:** This text would be great for the diverse classroom because the novella deals with the problem of identity through appearance. The African American students in the classroom would probably enjoy this novel because it deals with many of the same struggles that they face. Female students would also enjoy this text because it displays the harsh realities of jealousy and love, like how far would you go to take revenge? The language of this novel is so intense and beautiful, and I think that would encourage students to think that their own voice is also just as beautiful. Even though the language appears to be simple, it is so complex in meaning. Many students could identify with one of the characters in the novel because the situations that they are placed in are situations that many of us face today, like that of suspecting that one’s significant other is cheating, or not finding one identity. Students will be able to better understand themselves by reading this piece because it displays the nature of humans.

**Usage:** Students could read this novella independently at home because of the simple language and structure. However, this text would need to be reinforced by other in class activities and could also be used during silent reading or read aloud times, due to the complexity of the content. Therefore, this text would be great to use in the both the assisted and review phase of instruction during the unit. It might be better suited during the review phase because the plot is easy to understand, so it would be more about reviewing about what the text implies or means about culture, identity, gender, etc and how it relates to the students. I would use this text as a replacement to the original text because African American female writers are nonexistent in just about all classrooms in high school, which is a shame because students need to be able to identify with the characters in order to get anything out the text. By allowing multicultural texts in the curriculum, we are better able to appeal to a wider audience.

**Readability:** According to Edward Fry’s Readability formula, *Passing* has a ninth grade reading level, which is very appropriate for eleventh grade students. Even though Fry’s readability formula seems to be on point, I think there needs to be evaluation on other aspects than just syllables and length of sentences, which is why Bader is a great compliment to all of these other formulas. The words are easily decodable because of the natural rhythm that this text contains. The diction and tone is distinct and intense, which makes it easy for students to better pinpoint certain aspects in the novella. The length of the text is great too because it is about as long as McCullers’s piece that I provided. As mentioned, the content is probably the best fitting to eleventh grade students in comparison to the other selected texts because it deals with events that are likely to happen to them, like betrayal and the need for identity.
Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Introduction and Summary: Zora Hurston is also an African American female writer, also associated with the Harlem Renaissance. However, Hurston sometimes defies many of the Harlem Renaissance ideals; for instance, the setting is in the south and not Harlem. Regardless, Hurston is lumped with female African American Harlem Renaissance writer, and her novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God, allows for a great comparison to Larsen’s Passing (11.3). Hurston provides a great comparison also to O’Connor and McCullers because they all wrote about the south and use very vivid imagery. American female writers must contain some diversity, which is why I choose another African American female writer.

Janie, the main character, is betrothed to an older farmer, and she works hard everyday on his farm like a “mule.” A young man, Jody, asks Janie to run away with him to an all African American town, where he becomes the mayor and the most powerful man in the town, bringing the first lamp post and general store. Janie becomes his wife, and leads a constrained life because of his intense jealousy. After a fight, Jodie dies, which leaves Janie all of his possessions, like the general store and nice house. A wild boy by the name of Teacake swept Janie off her feet, and they ran away together to Florida, where they worked on another farm. During a hurricane, they fled Florida, but on the way, Teacake was bitten by a rabid dog and died. Janie returned to her home, where she used to live with Jody, and tells her friend of having to bury Teacake.

Rationale: What is great about this text is that it uses dialect, and provides a distinct southern voice. Many students would be fascinated by Hurston’s use of dialect, and also encourage them to find their own voice as well. This novel is really about Janie’s progression into self realization, which many students are also trying to do during adolescence. Therefore, students may be living vicariously through Janie’s experiences and emotions, and allows a connection between character and reader. By establishing this connection, students are more likely to enjoy the text and try to pull out useful information from it. The plot of the narrative is just a fun story, and at times it is very comical, which is another reason that I think this text would be good for any reader, struggling or independent.

Usage: This text should be read aloud by both students and the instructor to truly grasp the voices and dialects of these characters. Another reason that I think this should be read aloud is because at times, it takes a minute to unpack a word that is written phonetically in a particular dialect. Some students may be unfamiliar with the dialect being used, which would suggest that this text would be used in the assisted phase in instruction, though many students could figure it out. However, I would like to encourage students to read independently, so I would probably assign only a few chapters to be read at home or with a buddy during class. This text could either replace or supplement the official text, depending on if there would be enough time to read the entire novel, though
it is fairly short. This text is also a great compliment to Larsen’s work too, so it should be introduced after that text due to the same literary period/genre.

Readability: Using the leveled texts formula, I would suggest that a ninth grade student would be able to read this novel, but those students would only understand the plot and content of the novel, and not necessarily what the novel means. I also do not think a ninth grade student would be able to read the dialect as fluently as an eleventh grader. Therefore, I think it would be an appropriate text for the eleventh grade student, even to the frustrated reader (with lots of assistance). Linguistically, it is appropriate for eleventh grade students because there is a natural flow or rhythm in Hurston’s language. The tone and voice are the most prominent features of this novel because of the dialect, which will aid in understanding voice and tone. The chapters are short, and the font is fairly big, which would encourage any student to continue to read because they feel as if they progressed far in the text.

Bibliographic Information: