

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Journal

# A Raisin in the Sun

by Lorraine Hansberry

### Reading Schedule

Group members: \_\_\_\_\_

| <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> | Student Journal | Due Date | Discussion Date |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|
| Introduction               | Pages 2-4       |          |                 |
| Act I                      | Pages 5-6       |          |                 |
| Act II                     | Pages 7-8       |          |                 |
| Act III                    | Pages 9-10      |          |                 |
| The Exchange               |                 |          |                 |
| Assessment                 |                 |          |                 |

**THE EXCHANGE**

How do  
communities  
unite and  
divide us?

# Getting Started

## What If?

Your town is deciding what to do with an empty plot of land. There is a big debate in your community about what should be built there. The kids in the town want a skateboard park. The senior citizens want a community garden.

You love to skateboard. You would love a skateboard park nearby. Your dad agrees that a skateboard park in the area would give kids something to do. But your grandmother would really like a place to garden. Your mother thinks a garden will keep your grandmother active. No one in your family can agree about the issue. Soon, everyone is arguing.

Make notes about how this would affect you.

- How do you keep this issue from dividing your family?
- How would you encourage your family to solve the problem?
- What might the community do to solve the situation?

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**Connect to The Exchange Question** Discuss how this situation could relate to The Exchange Question: **How do communities unite and divide us?** Summarize your discussion.

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# Introduction

Read the Introduction on pages 7–9 in *A Raisin in the Sun*. The Introduction will help you understand key concepts in the book. Knowing them will help you discuss and write about the book.

The Introduction includes information about

- the setting of the story—Chicago’s Southside in the 1950s
- Lorraine Hansberry’s writing style
- the historical importance of *A Raisin in the Sun*

After you read the Introduction, answer these questions to check your understanding.

1. What were the living conditions like for African Americans on the Southside of Chicago during the 1950s?

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2. How did Hansberry try to make her plays seem realistic?

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3. Why is *A Raisin in the Sun* historically important?

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# Introduction: Key Concepts

## Personal Experience Chart

Study the **Personal Experience Chart** for *ambition*. Write a sentence using the word *ambition*.

### Key Concepts

ambition  
confront  
goal  
identity  
prejudice

## Personal Experience Chart

**Key Concept:** ambition

**Define or rename:** strong desire to achieve a goal

### Specific Examples

People work hard to achieve their ambitions.

Many students have an ambition to go to college.

If an athlete has talent and ambition, he or she might compete in the Olympics.

**Personal Connection:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper, create a similar **Personal Experience Chart** for each of the **Key Concept** words.

# Respond to Act I

1. **Personal Response** Walter feels like his family does not understand him or support his dreams. Describe a time you felt misunderstood by someone close to you. What did you do about it?

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2. **Minor Character** How is the character of Willy Harris important to Walter's goals and ambitions? Use the words *goal* and *ambition* in your response.

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3. **Genre** How do the stage directions in this play help to communicate the characters' moods and feelings?

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4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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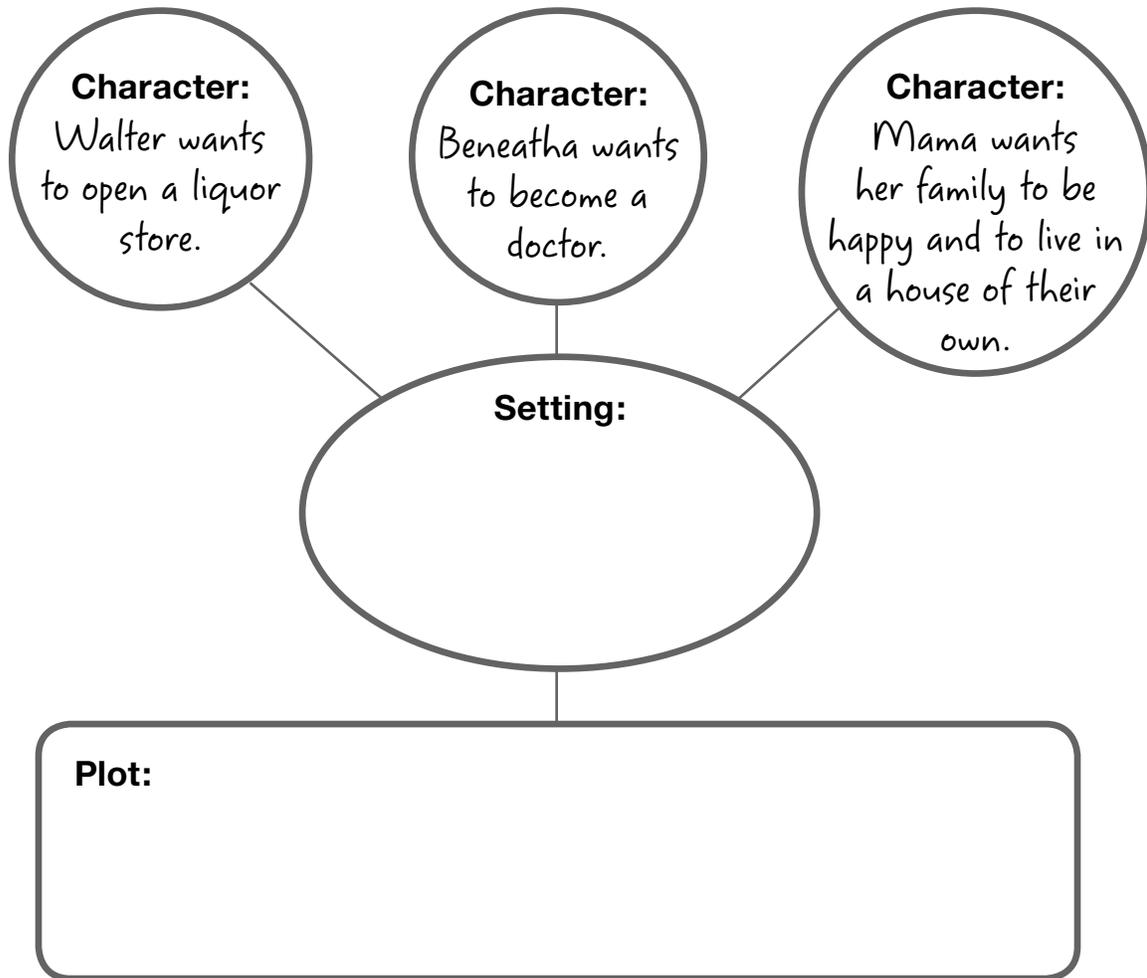
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**Respond to Act I,** continued

5. **Make Predictions** In Act I, you learn about the characters, setting, and plot of the play. Read the goals of Walter, Beneatha, and Mama in the circles. Then describe the setting and plot of the beginning of the play.

**Character Setting Plot Chart**



Do you think the arrival of the insurance check will change the family? How might it change them? What makes you think this?

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## Respond to Act II

1. **Personal Response** Beneatha wears African robes and dances to African music. With what culture do you identify most? How do its traditions, such as music or clothing, express who you are?

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2. **Irony** What is ironic about Mr. Lindner's visit as a representative of the New Neighbors Orientation Committee? Use the words *prejudice* and *confront* in your response.

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3. **Comparisons** How do George Murchison and Asagai view the world differently? How does this affect their view of Beneatha?

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4. **Generate Questions** Write a question about this section for someone else reading this book. Exchange questions with them. Do you agree with their answer?

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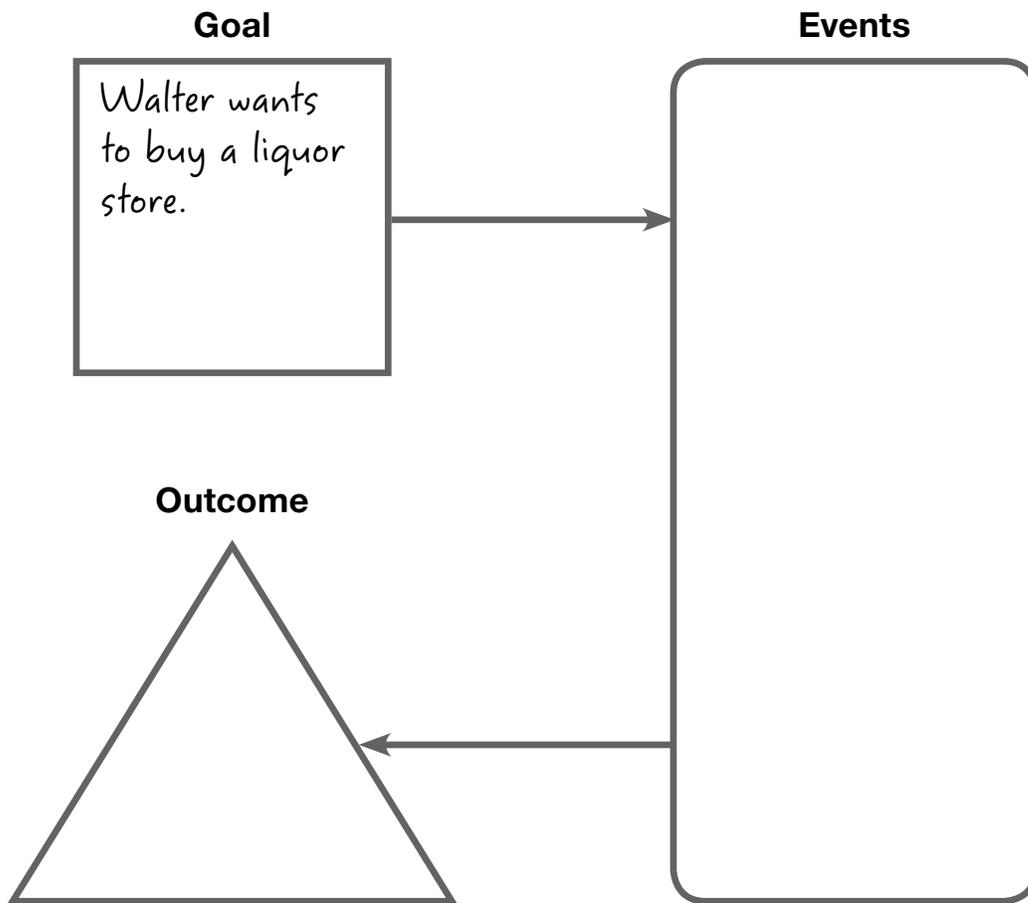
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**Respond to Act II,** continued

5. **Confirm Predictions** In Act II, the insurance check arrives. List the events and the outcome related to Walter’s goal to open a liquor store. Use the **Goal and Outcome Chart** to answer the question.

**Goal and Outcome Chart**



Was your prediction about what would happen to the Younger family when the money arrived correct? Are you surprised by what happened?

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## Respond to Act III

1. **Personal Response** Walter tells Mr. Lindner that he and his family have worked hard all of their lives. This shows his pride. What are you proud of that took a lot of hard work?

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2. **Conclusions** Reread pages 174–176. How does Mama’s speech about earlier generations of her family express her identity? What does she suggest about Walter’s identity? Use the word *identity* in your response.

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3. **Symbolism** What does Mama’s plant symbolize? Why does she continue to care for it, even though it looks sick and will not grow?

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### What If?

4. **Connect** Look at your notes on **Student Journal, page 2**. Think about what might happen if you were part of a group that was divided over an issue. Compare this to *A Raisin in the Sun*. How do the Youngers keep the community from tearing them apart?

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**Respond to Act III,** continued

5. **Theme** When Walter loses the money, everyone feels as if they have lost what they most wanted. Use the **Table** to list what Walter, Mama, and Beneatha lost and how each of them resolved their problem.

**Table**

|                              | Walter   | Mama | Beneatha |
|------------------------------|--|------|----------|
| The Things He/She Lost       | the money to open the store; respect of his family   |      |          |
| How the Problem Was Resolved | Walter regains his pride by confronting Mr. Lindner. |      |          |

How does the conclusion of the play connect to the theme of Where We Belong?

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