



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE WAYS OF WHITE FOLKS BY LANGSTON HUGHES

1. How does Langston Hughes portray the power imbalances between white and Black characters in the stories?
2. In what ways do the stories reveal the complexities of racism, including subtle forms of prejudice?
3. How does Hughes explore the intersection of race and class in the stories?
4. Are there characters who challenge the typical stereotypes of their socioeconomic or racial groups?
5. What does the title *The Ways of White Folks* suggest about the collection's central focus?
6. Do the stories primarily serve as critiques, observations, or both? Why?
7. Several stories focus on relationships between Black and white characters. How does Hughes handle these interactions?
8. In what ways do these relationships highlight the tension, exploitation, or unexpected connections between individuals?
9. How does Hughes balance humor, irony, and seriousness in his storytelling?
10. Did the tone of any particular story surprise you? How did it impact your understanding of the themes?
11. How do the Black characters in the stories demonstrate resilience in the face of systemic oppression?
12. Are there moments where they subtly or overtly resist white dominance? How effective are their actions?
13. How do the settings of the stories—rural towns, urban centers, domestic spaces—enhance the themes?
14. What elements of the stories feel tied to their historical context, and what themes remain relevant today?
15. How do the stories examine the internal struggles of Black characters navigating a racially segregated society?
16. Do the characters experience moments of self-empowerment or identity assertion?





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17. How does Hughes depict white characters in the collection? Are they ever complex, or do they primarily serve as symbols of systemic oppression?
18. What does Hughes seem to suggest about the ways white people view or exploit Black individuals?
19. Many of the stories employ irony and satire. How does Hughes use these techniques to critique societal norms?
20. Can you identify a story where the use of irony had the most impact on you? Why?
21. What recurring images, symbols, or motifs did you notice throughout the stories?
22. How do these elements contribute to the overarching message of the collection?
23. Impact of Race Relations on Personal Lives
24. How do racial dynamics influence the personal relationships portrayed in the stories?
25. Are there any examples where these dynamics lead to unexpected alliances or moments of mutual understanding?
26. How do the stories differ in tone or approach when portraying similar themes?
27. Are there any characters or storylines that seem to serve as counterpoints to one another?
28. Contemporary Resonance
29. How do the themes and issues raised in *The Ways of White Folks* remain relevant in today's discussions about race and systemic inequality?
30. Did any particular story remind you of a current event or personal experience?
31. Which story resonated with you the most, and why?
32. How did the collection affect your understanding of race relations in the early 20th century?
33. These questions aim to deepen understanding of Langston Hughes's exploration of race, identity, and power dynamics in this groundbreaking collection.

Discussion questions generated by ChatGPT.



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