

American Literature

JEOPARDY



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To the Teacher

American Literature Jeopardy deals with many different aspects of the American novels, plays, and nonfiction works chosen for this book. The gameboards can be used in several ways: as a fun and easy way to reinforce what is being read and studied, as a study guide, and as a review for a final project or exam. The game challenges students to remember details and helps them understand the book better, and the game format encourages them to enjoy reading and comprehension. Best of all, *American Literature Jeopardy* can be a successful learning activity for students at different learning levels.

The format of *American Literature Jeopardy* is like the popular television show *Jeopardy!* A student (or a team of students) is given the answer within a specified category and is asked to provide the question. The fact given as a question is actually stated, not asked, as in this question from the gameboard for Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*: "To Santiago, this baseball player is great and cannot fail." The student response is given as a question: "Who is Joe DiMaggio?" Many students are familiar with the format from watching the *Jeopardy!* television show, playing its computer or board-game versions, or even from playing this type of game in other classes.

This version of *American Literature Jeopardy* has been created for thirty well-known American classics. There are two gameboards for each book: basically, one for the first part of the book, the second for the last part of the book. If the gameboard reads: Part I: Chapters 1–19, then it covers the material *through* Chapter 19. Also, some books don't have chapters per se. In these cases, the book is divided into two parts as equally as possible, taking into consideration natural breaks, giving the noted text that begins or ends a section.

As with any literature, there is sometimes more than one acceptable response, and sometimes a more detailed answer is preferable. When the response in the answer key is given, for example, as "Who is George (Gibbs)?" (from *Our Town*), the game leader may accept "Who is George?" Another game leader may want the character's entire name, and thus, "Who is George Gibbs?" would be the correct answer. Information for a more detailed answer is in parentheses within the question; teachers can decide how thorough they want responses to be. Alternate responses are in

parentheses and preceded with "or." For example, in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the statement is given as "Town in which Jody becomes the mayor." The student response *might* be "What is Eatonville?" which is correct. But the alternate response, "What is West Maitland?" is acceptable since the characters in the story mention that different people call the same town by different names. Sometimes a student might not be able to remember a minor character's specific name but can answer correctly with an identifying phrase. For *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one of the quotations has a response of "Who is Sherburn?" but the alternate response is "Who is the man who shot Boggs?" As the teacher, you will determine whether a response is acceptable.

How to Use This Book

The books chosen for this *American Literature Jeopardy* collection are all written by American authors and have been popular choices in English classes for many years. Most are novels; however, there are five plays in the thirty choices, as well as two nonfiction books. The group of writers includes a few from the nineteenth century, many award-winning twentieth-century writers, and some of our best minority writers today, including Ernest J. Gaines, Rudolfo Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, and Amy Tan. The maturity of the students and the school's curriculum will determine which of these books can be taught as a class activity. However, the *American Literature Jeopardy* gameboards are successful with independent reading groups as well.

Each gameboard has five general categories, many of which are similar from book to book. (After doing some *Jeopardy* quizzes with students, you will find that confidence, at any grade or ability level, increases when some of the categories remain consistent.) Within each category are five questions, each assigned a point value of 5 through 25, depending on its relative difficulty. For each category, there is also a bonus question. This question is not necessarily more difficult. Students should be aware that bonus questions are a "grab-bag" of information. Also, bonus questions may be used in whatever way seems suitable. A point value of 5 for each bonus question would give the entire game

400 points; a value of 25 points per bonus question would make it a 500-point game. A bonus question might be used as a tie-breaker, letting students choose the category they want to answer to win.

For this type of activity, it is usually more effective to allow students an opportunity to study the information beforehand. This can be achieved through the use of study guides, daily assignments, discussions, and/or weekly exams. Many teachers use *American Literature Jeopardy* as the culminating activity to review entire sections, either for a final wrap-up or before a final exam.

Feel free to modify *American Literature Jeopardy*. If you have stressed something in class that is not included in the game, it is easy (and recommended) to add or change questions. Conversely, if an entire category on a game has not been studied, such as “Vocabulary” or “French Words,” omit the entire category. You may then create a new category or just play the game with four categories. You can also modify the questions to make them easier or harder to fit the needs of each particular class. (An excellent extension activity for students is for them to create their own *American Literature Jeopardy* game for a unit.)

Here are the specific directions for a typical *Jeopardy!*-style game:

- On the board, write the categories for the game to be played along with point values for each question, drawing a simple grid.
- Divide the class into teams. Play begins when one student asks for a question from a given category with a given point value. For example, if the literature read and studied is the drama *Twelve Angry Men*, the student might say, “I want the 10-point clue from the Evidence category.”
- The game leader (usually, the teacher) then reads the 10-point statement from the requested category.
- The teacher should decide ahead of time *how* the response will be taken and accepted. Sometimes, it’s just the first student to raise his or her hand and be called on. It also may be determined that the student who chose the clue must give the answer. (See “Variations of the Game”—specifically, “Even Playing Time”—for more details on this.) When playing in teams, choose a student to be the official spokesperson—either throughout the game or on a rotating basis. This will reduce arguing between teams and help prevent students from blurting out the wrong response.
- If the answer is correct, record points for the team and cross out that square on the grid so that students know not to choose the square again. (Students can be grid recorders and scorekeepers, if needed.) The student who answered correctly chooses the category and point value for the next question.
- If the answer is wrong, subtract the point value of the question from the team score. The other team now has the chance to answer the question. Whoever answers the question correctly chooses the category and point value for the next question.
- If no one can answer the question, give the correct answer to the group. The student who last successfully answered a question chooses the next category and point value.
- Continue until all the categories are crossed out, and the game is over.

Some other variations of the game:

No-Penalty Game

In this version, students never get penalized for a wrong answer. Teams only receive points when the question is answered correctly. However, in this version of the game, the team only gets one answer before the other teams can try.

Stealing a Question

In this version, after a wrong answer has been given, another team can decide to answer it. (In *American Literature Jeopardy*, especially, sometimes the answer will be between just two main characters or two places. Hence, the second team that tries to answer the question may be awarded only half the point value because they’ve already heard an incorrect response, leaving them with the obvious correct response.)

Even Playing Time

Instead of letting a team take another turn every time a response is given correctly, the game leader goes back and forth, or proceeds through teams equally, letting each team have a turn. This promotes student participation and maintains the momentum of the game. Another way to encourage everyone’s participation is to go systematically through the group to let each student have a turn choosing a topic and point value. The student who chooses also gives the response for that particular item—with team discussion and consensus beforehand, if needed. Thus, even the quietest student in class will get to speak up, if only to choose a clue. This type of team-leader rotation also creates a

tighter group structure, promoting brief discussion and thinking aloud before one person gives the answer.

Using Notes and/or Book

Sometimes a novel or book has so many characters and information, it might be advisable to let everyone use their notes and/or books. The novel *A Gathering of Old Men* by Ernest J. Gaines is a good example of this. Not only are there many characters, but they almost all have nicknames. Hence, to answer a clue about “Characters,” “Quotations,” or even “Events” may be confusing. Also, a very long book, such as *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, can be overwhelming; there are more than twenty characters in just the first three chapters of the forty-two-chapter novel that continually introduces new characters! The game leader decides whether notes or books should be allowed, but then a time limit is placed on how long the team has to consult these sources. Usually a minute is sufficient if they have notes or books in front of them; appoint one student to be this timekeeper. Monitor the student at first, to make sure the timekeeping is consistent and fair.

These variations can be used alone or combined to suit the needs of your class. The most important thing is to decide on the format and rules ahead of time. Modifications and changes can be made *after* a game is played, but the format shouldn’t be changed in the middle of a game.

Following are some notes on specific categories:

Characters

Usually just the name of the correct character is needed when the statement gives a detail or description about that character. Sometimes, such as in *The Awakening* gameboard, the only clue is “Léonce.” Students need to identify who this is. For this item, the answer would be “Who is Edna’s husband? (or: Who is Mr. Pontellier?)” (Since, throughout this novel, he is referred to just as Mr. Pontellier—even by his wife—this is a more detailed response.)

Details

Although there is a wide range of information in this category, usually the clues deal with specifics in the events or characters of the book.

Historical and Cultural Categories

Some books are so intrinsically determined by history or culture that these categories are separate. Factual categories dealing with history can be found on the gameboards for *The Crucible*, *Hiroshima*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, and *The Scarlet Letter*. On the

gameboard for *Hiroshima*, there are categories listed as “Facts,” “August 6, 1945,” and “The Aftermath,” because this book is best accompanied by historical background so students understand the time period and events. Teachers who want to use the *Hiroshima* gameboards should definitely look over the information they cover and may use this information as a guide before or during the reading of the book. Different cultural details are addressed in the gameboards of *The Joy Luck Club* and *My Ántonia*. Sometimes information about the author is also a category, but most of this information should be in the introduction to the novel.

Literary Terms

Some books have wonderful examples of metaphors, personification, allusions, etc.—examples that make the book rich with a poetic quality. This category, more than any other, needs to be discussed and reviewed ahead of time, perhaps just as a review of types of literary devices.

Times and Places

These are either specific locales in the book or places mentioned by characters or in events. The concept of time is also included in this category because a time period is part of a setting.

Quotations

Usually, the student must supply *who* said the comment in the book, but sometimes the clue asks more in the way of identification. For example, on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* gameboard, the clue is given as “The reason Huck says joyfully, ‘it was like being born again, I was so glad to find out who I was.’” The student must supply the *occasion* for Huck saying this, which would be, “What is finding out that the Phelpses think Huck is actually Tom Sawyer?”

Vocabulary

Usually, the vocabulary words require informal definitions. However, vocabulary study will determine how this category should be used. For a developmental class, it would be advisable to give the word within the context of a sentence; e.g., for *voracious*—“The athlete had a voracious appetite after the game.” Or, try using the context of the book in a sentence. For example, for *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, the teacher could say, “Maya had a voracious need to read as many books as she could.” For an honors class, the word could be given as shown on the gameboard, asking for a definition of the word. (In some situations, the teacher might

want to write the word on the board for clarification. This also applies to foreign words.) On *The Call of the Wild* gameboard, the clue is the word *nocturnal*. The student needs to supply the answer as such: “What is happening at night?” or a reasonable definition. Some teachers ask that students use the vocabulary word correctly in a sentence, using the context of the book to show understanding. Thus, in the same example, the student might answer “What are ‘Some creatures in the Arctic are nocturnal animals, moving about mostly at night?’”) On some gameboards, the vocabulary category is set up in reverse. On the *Ethan Frome* gameboard, the clue in the category “This Vocabulary Starts With an ‘I’” is “Harmless, not offensive.” The answer is a word from the novel that has that meaning and starts with the letter “i.” The response from the student would be, “What is *innocuous*?”

A few times, the gameboard provides a more difficult vocabulary word *within* the context of the clue. On *The Great Gatsby* gameboard, the vocabulary clue is “Because of his almost-too- proper speech, this character seems almost *staid* to Nick.” Not only do students have to know the meaning of *staid*, but they have to be able to answer the question within the context of the story, which would be, “Who is Gatsby?” The Vocabulary category can also be a spelling exercise. Teachers should always look over the Vocabulary sections of any *American Literature Jeopardy* game to be able to clarify how each category works *before* students start the game.

Miscellaneous Categories

There are categories that are unique to one or two books only, such as “Spanish Words” for the novel *The Old Man and the Sea* and “Symbolism” in the drama *The Glass Menagerie*. Sometimes the information needed to answer these categories should be addressed as the book is being read. Any time symbolism is used on a gameboard, classroom discussion is essential. The concept (and category) of archetypes in the novel *Bless Me, Ultima* needs to be understood while reading the book. Any student who has seen the *Star Wars* movies can point out the Young Hero, the Mentor, and the Quest archetypes, but these need to be discussed in context with particular books. Another unique category is called “Relationships.” This asks the students to provide the relationship between characters, such as husband-wife, sister-brother, best friends, etc. Sometimes the relationship is more subtle. In *The Color Purple*, the clue under the 5-point square is “The Olinka.” The correct answer is “What is the tribe for which Samuel, Corrine, and Nettie become missionaries and teachers?”

Usually, if the gameboard categories are ambiguous in any way, a glance at the answer keys will help a teacher clarify for students what is needed.

Almost every teacher who uses a *Jeopardy!*-style game in the classroom will adapt the game to his or her own situation. However the game is used, it is an entertaining and stimulating way to review and an exciting activity for students. You’ll find your students eager to play *American Literature Jeopardy* again and again.

8

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

Part I: Through letter that ends, "the uplift of black people everywhere. Your sister, Nettie"

	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	DETAILS	NOT JUST THE COLOR PURPLE	QUOTATIONS
5	The first time Celie sees a picture of this person, she is entranced.	This is the reason Celie ends up with her head cut and bleeding on her wedding day.	This continent is the place Nettie has traveled to and lived in, as Celie finds out from her letters much later.	Miss Millie, the mayor's wife, has a little boy with brown hair and eyes this color.	The first thing this person says to Celie is, "You sure is ugly," as if she hadn't believed others.
10	Celie doesn't think she's as smart or as pretty as this sister of hers.	This is the reason Harpo has frequent nightmares.	When Harpo asks how to make his wife "mind," this is Celie's immediate response.	Scraps this color from one of Shug's old dresses make the quilt look prettier, according to Celie.	She tells Celie, "I love [my husband]. God knows I do. But I'll kill him dead before I let him beat me."
15	Olivia	This is the reason Shug Avery comes to stay with Celie and her husband.	This is how Celie gets Shug to start eating again.	Shug's wedding present to her new husband is a Packard, a car this color.	The first thing this man says to Celie is "I heard so much about you. Feel like we old friends."

20

Sofia Butler tells this person, "When you free, me and the baby be waiting."

This is what Harpo does with his house after Sofia and the children leave him.

This is the real reason Harpo is eating so much at one point.

Squeak sings a song, "They call me [*this color*] . . . like [*this color*] be my name."

This person advises Celie, "You ought to bash Mr. _____ head open. . . . Think bout heaven later."

25

Celie writes about this person, "One good thing bout the way he never do any work round the place, us never miss him when he gone."

Sofia goes to jail for doing this.

Harpo gives this person the nickname Squeak.

When Celie has a chance to buy her first new dress, Albert's sister tells Celie, "he won't pay for [*this color*]. Too happy looking."

When Shug first asks where Celie's two children are, this is Celie's immediate and truthful answer.

B
O
N
U
S

Henry Broadnax

Amount of time Sofia spends in prison

Miss Millie asks Sofia to teach her how to do this.

Grady wears suspenders of this color.

This character says after a trip to jail, "He saw the Hodges in me. . . . And he didn't like it one bit."

N
O
T
E
S

Large empty rectangular box for notes.

8

The Color Purple by Alice Walker

Part II: Beginning with letter that starts, "Dear Celie, Samuel is a big man."

	CHARACTERS	EVENTS	DETAILS	PLACES	RELATIONSHIPS
5	This happened to Celie's real father, causing his death.	This hobby of Celie's turns into a full-time business.	Squeak leaves Harpo and goes to Memphis for this reason.	Nettie describes this American city as "a beautiful city," one where there are "colored people in more fancy motor cars than I thought existed."	The Olinka
10	This person accuses Nettie of being the biological mother of her adopted children.	This event destroys Nettie's hut and the missionaries' school and church.	This is why Samuel takes Nettie in so quickly when she shows up on their doorstep, ready to work.	In this country, the Missionary Society people are invited into many homes for "tea."	Samuel and Corrine
15	Person considered by some in the African village as just "the missionary's drudge."	Before Samuel's wife dies, Nettie makes her remember this particular day to prove Nettie <i>isn't</i> the mother of her adopted children.	Shug believes God gets mad at humans if they do this.	Nettie is talking about this when she mentions the <i>Malaga</i> and how amazing it is, stating that it is three stories high.	As children, Tashi and Olivia; then as adults, Tashi and Adam.

20

This African woman is the mother of Tashi.

At the funeral for Sofia's mother, this is the unorthodox thing Sofia insists on.

Nettie says Africans are very much like white people back in America for this one reason.

When Celie goes to this place with Shug, Celie is sure it's the wrong place because it is now so neat and pretty.

First, God; then, Nettie

25

Though he told Nettie that "in the rainy season some of you will probably die," this African was the one who died during one rainy season.

The elderly female English missionary admits to Nettie and Samuel that she went to Africa for this one reason.

According to one of Celie's workers in Memphis, saying this grammatical error is the one thing that makes a "country" person stick out in the city.

In this African country, Nettie says the people there were so black in skin color, they were "blue-black."

By the end of the book, Samuel and Nettie

B
O
N
U
S

Eleanor Jane

On this day, Celie says, "us so happy. Matter of fact, I think this the youngest us ever felt."

For this sad occasion, Celie gets dressed up in dark-blue slacks with a flower in her hair.

Nettie reports that the cacao plantations in Monrovia are actually owned by people in this European country.

Doris Bains and Harold (Harry)

N
O
T
E
S

Empty box for notes.

8 *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
 Part I: Through letter that ends, “the uplift of black people everywhere. Your sister, Nettie”

	Characters	Events	Details	Not Just the Color Purple	Quotations
5	Who is Shug Avery?	What is the oldest son hits her with a rock because he doesn't want anyone taking his mother's place?	What is Africa?	What is blue?	Who is Shug Avery?
10	Who is Nettie?	What is he was with his mother when she was killed by her boyfriend?	What is “beat her”?	What is yellow?	Who is Sofia?
15	Who is Celie's daughter who was given away at birth?	What is she is sick and no one wants to take her in; everyone says she's too sinful?	What is by bringing a plate of home-cured ham and biscuits for herself, knowing the scent would get Shug to eat?	What is dark blue?	Who is Grady, Shug's husband?
20	Who is Harpo?	What is turns it into a jukejoint?	What is he's trying to get as heavy as his wife (probably so he would have a chance when they get into fights)?	What is yellow?	Who is Sofia?
25	Who is Albert (her husband)?	What is sassing the mayor's wife, then hitting the mayor?	Who is Harpo's new girlfriend after his wife leaves?	What is red?	What is “I don't know”?
B O N U S	Who is the man Sofia brings home after leaving Harpo, saying, “he's a good family friend”?	What is three years?	What is drive a car?	What is red?	Who is Squeak? (or: Who is Mary Agnes?)

8 *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
 Part II: Beginning with letter that starts, “Dear Celie, Samuel is a big man.”

	Characters	Events	Details	Places	Relationships
5	What is he was lynched?	What is sewing and making trousers and pants?	What is to sing professionally?	What is New York City?	What is the tribe for which Samuel, Corrine, and Nettie become missionaries and teachers?
10	Who is Corrine, Samuel's wife?	What is the roadbuilders laying the roadpath right through the village, destroying any buildings in their way?	What is he thinks Nettie is the real mother of his adopted children?	What is England?	What is husband and wife? (or: Who are the adoptive parents of Olivia and Adam?)
15	Who is Nettie?	What is the day that Corrine and Olivia were in town, buying cloth, and Celie came face to face with them?	What is “to walk by the color purple in a field and not notice it”?	What is the ship that takes them all to Africa for the first time to be missionaries?	What are best friends; then husband and wife?
20	Who is Catherine?	What is having females as pallbearers along with some of the males?	What is “they think they are the center of the universe and that everything being done is done for them”?	What is the place Celie grew up as a child?	Who are the people to whom Celie addresses her letters throughout the book?
25	Who was Tashi's father?	What is to have time and peace to write novels?	What is saying us all the time instead of using we?	What is Senegal?	What is husband and wife?
B O N U S	Who is the white girl that Sofia practically raised because Sofia was sentenced by the courts to work for the little girl's family?	What is the day that Celie was reunited with her sister, Nettie, and her biological children?	What is the funeral for Sofia's mother?	What is Holland?	Who are the old English missionary woman and her grandson?