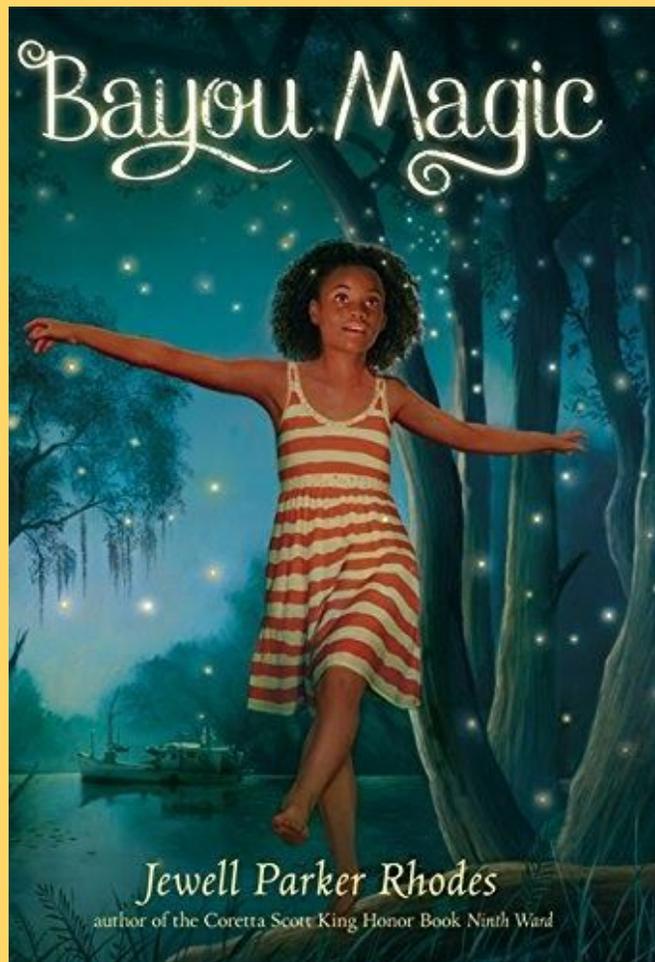




MIDDLE READER LESSON PLAN



Bayou Magic by Jewell Parker Rhodes
GUIDED ANTI-BIAS/ANTI-RACIST READING | GRADES 3-5+



INTRODUCTION

This lesson is divided into 4 sections that are designed to follow along with the book *Bayou Magic* by Jewell Parker Rhodes. Each section focuses on reading comprehension, critical thinking, and self-reflection based on the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards. There are discussion questions, reflection prompts, and activities to guide the student.

OBJECTIVES

This guided reading lesson is designed to be part of a larger life-long commitment to anti-racist teaching and learning for the student and the facilitator. Reading Is Resistance sees reading as an opportunity to seed deeper conversations and opportunities for action around racial equity in our communities. We hold the belief that being anti-racist is a process of learning (and unlearning) over time.

The [Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards](#) (focused on Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action) serve as guides for our work.

TEACHING TOLERANCE STANDARDS (GRADES 3-5) COVERED IN THIS LESSON

Identity Domain #1	Diversity Domain #10	Justice Domain #15	Action Domain #17
<i>I know and like who I am and can talk about my family and myself and describe our various group identities.¹</i>	<i>I know that the way groups of people are treated today, and the way they have been treated in the past, is a part of what makes them who they are.²</i>	<i>I know about the actions of people and groups who have worked throughout history to bring more justice and fairness to the world.³</i>	<i>I know how to stand up for myself and for others when faced with exclusion, prejudice and injustice.⁴</i>

¹ [Teaching Tolerance Standards](#)

² [Teaching Tolerance Standards](#)

³ [Teaching Tolerance Standards](#)

⁴ [Teaching Tolerance Standards](#)



SECTION ONE: PP 1-64

SUMMARY

The setting is New Orleans, and it is 9-year-old Maddy's turn to spend a bayou summer with her Grandmere, who just might be a witch. At Grandmere's, Maddy begins to learn about the community in Bon Temps that formed after slavery. We meet Bear, a local kid who takes Maddy on adventures. And she sees a mysterious mermaid under the swamp water.

DISCUSS

- Name the various group identities that Maddy has. **IDENTITY DOMAIN #1**
- What is she most proud of about her identity? **IDENTITY DOMAIN #1**
- How does her identity become clearer when she visits Grandmere and why? **IDENTITY DOMAIN #1**

REFLECT

- Who in your community or family has historical information that gets shared with you? **IDENTITY DOMAIN #1**
 - Why is it important to know our past? **IDENTITY DOMAIN #1**
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SECTION TWO: PP 65-121

pp. 65-121

SUMMARY

Maddy finds out she has inherited magical abilities and a special connection with the water. Grandmere shares the story of the violent kidnapping and enslavement of Membe, Maddy's great-great grandmother. Membe also had a magical connection with the water. Mami Wata (Mother Water) followed the ship carrying Membe from Africa all the way to the U.S. to comfort her.

Grandmere also hints that the water in Bon Temps is at risk of being polluted by oil that is being drilled and excavated.

DISCUSS

- How does Grandmere teach Maddy about the way her past impacts who she is today?
DIVERSITY DOMAIN # 10
 - What does Mami Wata represent for Maddy, Grandmere, and Membe? **DIVERSITY DOMAIN # 10**
 - Who teaches you about the way your family's past impacts who you are today?
DIVERSITY DOMAIN # 10
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SECTION THREE: PP 122-177

SUMMARY

We realize that Grandmere's legacy and connection to Mami Wata will be passed on to Maddy. One evening, Maddy is called by Mami Wata into the water and sees a vibrant ecosystem. She also shows her the oil pipeline far under the surface of the water.

Bear's father comes to shore for a few days between weeks working on an oil rig. Bear's dad is depressed and harmful to Bear. In some way, this is connected to the harm that oil does to the natural world.

DISCUSS

- Who are the people who have worked to bring justice/fairness in this story? Give an example. **JUSTICE DOMAIN #15**
 - The way Rhodes describes the oil pipeline is incredibly vivid and magical itself. Write a bit about the way the oil and pipeline are described. Why does the author choose to describe the oil in this way? How does this add to the bigger meaning of justice/fairness? **JUSTICE DOMAIN #15**
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SECTION FOUR: PP 178-END

SUMMARY

A series of Maddy's visions predicting a big oil leak in the water ends up coming true. A broken pipe gushes oil into the bayou, and the oil rig catches fire killing Bear's dad.

Can Maddy and Mami Wata and her mermaids save Bone Tom before it's too late?

DISCUSS

- How does Maddy help to save Bon Temps from an environmental disaster? **ACTION DOMAIN #17**
- What does this book teach us about the power of the individual versus the power of community (both earthly and magical)? **ACTION DOMAIN #17**
- How might this inform us when we take action for justice? **ACTION DOMAIN #17**

REFLECT

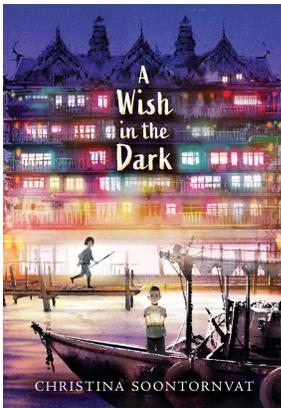
- Talk about a time when you stood up for yourself. What kind of treatment were you asking for? **ACTION DOMAIN #17**
 - Talk about a time when you stood up for someone else. Why did you do so? **ACTION DOMAIN #17**
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WHAT'S NEXT?

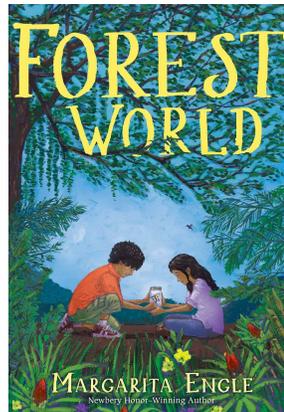
RESOURCES/ACTIVITIES

- ❑ [Watch an interview with Jewell Parker Rhodes](#) on writing historical fiction.
- ❑ Check out [U.S. Youth Climate Strike](#); how might you get involved in protecting the environment where you live?
- ❑ Learn more about Mami Wata by [virtually visiting the UCLA Fowler Museum](#).

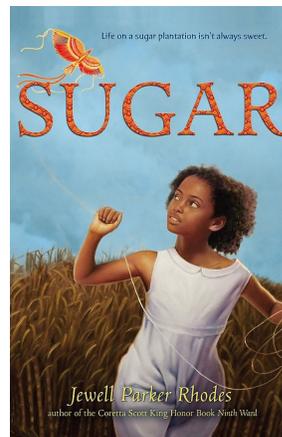
READ NEXT



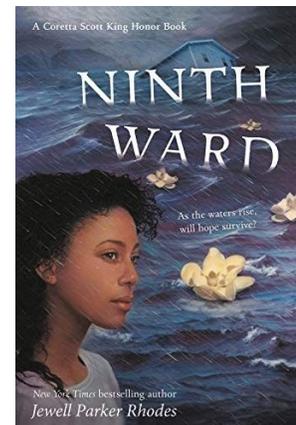
A Wish in the Dark by
Christina Soontornvat



Forest World by
Margarita Engle



Sugar by Jewell
Parker Rhodes



Ninth Ward by Jewell
Parker Rhodes