

LOCOMOTION

Applause Series CURRICULUM GUIDE
CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES

February 14, 2012

Locomotion

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Locomotion*, brought to us by Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour. This moving performance was adapted by author Jacqueline Woodson from her same-titled book and features the story of Lonnie Collins Motion — nicknamed Locomotion — as he mourns his parents who died in a tragic house fire four years earlier. At the urging of his teacher, Lonnie finds a release for his pain by writing down his feelings in the form of poetry. Although sad in many aspects, *Locomotion* is at its heart a story of hope and resilience and features many lighthearted moments. Incorporating many of Lonnie’s poems, Woodson uses breathtaking language to illustrate his remarkable journey from silence to expression as he begins to anticipate a brighter future.

As you prepare for the performance, we hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” materials and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.



See you at the theater,

Support for Civic Center education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

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This study guide was compiled and written by Yvette Zarod Hermann; edited by Karoline Myers and Kristen Darrah.
Based on *Locomotion Cuesheet Performance Guide* by The Kennedy Center.

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ABOUT THE CIVIC CENTER



The Civic Center of Greater Des Moines is a cultural landmark of central Iowa and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities. The Civic Center has achieved a national reputation for excellence as a performing arts center and belongs to several national organizations, including The Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, International Performing Arts for Youth, and Theater for Young Audiences/USA.

Five performing arts series currently comprise the season— the Willis Broadway Series, Prairie Meadows Temple Theater Series, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Family Series, the Dance Series, and the Applause Series. The Civic Center is also the performance home for the Des Moines Symphony and Stage West.

The Civic Center is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. Through its education programs, the Civic Center strives to engage patrons in arts experiences that extend beyond the stage. Master classes bring professional and local artists together to share their art form and craft, while pre-performance lectures and post-performance Q&A sessions with company members offer ticket holders the opportunity to explore each show as a living, evolving piece of art.

Through the Applause Series— curriculum-connected performances for school audiences— students are encouraged to discover the rich, diverse world of performing arts. During the 2011-2012 season, the Civic Center will welcome more than 40,000 students and educators to 13 professional productions for young audiences.

Want an inside look? Request a tour.

Group tours can be arranged for performance and non-performance dates for groups grades 3 and above.

Call 515-246-2355 or visit CivicCenter.org/education to check on availability or book your visit.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 250,000 patrons visit the Civic Center each year.

The Civic Center opened in 1979.

The Civic Center has three theater spaces:

- *Main Hall: 2,744 seats*
- *Stoner Studio: 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater: 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Main Hall.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of the Civic Center complex. The space features the Brenton Waterfall and Reflection Pool and the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 16th season of school performances.

GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. A dramatic theatrical production with live actors succeeds best with intense focus from the audience. Imagine the dedication and cooperation behind this performance – the hours of memorizing lines and rehearsing technical elements. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time. As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- * What kind of live performance is this (a drama, a comedy, a musical, etc.)?
- * What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- * What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- * Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- * Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- * Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- * Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- * Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- * Do not text during the performance.
- * Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- * When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- * **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- * Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- * Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- * Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Thank you for choosing the Applause Series at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- * Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- * After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- * Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- * The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- * Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- * Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- * Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- * All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- * Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
- * Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- * Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- * Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with the Civic Center Education staff.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- * When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. You may enter the building through the East or West lobbies; a Civic Center staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- * Civic Center staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- * Applause seating is not ticketed. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- * We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- * Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.
- * As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause performances.

IN THE THEATER

- * In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- * We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- * Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- * If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at 515.246.2355 or education@civiccenter.org. Thank you!

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



ABOVE: Lonnie, or Locomotion, writes poetry in his school notebook. For Lonnie, poetry allows him to express his feelings.

Ever have a lot to say, but can't get the words out? That's the problem confronting Lonnie Collins Motion, a kid who's so full of energy that everybody calls him Locomotion. After experiencing some very real family tragedies, the power of poetry finally provides an outlet for Lonnie to express his feelings. Award-winning novelist Jacqueline Woodson has turned her book into an inspiring play about the journey of a boy as he moves from tragedy to hope and from losing one family to gaining a new one. As the play incorporates portions of Lonnie's poems, audiences will marvel at Lonnie's journey of self-discovery through words.

Duration: Approx. 60 minutes

"The gradual unfolding of his life's events intermingle with his discoveries about poetry as a form, from **haiku** to **sonnets** to the **epistle poems** he writes to his father... Woodson, through Lonnie, creates...a contagious appreciation for poetry."

—Publisher's Weekly

THEATRICAL TRICKS

Locomotion is a "memory play" which means scenes jump forward in time or "flash back" to the past. On stage, change happens fast, as quick as a memory flashes into your head. Be prepared for transformations on stage that happen quickly.

Actor Transformations

The actors in *Locomotion* play more than one character. Sometimes they are younger and older versions of the same person. You'll see actors transform into other people by how they speak, move, and even dress. Together the three actors will play the following roles:

Lonnie Collins Motion, age 11

Enrique - Lonnie's friend, age 12

Daddy - Lonnie's father

Mama - Lonnie's mother

Lili - Lonnie's sister, age 8

Ms. Marcus - Lonnie's teacher

Miss Edna - Lonnie's foster mom

Agency Man

Location Transformations

The locations in *Locomotion* change, too. Watch how the stage transforms into different places — a classroom, a schoolyard, a house — and switches from past to present and back to past.

Pay close attention to how the furniture, lights, and sound work together to create a new time and space for all the various scenes.

Focus Transformations

Sometimes an actor transforms his focus by talking directly to the audience instead of the other actors. The actor is still "in the play," pretending the audience is not there. Often during the play, we see how Lonnie speaks in the direction of the audience, while imagining no one is there. (Remember, when an actor talks directly to the audience, it is usually not an invitation to talk back to the actor.)

Adapted from *Locomotion Cuesheet*, produced by ARTSEEDGE, a program of the Kennedy Center Education Department.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, JACQUELINE WOODSON



Image courtesy of jacquelinewoodson.com.

Jacqueline Woodson has written numerous award-winning books for young people. She is the youngest person ever to win the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Young Adult Library Services Association, is the only author to receive three Newbery Honor Awards, and has been recognized by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee for three of her books.

Her first play, *Locomotion*, is adapted from the National Book Award Honor and Coretta Scott King Honor novel of the same name, and like many of her works, has appeared on numerous Best Books and Notable lists.

Read the following letter from Jacqueline Woodson to learn more about her childhood, her life as a writer, and her special connection to the main character in *Locomotion*.

A LETTER FROM JACQUELINE WOODSON

A story begins in so many places—in the writer’s head, their heart, their childhood. The story of *Lonnie Collins Motion* began, for me, in the fifth grade—the first year I knew I was going to be a writer. Yes, for many years before then, I dreamed of being a writer, talked about it constantly to whoever listened. But I didn’t know. And knowing and dreaming are very different.

In fifth grade, poetry brought me from dreaming to knowing.

That was the year I began to understand that poems told stories. That if one read a poem closely enough, slowly enough, the stories would begin to unfold. I knew I wanted to tell stories the way the poets did. I knew I wanted the stories to have meaning, to be about real things, real places, real people...that I imagined...

And here is where *Locomotion* arrives— because this story was always coming, was always being told— in bits and pieces, the story of a boy who is learning to love himself, his life, his world— through poetry. Who, like a locomotive, is moving forward, no matter what. A boy who is learning to tell his story just as I learned to tell mine. Where did Lonnie Collins Motion come from? He came from the pages of my own story. We’re different in so many ways—Lonnie is in foster care, I grew up with my mom and grandma and a village of aunts and uncles looking out for me. Lonnie has only one sister, I have a sister and two brothers. Lonnie is in sixth grade, I was in fifth. But like Lonnie, I too learned to love poetry, to tell my stories. Like Lonnie, I too take in every detail of the world, watching it carefully, and writing down what I think, see, feel. Like Lonnie, I too grew up in Brooklyn, New York. And like Lonnie—I too hate pigeons and love basketball.

I know now, many years and many stories later, that the characters we as writers create have a lot of us inside of them. But once you meet Lonnie, I think that you’ll agree—there is a little bit of Lonnie...in all of us.

Jacqueline Woodson

VOCABULARY

PERFORMANCE TERMS

flashback: a scene in a play that takes the characters and the audience back in time.



Locomotion has flashback scenes that show a time when Lonnie's parents were alive.



monologue: a part of a play when an actor speaks directly to the audience to tell you his/her innermost thoughts. See if you notice when the characters are performing a monologue. They will be looking right at you!

When performing a monologue, an actor talks only to the audience, rather than to other actors.

Image courtesy of news-journal-online.com

scrim: a sheer fabric screen on stage that provides a backdrop or can reveal things behind it; its transparency depends upon stage lighting. *Locomotion* uses a scrim that has images projected onto it. See if you notice when the scrim is used.

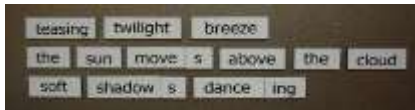


Silhouettes on a scrim. As you watch the performance, think about what sort of mood is set when the scrim is used. Image courtesy of babablag.files.wordpress.com

POETRY TERMS

allusion: a reference to a famous person, place or thing

Haiku: a three line unrhymed poem with 5 syllables in the first line, 7 syllables in the second line, and 5 syllables in the last line.



An example of a haiku. Can you count the syllables in each line?

Image courtesy of mandyjwatson.com.



epistle: a letter to someone important. An epistle poem is a letter written in poetic form.

Lonnie writes more than one epistle poem in his journal during the play.

Image courtesy of healthforthewholeself.com.

imagery: From the word "image", imagery describes words that bring up a picture in the reader's or listener's head. Listen for the use of imagery in *Locomotion's* poems.



Image courtesy of mdjunction.com.

Imagery in one of *Locomotion's* poems: the ideas in my head go out like a candle and all you see left is this little string of smoke that disappears

metaphor: Metaphor is when you use two nouns (persons, places or things) and compare or contrast them to one another. Unlike simile, you don't use "like" or "as" in the comparison.

simile: Simile is when you compare two nouns (persons, places or things) that are unlike, with "like" or "as." Lonnie's line about the ideas in his head being like a candle, left, is an example of a simile.

KEY WORDS FROM THE SHOW

Brooklyn: the part of New York City where Lonnie is from.



Locomotion is set in Brooklyn, which is also the home of its author Jacqueline Woodson.

Image courtesy of nyc tourist.com.

brownstone: a type of home found mostly in Brooklyn, New York.



Image courtesy of nycrc.com.

The houses are attached to each other in a row and the front steps are called the stoop, where neighbors and children would gather to talk and play games.

group home: sometimes called an orphanage, a Group Home is for children under the age of 18 who have no adult relatives able to take care of them.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PLAY



ABOVE: The three actors in *Locomotion* are just a few of the people who work to create the play.

From the people who develop the show to the performers you see on stage, it takes a lot of effort and teamwork to bring a story to the theater, and even more cooperation to take the show on tour around the country.

Think about the many careers in the theater by reviewing the following information about many of the people who work to create the play *Locomotion*.

WRITER OF THE STAGE ADAPTATION

In this play, the author of the book also adapted it for the stage, even adding a character who was not in the book to help tell the story. Jacqueline Woodson started with the text of her book, and then figured out what to keep, take out, or add to make the story work for the stage.

DIRECTOR

The director is in charge of telling the actors where to go on stage and how to interpret their characters. The director guides all the designers to make sure everyone is telling the same story.

ACTORS

Actors are all of the people who you see on the stage. They work together as a team to rehearse the play, memorize their lines, and tell the story. In *Locomotion*, two of the actors play more than one character. See if you can tell who all they play!

SET DESIGNER

The set designer creates the world where the actors tell the story. The set designer imagines and draws all of the pieces that you see on the stage. The set designer also figures out how the stage changes from scene to scene.

COSTUME DESIGNER

The costume designer works with the director to create the clothes and costumes that the actors wear to help them become the characters. Each actor may have many "costume changes."

LIGHTING DESIGNER

The lighting designer makes sure the audience can see what they are supposed to see and use lighting and effects to create a mood or scene.

PROPSMASTER

The propsmaster carefully reads the script and collects, buys, or makes any of the objects that an actor picks up or carries.

BACKSTAGE CREW

There are lots of people backstage who build and operate the scenery, costumes, props, lights, and sound during the performance. They rehearse with the actors to learn their "cues" and make the show run smoothly.

STAGE MANAGER

During the show, the stage manager "calls the cues," which means he or she makes sure all the elements of the show, like lights, sound, and actor entrances and exits are timed correctly.

AUDIENCE

There can be no performance without you, the audience. You are a collaborator in the performance and your polite attention and applause is one of the most important parts of any live show.

WHAT IS POETRY?



Locomotion is about and told through poetry — Lonnie's poems. What is poetry? Where do we find it? What does it mean?

FORMS OF POETRY

Poetry is a kind of writing that is hard to define, because it takes many forms.

SONG LYRICS are poetry

so is **RAP**

and **HAIKU**

Poetry even shows up on **BIRTHDAY CARDS**

and **TV COMMERCIALS**

Poetry does not always have to rhyme. The kind of poetry that Lonnie writes in *Locomotion* is called "free verse," and it doesn't rhyme.

So what is poetry? Well,
it has stuff like
verses
line breaks
and
imagery

CREATING IMAGERY

In order to create images with words, we can use:

simile

Her smile was like a sunrise...



Image courtesy of designzzz.com.

metaphor

The eagle is freedom as he swoops though the sky...



Image courtesy of tobinphoto.com.

allusion

Des Moines is the Paris of America!



ABOVE: Poetry is about finding just the right words and putting them in just the right order to express a thought or feeling. Image courtesy of urbanmuseumwriter.com.

CHECK IT OUT

What images does the poet create with words in the following poem? How does the poet use similes and metaphors to make her point about a flint, the subject of her poem?

FLINT

An emerald is as green as grass,

A ruby red as blood;

A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;

A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,

To catch the world's desire;

An opal holds a fiery spark;

But a flint holds a fire.

Christina Rossetti
1830-1894

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 1

1) Stage It!

Explanation: In this activity, students will sketch out and outline a plan for staging a dramatic scene.

Goal: Students will visualize text as directors, adding images to heighten the impact of words.

When: Before the performance

Materials:

- * Copies of "Roof," page 15
- * Paper
- * Pencils

Activity Part 1:

1. Distribute a copy of the poem "ROOF" to your students.
2. Ask them to imagine how they would bring it to life on stage. Students may work in teams to describe their ideas on paper through writing and hand-drawn illustrations.
3. Ask each group of students to share their drawing and their vision for bringing "Roof" to life on stage with the rest of the class.

ROOF

At night sometimes after Miss Edna goes to bed I go
up on the roof
Sometimes I sit counting the stars
Maybe one is my mama and
another one is my daddy And maybe that's why
sometimes they flicker a bit
I mean the *stars* flicker

Follow-up Questions:

1. What key words in the poem affected your staging choices?
2. Did you learn anything valuable about your classmates?
3. Did you learn anything valuable about yourself?
4. What was most challenging for you about this activity? What was easiest for you?

Follow-up Question After the Performance:

1. How did the staging of the poem "Roof" compare to what you envisioned?

2) Things Change Monologue

Explanation: In this activity, students will write a first draft in response to a prompt. They will then create a revision of their writing that they will perform.

When: Before or after the performance

Goal: Students will reflect upon meaningful events in their own lives through writing.

Materials:

- * Paper
- * Pens and pencils
- * Flashlight

Activity:

1. Write on the board: "Things change." Ask students to interpret this statement. Is change good or bad? When and why? Give examples of good changes and examples of bad changes. Classify students' examples into global, local, familial, personal, or other changes.
2. Ask the students to focus on personal change. Everyone goes through it. It can be good, bad, or bittersweet. Big changes could be getting glasses, or braces, or starting at a new school, moving, or the birth of a sibling. Brainstorm other ideas on the board.
3. Ask the students to write about a big change in their lives. Describe what it was, and how they felt before and what they felt that was different afterwards. Ask students (in class or for homework) to reread their drafts and prepare to read it aloud to class as a monologue--a scripted speech that an actor would perform in a play. (Students may also team up and "direct" each other in the performing of each other's pieces.)
4. Dim the classroom lights if possible, and "set the stage" for students to perform. Create a spotlight with a flashlight and allow each student to decide if they need a spotlight or not.
5. Extensions of this activity could include adding props or costumes, or short excerpts of music to introduce each performer.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Did you learn anything valuable about your classmates?
2. Did you learn anything valuable about yourself?
3. What was most challenging for you about this assignment? What was easiest for you?

Adapted from *Locomotion Cuesheet*, produced by ARTSEGE, a program of the Kennedy Center Education Department.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES, pg. 2

3) List Poem

Explanation: In this activity, students will use a poem from the novel *Locomotion* as a mentor text to write their own self-inspired inventory, or list poem.

Goals: To experiment with the writing of free-verse (unrhymed) poetry.

When: Before or After the Performance

Materials:

- * Copies of “List Poem,” page 15
- * Paper
- * Pencils

Activity:

1. Have students first list everything on their person: each piece of clothing, everything in their pockets, everything that is touching them.
2. Ask one or two students to share their lists, allowing other students to comment on things that they may have missed or ways to be more descriptive.
3. Give students a copy of “List Poem” by Lonnie. Read it aloud three times, by three different readers. What can you tell about the author of this poem?
4. Ask students to notice punctuation, line breaks, italics, and the ending of the poem:
 - * The line breaks serve as commas, sometimes, except for the line about the gold chain with the cross. Why would the poet put an odd break there?
 - * Why is the word ‘clean’ italicized?
 - * What are the connections between the last three lines?
 - * What is this poem a list of?
5. Create a checklist or rubric with the class to clarify what needs to be in the poem:
 - * a list
 - * at least how many lines?
 - * a final line that reveals what the poem is a list of
 - * other poetic devices you may have worked on previously in class

6. Guide students in the writing of their own “List Poem.” Ask them to refer to the lists they made in step one as ideas in crafting their own poem. If students would rather “list” things other than a personal inventory, allow them to do so. They could write about the classroom, or any familiar place or person.

7. Ask students to pair and share their poems with one another, or to share with the entire class.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Did you learn anything valuable about your classmates?
2. Did you learn anything valuable about yourself?
3. What was most challenging for you about this assignment? What was easiest for you?

LIST POEM

Blue kicks—Pumas
Blue-and-white Mets shirt
Mets hat
A watch my daddy gave me
Black pants but not dressy—they got side pockets
Ten cornrows with zigzag parts like Sprewell’s
A gold chain with a cross on it from Mama—under my shirt
White socks *clean*
One white undershirt *clean*
White underwear *clean*
A dollar seventy-five left pocket
Two black pens
A little notebook right pocket
All my teeth inside my mouth
One little bit crooked front one
Brown eyes
A little mole by my lip
Lotion on so I don’t look ashy
Three keys to Miss Edna’s house back pocket
Some words I wanted to remember written on my right hand
Leftie
Lonnie



POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT AND DISCUSSION



Assessment Activities

Write a Review

Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of the *Locomotion* performance to inform others about what they experienced. They should describe with detail: what they saw; what they heard; how the performance made them feel; what the performance reminded them of; and what their favorite part was and why. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

Writing Inspiration

Invite students to choose one of the following lines from the play as a first line of their own piece of writing. It could be a paragraph, a play, a poem, an essay, or a journal entry.

- * "Yesterday feels like a long time ago."
- * "You want to leave something behind. Something good."
- * "Writing makes me remember."
- * "Once we were real."

Words that Say A Lot

Ask students to sum up the show in seven words and share with one another. Next, ask each student to sum up his or her life in just seven words. In each case, the words can be a list, phrases, or a sentence.

Things Change Monologue

For a longer assessment, do "THINGS CHANGE MONOLOGUE" activity on page 13.

Discussion Questions

The Play

1. Were three actors enough to tell the story of *Locomotion*? Why or why not?
2. Who was your favorite character and why?
3. Were the flashbacks used effectively? Did they remind you of anything?
4. Could this story have happened outside of Brooklyn, New York? Why or why not?
5. What do you think about Lonnie's future without his parents?

Relationships

1. Who is the most independent person in the play? The most dependent? Were any people interdependent?
2. What did family mean to Lonnie? What does family mean to you?

Hardships and Coping

1. Lonnie experiences many hardships during the performance. How do you cope with hardship in your life? What can you do to help others when they experience hardships?

Poetry and Expression

1. Lonnie discovered that he could express his ideas and feelings through writing poetry. What are ways that you find to express yourself?
2. Can you remember any of Lonnie's poems from the play or the book? If so, what was the poem about?

POEM HANDOUTS

ROOF

At night sometimes after Miss Edna goes to bed I go
up on the roof
Sometimes I sit counting the stars
Maybe one is my mama and
another one is my daddy And maybe that's why
sometimes they flicker a bit
I mean the *stars* flicker

Source: *Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson. Puffin Books, 2008.
page 3

For use with *Stage It! Activity*, page 12

LIST POEM

Blue kicks—Pumas
Blue-and-white Mets shirt
Mets hat
A watch my daddy gave me
Black pants but not dressy—they got side pockets
Ten cornrows with zigzag parts like Sprewell's
A gold chain with a cross on it from Mama—under
my shirt
White socks *clean*
One white undershirt *clean*
White underwear *clean*
A dollar seventy-five left pocket
Two black pens
A little notebook right pocket
All my teeth inside my mouth
One little bit crooked front one
Brown eyes
A little mole by my lip
Lotion on so I don't look ashy
Three keys to Miss Edna's house back pocket
Some words I wanted to remember written on my
right hand
Leftie
Lonnie

Source: *Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson. Puffin Books, 2008.
page 33

For use with *List Poem Activity*, page 13

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



ALSO BY JACQUELINE WOODSON

- * *After Tupac and D Foster*
- * *Behind You*
- * *Between Madison and Palmetto*
- * *Feathers*
- * *From the Notebooks of Melanin*
- * *Sun*
- * *The House You Pass on the Way*
- * *Hush*
- * *If You Come Softly*
- * *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*
- * *Last Summer with Maizon*
- * *Lena*
- * *Maizon at Blue Hill*
- * *Miracle's Boys*
- * *Peace Locomotion*

YOUNG ADULT BOOKS WRITTEN IN VERSE

- * *Crazy Man* by Pamela Porter
- * *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech
- * *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Euwer Wolff
- * *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Books about Poetry and Writing Poetry:

A Note Slipped Under the Door by Nick Flynn

Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem by Jack Prelutsky

Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out by Ralph Fletcher

Websites:

Official Website of Jacqueline Woodson.

Has a student-friendly section devoted to answering the questions of readers. www.jacquelinewoodson.com/

TeachingBooks.Net, Jaqueline Woodson.

Video clips of Jacqueline Woodson discussing her work, including reading poems from *Locomotion*.

http://www.teachingbooks.net/spec_athr.cgi?pid=3460&a=1

Teen Ink: A Teen Literary Magazine and Website

Devoted entirely to teenage writing, art, photos, and forums. Students ages 13—19 may submit their work for publication.

www.teenink.com/

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences on Tour.

<http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/family/ontour/road.cfm>

Locomotion by Jacqueline Woodson. Puffin Books, 2008.

"Locomotion" Cuesheet Performance Guide, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Official Website of Jacqueline Woodson. www.jacquelinewoodson.com/