

# Thank You, Ma'm

## By Langston Hughes

Prompt:

After reading: Thank you, Ma'm, write an essay that:

Shows your understanding of the story and the characters. (What are they like and why do they do what they do?)

Shows your understanding of the author's message. (What does the author want us to learn from the story?)

Makes a connection to your life, to another text, or to the world.

You must justify your thoughts with examples and evidence from the text.

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Initial questions:

How did Mrs. Washington catch Roger?

Where did she take him?

What was the occupation of Mrs. Luella Bates Washington?

Why did he try to steal from her?

What did she make him to eat?

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Interpretive Questions:

What do you know about Ms. Luella Bates Washington Jones' home?

How did Roger change from the beginning to the end of the story?

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Reflective Questions:

Does Roger remind you of anyone you know? (Text to Self)

How is this story similar/different to another story you've read? (Text to Text)

What was the main idea of the story "Thank You, Ma'm" ? (Text to World)

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## Critical Questions:

The author chose not to have Roger thank Ms. Jones at the end of the story. Why do you think he chose to end the story in this manner?

## Describing Characters

Name

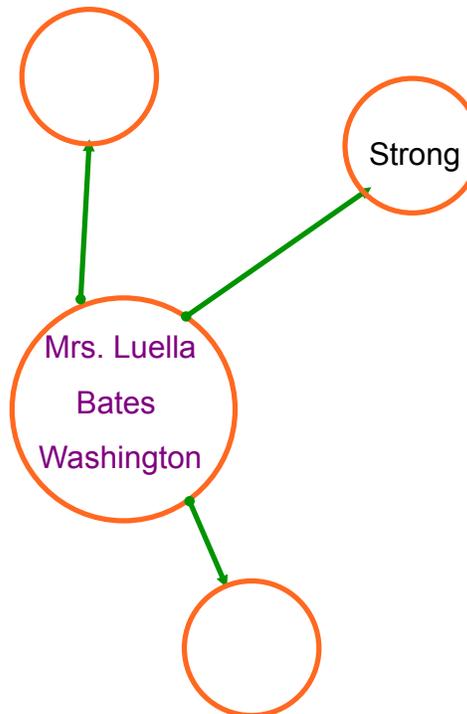
Date

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### Directions:

Describe a character in the story using a Bubble Map (describing map) with adjectives and adjective phrases. Use short bubbles for stated attributes and long bubbles for those attributes that are implied. Besides each adjective or adjective phrase write an event, action, or quote from the selection that justifies the adjective or adjective phrase.



She reached down, picked the boy up from his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled (p. 26)

## Describing Characters

Name

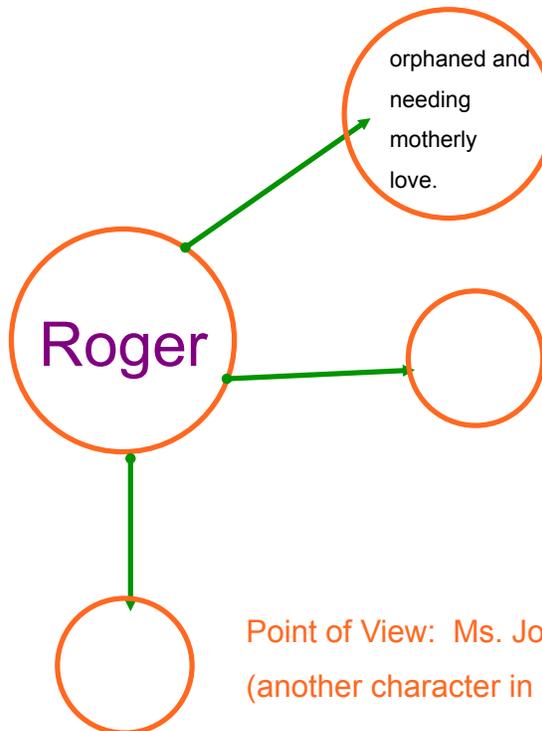
Date

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### Point of View

Directions: Describe the character from the point of view from another character in the story. Make sure you write reasons/justifications besides the adjectives and adjective phrases.



"You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?" p. 11

Point of View: Ms. Jones  
(another character in the story).

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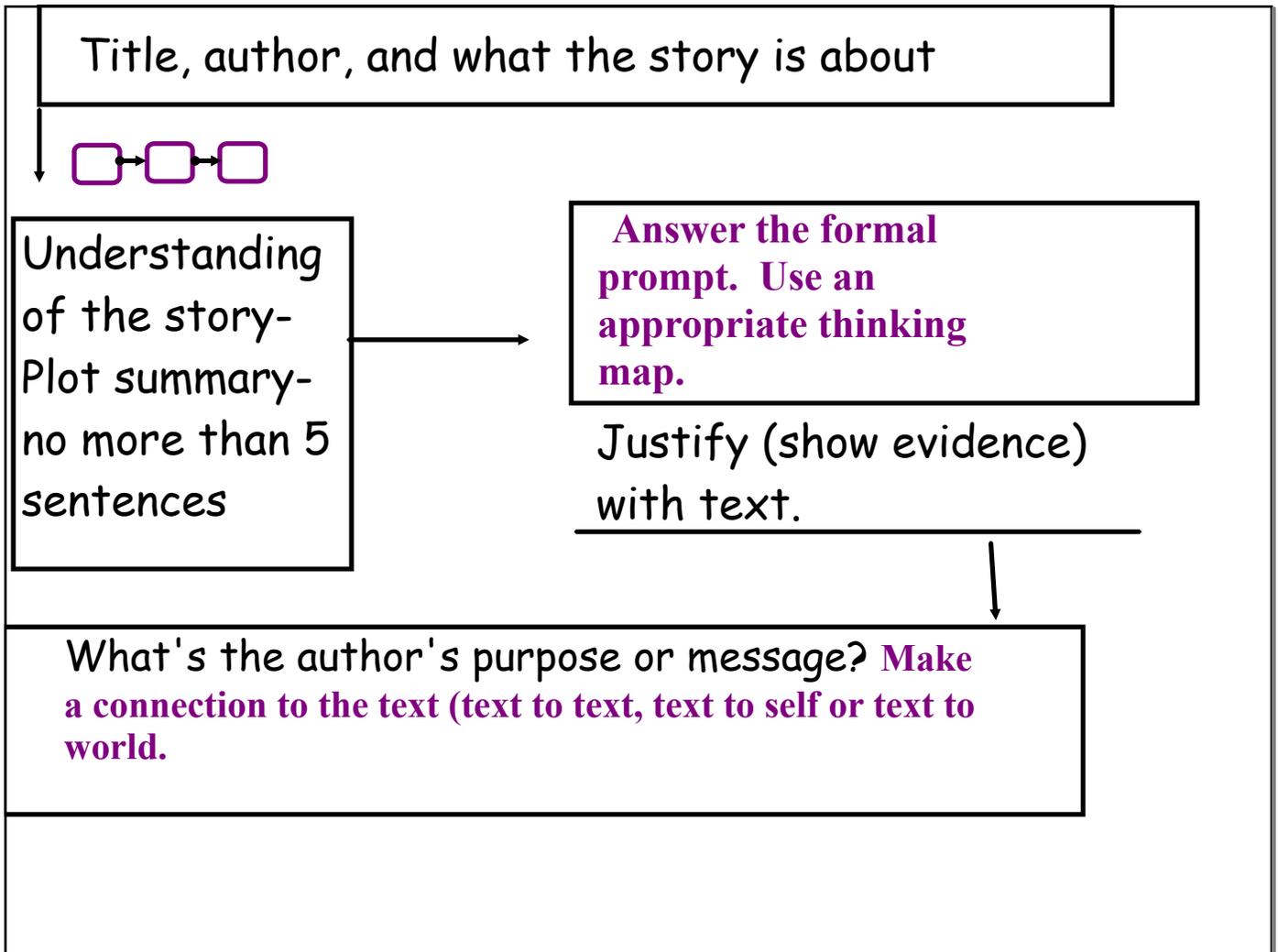
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Title, author, and what the story is about

As Mrs. Jones is walking home from her job at the beauty shop, a fourteen year old boy named Roger tries to grab her purse.

Mrs. Jones wrestles the boy to the ground and decides to take him home with her.

She learns Roger has nobody at home and was trying to steal money to buy blue suede shoes.

Instead of calling the police Ms. Jones feeds the boy, gives him some money, and sends him on his way.

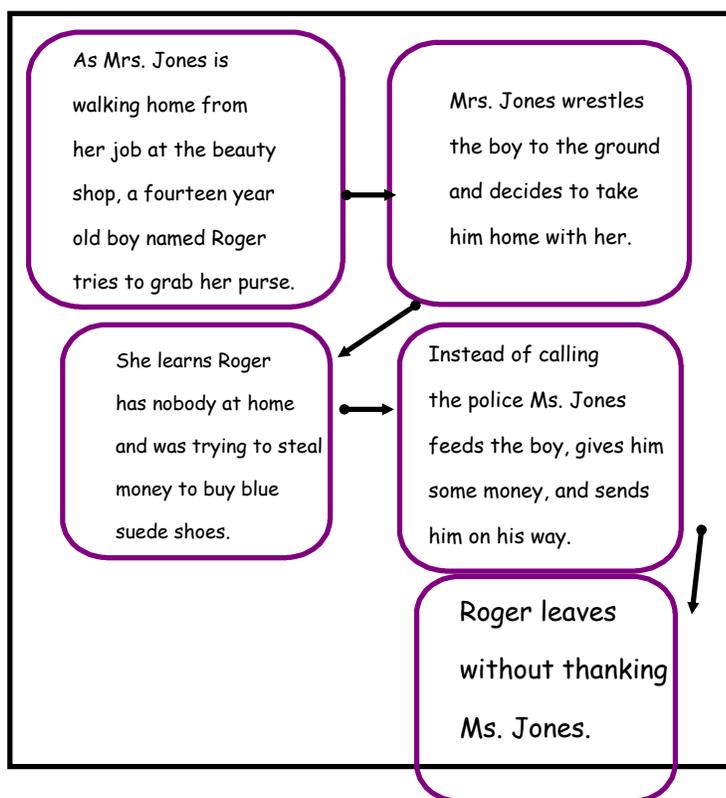
Roger leaves without thanking Ms. Jones.

Answer the formal prompt. Use an appropriate thinking map. (understanding of Mrs. Jones and Roger (What they are like?))

Justify (show evidence) with text.

What's the author's purpose or message? Make a connection to the text (text to text, text to self or text to world).

### Plot summary in 5 sentences



"Thank You Ma'am" written by Langston Hughes is a story about a young boy named Roger who tries to steal a purse from Ms. Jones, a hardworking lady who lives in a boarding house. Ms. Jones uses the incident to teach Roger a lesson about life.

As Mrs. Jones is walking home from her job at the beauty shop, a fourteen year old boy named Roger tries to grab her purse. Mrs. Jones wrestles the boy to the ground and decides to take him home with her. She learns Roger has nobody at home and was trying to steal money to buy blue suede shoes. Instead of calling the police Ms. Jones feeds the boy, gives him some money, and sends him on his way. Roger leaves without thanking Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones is described as a "large woman" (p.9). Through what she says and does we know that Ms. Jones is also an understanding person. She tells Roger that she "was young once and that she wanted things she could not have" (p. 13). Ms. Jones does not ask him too many questions because she "did not want to embarrass him" (p. ). When Ms. Jones gives Roger some food and shares her ten cent cake with him she shows that she is a generous person. She also shares per personal things with him when she tells him to "run that comb through your hair" (p.. ) At the end of the story she even gives the boy money to buy shoes.

Unlike Ms. Jones, Roger is described as "frail and willow wild" (p. ). Even though he tries to steal a purse, I think Roger is an honest person deep down. For example, when Ms. Jones asks if he would run if she turned him loos he says "Yes'm" (p.). When he is sitting in the room Roger could steal the purse and run since Ms. Jones is not looking at hi. Instead he stays on the other side of the room away from the purse and in sight of Ms. Jones. Roger is also a good person inside. In the story it says that "he did not want to be distrusted" (p. ) While he doesn't actually thank Ms. Jones when he leaves we know that he "wanted to say something."

I believe the author wrote this story to remind us that sometimes good people do bad things and that we should not be so quick to judge them and punish them. I am thankful that in my life people have given me a second chances, just like Ms. Jones gave Roger a second chance. I hope to do the same thing for others that I meet who make mistakes.

