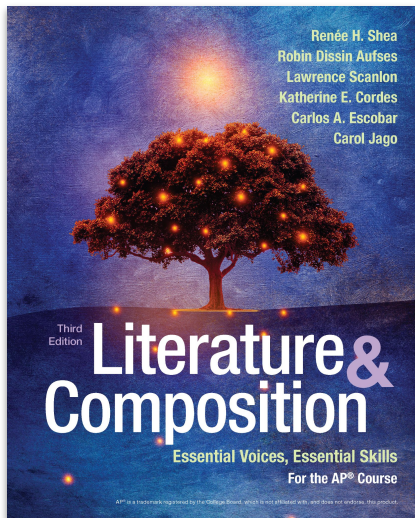


Welcome to the BFW AP[®] Literature Professional Learning Community



Presented by the *Literature & Composition*, 3rd Edition Team:
Renee Shea, Robin Aufses, Lawrence Scanlon, Kate Cordes, Carlos Escobar





BFW AP[®] Literature

Professional Learning Community



Passing by Nella Larsen

Presented by Renee Shea and Robin Aufses
with special guest Akua Duku Anokye, Ph.D.

Please Introduce yourselves!

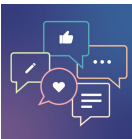
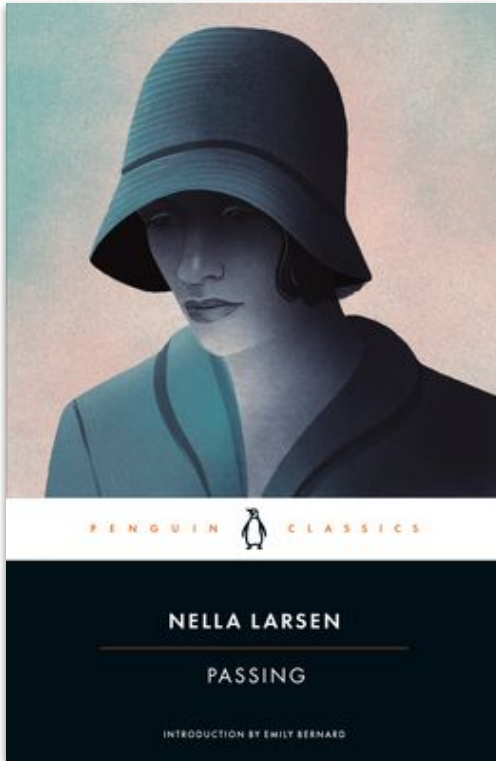
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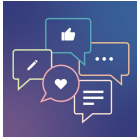
Location

Something about your school environment



New — Exciting — Ahead of the Curve!





Passing by Nella Larsen

- A novel of the Harlem Renaissance (1929)
- Larsen daughter of Danish mother and West Indian Father
- Story of two women who grew up in the same community, but take different paths as adults: one chooses to “pass.”
- Extensions to many different forms of “passing,” masking, and constructing identity -- then and now
- Brit Bennett influenced by Larsen, champion of *Passing*, in her bestselling novel *The Vanishing Half* (2020)



extending beyond the text

These photographs each show an aspect of life in Harlem during the 1920s. Clockwise from the left, the first image shows a parade organized by the United Negro Improvement Association in 1920. The second image, taken in 1925, shows a woman in a fur-trimmed coat out for a walk. The third image shows a waitress serving two women at a lunch room in 1928.



Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images



Anthony Barboza/Archive Photos/Getty Images

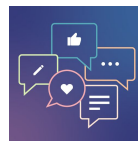


General Photographic Agency/Hulton-Archive/Getty Images

1. What does each of these photographs convey about life in Harlem during this period? Taken together, what do they suggest about the diversity of these communities?
2. How does each of these images relate to the setting and plot of Larsen's novel? What aspects of them portray the environment Clare yearns for?
3. Which aspects of life in these photos are not depicted in *Passing*? Why do you think Larsen chose not to include them?

Text Overview: The Harlem Renaissance

Extending Beyond the Text (p. 522 of *Literature & Composition*, Third Ed.)



**2011 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

In *The Writing of Fiction* (1925), novelist Edith Wharton states the following.

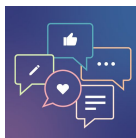
At every stage in the progress of his tale the novelist must rely on what may be called the *illuminating incident* to reveal and emphasize the inner meaning of each situation. Illuminating incidents are the magic casements of fiction, its vistas on infinity.

Choose a novel or play that you have studied and write a well-organized essay in which you describe an “illuminating” episode or moment and explain how it functions as a “casement,” a window that opens onto the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

You may select a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of comparable literary merit.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
As I Lay Dying
The Awakening
Beloved
Catch-22
The Catcher in the Rye

Oedipus Rex
Othello
Passing
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
The Portrait of a Lady
Pride and Prejudice



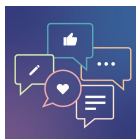
Question 3

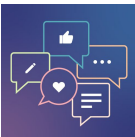
In many works of fiction, houses take on symbolic importance. Such houses may be literal houses or unconventional ones (e.g., hotels, hospitals, monasteries, or boats).

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a literal or unconventional house serves as a significant symbol. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how this house contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

All Over Creation
All the Light We Cannot See
The Awakening
Beloved
Brown Girl, Brownstones
Death of a Salesman
Elmet
Fences
The God of Small Things
Great Expectations
The Haunting of Hill House
Homegoing
A House for Mr. Biswas
The House of Mirth
The House of the Seven Gables
The House on Mango Street
Housekeeping
Howards End
Jane Eyre
Kindred
Mrs. Dalloway
Native Son
Nervous Conditions
Never Let Me Go

Northanger Abbey
Passing
The Portrait of a Lady
The Professor's House
A Raisin in the Sun
The Remains of the Day
The Round House
Saturday
The Secret Garden
Sense and Sensibility
Sing, Unburied, Sing
A Streetcar Named Desire
Sula
To Kill a Mockingbird
The Turn of the Screw
Uncle Tom's Cabin
Where the Crawdads Sing
White Teeth
Wide Sargasso Sea
Wuthering Heights



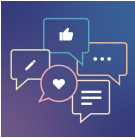


Writing Opportunities: Exam and Beyond

Topics for Composing

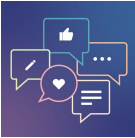
1. **AP® FRQ** **Literary Argument.** Many works of literature feature contrasting characters — often a pair who are adversaries, whose relationship changes over time, or who have taken dramatically different paths in life, either by choice or force. In *Passing*, Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield, childhood friends, meet again for the first time in twelve years. They re-establish a friendship both fraught with interpersonal conflict and shaped by socially oppressive circumstances. In a well-written essay, analyze how the complexity of the relationship between these two women contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

17. **Connections.** In *The Great Gatsby*, another novel from the 1920s, the character of Jay Gatz “passes”: a Midwestern farm boy, he changes his name to Jay Gatsby, falsifies information including that he went to “Oggsford” (as in Oxford in England), and generally presents himself as a member of the educated, affluent elite. In what ways are Clare and Gatz/Gatsby similar in their motivation to move between identities? In what ways are their circumstances very different? What similar themes do F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, and Nella Larsen explore in these novels?



Classroom Application: Themes and Approaches

- **Identity and Masking** (“We Wear the Mask” by Paul Laurence Dunbar, *Lit & Comp* 3e, p. 497)
- **Conformity vs. Rebellion:** “At times, passing was an act of rebellion against the racial regime; on other occasions, it was a challenge to African Americans’ struggle to shape and to nurture group identities and communities.” Allyson Hobbs, *A Chosen Exile*, 2014 (p. 546)
- How might you use the cover image for *Passing* (p. 537) to encourage critical reading and thinking about the novel?
-
- ...
- ...



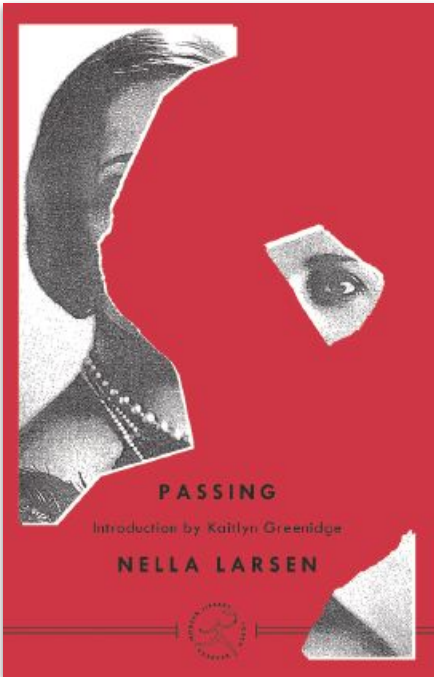
Special Guest: Akua Duku Anokye

- Arizona State University
 - Office of Interdisciplinary Global Learning and Engagement (IGLE)
- Chief Reader, Advanced Placement English Language and Composition
- Past Chair, Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Development Committee
- Past Chair
 - Conference on College Composition & Communication





Reflections (for next PLC)



- Why do **you** think Nella Larsen's *Passing* is having a moment at this point in time?
- Pair another passage from *Passing* with a clip from the film in a way that promotes close reading. (You might look at this [clip](#), starting at 3:40, with Tessa Thompson reading a passage while the film plays.)
- How might you use the cover image for *Passing* (*Lit & Comp* 3e, p. 537) to encourage critical reading of and thinking about the novel?
- Why do you think *Passing* (the novel) is enjoying a moment at this point in time?
- Whatever you suggest to promote/encourage bringing the novel to your students (either for the exam or beyond) ...