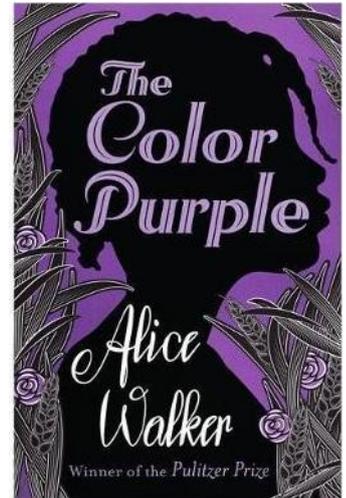


The Color Purple

By Alice Walker

Suggested Discussion Questions

- *The Color Purple* gives an account of the terrible ways in which poor black women were abused, both by society and in the context of their home lives. Can you list some of the abuses mentioned?
- In Section I, where does Celie find the strength to survive the misery that is her life?
- How does Alphonso manipulate Celie with his warning, "You better not tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy," in Section I of *The Color Purple*? (page 3)
- Why does Celie address her letters to "Dear God" throughout the majority of *The Color Purple*?
- In Section I of *The Color Purple*, how does Alphonso's management of Celie's babies, her schooling, and her marriage to Mr. ____ intensify her subjugation?
- What qualities does Shug Avery project in Section I of *The Color Purple* that attract Celie so powerfully, and how does this fascination reflect Celie's age?
- In Section I of *The Color Purple*, how do two events in the dry goods store where Celie meets Olivia foreshadow future conflicts for the characters?
- How does Nettie's disappearance and Harpo's abuse of Sofia in Section I of *The Color Purple* reflect the causes of society's perpetuation of male dominance?
- How is Harpo's inability to stand up to his father in *The Color Purple* paradoxical both in his own situation and in his relationship with Sofia?
- In *The Color Purple*, why does Celie, a victim of long-term abuse, recommend that Harpo beat Sofia?
- In Section 2 of *The Color Purple*, how does Celie and Sofia's budding friendship reflect the need for women's solidarity in a male-dominant world?



- How do the three identities Celie models—a dutiful daughter and wife, a submissive victim, and a steadfast friend—help and hinder her in Section 3 of *The Color Purple*?
- In Section 3 of *The Color Purple*, what effect does Shug Avery's transformation from a picture to a real person have on Celie?
- In Section 3 of *The Color Purple*, how is Harpo's constant eating a metaphor for his relationship with Sofia?
- In Section 4 of *The Color Purple*, what causes the transformation in Harpo's character after Sofia leaves him?
- How does Celie react to Shug's illness, and how does Shug's courage to ignore society's rules for women empower Celie in Section 4 of *The Color Purple*?
- Are the men in *The Color Purple* shown mainly in a negative light?
- How do Sofia's perceptions of a slave and a captive differ from her son's description in Section 5 of *The Color Purple*, and why does his response make her happy?
- In Section 6 of *The Color Purple*, what makes Celie's discovery that Mr. ___ has been hiding Nettie's letters for years the climax of her story?
- In *The Color Purple*, why does the author introduce Nettie as a secondary narrator of the story?
- How does the author use Nettie's analyses of the Harlem blacks and African blacks to shed light on contemporary intraracial issues in Section 7 of *The Color Purple*?