



Cue to Cue

RESOURCE GUIDE

for Educators and Audience Members



Welcome to Cue to Cue, an educational resource guide created to help teachers, parents/guardians, and young audience members enhance the experience of watching *Locomotion, The Play*.

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Big Themes

- Foster Care
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- Loss
- Poetry
- Personal Expression
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- Hope
- Power of Language



Short Show Description

Locomotion centers on an 11-year-old boy named Lonnie. While struggling in foster care after the deaths of his parents, he discovers that poetry helps him express his feelings about tragedy, his separation from his sister, and the challenges of his new life. Multiple Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson adapts her 2006 novel to the stage, originally co-commissioned by Orlando Repertory Theatre and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Full Synopsis

A New Home

Lonnie Collins Motion lives in a foster home in Brooklyn with Miss Edna after his parents passed away. Separated from his sister, Lili, he is only allowed to see her on Saturdays. Ms. Marcus, his teacher, requires the class to write in their poetry notebooks every night and Lonnie begins

to tell his story through the poems he writes.

Late October

One day when Lonnie returns home from school, he finds Miss Edna dancing and singing in their living room. At first, Lonnie worries that Miss Edna's "mind got broke," but she tells him that she is just excited that she received a letter from her son, Jenkins, who is away in the war. Lonnie smiles at the joy Miss Edna has for her son, and climbs onto the roof to write a new poem.

Stuff that Happened

In school, Lonnie becomes frustrated when the class is assigned to write about something familiar. Ms. Marcus suggests that he write about a classmate, so Lonnie writes a poem describing his best friend, Enrique. He becomes discouraged because he does not feel that describing someone or something is poetry, it is just "stuff that happened."

Full Synopsis continued...

What IS Poetry?

The class discusses poetry and Ms. Marcus tells them that rap is poetry. Upon hearing this news, Enrique decides he likes poetry now, proclaiming, "Hip Hop rules the world!" Lonnie is scheduled to meet his sister at the Agency for their scheduled visitation, but Lili's foster mom, Ms. Selma, informs Miss Edna for the second week in a row that Lili is too busy. Lonnie becomes frustrated and sad, but Miss Edna encourages him to find a good memory and not to dwell on the bad things all day. The memory that surfaces is Lonnie and his mother in the kitchen. The song, "Locomotion" comes on the radio and they dance. She tells him the song inspired his name, Lonnie Collins Motion.

We'll Be Together Someplace

The following Saturday, Lili confesses she has been missing their weekly visits on purpose because going to the Agency makes her sad. When she tells Lonnie that she wants their lives to be normal, they dream of June, when they will go to camp upstate for two weeks.

A Poem is Coming

In school, Ms. Marcus requires that each student must read a poem aloud to the class. Enrique presents an adaptation of Langston Hughes' Dream Variation. Listening to Enrique, Lonnie is reminded of his mother and suddenly he "feels a poem coming," which distracts him from the poems he is assigned in class, causing

him to get in trouble with Ms. Marcus. Lonnie begins to write this new poem.

Popsicle, Icicle, Bicycle, Sickle Cell

Lonnie learns his friend, Enrique, is very sick; he has been diagnosed with sickle-cell anemia, and will not be returning to school. The class discusses the illness, and the possible loss of their friend. Lonnie composes a poem about the experience and shares it with Enrique in the hospital.

Little Brother Lonnie

Miss Edna is overjoyed when Jenkins returns from the war and Lonnie is flattered and happy when Jenkins refers to him as "Little Brother Lonnie."

A Poet

Back in school, Lonnie fills up his poetry notebook and turns it in to Ms. Marcus. She reads his poetry and learns what happened to Lonnie's parents. She encourages Lonnie to continue writing, giving him a new notebook to use.

The Past...And Poetry

Finally it is June, school is out and Lonnie visits his sister on Sunday because he now has permission to attend church with her. Lonnie reads aloud one of Lili's favorite poems written about their mother; both are content in their memories.



The Creators

Who wrote *Locomotion*?

“I used to say I’d be a teacher or a lawyer or a hairdresser when I grew up but even as I said these things, I knew what made me happiest was writing.”

- Jacqueline Woodson

Jacqueline Woodson is an American writer of books for adults, children, and adolescents. She is best known for her National Book Award-Winning memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming*, and her Newbery Honor-winning titles *After Tupac and D Foster*, *Feathers*, and *Show Way*. Her picture books *The Day You Begin* and *The Year We Learned to Fly* were NY Times Best Sellers. After serving as the Young People’s Poet Laureate from 2015 to 2017, she was named the National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature by the Library of Congress for 2018–19. She was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 2020. Later that same year, she was named a MacArthur Fellow. Want to learn more about Jacqueline and her work?

[Visit her website here.](#)

Fun Facts from Jacqueline Woodson herself...

- I can only write with my notebook turned sideways. When I was a kid, I wrote with it turned upside down.
- I can jump double-dutch.
- I write, catch, and eat with my right hand. Everything else – batting, shooting a basket, holding a golf club, etc. is done with my left.
- I love it when it’s quiet and sunny.
- I have a lot of my writing memorized so that I don’t have to carry my books everywhere.
- Fall is my favorite season.
- I once wrote a book in two weeks and it only needed a little revision.
- The next book I wrote took four years.

What is the Young People's Poet Laureate?

[The Poetry Foundation](#) appoints a Children's Poet Laureate or Young People's Poet Laureate every two years, honoring the work of a living American poet who writes exceptional poetry for younger readers.

In an [interview](#) in 2015, Woodson shared her thoughts about the honor and her goals for the two year appointment.

"I think one thing I want to do as young people's poet laureate is make sure all people know that **poetry is a party everyone is invited to**. I think many people believe and want others to believe that poetry is for the precious, entitled, educated few. And that's just not true. Our children's first words are poems—poems we and our listeners are delighted to hear and eager to understand. Rap is poetry. Spoken word is poetry. Poetry lives in our everyday. I've read some of the most poetic tweets, listened to poetic voice messages and snippets of dialogue between teenagers."

Interested in more books and poetry by Jaqueline Woodson? Check out **a full list of her written works** in the resources section of this guide.



Pre-Show Discussion Questions

The following conversation starters will help you think about the themes in *Locomotion, The Play*, as well as make some predictions about the production itself. Discuss the following before you join us at the theatre.

When you hear the word “poetry” what comes to mind?

- A. How many different forms of poetry can you name?
- B. What do you think qualifies something as poetry? Why?

When you are faced with something challenging, how do you take care of yourself?

In the play, *Locomotion*, the character finds their voice through the creative expression of poetry, in what ways do you express yourself?

Standards: LAFS.K-8.RL.1.1, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.2, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.3



Post-Show Discussion Questions

We hope you enjoyed Orlando Repertory Theatre's production of *Locomotion, The Play*. Discuss the following questions after attending the performance.

What was *Locomotion* about? Describe the beginning, middle, and end. What was the climax of the story? Why? If you had to summarize the play in one sentence, what would it be?

What did you notice when you first entered the theatre? Describe the stage.

Locomotion takes place in present day. Did the set and scenery help establish the show's location or time? What specific things did you notice about the set and stage lights: color, shape, texture? Did you notice anything about the set or lights that you thought was unique? How did Lonnie's memories look different from the rest of the story?

What did you notice about the actors and their performances? How did they use their voices and bodies to bring the characters to life?

Which character do you relate to the most? Why? What words describe that character?

Standards: LAFS.K-8.RL.1.1, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.2, LAFS.K-8.RL.1.3, LAFS.K-8.RL.2.6, LAFS.K-8.RI.1.2, TH.K.C.2.1, TH.K.C.3.2, TH.1.C.2.2, TH.1.S.3.2, TH.2.O.2.1, TH.3.C.1.2, TH.3.C.2.2, TH.3.O.2.1, TH.3.O.1.2, TH.3.S.1.3, TH.3.S.3.3, TH.4.O.1.1, TH.4.C.3.1, TH.4.S.1.1, TH.4.S.1.3, TH.4.S.3.3, TH.5.O.1.1, TH.5.O.1.3, TH.5.O.3.1, TH.5.S.1.3, TH.5.S.3.3, TH.68.O.1.2, TH.68.S.2.3, TH.68.H.1.5





Exploration of Themes in *Locomotion, The Play*

> FOSTER CARE

What is Foster Care and how do we talk about it with young people? As with most topics, being honest and straightforward is a great place to start. Here are some potential questions young people might have and responses to get the conversation started.

What is Foster Care?

Foster Care is a temporary home for children who need to be removed from their own homes because they may be unsafe or may have lost family like Lonnie in the play. This is a confusing and challenging time for many children. Foster parents step in to provide a home, food, and support to children during this time.

What can I do to support children living in Foster Care?

Protecting children and helping foster parents is a way to be a supportive community member. There are many ways to do so.

Connect to local groups [here](#).

Here are some examples of how you might be able to support these families:

- Free haircuts, dental care, clothing, or transportation.
- Free services based on your business: construction, home furnishings, family dinners at restaurants, mechanic services.
- Scholarships or free lessons for summer camp, sports teams, dance, art, or music.

You can help children and their families by:

- Providing school supplies (books, pencils, book bags, paper)
- Providing jobs for older youth
- Mentoring a child

You or your organization can contribute money or donate goods:

- For scholarships, summer camps, field trips, or music lessons
- For holidays, birthdays, and graduations
- Other items such as car seats, high chairs, toys, luggage, or clothes

You can support agencies and the court system by:

- Recruiting foster/adoptive parents in your community
- Hosting social events for foster/adoptive parents (picnics, parties, bowling)

Additional Resources

Florida Department of Children and Families: myflfamilies.com

Embrace Families: embracefamilies.org



Exploration of Themes in *Locomotion, The Play*

> ILLNESS/HEALTH

Lonnie's friend Enrique, has sickle-cell anemia. It is a very serious disease and keeps him from attending school.

What is it?

Sickle cell is a red blood cell disorder. It is inherited. That means that it is passed down the same way people get the color of their eyes, skin, and hair from their parents. For a child to inherit sickle cell, both parents need to carry the gene for it. There is no way to catch sickle cell and it is not contagious. You are born with it.

September is Sickle Cell Awareness Month

September is Sickle Cell Awareness Month. Share information about the disease and how you can support members of the community living with it.

Ways to Support

Check out [Sickle Cell Speaks](#). There are a variety of ways to support research and advocacy for those living with Sickle Cell disease.

> POETRY

Locomotion explores the power of writing and creative expression. How can writing, and specifically poetry, support resiliency and resolve in the face of tragedy? Our main character Lonnie, discovers his voice as a poet throughout the play.

So, what is poetry?

Poetry is defined as literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm.

Much like Lonnie was initially, some people are intimidated by the word. Poetry can be approached through a variety of forms or simply as descriptive free-writing. How many forms of poetry can you think of?

Let's try some writing!

ELA Activities by Grade

K-2nd Grade Activity:

Acrostic Poems

What is an acrostic poem? When the first letters of each line of the poem spell out a word or phrase, you have successfully written an acrostic poem!

Invite students to write an acrostic poem for their own names! For younger students, include images in addition to the words to illustrate each line.

3rd-5th Grade Activity:

Acrostic Poems Extended

In addition to writing an acrostic poem for their own name, invite students to write one for a character in the play. Compare and contrast their poems with that of the characters. What unique qualities or character traits do they remember from the play? How did each character come to life with this simple poetic form?

Middle School Activity: Haiku

Lonnie uses poetry to process all that is going on in his life. He writes about the things he knows, his past experiences, things he does not quite understand, and his hopes for the future. He even writes about the seemingly mundane experience of catching the bus to visit his sister. He articulates the relevance and meaning of his life through his poems. How can you share your story with the world?

Directions: Create a Haiku describing different moments in your day, such as breakfast, traveling to school, a math lesson, etc. Create five poems reflecting different activities and moments

occurring in one day and arrange them in chronological order. Read your poem with a peer and discuss.

What surprised you about this form of poetry?

How did the seemingly mundane turn into something creative or interesting?

Were there similarities or differences in each of your series?

Which might be fun to expand on?

High School Activity

Lonnie's teacher asks the students to respond to a variety of prompts. Write a poem, free form, rhyming, or choose a classic form responding to the following:

Describe the perfect moment.

Share and reflect. What was that like? Did anything you wrote surprise you? How so? Would you consider what you wrote poetry?

Standards: WL.K12.AH.5.7

Vocabulary and Definitions in *Locomotion, The Play*

visitation

a supervised visit with a family member or friend

Group Home

a home where a small number of unrelated people in need of care, support, or supervision can live together

Foster Care

out of home care, a temporary service provided by States for children who cannot live with their families

placement

the placing of a child in the home of an individual other than a parent or guardian or in a facility

irrelevant

not connected with or relevant to something

fuertes

powerful

baccalaitos

deep-fried codfish fritters

poesia

poetry

sophoras

type of tree or shrub

variation

a change or difference in condition

sickle

a short-handled farming tool with a semicircular blade, used for cutting grain, lopping, or trimming

Sickle Cell Anemia

A group of disorders that cause red blood cells to become misshapen and break down



Additional Resources

Books and Poetry by Jacqueline Woodson

Picture Books

The World Belonged to Us
The Year We Learned to Fly
The Day You Begin
This Is the Rope
Each Kindness
Pecan Pie Baby
Coming On Home Soon
Show Way
The Other Side
Sweet Sweet Memory
Our Gracie Aunt
Visiting Day
We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past

Middle Grade/Young Adult

Before The Ever After
Harbor Me
Brown Girl Dreaming
Beneath a Meth Moon
Between Madison And Palmetto
Maizon At Blue Hill
Last Summer With Maizon
Locomotion
Feathers
Peace, Locomotion
Hush
Behind You
If You Come Softly

Miracle's Boys
From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun
I Hadn't Meant To Tell You This
Lena
The House You Pass On The Way
The Dear One
After Tupac and D Foster

Adult Books

Red at the Bone
Another Brooklyn

Poetry

Poetry As Memoir
Poetry As Fiction
Poetry As Picture Book
Poetry as History
Poetry As Empathy

Websites and Links

[Scholastic's Locomotion Discussion Guide](#)
[Jacqueline Woodson's Website](#)
[The Kennedy Center - Featured Resources](#)

Want to get involved in poetry in Orlando?

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Orlando REP Poetry Workshops and Masterclasses

[Field Trip Workshop](#) - Poetic Power
in Locomotion

[Shawn Welcome Masterclass](#)

Florida State Standards

Detailed list of Florida State Standards satisfied by using this guide and attending Orlando REP's production of *Locomotion, The Play*.

Language Arts Florida Standards

(Text refers to the play, the script, or the content in this guide.)

Reading/Text Analysis Standards:

LAFS.K-8.RI.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

LAFS. K-8.RL.1.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

LAFS. K-8.RI.1.3 Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

LAFS. K-8.RL.3.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

LAFS. K-8.RL.1.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral.

LAFS. K-8.RL.1.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

LAFS. K-8.RL.2.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

LAFS. K-8.RI.1.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

Vocabulary Standards:

LAFS.2-8.L.3.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

LAFS.2-8.L.3.5 Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Writing Standards:

LAFS.K-8.W.1.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

WL.K12.AH.5.7 Write creative pieces (poetry, narratives, and plays) using effective imagery and the appropriate literary devices to genre.

Theatre Arts:

TH.K.C.2.1 Respond to a performance and share personal preferences about parts of the performance.

TH.K.C.3.2 Share reactions to a live theatre performance.

TH.1.C.2.2 Identify elements of an effective performance.

TH.1.S.3.2 Describe characters and plot development discovered during dramatic play.

TH.2.O.2.1 Re-tell what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of a story after viewing a play.

TH.3.C.1.2 Watch a play and describe how the elements of light,

costumes, props, and sound influence the mood of the production.

TH.3.C.2.2 Discuss the meaning of an artistic choice to support development of critical thinking and decision-making skills.

TH.3.O.2.1 Describe what happened in a play, using age-appropriate theatre terminology.

TH.3.O.1.2 Discuss why costumes and makeup are used in a play.

TH.3.S.1.3 Evaluate a performance, using correct theatre terms, and give specific examples to support personal opinions.

TH.3.S.3.3 Describe elements of dramatic performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

TH.4.O.1.1 Describe what a designer and director do to support the actor in creating a performance.

TH.4.C.3.1 Identify the characteristics of an effective acting performance.

TH.4.S.1.1 Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.

TH.4.S.1.3 Use theatre terms to evaluate a live performance and discuss the qualities that directly impacted the audience's response to the production.

TH.4.S.3.3 Describe elements of dramatic and technical performance that produce an emotional response in oneself or an audience.

TH.5.O.1.1 Explain an actor's choices in the creation of a character for a scene or play.

TH.5.O.1.3 Evaluate how an actor or designer's choices about a character affect the audience's understanding of a play.

TH.5.O.3.1 Describe a variety of theatrical methods and/or conventions that a group of individuals can use to communicate with audiences.

TH.5.S.1.3 Evaluate a performance, using theatre terminology, and articulate emotional responses to the whole and parts of dramatic performances.

TH.5.S.3.3 Use elements of dramatic and technical performance designed to produce an emotional response in an audience.

TH.68.O.1.2 Discuss how color, line, shape, and texture are used to show emotion in technical theatre elements.

TH.68.S.2.3 Analyze the relationships of plot, conflict, and theme in a play and transfer the knowledge to a play that contrasts in style, genre, and/or mood.

TH.68.H.1.5 Describe one's own personal responses to a theatrical work and show respect for the responses of others.