

"American History" by Judith Ortiz Cofer

Text Dependent Questions – Answer on separate paper

Comprehension

- 1) Recall** What attracts Elena to Eugene? How does he respond to her?
- 2) Recall** What world event happens on November 22, 1963?
- 3) Summarize** What is Elena's greatest personal concern on this day?

First Thoughts

1. What do you think happens to Elena and Eugene after the story is over?

Shaping Interpretations

2. Eugene, nicknamed "the Hick," and Elena, nicknamed "Skinny Bones," come from very different cultures, yet they have something important in common. What is it?
3. Which statements in the story seem important or controversial to you?
4. If someone who hadn't read the story asked you what the title means, what would you say?
5. Why do you think Elena is turned away from Eugene's house?
6. Look at the last statement in the story. Why do you think Elena doesn't want to see the snow turning gray? Could this statement reveal something important about Elena's character—about how she faces a loss in her life? Think about the whole story and try to state in your own words your interpretation of the story's theme.

Connecting with the Text

7. What would you say to Elena about her experience with Eugene's mother? What would you advise her to do?

Extending the Text

8. Do you think that Elena's rejection is something that others have experienced? Explain.
9. Imagine it is the week after Elena's heartbreak and she has to go to school. How do you think she will manage?
10. Eugene disappears from the story after the mid-point of the story. What do you suppose he thinks that evening, when Elena doesn't show up? Do you think he knows what his mother did?