



# Tar Beach

by Faith Ringgold

## Teacher's Guide

Written By Laurie Rozakis, Ph.D.



**CLASSROOM  
FAVORITES**

**A Perma-Bound Production**

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## Synopsis

The first-person narrator, eight-year-old Cassie Louise Lightfoot, is flying above the George Washington Bridge. This bridge spans the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey. From her lofty vantage point, Cassie sees her parents and next door neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Honey playing cards on the roof. Cassie also sees her baby brother Be Be lying motionless on his mattress. He is watching Cassie flying.

In a flashback, Cassie remembers the fun she had sleeping at Tar Beach, as the rooftop is called. She felt that she owned everything, especially the George Washington Bridge. The bridge is special to her not only because of its splendor but also because it opened in 1931, the year she was born. Cassie's father had helped build the bridge. Cassie compares the bridge to a giant diamond necklace. Cassie is happy that she can fly because it gives her the freedom to go where ever she wants.

Cassie's father takes her to see the new bridge that he is helping to build. Cassie's father can't join the bridge builders' union because of prejudice. Cassie vows to buy the new bridge for her father. Then her family will be happy, secure, and wealthy. To make sure the family has ice cream for dinner every night, Cassie plans to fly over the ice-cream factory.

That evening, Cassie's family and Mr. and Mrs. Honey will enjoy a fine meal on Tar Beach. Cassie will fly to the union building and take Be Be with her. Cassie has told Be Be that anyone can fly. People simply need to want to go somewhere that they can't reach any other way.



## Timeline

- 1931** Faith Jones Ringgold born in Harlem, New York
- 1941** December 7: America enters World War II
- 1948** State of Israel founded
- 1950** Korean War begins  
Faith Ringgold marries Robert Earl Wallace, a classical and jazz pianist
- 1952** Elizabeth II crowned Queen of England  
Car seat belts introduced  
Polio vaccine invented
- 1954** Supreme Court issues Brown v. Board of Education, making segregation in public schools illegal
- 1955** Disneyland opens  
McDonald's corporation founded  
Faith Ringgold graduates from City College of NY with a BA in Fine Arts and Education
- 1956** Sabin invents the oral polio vaccine  
Faith Ringgold divorced
- 1957** Dr. Seuss publishes *The Cat in the Hat*
- 1958** NASA established
- 1959** Faith Ringgold earns her MA in art from the City College of New York
- 1960** First televised U.S. presidential debate
- 1961** Peace Corps founded  
Berlin Wall built  
Alan Shepard is the first American in space
- 1962** Faith Ringgold marries Burdette Ringgold
- 1963** President Kennedy assassinated
- 1967** First Super Bowl  
First heart transplant

Six Day War in Middle East

Faith Ringgold holds her first one-person art show

**1969** Neil Armstrong is the first human on the moon

**1974** President Nixon resigns

Faith Ringgold creates her first soft sculptures

**1979** Sony introduces the Walkman

**1981** First woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court

Pac-man video game is very popular

**1983** Sally Ride becomes the first woman in space

**1989** Berlin Wall taken down

**1990** Nelson Mandela is freed in South Africa

**1991** Collapse of the Soviet Union

Faith Ringgold publishes *Tar Beach*, her first book

**1992** *Tar Beach* named a Caldecott Honor book

**1997** Scientists clone sheep



## Author Sketch

Faith Jones Ringgold was born October 8, 1930, in New York, NY. Her father was a sanitation worker; her mother, a dressmaker and designer. Because she suffered from asthma, Ringgold often stayed home from school. The child passed the long days listening to jazz on the radio and drawing pictures.

Trained as an art teacher, Ringgold earned her BA in art and education from the City College of New York in 1955 and her MA four years later. Faith married Robert Earl Wallace, a jazz pianist, in 1950. The couple had two daughters, Barbara and Michele, but the marriage dissolved six years later.

Ringgold spent nearly twenty years as an art teacher in the New York City public schools, from 1955-1973. Nonetheless, she carved out time to establish a career as a painter, mixed media sculptor, performance artist, and writer. In fact, her fame rests primarily on her art rather than on her writing. She is especially well-known for her so-called "story quilts," quilts that convey a personal narrative. Ringgold created her first quilts in 1980, adding writing to their borders. Such works as *Flag Story Quilt*, *Slave Rape Story*, and *Street Story Quilt* brought Ringgold

greater recognition as an important and innovative artist.

From the start, Ringgold has actively promoted her work. Her art has been the subject of many one-person shows, including those held in the Spectrum Gallery, New York City, 1967 and 1970; and the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, 1987, 1989, and 1992. Ringgold's paintings and soft sculptures, especially her quilts, have been displayed in museums and galleries, including the Boston Museum of Fine Art, the Clark Museum, the High Museum of Atlanta, Newark Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Studio Museum of Harlem. She has also exhibited her work in museums and galleries abroad. Ringgold lectures widely at museums, schools, and colleges.

Much of Ringgold's art—apparent in *Tar Beach*—centers on her African-American heritage and the importance of dreams. In *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House*, for instance, a young girl visits her aunt, an artist whose walls are lined with her paintings of important African American women.

## Critic's Corner

In 1988, Ringgold created a story quilt that she called "Tar Beach." It shows a child named Cassie fantasizing while lying on the tar roof of a Harlem apartment building during the 1930s. An editor at Crown Books saw a poster of "Tar Beach" and convinced Ringgold to recast the quilt as a children's book. Critics cheered the resulting book, praising *Tar Beach* as impressive and inspiring. For example, Rosellen Brown, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, describes Ringgold's art in *Tar Beach* as "richly colored, sophisticated versions of what a child herself might paint." Brown concluded her review: "there's an air of triumph...in Ms. Ringgold's vision."

Janice M. Alberghene was equally impressed by the book. Writing in *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*, Alberghene said: "Few artists combine painting, quilt-making, and storytelling to create their works of art. When such an artist then adapts her work to create picture books for children, the result is both visually arresting and thematically nuanced. Faith Ringgold's books in this genre, *Tar Beach* and *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House*, together with *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky*, an original work for children, draw upon family tradition, autobiography, and history to portray inspiring African-American heroines, both real and imagined."

Reviewing *Tar Beach*, the *Publishers Weekly* critic wrote: "Ringgold's strong figures and flattened perspective bring a distinctive magic to this dreamy and yet wonderfully concrete vision, narrated in poetic cadences that capture the language and feel of flight."

Not surprisingly, Ringgold has received many awards. Among the most significant is a Guggenheim fellowship for painting (1987). In 1992, *Tar Beach* received the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award from the American Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table and was named a Caldecott Honor Book by the American Library Association.

## Other Books by Faith Ringgold

### Self-Illustrated Children's Books

- Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* (1992)
- Dinner at Aunt Connie's House* (1993)
- My Dream of Martin Luther King* (1996)
- Bonjour, Lonnie* (1996)
- The Invisible Princess* (1998)
- Counting to Tar Beach* (1999)
- If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks* (1999)
- Cassie's Colorful Day* (1999)
- The Invisible Princess* (2001)
- Cassie's Word Quilt* (2002)
- The Three Witches* by Zora Neale Hurston (2006)

### Other

- Talking to Faith Ringgold* (With Linda Freeman and Nancy Roucher) (1995)
- We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (1995)
- Dancing at the Louvre: Faith Ringgold's French Collection and Other Story Quilts* (1998)
- Faith Ringgold: A View from the Studio* (with Curlee Raven Holton) (2004)
- O Holy Night: Christmas with the Boys' Choir of Harlem* (illustrator) (2004)
- What Will You Do For Peace? Impact of 9/11 on New York City Youth* (editor)(2004)
- The Three Witches* by Zora Neale Hurston (illustrator) (2006)

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### Books

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### Periodicals

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- Detroit Free Press*, February 1, 1996, pp. 1C-2C.
- Entertainment Weekly*, February 8, 1991, pp. 68-69.
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- Horn Book*, May/June, 1991, p. 322; May/June, 1996, p. 351.
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- Los Angeles Times Book Review*, February 24, 1991, p. 8; February 25, 1996, p. 11.
- Newsweek*, September 9, 1991, pp. 64-65. p. 56.
- New York Times*, July 29, 1984, pp. 24-25; February 14, 1992.
- New York Times Book Review*, February 24, 1991, p. 30; February 21, 1993, p. 22; February 11, 1996, p. 25; February 2, 1997, p. 18.
- Publishers Weekly*, February 15, 1991, pp. 61-62; August 16, 1993, p. 104; October 16, 1995, p. 51; November 13, 1995, p. 63; January 1, 1996, p. 70; September 2, 1996; January 13, 1997, p. 77; November 23, 1998, p. 67.
- School Library Journal*, December, 1991, pp. 88, 90; October, 1993, p. 10; February, 1996; July, 1996; January, 1997.
- Village Voice Literary Supplement*, April 1, 1991, p. 25.

## General Objectives

1. To understand the title
2. To see why people spent time on the roof
3. To assess the power of dreams
4. To explore discrimination
5. To read about a bridge
6. To appreciate aspects of African-American culture
7. To probe Cassie's character
8. To appreciate the beautiful artwork
9. To analyze how the art and text work together to tell the story
10. To determine the book's theme

## Specific Objectives

1. To understand that "tar beach" is the roof of the apartment house
2. To learn how people coped with summer heat in cities before the invention of air conditioning
3. To appreciate how Cassie's dreams influence her outlook on life
4. To understand the difficulty Cassie's father had getting a job because of his race and family background
5. To probe what the George Washington Bridge symbolizes to Cassie
6. To appreciate Cassie's close family ties and friendships
7. To compare and contrast the reader and Cassie
8. To compare the art to the colors and shapes in a quilt
9. To analyze the relationship of the art and the story
10. To understand the lessons about dreams and aspirations that the book teaches

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Faith Ringgold's style, present the following terms and applications to the story book:

**visuals:** Since *Tar Beach* is a picture book, the visuals are an integral part of the story. Here, the visuals and text together tell the story of a young African-American girl during the Depression. The vibrant colors and angular shapes create a quilt in book form, showing how Ringgold adapted her story quilt "Tar Beach" into a children's book. The borders, interweaving of patterns, and flat perspective reinforce the quilt-like appearance of each page. In fact, the text was originally written on fab-

ric strips around the border of the quilt. The page border has been reproduced from the original story quilt. Even the background material is the same canvas that Ringgold used in her original painting.

**point of view:** the position from which a story is told. In *Tar Beach*, Ringgold uses the first-person point of view. As a result, readers are inside the story, experiencing events through Cassie's eyes. This point of view gives the book a freshness and immediacy that plunges readers into the experience. This is important because the events described are more than 70 years old and thus very far removed from readers' daily lives.

**theme:** the book's main idea, the author's message about life. In *Tar Beach*, the theme is the power of dreams to transform negative experiences into something positive. On her web page, Faith Ringgold has this motto: "If One Can Anyone Can. All You Gotta Do Is Try." Cassie, a stand-in for Ringgold herself, dreams of escaping poverty and discrimination. Ringgold dreamed the same dreams and achieved great success in the arts. Her message is clear: Aim high. Dream great things and they will come true.

## The Importance of Setting

The book is set in Harlem during the Depression, but the focal point is the George Washington Bridge. The bridge functions both as a real location and as a potent symbol of greatness, achievement, and promise. Cassie calls it "my most prized possession" and likens it to "a giant diamond necklace." In the same way, Ringgold calls the George Washington Bridge "my bridge" because she has seen it outside her window nearly all her life.

The two-level George Washington Bridge crosses the Hudson River between upper Manhattan (West 178th Street) and Fort Lee, New Jersey. The bridge forms part of Interstate Highway I-95. The bridge is 4,760 feet long and 119 feet wide. The tower above the water is 604 feet high. The bridge has 12 toll lanes on each level. Its original cost was \$59 million. Othmar H. Ammann, the Port Authority's Chief Engineer at the time, designed this suspension bridge. In October 1927, ground was broken for the original six-lane bridge. The Port Authority opened the bridge to traffic on October 25, 1931. In 1946, two additional lanes were provided on the upper level. On August 29, 1962, the lower level opened. This made the George Washington Bridge the world's only 14-lane suspension bridge. It also increased



**Internet**

Faith Ringgold (Official site)  
[www.faithringgold.com/](http://www.faithringgold.com/)

Artist Profile - Faith Ringgold  
[www.ndoylefineart.com/ringgold.html](http://www.ndoylefineart.com/ringgold.html)

Faith Ringgold Teacher Resource File Biography  
[falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/ringgold.htm](http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/ringgold.htm)

Faith Ringgold Online  
[www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/ringgold\\_faith.html](http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/ringgold_faith.html)

Faith Ringgold  
[www.artincontext.org/artist/r/faith\\_ringgold/](http://www.artincontext.org/artist/r/faith_ringgold/)

Scholastic.com  
[books.scholastic.com](http://books.scholastic.com)

Art Focus: PBS Faith Ringgold  
[www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/ringgold.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/ringgold.html)

the bridge’s capacity by 75 percent. Not surprisingly, the George Washington Bridge is one of the world’s busiest bridges. In 2005, a total of 107,224,000 vehicles traveled on the bridge.

In 1981, the American Society of Civil Engineering designated the George Washington Bridge a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

**Cross-Curricular Sources**

**Books**

- Patricia Clapp, *The Tamarack Tree*
- Evelyn Coleman, *White Socks Only*
- Lizzy Gray, *Miss Tizzy*
- Nikki Grimes, *Meet Danitra Brown*
- Eloise Greenfield, *Grandfather’s Face*
- Deborah Hopkinson, *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*
- Julius Lester, *John Henry*
- Patricia McKissack, *Miranda and Brother Wind*
- Margaree Mitchell, *Uncle Jed’s Barbershop*
- Patricia Polacco, *Mrs. Katz and Tush and Pink and Say*
- Christopher Raschka, *Yo? Yes!*
- Ann Rinaldi, *In My Father’s House*
- Ann Rinaldi, *The Last Silk Dress*
- Alan Schroder, *Satchmo’s Blues*

**Media Adaptations**

- The Last Story Quilt* (video)
- Faith Ringgold Paints Crown Heights* (video)

**Themes and Motifs**

A study of the central issues and situations in Faith Ringgold’s *Tar Beach* should include these aspects:

**Themes**

- dreams
- bridges
- summer
- poverty
- discrimination
- family
- love
- flying
- goals
- artwork

**Motifs**

- dreaming of a better future
- appreciating a great architectural achievement
- finding ways to endure summer in the city
- understanding the effects of poverty
- setting admirable goals
- probing the roots of discrimination
- enjoying a close family
- appreciating beautiful artwork
- telling a story in pictures and words
- exploring life in Harlem

## Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each.

1. I will always remember when the stars fell down around me and lifted me up above the George Washington Bridge.  
*(At night, Cassie dreams that she can fly. In her imagination, she soars high above the discrimination, poverty, and sweltering summer heat of Harlem in the 1930s, during the depths of the Depression. This scene introduces the book's primary motif: the power and importance of dreams.)*
2. I could see our tiny rooftop.  
*(Cassie's family, joined by a neighboring couple, passes the hot summer nights on the roof. In the days before air conditioning, this was very common among those who could not escape the city to the cooler mountains. The roof offered the possibility of a breeze, a welcoming respite from the stifling apartments.)*
3. Sleeping on Tar Beach was magical.  
*(The black tar rooftops of city apartments were called "tar beaches," an ironic allusion to the sandy white beaches that wealthy people enjoyed in the summer. These rooftops were flat rather than pitched, as the pictures show.)*
4. The bridge was my most prized possession.  
*(Cassie, like her creator, finds magic in the glittering lights and majestic span of the George Washington Bridge. Indeed, the bridge is a glorious sight on clear nights.)*
5. He can walk on steel girders high in the sky and not fall. They call him the Cat.  
*(Cassie is very proud that her father helped build the George Washington Bridge. She mingles her pride in his skill with the great accomplishment. Despite his great skill and bravery, however, Cassie's father is often denied work because he is black.)*
6. Then it won't matter that he's not in their old union, or whether he's colored or a half-breed Indian, like they say.  
*(Here, Cassie states the reality of discrimination outright. Many of the unions were closed to minorities, including African-Americans, Jews, and Greeks, during the 1930s and for some time after. Discrimination lingered well after the passage of Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s.)*
7. And Mama won't cry all winter when he goes to look for work and doesn't come home.

*(Readers never find out where Cassie's father goes when he can not get work, but readers can nonetheless see the toll his temporary desertion takes on the family.)*

8. And Mommy can laugh and sleep late like Mrs. Honey.  
*(Cassie dreams of rescuing her family from poverty so they can live a life of comfort and ease. All she asks for herself is the privilege of having ice cream for dessert every night, not just as a rare treat. This shows her selfless nature.)*
9. All you need is somewhere to go that you can't get to any other way. The next thing you know, you're flying among the stars.  
*(In the last page of text, Cassie explains how to "fly." She means that flying comes from setting goals. It shows her determination to escape from the restrictions of poverty and discrimination through the power of her will and hard work.)*
10. The last page  
*(This page shows the quilt "Tar Beach" that sparked the book of the same name. Ringgold completed the quilt in 1988 as the first of five quilts in a series. The quilt now hangs in the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. From the picture here, students can see how closely Ringgold adapted her quilt to the book. The colors, shapes, subjects, themes, and flat perspective are the same.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. When and where does the story take place?  
*(The story is set in Harlem, New York, in the 1930s. At that time, Harlem was a predominately African-American area of the city.)*
2. Where does Cassie's family go on hot summer nights?  
*(They go to the roof of their apartment building to escape the summer heat. They play cards and have a picnic supper.)*
3. What does Cassie's father do for a living?  
*(He is a laborer who builds bridges.)*
4. Why isn't Cassie's father in the union?  
*(He is denied membership because of his race.)*

5. What does Cassie want for dessert every night?  
(*She wants ice cream.*)

**Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)**

6. What does the title mean? What is a "tar beach"?  
(*It is the tar roof of their apartment building. A tar beach would be very hot during the day. But at night, the roof is cooler than inside the apartments.*)
7. Why is Cassie's father called "the Cat"?  
(*He is skilled at moving on the high girders safely, like a graceful cat.*)
8. What does Cassie mean when she says that she is "flying"?  
(*She means that she is dreaming of a better future. She is not literally flying. Rather, she is soaring above the present through the power of her imagination.*)

**Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)**

9. What did you like the most about the pictures?  
(*Possible answers: The bright colors and interesting details.*)
10. What are your dreams of the future?  
(*Students might dream of helping their parents, as Cassie does. They might dream of visiting a special place or getting a long-desired pet.*)

**Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)**

11. Draw another picture for this book.
12. Write a new title for the book.

**Across the Curriculum**

**Art/Music**

1. Build a model of the George Washington Bridge. Use pasta, blocks or other materials.
2. Draw your family or friends at a beach you like. Write a sentence telling how everyone is having fun.
3. Faith Ringgold wrote a song about this book. She calls it "If One Can Anyone Can All you Gotta Do Is Try." Find the song on her website: [www.faihringgold.com](http://www.faihringgold.com). Ask your music teacher to help you learn to sing it. Then share it with the class.
4. Think of another scene in the book. Make a quilt square of that scene. Draw the quilt or cut and

paste pieces of paper. Write words to tell what the scene shows.

5. Make up a song about flying. Sing the song for your friend.

**Language Arts**

1. Write a letter to the author, Faith Ringgold. Tell her two things you liked about the book.
2. Choose one page. Write new words for the page.
3. List two of Cassie's dreams for the future. Then list two of your dreams. How are they the same? How are they different?
4. Write a poem about summer. Tell what you do in the summer with your friends.
5. List three ways to stay cool in the summer.

**Social Studies/Geography**

1. Cassie's father builds bridges. Interview a parent, relative, or family friend about their job. Tell why they like their job.
2. Look at the picture of Cassie's family eating dinner on the roof in the summer. Look at a map of America. Point to three states that are very hot in the summer.
3. Cassie's father works in a dangerous occupation without the benefits of union membership. Find out what a union is. List three different unions.
4. Work with friends. Put on play about eating different foods. Tell about some special foods that people in your family like.
5. Write a report on George Washington. Give three reasons why he is famous.

**Speech/Physical Education**

1. Cassie's parents and their friends Mr. and Mrs. Honey play cards. Play a card game like "Go Fish" with a friend.
2. Show how you might move your arms to fly. Pretend to fly over your home.
3. Explain how your life is different from Cassie's life.

4. Give a speech to convince the union people to let Cassie's father join the union.

## Science/Math

1. Look at the picture of Cassie flying. Find the stars. Then find out the names of two stars that you can see from your house.
2. Record the temperature in your yard each day and night for one week. Record the temperature the same time each day and night. What pattern do you see?
3. Look at the picture of Cassie's father walking on the bridge. Explain why he carries the pole.
4. With a parent, visit a bridge near you. If you can't visit a bridge, look at a picture of one. List all the things you see.
5. Cassie was born in 1931. Make a calendar for the month that you were born. Circle your birthday.
6. Cassie was born in 1931. Figure out how old she would be today.

## Alternate Assessment

1. Imagine this story takes place now. How would it be different? How would it be the same? With some friends, act out this book as though it was written today.
2. Read *Counting to Tar Beach*. Tell how it is the same and different from *Tar Beach*.
3. Faith Ringgold has won many awards. Make her an award for this book.
4. Draw a bridge that Cassie's father would like to build.

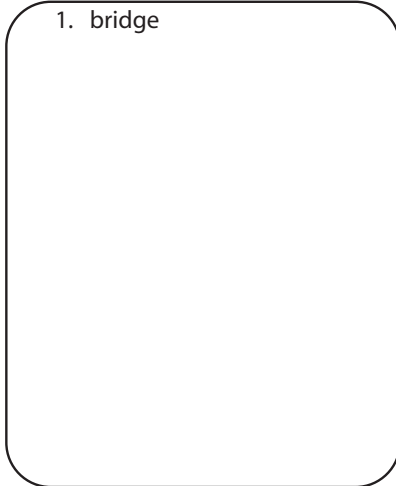
## Teacher's Notes



## Vocabulary

Draw a picture that tells what each word means.

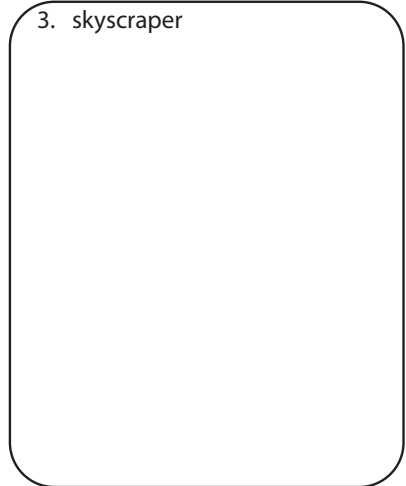
1. bridge



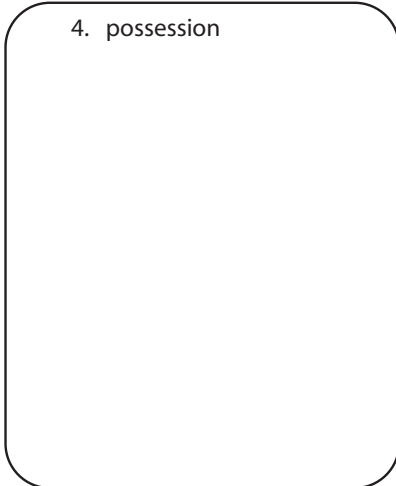
2. floodlights



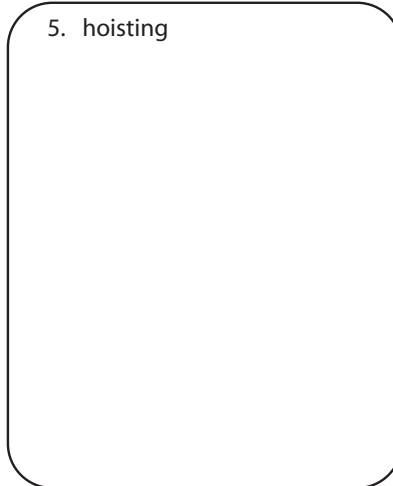
3. skyscraper



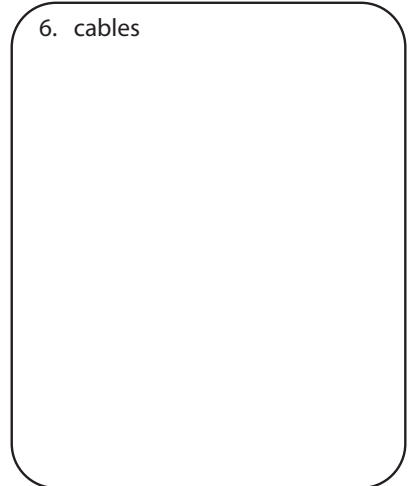
4. possession



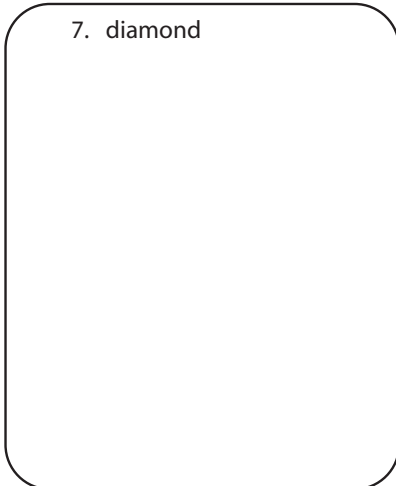
5. hoisting



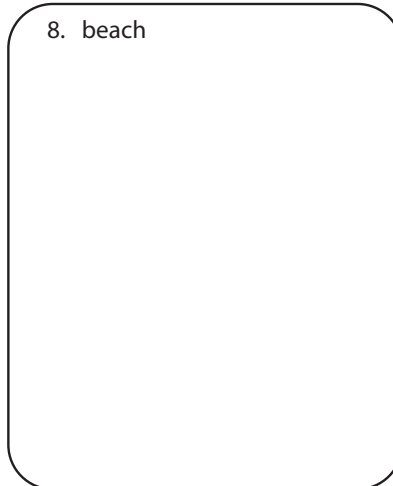
6. cables



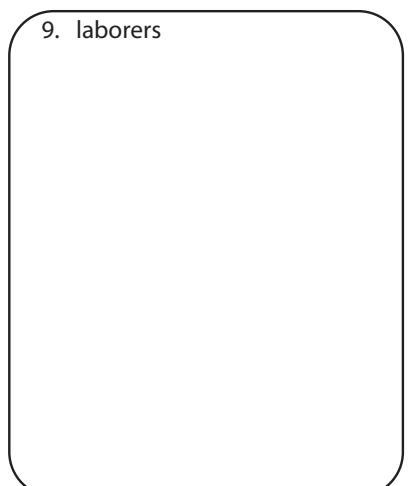
7. diamond



8. beach



9. laborers



## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

Write the word that best complete each sentence.

1. Cassie's parents and their friends eat dinner on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the apartment because it is so hot inside.
2. Cassie's favorite thing is a structure called the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. She wants to wear this structure like a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Cassie is in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade.
5. Cassie wants to be rich so her family can eat \_\_\_\_\_ every night.

### Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match the letter to the description. Write the letter in the correct space.

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| ____ 1. cards                           | A. Mr. and Mrs. Honey               |
| ____ 2. fried chicken                   | B. the Cat                          |
| ____ 3. friends of Cassie's parents     | C. the game Cassie's parents play   |
| ____ 4. Cassie's brother                | D. one of the foods the family eats |
| ____ 5. the nickname of Cassie's father | E. Be Be                            |

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark these sentences T if they are true or F if they are false.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Cassie lives in New York City in the 1930s.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Cassie can really fly!
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Cassie's father helped build the George Washington Bridge.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Tar Beach has pretty white sand and big waves.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. Cassie promises to take her brother flying with her.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose one. Answer in complete sentences.

1. Tell why you liked this book. Write three sentences or more.
2. Imagine you can fly. Explain where you would go. Write three sentences or more.
3. Pick a picture in the book you liked. Tell about it. Write three sentences or more.
4. Tell how Cassie wants to help her father. Write three sentences or more.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Story Events (20 points)

Circle the two events that are not part of the story.

1. Cassie imagines she is flying in the sky.
2. Be Be watches Cassie flying.
3. Cassie remembers sleeping at Tar Beach. She had a lot of fun.
4. Cassie and her family go to the ocean. They swim in the waves.
5. The George Washington Bridge was built in 1931.
6. Cassie father takes her to see the new bridge that he is working on.
7. Cassie's father joins the union. This makes him very happy.

### Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Circle the word to complete each sentence.

1. Cassie and her family eat dinner at (**Tar Beach, the George Washington Bridge**).
2. They eat fried chicken and (**peanuts, corn on the cob**).
3. Cassie's father builds (**homes, bridges**).
4. Mr. and Mrs. Honey are Cassie's (**neighbors, uncle and aunt**).
5. The author of this book is (**Cassie Louise Lightfoot, Faith Ringgold**).

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements T if they are true or F if they are false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Cassie's family is rich. He works a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Cassie's mother sleeps late every day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Be Be and Cassie are twins.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Cassie was born in 1931.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Cassie wants to have ice cream every night for dessert.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose one. Answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe Cassie's life. Write three sentences or more.
2. Explain how Cassie wants to help her father. Write three sentences or more.
3. Tell what happens when Cassie goes flying. Write three sentences or more.
4. Tell what flying means. Explain what Cassie is really doing. Write three sentences or more.

# Answer Key

## VOCABULARY TEST

1. The picture should show a bridge.
2. The picture should show huge lights as in a stadium.
3. The picture should show a very tall city building.
4. The picture should show something owned, such as a car or shoes.
5. The picture should show someone lifting something.
6. The picture should show the thick wires on a bridge or other similar structure.
7. The picture should show a glittering clear gem, like glass.
8. The picture should show sand and surf.
9. The picture should show a group of people working together.

## COMPREHENSION TEST A

### Part I: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

1. roof
2. George Washington Bridge
3. diamond necklace
4. third
5. ice cream

### Part II: Matching (20 points)

1. C    2. D    3. A    4. E    5. B

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

1. T    2. F    3. T    4. F    5. T

### Part IV: Essay (40 Points)

Answers will vary.

## COMPREHENSION TEST B

### Part I: Story Events (20 points)

4. Cassie and her family go to the ocean. They swim in the waves.
7. Cassie's father joins the union. This makes him very happy.

### Part II: Sentence Completion (20 points)

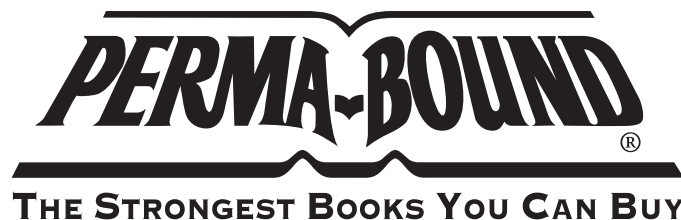
1. Tar Beach
2. peanuts
3. bridges
4. neighbors
5. Faith Ringgold

### Part III: True/False (20 points)

1. F    2. F    3. F    4. T    5. F

### Part IV: Essay (40 Points)

Answers will vary.



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