

1. Analyze the use of color in the novel. What might the colors represent? (shug's red dress, celie imagining her in purple, the purple in the fields, the colors of the patchwork quilt)
2. Chart Celie's growth as an individual--as one who emerges from a shell to claim her place in the world. Which events/moments most profoundly indicate this growth, and how does each fit into her grand reemergence?
3. Contrast two male characters in the novel. How are men in general portrayed? What exceptions are there to this generality, and what does/do the exception/s suggest
4. The Color Purple deals with oppression generally, yet it focuses on three areas in which Celie is particularly vulnerable: as a poor person, as an African-American, and as a woman. Discuss how each area of discrimination affects Celie and how she finally finds her way out.
5. Throughout much of the novel, Celie lives in isolation from others...much to her detriment as a human being. How does she overcome this isolation, and what are the most significant changes you see in her by the end of the story?
6. When the film version of The Color Purple was released, it was sharply criticized as being unduly harsh on black men, portraying them as abusive & oppressive. Do you agree that this has been an unfair portrayal? Why might the author have chose to represent men in this way?
7. The novel is a controversial one to read in a school setting. Many have criticized it for it's explicit sexuality, the central role of Celie's homosexuality, and it's rejection of marriage under certain circumstances. Others have countered that the novel's virtues far outweigh any discomfort one might feel at the descriptions and accounts in the story. Do you think the novel is appropriate literature in the high school setting? Why or why not?

You may also create a topic of your own to write about. Think about what interests you; that will result in better writing.