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**Auszug aus:**

*Nafissa Thompson-Spires: Heads of the Colored People*

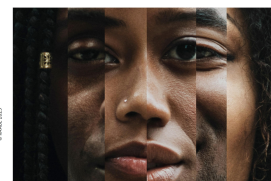
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## Nafissa Thompson-Spires: *Heads of the Colored People* – Analyzing two short stories

Linda Weiland



Die Lernenden lesen die beiden Kurzgeschichten *Heads of the Colored People: Four Gang Bitches, Two Chicks Outlines, and No Apology* und filmen die *Sloganic A Transformation Story*. Jede short story wird von pre-reading sowie diversen while- und post-reading activities begleitet, die Notizenmachen und Kontextualisierung unterstützen. An jede Kurzgeschichten schließen sich Aufgaben an, die den Schülerninnen und Schülern eine kreative Auseinandersetzung mit dem jeweiligen Text ermöglichen. Abschließend vergleichen die Lernenden beide stories und diskutieren deren Intention vor dem Hintergrund der aktuellen Gesellschaftsstrukturen der USA. Außerdem schreiben sie einen persönlichen Kommentar in Form eines reviews.

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# Nafissa Thompson-Spires: *Heads of the Colored People* – Analysing two short stories

Linda Weiland



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Die Lernenden lesen die beiden Kurzgeschichten *Heads of the Colored People: Four Fancy Sketches, Two Chalk Outlines, and No Apology* und *Fatima, the Biloquist: A Transformation Story*. Jede *short story* wird von *pre-reading* sowie diversen *while-* und *post-reading activities* begleitet, die Textverstehen und Kontextualisierung unterstützen. An jede Kurzgeschichte schließen sich Aufgaben an, die den Schülerinnen und Schülern eine kreative Auseinandersetzung mit dem jeweiligen Text ermöglichen. Abschließend vergleichen die Lernenden beide *stories* und diskutieren deren Intention vor dem Hintergrund der aktuellen Gesellschaftsstrukturen der USA. Außerdem schreiben sie einen persönlichen Kommentar in Form eines *reviews*.

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## Competences and skills:

This unit first and foremost practises **literary competences** such as text comprehension and the analysis of plot structure, character constellations, literary devices and language. **Close reading** as one of the most relevant reading strategies when it comes to literature is trained in each topic. As students repeatedly share their results on analysis, research and creative tasks and discuss certain aspects within the short stories, they train their **speaking skills** in authentic settings. Students' **creative writing skills** are trained when they write an additional paragraph to *Fatima, the Biloquist: A Transformation Story*. Their **generic writing skills** are trained when they write their own review about the short stories. **Listening/viewing skills** are practised when students receive input on certain technical terms via video in topics 3 and 4.

**Overview:**

List of abbreviations:

**A** Analysis**P** Working with the picture**T** Working with the text**W** Writing**CH** Characterisation**R** Research**VI** Working with the video

Topic	Material	Methods/Skills
1: Introducing <i>Heads of the Colored People</i>	M1–M2	P, R, T
2: <i>Heads of the Colored People: Four Fancy Sketches, Two Chalk Outlines, and No Apology</i>	M3–M5	A, R, T, W
3: <i>Fatima, the Biloquist: A Transformation Story</i>	M6–M8	A, CH, R, T, VI, W
4: Concluding <i>Heads of the Colored People</i>	M9	T, VI, W

# Nafissa Thompson-Spires: *Heads of the Colored People* – Analysing two short stories

## Facts

Nafissa Thompson-Spires is an African American writer, who was born in 1983 and currently teaches Creative Writing at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Her short story collection *Heads of the Colored People* is her debut, which won several literature prizes and was long listed for the U.S. National Book Award. It consists of eleven vignettes of people of colour and their everyday experiences. The stories focus on the characters and their psychological make-up rather than on the action and show the subtle challenges and their effects that these characters face within U.S. society. Nafissa Thompson-Spires has been labelled a bold new voice and is said to set new standards for the short story as a genre. Her stories themselves have been called vivid, fast, funny, way-smart, compassionate, verbally-inventive, soulful, intimate, wise, wicked, tender, awkward – and the list of praise goes on and on (see <http://www.nafissathompsonspires.com>). And indeed – the two short stories selected for this unit, *Heads of the Colored People: Four Fancy Sketches, Two Chalk Outlines, and No Apology* and *Fatima, the Biloquist: A Transformation Story*, represent all these diverse descriptors: they are complex, dense, disarming, personal, provocative, confrontational and challenging.

*Heads of the Colored People: Four Fancy Sketches, Two Chalk Outlines, and No Apology* addresses the themes police brutality and racial stereotypes as eminent problems within U.S. society. The focus is on four Black characters who interconnect within the story. The plot that leads to the fatal climax of the story is withheld from the readers and happens in the off. The readers are asked to fill in the gaps on their own, which confronts them with the undeniable frequency of police shootings and the shocking realisation that we know their typical scheme due to their recent media presence. The narrator of the story plays an important role in this regard as he/she comments on the plot from a meta-level and mediates between story and reader. What remains after the fatal climax at the end of the story are the detailed sketches of the characters the story revolves around. The story thus picks up the idea of the character Kevan to preserve Black

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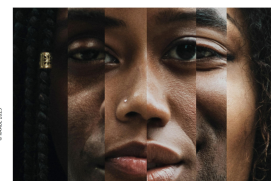
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