

### "Everyday Use" Handout

**Activity One:** Answer the following questions as a way of summarizing the text after your first read of the short story.

Guiding Questions	Response
<p>1) Who is the narrator? What words does the author use to describe the narrator?</p> <p>2) Compare and contrast the way the narrator dreams of being to the way she is in real life?</p> <p>What words/phrases describe her in the dream? What words or phrases describe her in real life?</p> <p>What does this daydream tell us about how Mama perceives her relationship with Dee?</p> <p>3) Reread the following quotation from the text: "Maggie can't appreciate these quilts!" [Dee] said. "She'd probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use."</p> <p>What value does each character place on things for "everyday use," like the quilts or the churn?</p> <p>4) Reread the following quotation, "Maggie smiled; maybe at the sunglasses. But a real smile, not scared. After we watched the car dust settle, I asked Maggie to bring me a dip of snuff. And then the two of us sat there just enjoying, until it was time to go in the house and go to bed."</p>	

Interpret the meaning of these sentences. How does the end of the story contrast the beginning of the story? What caused this change?

**Summary:** After reading the story, write a 2-3 sentence summary of “Everyday Use”.

**Determining a theme:**

Look at the theme subjects below. Circle the word that most accurately relates to the story.

Coming of Age	Romantic Love	Beauty of Nature	Wealth	Legacy	Patriotism
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**Activity Two:** While answering these questions, consider your answers to the first part of the questions and the overall theme of the story.

Second Read Guiding Questions	Response
<p>1) How would the story be different if it were told from Dee’s point of view?</p> <p>Why did the author choose to have Mama narrate the story?</p> <p>2) How has Dee’s opinion of the house changed?</p> <p>3) Why did Dee change her name? What does Mama explain is the significance of the name “Dee”?</p> <p>4) Reread the following quotation from the text: “Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts!” [Dee] said. “She’d probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use.”</p>	

How do Mama and Maggie's reactions reveal what they think about Dee's complaint?

What is the significance of this quotation given the title of the story?

4) Reread the following quotation, "You just don't understand," she said, as Maggie and I came out to the car.

"What don't I understand?" I wanted to know.

"Your heritage," she said."

Explain how this exchange reveals a theme of the text.

5) According to the author, whose opinion of "heritage" is correct? Why?

**Determining a theme:** Theme Subject: (from above) \_\_\_\_\_

What is Alice Walker's message about that subject? \_\_\_\_\_

Use the following sentence frame to construct a thematic statement.

In \_\_\_\_\_'s short story, \_\_\_\_\_ she

illustrates the idea that

\_\_\_\_\_. (thematic subject + the author's message about that subject)

\*Note: Theme statements should be universal; do not include any character names or details from the story.