

Gade Deye

by **Kia Penso**

Illustration by **Rosalind Helfand**

Curriculum developed by **Rosalind Helfand**

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OVERVIEW

Quick Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

| Student Population | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Age/Grade Level Appropriateness | * Ages 14+ * Grades 9+ |
| Genre/s | * Memoir * Caribbean history * Coming of age |
| Length | 1,755 words |
| Content Advisories | * Some references to teenagers drinking |
| One Sentence Summary | In this short memoir, the author reflects on growing up on a Caribbean island and her brother's transformation upon a new musical experience. |

| Lesson Planning | |
|--|---|
| Topics & Key Themes Overview | Topics * Life in the Virgin Islands * Caribbean island culture * Social segregation * Cadence rampa musical genre of the Caribbean * Natural music – the sounds that insects and animals make at night * Interest and inspiration in music |
| Topics & Key Themes Overview | Themes * Personal transformation * Coming of age * The power of music * Healthy vs. unhealthy obsessions * Experiencing the birth of something new culturally * Looking back at one's life * The value and irreplaceability of nature |
| Historic Events / Time Periods for Study | * History of the Caribbean islands, particularly St. Croix and the US Virgin Islands * The development of Cadence Rampa and Zouk musical genres |

| Lesson Planning | |
|--|---|
| Complementary Classic and Historic Texts | * <i>Texaco</i> by Patrick Chamoiseau * <i>Omeros</i> by Derek Walcott |
| Author and Artists Information | <p>Kia Penso is a writer and editor raised in Jamaica and living in Washington, D.C.</p> <p>Rosalind Helfand was the managing editor of Literature for Life (renamed Locavore Lit LA) and is a photographer.</p> |
| Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum) | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D |

Author Biography

Kia Penso was born in New York City and raised in Kingston, Jamaica. She earned her PhD in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara and later her MS from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Her study of an American poet, Wallace Stevens, *Harmonium, and the Whole of Harmonium*, was published in 1991. She has worked as a writer and editor in California, the Caribbean, New York City, and Washington, D.C., where she lives. She has worked extensively as an editor and writer for national and global organizations.

Artist Biography

Rosalind Helfand was the managing editor for Literature for Life (now Locavore Lit LA) and is a photographer. The natural world is her favorite subject.

SYNOPSIS

In "Gade Deye," the author reflects on growing up on the U.S. Virgin Island of St. Croix in the Caribbean. She takes us back to the time when her brother discovered his love for music, particularly the Caribbean musical genre called Cadence Rampa. Although she didn't realize it at the time, her experience

with that music, the environment of the island, and her brother’s transformation from teen to adult left a powerful stamp on her memory and sense of identity.

CURRICULUM

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

Topic and Main Ideas

Research the unique contributions of the cultures in the Caribbean Islands to world culture through art, music, and more. How are these cultures threatened by changes in our physical environment due to climate change? Research the impacts through weather extremes and flooding of climate change on the islands and write a three to four page essay discussing past cultural influences that have come from the Caribbean Islands and what cultures could be lost due to climate change.

Passage-Specific Themes

Read the following passage from “Gade Deye”:

And somehow at the same moment he sort of stepped forth fully formed as it were out of his solitude—it was like he wasn’t going to pretend to be an adult till he could do it perfectly—and found a social life and friends among a bunch of Creole- speaking down-islanders.

Write in your journal about your path to adulthood. Do you feel like you’re more of a kid still, an adult, or a combination of the two? Do you find yourself studying what it is to be an adult, or is becoming an adult something you don’t think too much about? Reflect on these questions for 10-15 minutes.

Universal Themes

How does nature enrich our lives and experiences as human beings? Think about positive experiences you’ve had with nature, such as enjoying a bird singing and write about them for five-10 minutes in your journal. Then discuss what would be lost to humans without access to nature.

Key Vocabulary

Definitions are very context-dependent. Make sure that any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

| Level One | Level Two | Level Three |
|-------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| penetrating | sugar cane | sugar estate |
| society | stand (a stand of trees) | guinea grass |
| dreadful | subdivide | public housing |
| forbade | insatiable | socially segregated |
| withdrawn | oil refinery | Virgin Islands vs U.S. Virgin Islands |
| surreal | smoldering | down-islanders |
| shuffling | spellbound | state-siders |
| discreet | geckos | bauxite |
| abandoned | insinuating | Radio Antilles |
| baffle | blue-collar | Creole |
| Reggae | | Zouk music |
| | | Cadence Rampa music |
| | | Frederiksted |

Vocabulary Activity Options

1. Research the Spring Peeper frogs of the Caribbean islands. What do they look like? What do they sound like? What habitat do they require to survive? What is their history? Create images of the frogs together with detailed information about them that you will post in the classroom. As a class, also listen to recordings of the frogs singing.
2. Part One: Ask students to collaboratively create a large classroom map of the islands of the Caribbean, including all of those mentioned in “Gade Deye.” Assign each student a different island whose history and contemporary information they will research. Then, have students post pop-up facts about the islands next to them on the map.

Part Two: In addition to the different islands, every student should read about the island of focus in “Gade Deye,” St. Croix. What is the history of the island and its peoples? Who are the various segregated groups discussed in the story, and where did they come from? What issues, especially related to climate change and massive hurricanes, is St. Croix currently experiencing? Ask students to write a short, three-page report covering the history and these issues and discuss them in class.

3. Research the history and sounds of the Caribbean Island musical genres known as Cadence Rampa and Zouk. How was each unique and groundbreaking? How was each grounded in the

cultures and histories of Caribbean peoples? Report on this music and then listen as a class to samples from these genres.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. What sort of awakening did the narrator’s brother have? How did it transform him? Have you witnessed or experienced a transformation of your own as you’ve grown older?
2. What types of music do you love the most? Is there a particular musical genre that’s truly inspired you? How so?
3. Music is an art form that can bring different people together—people who might not normally interact. Why do you think this is so? Take a moment to reflect on times when you’ve seen music or another art form bringing people together in journals, then share some of your responses in class.
4. The narrator felt that the music he experienced lost some of its power without the sounds of nature. Why do you think he felt this way? How are the sounds we hear in nature irreplaceable by human created sounds? What makes them special and unique? Reflect on these questions in your journals, then share your responses.
5. Do you think we experience music differently depending on how old we are and what is happening in our lives? Why or why not?

Text-Dependent Question Options

1. The narrator’s brother experiences obsessions. Discuss these obsessions using examples from “Gade Deye.” Are obsessions always bad? Are they sometimes good? Why or why not?
2. What does “Gade Deye” mean? How does the title relate to the story? Explain your answer using examples from the text.
3. What do the narrator and his friends get into trouble for in “Gade Deyes”? How is the narrator’s brother in a different place in terms of maturity and focus compared to everyone else who got into trouble?
4. What does it mean to reminisce? Why do you think the narrator chose to reminisce about this particular episode from his youth?
5. Did the narrator’s experience with his brother change him? How and why (or why not)? Use examples from the text to explain your answer.
6. What does portion of the “Gade Deye” story do you think the illustration is meant to depict? Why did the illustrator choose an image of a frog? What is the power and significance of the frogs in “Gade Deye” to the narrator and her brother?

Writing Exercise Options

Narrative

Reminisce about a positive experience in your life that changed or transformed you. Write a short narrative nonfiction story about this experience that includes details of your life and your surroundings, as well as the other people who were a part of your life at the time.

Descriptive

Find the nature in your world. Whether it's a yard or a park or a roadway median with plants, find it. Take time to observe it. What insects and animals do you see? What grows there? Write a short essay describing this nature in as much detail as possible. Help your audience to find what's special in it – and what's interesting or fascinating.

Analysis

When do you think most of “Gade Deye” takes place? Become an investigator and use clues from the story to get an approximation of the time period. Write a short essay discussing your investigation process and explaining your conclusions.

Complementary Reading Text Option

Read famed Caribbean poet Derek Walcott's poem “Omeros.” Link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48317/omeros>

Writing Exercise

What allusions to the Caribbean Islands does Walcott make in his poem? What and who is the poem about?

Discuss Walcott's poem, its meaning, and how its tone evokes the mystery and “looking back” feeling of “Gade Deye” in a short essay.

Activity Options

Classroom Activity One

Divide students into groups of 3-4 students and ask the students in each group to discuss musical genres that were important to their communities and families growing up. After discussing these, ask students to share the genres.

On a chart on the board, ask students to write down each genre mentioned. As genres are repeated, instead of listing it anew, keep a tally under the genre already listed. When finished, discuss as a class the overlaps and differences in the music that's shaped us.

Classroom Activity Two

Divide students into groups of 4-5 students and ask them to form a band. They must decide on what type of music they'd play, who are the musicians and singers, and, most importantly, the name of their band.

After deciding, students should list their band names on the board and present to the class the details of their band. Invite fellow teachers to come and vote on which band name they like best.

Home Activity

Together in school, listen to the following sound recording of the night sounds of creatures in the US Virgin Islands. Which creatures are identified in "Gade Deye" as contributing to those sounds?

Recording: <https://youtu.be/Z6dJnFbWxuo> (<https://youtu.be/Z6dJnFbWxuo>)

At home, survey the sounds you hear at night for 15-30 minutes each evening for a week. Listen specifically for sounds made by birds and insects – not artificial sounds created by humans or machines. When you're ready, use your cell phone or an other device to make a recording of the sounds made by creatures. Identify these creatures as accurately as possible and bring your recording to school to share — make sure to present the details of your observations to your class. When was the best time to hear night creatures? How many did you hear? What are your best guesses as to the identities of these creatures? Don't worry about having many creatures represented — one or two are fine.

Optional Addition:

To take the activity to another level, either at home or in class, experiment with mixing these natural sounds with human music.

Use the free program Audacity to do so <http://www.audacityteam.org/> (<http://www.audacityteam.org/>)

Guest Speaker

Option One: Invite the author and/or illustrator to guest speak.

Option Two: Invite professional musician and sound recorder Eric Potter to talk to your class about his experiences traveling the United States to record sounds in nature to be used in film and music.

<https://www.ericpottersound.com/about> (<https://www.ericpottersound.com/about>)

Option Three: Invite a musician with experience in and knowledge of Cadence Rampa and Zouk music to talk about these music forms and demonstrate them.

Option Four: Invite a speaker from the Caribbean Island Heritage organization in Los Angeles to talk about the history and heritage of St. Croix and other islands. <http://caribbeanheritage.org> (<http://caribbeanheritage.org>)

Field Trip

Attend an event organized by the Caribbean Island Heritage organization in Los Angeles. <http://caribbeanheritage.org> (<http://caribbeanheritage.org>)

Ask students to journal about what they experienced and learned at the event, afterwards.

TEST PREPARATION COMPONENT

Writing Exercise

As is seen in “Gade Deye,” music is a focal point in many people’s lives. Over time and with advancements in technology, music has become an industry—beginning with live performances and spanning toward mass distribution and easy accessibility. Now, lesser-known artists—like those who play at the story’s drive-in—can showcase their music to the world on websites like YouTube and Vimeo without record deals or expensive recording studios. In your opinion, how has the internet changed the game for the music industry? Has it expanded it or has it tainted it? Please write a one- to two-page response.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Text Type and Purposes standards 1-3.)

Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Text Type and Purposes standards 1-3.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10. (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/9-10/5/)5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in Text Type and Purposes standards 1-3.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Complementary Reading Text Writing Exercise

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.