

## *The Color Purple* STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

### Assignment 1 Entries 1-21

1. To whom does Celie address her letters?
2. What does Celie's father mean when he says, "You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't"?
3. What does Celie mean when she says she's "big"?
4. How many times has Celie given birth? Who is the father?
5. What does Celie believe has happened to her babies?
6. Who is Mr. \_\_\_?
7. Celie's father refuses to let Nettie marry Mr. \_\_\_ but says he can marry Celie. How does Celie's father describe her to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_?
8. Why do both Nettie and Celie work so hard to become educated?
9. What does Celie discover about her daughter? How does she make this discovery?
10. When Mr. \_\_\_ tells Celie that Nettie must leave their house, what does Celie give to Nettie? What does Nettie promise Celie she will do?
11. Who is Shug Avery?
12. Who is Sofia, and for what reason does she get pregnant?
13. Harpo's father and Celie advise Harpo to beat his wife. What happens when he does this?
14. Why is Celie jealous of Sofia?

### Assignment 2 Entries 22-35

1. How does Shug end up staying with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ and Sofia?
2. When does Celie realize her husband's first name is Albert?
3. How many children do Shug and Albert have together? Where are their children?
4. What causes Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ and Celie to feel close to each other when Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s father comes to visit?
5. Why does Celie cherish the quilt she and Sofia are making?
6. What strange habit does Harpo suddenly develop?
7. Why does Sofia leave Harpo? Where does she go?
8. What kind of a business does Harpo start, and where does he open it?
9. Shug sings a song for Celie. What is the song about?
10. Celie tells Shug that Mr. \_\_\_ will beat her when she is gone. When Shug asks why, what is Celie's response?
11. Shug asks Celie if it bothers her when Albert and Shug sleep together. Celie tells her she doesn't mind. What are Celie's true feelings toward Shug?

### Assignment 3 Entries 36-48

1. What does Mr. \_\_\_ tell Sofia about his children?
2. Who is Squeak, and how did she lose two of her teeth?
3. Why is Sofia in jail?
4. What is Sofia's job in jail? What is her attitude and mental state?
5. Who takes care of Sofia's children while she is in jail?
6. What is the plan for getting Sofia out of jail?
7. Why is Squeak sent to talk to the warden? What happens while Squeak is with him?
8. For whom does Sofia work when she is released from jail?
9. When Sofia finally gets to see her family after five years, how long does she get to visit with

them? Why?

10. What about Shug's Christmas visit surprises Albert and Celie?
11. What happens between Shug and Celie when Albert and Grady take the car for a long drive?
12. What does Shug want Mary Agnes to do?

#### Assignment 4 Entries 49-60

1. What does Shug discover that Albert has been keeping from Celie?
2. What does Celie want to do when she discovers Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ has been keeping her letters from Nettie all these years?
3. Why didn't Albert marry Shug after she had his three children?
4. How do Celie and Shug get the rest of Nettie's letters without Albert's realizing they have them?
5. Why did Albert keep Nettie's letters from Celie?
6. According to her letter, with whom does Nettie live?
7. Where does Nettie go with the Reverend and his family? Why?
8. Nettie thanks her old school teacher for something. What?
9. What does Celie discover about the two children she had with her father?
10. Why is Nettie so certain that their missionary work will be successful?
11. What surprises Nettie about slavery?
12. Why does Shug suggest making pants for Celie?

#### Assignment 5 Entries 61-68

1. How do the Olinka people first react to Nettie and the other missionaries?
2. What special gift did the Olinka people give to the missionaries at the end of the welcoming ceremony?
3. Why are the Olinka people confused about the relationships among the missionary family?
4. Why does Corrine ask Nettie to stop wearing her clothes and to start addressing her and Samuel as if she were their sister?
5. Why do Tashi's parents come to see Nettie?
6. According to her letters, how long has Nettie been in Africa?
7. Why are the Olinka happy to see there is a road being built to their village? What later upsets them about the road?
8. After her husband dies, Tashi's mother is made an honorary man. What important decision does this empower her to make?
9. What happens to the Olinka people when the government sells the land they own to a rubber factory in England?
10. Who does Corrine believe are Adam and Olivia's birth parents?
11. Why had Samuel urged Nettie to come to Africa?
12. What does Nettie tell Celie about their Pa?

#### Assignment 6 Entries 69-75

1. How does Celie's old house look when Shug takes her to visit her Pa there?
2. Celie's Pa explains that he has been more successful with running a business and becoming a wealthy black man than her real father. What has he done differently to avoid the lynching her real father got after finding success?
3. How does Nettie finally convince Corrine that Celie is the mother of Adam and Olivia, and

that the two of them had met once a long time ago?

4. What happens to Corrine?
5. Why doesn't Celie write to God anymore?
6. What does Shug teach Celie about God?
7. How does Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ react when he learns Shug is leaving and is planning to take Celie with her?
8. What does Celie do that surprises everyone at the dinner table?
9. Who is leaving with Shug to go to Tennessee?
10. Who offers to take care of Suzie Q (Squeak and Harpo's little girl) while Squeak goes north to sing?
11. What does Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ say to Celie as she is leaving for Tennessee?
12. What does Celie do to Albert as she is leaving for Tennessee?

#### Assignment 7 Entries 76-81

1. After moving to Memphis, what type of business does Celie start? What is the name of the business?
2. Celie comes to visit Sofia and Harpo when Sofia's mother dies. What are Sofia and Harpo arguing about when Celie arrives?
3. What is Celie's explanation when Harpo says Mary Agnes is different?
4. What does Celie learn about Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ and how he's been living since she moved away?
5. What happens to make Sofia have feelings for Harpo once again?
6. Sofia tells Celie Mr. \_\_\_ was in bad shape after Celie left him. What happened to turn Mr. \_\_\_'s life around?
7. What happens to Nettie and Samuel's relationship when they travel to England?
8. How are the Olinka people treated after the rubber factory is built?
9. What does Tashi do that upsets Adam?

#### Assignment 8 Entries 82-90

1. What does Celie inherit when her stepfather dies?
2. What crushing news does Shug give Celie when she goes back to Memphis?
3. Why does Henrietta eat yams, even though she hates the taste?
4. What is the only piece of mail Mr. \_\_\_ puts directly into Celie's hands?
5. Who is Miss Eleanor Jane, and what type of relationship does Sofia have with her?
6. What reasons does Tashi give for refusing to marry Adam?
7. What does Adam do to prove his love and devotion to Tashi?
8. What does Albert ask Celie? What is her response?
9. With whom is Celie reunited with at the end of the novel?