All the Blues in the Sky
by Renee Watson

Focus Rings of Culture

Ethnic
African American

National
United States

Age
Pre-teen
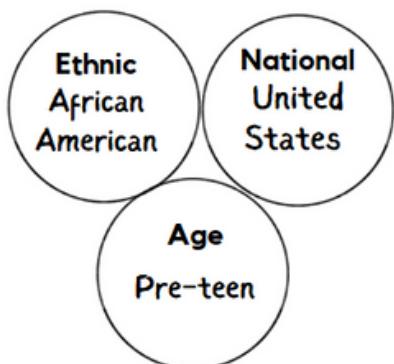
Vocabulary

Perseverance
Grief
Resilience
Bereavement
Anxious
Devastating
Manslaughter
Negligent

Grief Group
Empathy
Internal-Conflict
counseling
Verse
Trauma

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES
Building Background Knowledge

- Set Community Norms before reading example below:
  - Before reading, set community norms:
    - Students can pass.
    - Writing can stay private.
    - We talk about characters, not personal experiences unless we choose to share.
- This novel is mix of verse and poem. You can give a mini introductory on poetry.
- What is a Verse Novel Activity.
- This novel has themes that related to death and grief. You can get students ready by going over a mini lesson on grief and what it entails.

Discussion Questions Aligned to Vocabulary

- How does Sage show resilience even when she feels overwhelmed?
- How does Sage's perspective on grief change from the beginning to the middle of the novel?
- What internal conflict is Sage dealing with throughout the story?
- Where do you see moments of healing, even if they are small?
- How does the author use symbolism to communicate Sage's emotions?

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Identifying Cultural Behaviors

Cultural Behavior	Examples from the Text
Cooperative/Collaborative (shared work/dependence on the group) The value and practice of working together and sharing responsibility. Doing so can contribute to a richer overall experience as a group - "We work better together."	Sage attends a grief group to help her process the loss of her best friend. In this group, she meets other kids who are also dealing with grief. Sage and the students share similar experiences, so they are able to support one another and begin healing together.
Realness (frank, direct, upfront) The level of truthfulness, authenticity, and directness we utilize in our communications. Different cultures value different levels of directness. How truth and authenticity are communicated to others can be culturally based.	In the grief group Ms. Craver the counselor is often giving the students straight talk about what has happened and how you can get through the process of grief. The students also give each other realness in group sessions which sometimes leads to conflict.

Possible Writing Prompts

Character Development
Prompt: Explain how Sage changes over the course of All the Blues in the Sky. Use details and examples from the text to support your response.

Theme
Prompt: What is one theme developed in All the Blues in the Sky? Explain how the author develops this theme using events and Sage's thoughts.

Internal Conflict
Prompt: Describe the internal conflict Sage faces in the novel. Explain how this conflict affects her actions. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Extension Activities

Letter Poem
Students write a poem in the form of a letter from Sage to her best friend after Sage has received the letter from her best friends sister.

Verse on the Page (Typography Art)
Students choose a meaningful line from the novel and redesign it visually using: font size, spacing, placement, shape. How form reflects meaning—mirrors verse structure.

Symbol Map
Students draw a central symbol (blue, sky, music, notebook) and branch out:
- what it represents
- where it appears in the text
- how its meaning changes

Suggested CLR Protocols
Educators can access all CLR protocols on CLR+

Activity	CLR Protocol
Responding Protocol	Stand Share Sit In CLR we aim for the use of 80% involuntary response protocols. Stand Share Sit is a voluntary response protocol and discussion protocol. Great for adding movement when students have been sitting. A question is posed and all group members stand. Students share responses one by one and sit when finished. Validate and Affirm (VA) Kinesthetics, Sociocentrism, Collaboration Builds and bridges (BB) Turn Taking, Group Accountability
During Reading	Quad Strategy Students annotate while reading, then write or draw their biggest takeaway on a post-it. On the teacher's cue, students place their post-it on a quadrant of a 4-square grid (have multiple prepared); once full, the four students form a group to share and explain their takeaways using a Merry-Go-Round. Groups then flip the grid to reveal a new question and collaborate on a response, which is shared through an involuntary response protocol or extended into a Carousel rotation to build on other groups' thinking. Validate and affirm (VA) Sociocentrism, Kinesthetics, Collaboration
Literacy	Acrostic Content related Acrostics are a great way to have students summarize & synthesize their learning. Have an example of an acrostic related to the same subject matter so students get the idea of the strategy along with a word or topic to make the acrostic from (i.e. family or identity). Ask students to write the word vertically on a sheet of paper. Students will use each letter in the vocabulary word or topic word as the first letter of a word that connects, example, a synonym or a descriptor of the word or topic they are summarizing. Validates and affirms (VA) Subjectiveness, Sociocentrism, Collaboration, Spontaneity