**Houston Community College English 1301**

**Professor Hinchen-Bryan**

**“The Sky is Gray” Discussion Questions**

**Directions: Type your answer to the following questions on this sheet in a different color and submit it canvas by Monday, April 12, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.**

1. [What exemplifies the American national narrative in the story “The Sky is Gray” by Ernest J. Gaines? How do the African Americans relate to the American national narrative in the story?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-exemplifies-the-american-national-narrative-1849622)
2. [What does James learn about Jim Crow laws on his trip to town?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-james-learn-jim-crow-laws-his-trip-town-1183218)
3. [As a whole, is Gaines' work concerned with the character and society, human nature and values, or the nature of our existence?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/whole-work-concerned-with-character-society-human-346794)
4. [Describe the antagonist in Gaines' story.](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/who-antagonist-what-dominant-traits-antagonist-how-346703)
5. [Discuss the different conflicts of the story.](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-major-minor-conflicts-story-how-they-resolved-346702)
6. Does James' mother have to support the family by herself? "The Sky is Gray
7. In "The Sky is Gray" why does the young man say that the grass is black and the sky is pink, and turn the other cheek as the old man hits him?
8. In "The Sky Is Gray," how are passivity and active agency used to work out problems?
9. What is a good thesis statement fort the short story "The Sky is Gray" by Ernest J. Gaines?
10. What is the parent-child relationship in "The Sky is Gray"
11. Would you say James is a man in the story "The Sky is Gray"? Why or why not?
12. Contrast the nurse’s behavior toward James and Octavia with the old lady’s treatment of them. What is the significance of this contrast?
13. What is the difference between the old woman and Octavia in "The Sky is Gray"?
14. In "The Sky is Gray", why does the old woman ask James to take the garbage can out when there is no trash in it?
15. Can you relate to this story? Explain.

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**“The Sky is Gray” Essay Topics**

**Directions: Pick one of the following essay topics and write 3 paragraphs (Introduction, Body and Conclusion) submit it canvas by Friday, April 16, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.**

1. How does Gaines evoke the [**setting**](https://www.supersummary.com/setting/) of Civil Rights era Louisiana for the reader, aside from his mention of the capital Baton Rouge?

2. What is the [**symbolism**](https://www.supersummary.com/symbolism/) of “gray” in the story’s title? What might it suggest about both the story’s [**mood**](https://www.supersummary.com/mood-in-literature-definition-examples/) and the story’s suggestions about a post-Jim Crow world?

3. What do you think of James’s assertions of masculinity? Would these details within the story work as well in a tale about a White woman and her White son? Why, or why not?