

Tar Beach Discussion Guide | Scholastic.com

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Before Reading *Tar Beach*

· Have children look carefully at the unusual and exquisite illustrations in *Tar Beach*. From looking at the illustrations, ask the children to tell where they believe the story takes place. Have the children suggest whether the story is fact or fiction; have students offer statements to support their reasoning.

After Reading *Tar Beach*

· Ask the children if they believe Cassie *really could* fly over the city. Tell the children that when Cassie says she can “fly,” the author is making use of figurative language. Have children look on a map to locate New York City, Harlem and the George Washington Bridge. If possible, show the class photographs of these places. Inform the class that the author is writing about the rooftop of a neighboring apartment building she sees from the roof of her Harlem apartment. (When the author was a child, her family often spent hot summer nights up on the roof—the adults played cards and the children stayed up late, lying on mattresses.)

- Subjects:

Literature, Literature Appreciation, Listening Comprehension, City Life, African American

- Skills:

Listening Comprehension