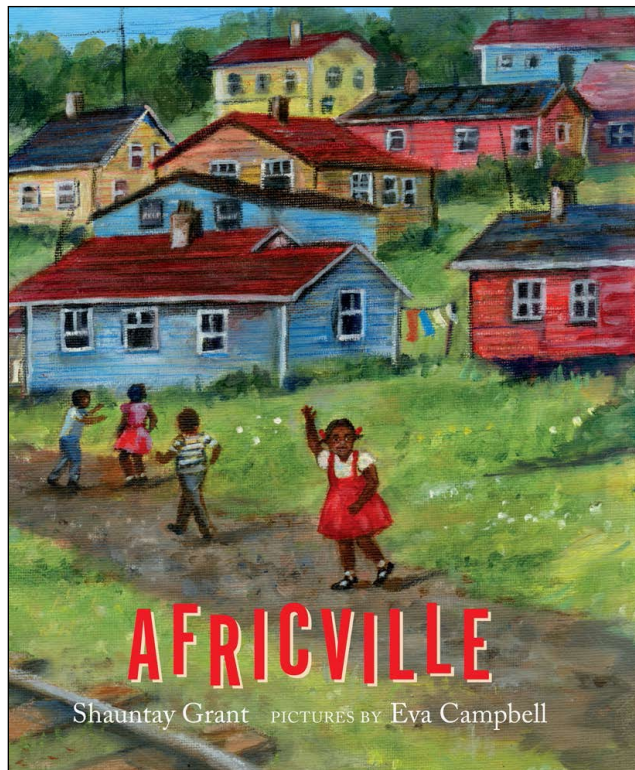




# GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

## AFRICVILLE

*Written by Shauntay Grant*  
*Illustrated by Eva Campbell*



**A powerful reimagination of what it was like to live in Africville  
in the 1960s through the eyes of a young girl.**

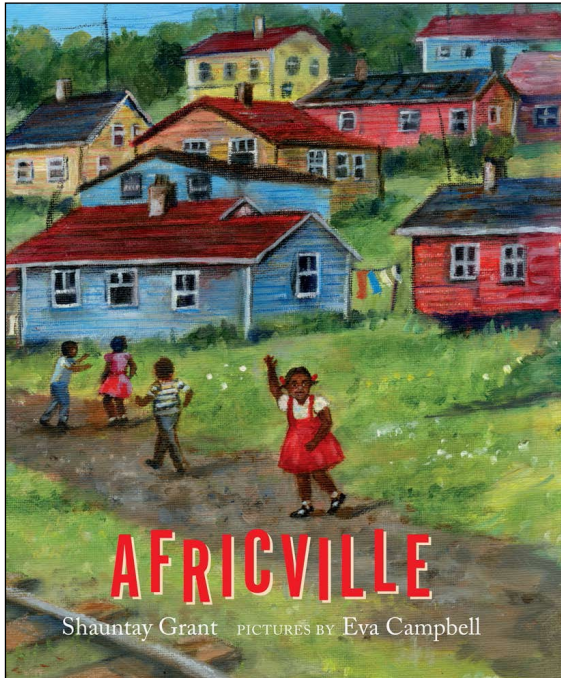
### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

Ages 4 to 7 / Grades K to 2

JUVENILE FICTION / History / Canada; Social Themes / Prejudice & Racism

Full-color illustrations / 8.25 x 10.25 / 32 pages

Hardcover with jacket / \$18.95 / 978-1-77306-043-9 / ebook / 978-1-77306-284-6



## BOOK DESCRIPTION

When a young girl visits the site of Africville, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the stories she's heard from her family come to mind. She imagines what the community was once like — the brightly painted houses nestled into the hillside, the field where boys played football, the pond where all the kids went rafting, the bountiful fishing, the huge bonfires. Coming out of her reverie, she visits the present-day park and the sundial where her great-grandmother's name is carved in stone, and celebrates a summer day at the annual Africville Reunion/Festival.

Africville was a vibrant Black community for more than 150 years. But even though its residents paid municipal taxes, they lived without running water, sewers, paved roads and police, fire-truck and ambulance services. Over time, the city located a slaughterhouse, a hospital for infectious disease, and even the city garbage dump nearby. In the 1960s, city officials decided to demolish the community, moving people out in city dump trucks and relocating them in public housing.

Today, Africville has been replaced by a park, where former residents and their families gather each summer to remember their community.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Without showing the book cover, read the title aloud to the class. What do students think the book will be about? How do they picture the cover in their imagination?

Now show the cover to the students. What stands out to them? Is the setting on the cover different than they expected?

Were there any words, activities, or pictures on the cover that students did not understand? Have students read any other books by this author, Shauntay Grant?

Now read the blurb on the jacket. Where is Africville located on a map? What kind of place does the community of Africville sound like? Do students predict this will be a happy story or a sad story? Why?





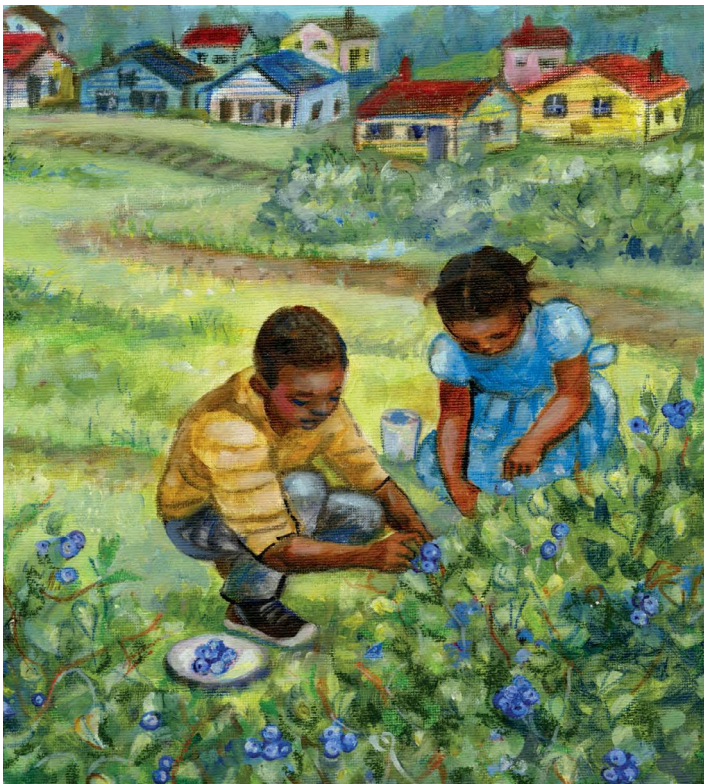
## POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### FEELING AT HOME

*Africville* is about home in many ways. In the story, the Africville that the young girl visits is much different than it was many years ago. We don't know if she has ever been there before, yet it still seems like a place where she feels at home. Ask students what makes the place feel like home to the girl? What tells us that this is a place she is glad to be in?

### FINDING HOME

Ask students to imagine a place — in real life or in their imagination — where they feel at home. What does that place look and feel like? Who else is there with them? Why do they feel at home in this place? Have they ever been to this place before? Now instruct students to find a partner. Partners will interview each other about the places they chose. Afterwards, each student will tell the class about the place his or her partner described.



## POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### PAST, PRESENT OR BOTH?

Ask students whether they think the story takes place in the past or the present. There may be differences of opinion; encourage students to defend or support their answers with examples from the book.

In actuality, *Africville* is a story that mixes past and present elements in a highly complex way, just as memory and imagination function in real life. It may not be evident upon first reading that much of what is depicted in the story is from the past and the girl is only seeing it in her imagination.

Tell students that you are going to read through the story a second time. Before beginning, ask them to make two columns on a piece of paper, one for the past and one for the present. As you reread the book, students must list as many instances as they can in each column. These instances may include what the words describe and elements of the pictures as well.

Afterward, compile their suggestions into a master list on the board.

As this takes place, be aware of opportunities to foster students' awareness of the complexity of memory in *Africville*. For example, were there instances in the book that students put in opposite columns? Why? Likewise, could some instances apply to both the past and present? This exercise helps students begin to see how multifaceted the relationship is between memory and the present moment — in the story and in real life. Conclude the activity by asking students how their own memories, daydreams, and imaginations shape their experience of the present moment.

## POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### MAP IT OUT

In the book, the young girl takes a kind of journey through various locations in Africville. Even though students may have never been to Africville before, have them draw a pretend map that traces her path through all the places she visits and the things she observes in each place. Students can use all the clues in the story to draw the most accurate and detailed map they can. When they are finished, students can read through the story and trace their finger along the map.

### A SENSE OF PLACE

One thing that makes the story of *Africville* so unique is that it centers on a special, memorable place. In fact, the place is almost like its own character in this story — it has its own look and personality. What kind of place is Africville? Ask students if it is a place they would like to visit? Why or why not? In what ways do they think Africville today differs from the way it is described in this story?

After discussing these questions, read about the history of Africville on the last page of the book. Ask students if this new information changes any of their answers to the above questions?



## SKILLS AND STANDARDS USED IN THIS GUIDE

### MAKING A MURAL

As a class, use the scenes and information from *Africville* to create a mural that features a panorama of the girl's journey through Africville. To do this, divide the class into 8-12 small groups. Each group will be responsible for one of the scenes or places the girl visits in Africville. The mural can be completed using any available media or supplies (e.g. paper and paints or watercolor, a chalkboard drawing, a bulletin board scene, etc.) but should be big enough that all the groups can comfortably draw their scenes. Mark out the mural ahead of time, planning the amount of space each group will have, or provide separate large sheets of paper that will be joined together later. Encourage students to draw and map out their scenes on a regular sheet of paper ahead of time and to decide what each person in the group will do. In planning and creating their scenes, students may want to gather inspiration not only from the images in the story but also from available resources on the Internet or elsewhere.

### THE BEAUTY OF NATURE

The Africville that the young girl was told about by her family was full of vivid colors and beauty, where people got to experience the different rhythms of nature more directly than in many cities today. Ask each student to draw a picture of their favorite scene from nature that features in the book, such as the harbor stones or a purple sky. Why was this their favorite element of nature in the book?



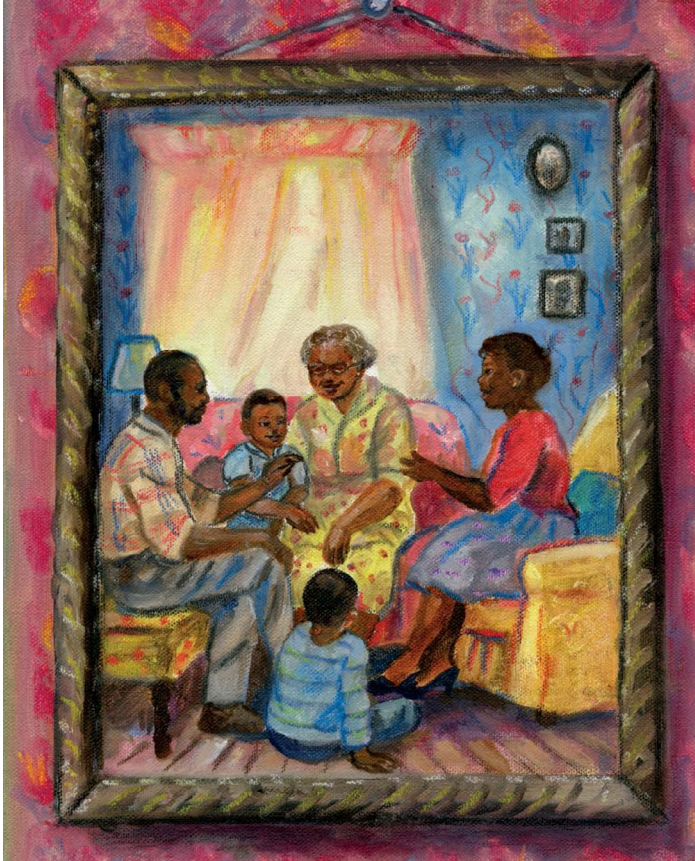
## SKILLS AND STANDARDS USED IN THIS GUIDE

### LONGING FOR THE PAST

The Africville of today is rather different from the Africville that the girl in the story imagined and longed for. Ask students how they think attending the Africville reunion festival made the girl feel: Sad? Grateful? Happy? Angry? What clues do we have in the book about how the girl is feeling?

It is not always easy to visit historical places that have been through loss or destruction. Do students think it was a good idea for the girl to visit Africville or not? Why? Although we are not told in the book, how might this have been an important experience for her?

Ask students if they have ever visited a place that made them feel sad. Where was it? Why was it a difficult place to visit? How was this experience important to them?





## AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHIES



**Shauntay Grant** is a descendant of Black Loyalists, Jamaican Maroons and Black Refugees who migrated to Canada some two hundred years ago. A writer and performance artist, she has won the Joseph S. Stauffer Prize, and she has published several picture books. Shauntay also lectures in the Creative Writing Program at Dalhousie University. Her professional degrees and training include the Master of Fine Arts program at the University of British Columbia, and the Bachelor of Journalism program at the University of King's College. She lives in Halifax.



**Eva Campbell** is an artist and illustrator who teaches visual art at Lester B. Pearson College UWC. She has exhibited her work in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Barbados and Ghana. Eva won the Children's Africana Book Award for her illustrations in *The Matatu* by Eric Walters. She lives in Victoria.