

# [A lesson before dying essay essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/a-lesson-before-dying-essay-essay-sample/)

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“ You think you the only one ever felt this way? You think I never felt this way? You think she never felt this way? Every last one of them back there one time in they life wanted to give up. She want to give up now. You know that?” – Reverend Ambrose, 216.

Life tests you all the time and it’s up to you to find the answers and learn from your choices. The most important lesson from the book “ A Lesson Before Dying” is to never give up, fight for yourself, your people and against injustices. In the novel, this lesson is shown through the characters of Jefferson, Grant Wiggins and Miss Emma. Jefferson is a sincere, and sensitive young black man who is put into jail under false charges. His own lawyer calls him a “ hog” because he is coloured. He begins to feel powerless in the white-dominated society. He is a symbol of white oppression of black people in that time. First of all, he allows his lawyer’s words to define him as a person, but after Grant Wiggins explain to him that he is a man not a “ hog”, he begins to stand up for himself as a black man with dignity. This change is notable after multiple visits from Grant to Jefferson’s cell.

Jefferson starts to look at himself in a new light and no longer refers to himself as a hog. When Jefferson is informed about the day of his execution, his reaction was calm, he does not let the sentence ruin him. Instead, he wants to try a change white population of his community and instead chooses to live a bit by eating a gallon of ice cream. Jefferson learns that this is not just about him, that it is about his ethnicity. Overall, Jefferson is an example of someone trying to fight for themselves and against the injustices of society. Grant Wiggins is the only educated black man in that community; thus the community expected a lot from him making the immense pressure he was under was very evident. Grant not only learns but also discovers a lot by the end of the book. At the beginning, he thought that going to visit Jefferson in jail was a waste of his time.

He hated others for making him keep up with the regular visits that got him nowhere. Even though Jefferson refused to let Grant in for a while, he opened up and showed everyone that he could be a man, not a hog like some of the white people believed him to be. By spending time with Jefferson, Grant discovered a different perspective on religion and a feeling that he did not have before. He helped his community understand that Jefferson was a man and their racism toward him was not warranted. Finally when everything was over, he began to realize that college had not taught him everything. He learns to accept responsibility for his own life, for his relationships with other people, and for his role as an educator in his community.

He opens his eyes and learns to love something other than himself and to strive for change. For these reasons, Grant demonstrates in the novel that he is an example of agent of change in his community, he fights against Jefferson’s thoughts and turned him into the man that he saw himself as. Jefferson does still die, but instead of dying as a “ hog” he dies as a man with dignity. Lastly, Miss Emma, or “ Nanaan” as Jefferson calls her, is Jefferson’s godmother. An old black woman who loves her family and cares about her community. After Jefferson’s lawyer calls him a hog in her presence, Miss Emma becomes obsessed with proving that she did not raise a “ hog”, she raised a gentleman.

She works tirelessly to make sure that everyone recognizes that Jefferson is a man when he goes to the chair. For example, she convinces Pichot to speak to his brother-in-law, Sheriff Guidry, to allow Grant to visit Jefferson. She is also the one who persuades Grant to visit Jefferson in order to get back Jefferson’s dignity; she is the real “ hero” who enables her grandson to die with dignity. In the novel Miss Emma stands up for her rights and refuses to be intimidated or to accept injustice; she does not give up.

In conclusion, this book touch hearts and makes people think about the injustice against dark coloured people. The characters demonstrate frustration, anger and powerlessness in those times when black people were extremely discriminated without any logical reason. The novel is brutally forthright and is made more depressing by the fact that this is something people experience even today. I learned that even if there are tasks given to you that you might not want to do because you cannot see the reason why or the benefit that it has for you, it can be beneficial to other people like Jefferson and Miss Emma, and the community at large. Change can start by serving your community. Even though something is hard, I’ll do it for my friends and family, like Grant said: “ A hero is someone who does something for someone else”.