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AP Lit period 1

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*Invisible Man* Visual Text Assignment

I moved again. "Get yo' hot, baked Car'lina yam," he called. At the corner the old man, wrapped in an army overcoat, his feet covered with gunny sacks, his head in a knitted cap, was puttering with a stack of paper bags. I saw a crude sign on the side of the wagon proclaiming YAMS, as I walked flush into the warmth thrown by the coals that glowed in a grate underneath.

"How much are your yams?" I said, suddenly hungry.

"They ten cents and they sweet," he said, his voice quavering with age. "These ain't none of them binding ones neither. These here is real, sweet, yaller yams. How many?"

"One," I said. "If they're that good, one should be enough."

He gave me a searching glance. There was a tear in the corner of his eye. He chuckled and opened the door of the improvised oven, reaching gingerly with his gloved hand. The yams, some bubbling with syrup, lay on a wire rack above glowing coals that leaped to low blue flame when struck by the draft of air. The flash of warmth set my face aglow as he removed one of the yams and shut the door.

"Here you are, suh," he said, starting to put the yam into a bag.

"Never mind the bag, I'm going to eat it. Here . . ."

"Thanks." He took the dime. "If that ain't a sweet one, I'll give you another one free of charge."

I knew that it was sweet before I broke it; bubbles of brown syrup had burst the skin.



**Image Title**:  Occupations - Peddlers - Food [**sweet**potatoes.]

**Creator**: American Press Association -- Photographer

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Both of the subjects in this photo are happy; they are both smiling. Why are they so cheery? In the case of the child on the right side, the reason is obvious. He is about to receive a delicious *sweet potato* (as labeled in the Image Details).

Judging from the vendor’s equipment, we can safely assume that the yams he is serving are warm. Additionally, by looking at their clothing, we can also assume that this photo was taken on a cold day. This is a similar scenario to the one described in the passage from *Invisible Man*. To put the passage into context, the narrator is walking through the streets of New York, which he describes as “covered with ice and soot-flecked snow”, and he mentions that the yams were lying on a “wire rack above glowing coals that leaped to low blue flame.” There is little more comforting than a warm treat on a cold winter day. Just as the narrator does, the reader will most likely feel a bit of nostalgia while reading this passage, as they remember a time when they, as a child, came out of the cold to have a steaming cup of hot chocolate, or a hot pastry to warm themselves up.

Another clear connection between the scenes is the state of the vendor. In the passage, he is made out to be somewhat tattered, in his “army overcoat”, and his “feet covered with gunny sacks”, and his “head in a knitted cap. Likewise, the peddler in the photograph is dressed in a fairly shabby (street vendors did not exactly break the bank) and large overcoat, with a unkempt beard covering his face (and probably keeping it warm in the cold winter air).