

***Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison (Published by Penguin)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts III

Summary

Song of Solomon is the story of a son's search for his family heritage. As he searches, Milkman discovers the complexity of family and the belonging that he has been looking for since childhood. Milkman's father, Macon, and aunt, Pilate, were once close but Macon now spends much of his time avoiding her because he believes she stole a treasure from him. Milkman discovers the truth behind this mystery as well as the mystery of family and love.

Connection to the Curriculum

Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* is a piece of contemporary fiction, which adds cultural depth to the Advanced Placement curriculum. Milkman's struggle to find his own identity while also searching for his family's true history is a topic which stimulates the important skills of discussion and critical thinking from students. This novel contains several motifs and themes that require closer inspection by the reader and the ability to transfer thinking about these ideas from literal to metaphorical. Finding these underlying messages and ideas is an imperative part of the Advanced Placement student's experience with literature. Morrison's use of poetic language and advanced dialogue places *Song of Solomon* in a category for higher-level readers and evaluators of literature. In addition, the novel is complex and contains many characters and subplots. Deciphering the character motivations and connecting the subplots into one story line develops a stronger reader and critical thinker.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.2- The student adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative texts.

1.3.5- The student identifies, interprets, and analyzes the use of figurative language including imagery and symbolism.

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.13- The student compares and contrasts character traits and motives, ideas, themes, viewpoints, authors' purposes, and use of literary devices in one or more appropriate-level texts.

Literature:

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.5- The student identifies, analyzes, and evaluates the use of literary devices in a text.

Writing:

3.1.1- The students use the writing process in various formats.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Morrison's emotional tale of a dysfunctional family includes sexual content (including a relationship between a young man and his distant cousin and a relationship between a husband and wife), violence (including abuse and racial tension), and profanity (including the "f" and "n" words). Topics include breast feeding and historical tragedies that are woven into the story line. Readers may be shocked at the depravity of some of the characters, but through the story, Morrison sends readers a message of hope for positive change for the future.

AP Connections

This novel has been referenced on the Advanced Placement exam. Toni Morrison is an author who is recommended by the College Board for Advanced Placement preparation.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities