

***Beloved* by Toni Morrison (Published by Penguin Books)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts IV

Summary

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* traces the effects of slavery on one young mother, Sethe, and the critical choices she feels she must make in light of the atrocities she has faced at the hands of others. Throughout the course of the novel, Sethe confronts the effects of a horrible choice she felt compelled to make as a young mother in order to save her young children from the ravages of slavery from which she managed to escape. Sethe emerges as a woman who may actually be able to recover from the horrors she has faced.

Connection to the Curriculum

Set after the Civil War, Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved* explores the horrors of slavery one woman faces. Students will analyze and evaluate the situations confronted by those involved in the slavery of the pre-Civil War era. Through her impressive writing style, Morrison details the experiences Sethe endures and their effects on her life. Morrison is a master of style and is adept in incorporating various and challenging literary devices in her novel, including Biblical allusions, foreshadowing, complex syntactical structure, extended metaphor, symbolism, and diction. The main character emerges in a state of grace despite the horrible actions she has endured and perpetrated. Students will emerge from a study of the novel with a broader sense of the personal effects slavery had on those who suffered its ravages. They will have the opportunity to discuss the emotional, social, historical, and cultural aspects that are presented within the context of the experiences of Sethe and the other characters. Furthermore, *Beloved* presents a unique style of story-telling and will challenge readers with its contemporary style.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 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. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Writing: 3.2- The students use the writing process including preparing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing to produce a written text.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

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

1.4.7- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

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

1.4.11- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.17- The student analyzes and evaluates how an author's style and use of literary devices work together to achieve his or her purpose for writing text.

Literature:

2.1.4- The student analyzes themes, tone, and the author's point of view across a variety of literary works and genres using textual evidence and considering audience and purpose.

2.2.6- The student recognizes ways that literature from different cultures presents similar themes differently across genres.

Writing:

3.4- The student uses organization that enhances the reader's understanding.

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

Readers should be aware that this story includes episodes of violence (including a mother murdering her own child to save her from abuse), sexual content (including a description of a relationship between two consenting adults and references to bestiality demonstrating the horrific means to which some slaves resorted), profanity (including the "n" and "f" words), and the belief in a ghost. These are in the context of a narrative about the devastating effects of slavery. Despite the atrocities, the overall message of hope prevails.

AP Connections

Beloved is one novel that has been repeatedly referenced on the AP Literature exam, and for many local and national colleges and universities, it is considered essential college-preparatory reading.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities