

# Multicultural Literature:

## Black is Beautiful Unit



## Essential Understandings:

In this unit you are being asked to look for the deeper human connections that unite us all. You should focus on how stories of human triumph and tragedy connect to the world, and how they can be used to inspire activism and positive change. Multicultural stories help us to navigate the world in which we live. By adopting a perspective that is inclusive, and accepting of our differences as well as our similarities, we become more successful in analytical work and in becoming global citizens. “As 21st century students, you are great consumers. *You* are saturated with information, media, and layers of subtext. If teachers don’t ask you to critique different kinds of media, to “read” the world through a critical lens, teachers aren’t teaching literacy at all. *You must become producers of new knowledge and new understandings, new texts and new meanings.*”

Literature is often used to connect groups of people. The act of reading allows a person to travel outside their own experiences. Understanding the culture, values, and perspectives of someone from a different background serves to educate, foster empathy, and promote social justice. This unit will focus on the following:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of cultures and worldviews-We will focus on addressing diversity.
2. Identify social, economic, political, and environmental interrelationships between cultures and worldviews.
3. Use multiple lenses such as race and ethnicity, gender, social class, regional culture, and religion to evaluate one’s culture in comparison to those studied.
4. Articulate how the social construction of culture and worldviews shapes contemporary social and political issues.

(Adapted from English 340: Global Perspectives and Cultural Diversity, Jake Jakaitis)

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## Guiding Questions:

- How can we use a novel as an agent to motivate social change?
- How do we determine beauty?
- How are people treated based on their appearance? Why do we treat people differently?
- **Why are stories so important to our lives?**

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**lessons**

- History of Jim Crow 10/26, 30
- Introduction to the Novel/Beginning Reading 10/30
- Setting/Environmental Factors Review 11/10
- Style/Song Analysis 1 11/14
- Kendrick Lamar and Toni Morrison-Artist Intent/Song Analysis 2 11/17
- Group Work Facilitation 11/28
- Black is Beautiful History 12/1
- Beauty/Image Standards in Society 12/5
- Writing Workshop 12/8
- Literary Elements and Techniques Review 12/12
- Metacognitive Planning 12/15
- Critical Lens/HITT TIED TRUE 12/18

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## Individual Work

- **Daily Journal Entries** that include the AIM/Do Now/Notes/Vocabulary and Journals/Writing exercises that are completed in class.  
**Due: November 7, 10, 14, 17, 28; December 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 18, 21**
- **Vocabulary Exercises**-students will define 5 vocabulary words per day to add to their journals. **Due: November 7, 10, 14, 17, 28; December 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 18, 21**
- **Achieve 3000**-Students will be utilizing a data driven program intended to improve their lexile (reading and writing) scores, prepare for college, and practice for the SAT/ACT. Students are expected to complete at least 1 full lesson on Achieve 3000 a week. Time will be given in class for this.
- **Kendrick Lamar Song Analysis**- students are required to participate in two in-class assignments where we compare and contrast a song from Kendrick Lamar's TPAB with the novel. Students will synthesize their analysis of the novel by making connections between the text and the music. Students will focus on analyzing style; an author engages in dictates how readers connect to the text. Students should explore the different styles between Kendrick Lamar and Toni Morrison. Use DIRECT QUOTES and then ANALYZE them specifically, telling HOW the writing style is important/impacts the reader. This is a FORMAL paper- no use of the first person. **Due November 30th**

For help getting started on this, fill out the following forms for each assigned reading.

2. <http://teachers.lakesideschool.org/us/english/ErikChristensen/WRITING%20STRATEGIES/LiteraryStyles.htm>

1. [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson209/definition\\_style.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson209/definition_style.pdf)

3. [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson209/think\\_aloud.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson209/think_aloud.pdf)

- **Critical Lens Essay Due 12/22**

**The first part of this project is a critical lens essay in which you will demonstrate, in writing, your understanding of *The Bluest Eye* (1970), by Toni Morrison - when read through a critical lens. This means looking deeply at the text, thinking for yourself, and considering the kinds of oppression that are experienced by the characters in Morrison's novel.**

**The essay should synthesize your understanding of the text in a traditional literary analysis that uses textual evidence to support your ideas, questions, observations, and interpretations. The essay will adhere to MLA format and should be 3 pages (no more or less). The essay will follow the formats of H.I.T.T. (introduction) T.I.E.D. (body paragraphs) and T.R.U.E. (conclusion).**

**You must have a thesis statement. This should be a specific, provable, debatable statement that includes a topic and opinion. This will be the statement that you set out to argue and prove in your essay.**

### **Overview of Guidelines**

**3 pages**

**MLA Format**

**HITT, TIED, TRUE Formats**

**Thesis statement**

**3 quotes from story as evidence**

**Clear organization**

**Formal tone**

**No outside sources**

**Essay Prompts (*choose one*)**

- 1. What kinds of oppression do black people experience when the collective voice of society tells them they must adhere to white standards of beauty?**
- 2. How is the influence of the “Black Is Beautiful” cultural movement of the 1960s visible in both Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Kendrick Lamar’s album *To Pimp A Butterfly* (2015)? Consider the ways both authors comment on how oppression manifests itself as internalized racism.**

**Essay Topics**

- **Oppression (Institutional and/or Internalized)**
  - **Racism, Sexism, Classism**
  - **The Master Narrative**
  - **Beauty**
  - **The Media**
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**Group Work** Due 12/22

- **Creative Presentation/Group Work Project**

**Using Toni Morrison’s novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and your critical lens essay as inspiration, design a creative project that calls attention to the importance of your ideas and expresses an understanding of one or more of the novel’s theme(s) - including, but not limited to – oppression (internalized / institutional), racism, sexism, classism, masculinity, the media, the master narrative, beauty, white privilege, etc.**

**Your presentation should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the chosen theme(s) and reflect a creative response to the novel.**

**Please choose one of the following presentation formats:**

- **Cartoon / Comic illustration**
- **Drawing / Painting**
- **Hip-hop / Rap / Lyrical performance**
- **Poetry / Spoken-Word / Slam performance**
- **Musical / Instrumental performance**
- **Internal Monologue / Soliloquy / Scene**
- **Interpretive Dance**
- **iMovie / Film / Documentary / Trailer**
- **Newspaper**
- **Magazine**
- **3D Set Design**
- **Board Game**
- **Video Game**
- **Advertisement**

**REMEMBER:**

**You are encouraged to combine several different formats if possible.**

**The piece must be at least 3 minutes in length (to perform, read, or explain).**

**The piece must include a visual component of some kind.**

**Don't be afraid to think outside the box! Be creative with both form and content.**

**Avoid the typical PowerPoint presentation!**

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## **Readings**

*The Bluest Eye* Toni Morrison

“Battle Royale” Ralph Ellison

[http://www.stjohns-chs.org/english/njones\\_courses/battleroyale.pdf](http://www.stjohns-chs.org/english/njones_courses/battleroyale.pdf)

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## **Links**

<https://bemoons.wordpress.com/2015/03/27/why-i-dropped-everything-and-started-teaching-ken-drick-lamars-new-album/>

<http://gjs.appstate.edu/social-justice-and-human-rights/what-social-justice>

<http://gender.stanford.edu/news/2013/why-literature-matters-social-justice>

<https://bemoons.wordpress.com/2015/03/27/why-i-dropped-everything-and-started-teaching-ken-drick-lamars-new-album/>

<http://feministteacher.com/2010/04/13/exposing-the-master-narrative-teaching-toni-morrison-the-bluest-eye/>

<http://huffenglish.pbworks.com/w/page/8202992/Project%20The%20Bluest%20Eye>

