

**CONTEMPORARY
AFRICAN AMERICAN
LITERATURE**

Four Week Conceptual Unit

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Rationale

Students today are faced with the great challenge of attempting to identify with and enjoy literature which they feel has no relevance to their lives. Many of the texts they must read in high school are hundreds of years old, in which the characters are people who are unlike the students, and are set in places which the students have never been or even heard of. I often question our obsession with the literary canon and our often unchallenged conformity of teaching it. Instead of modeling my teaching after the norm or so-called “standard,” I intend to make my teaching of literature relevant to my students’ lives and interesting to their minds. It would be naïve to believe that I could get away without teaching any of the canonical texts and I would not want to. These texts are necessary and beneficial to the teaching of literature. I want my students to study a wide variety of literature, which they are currently not being allowed to do in many classrooms across our nation.

One genre of literature that is often forgotten or even dismissed is African American literature. When African American literature is incorporated into the curriculum it is usually limited to a few slavery texts, Harlem Renaissance authors, and Civil Rights writings. These three time periods and genres are not representative of all that is African American literature. There are an immense number of writers who have contributed to shaping not only Black literature but American literature as a whole.

Many of these authors and their writing do not fit the typical identity which high school students equate with the literature they usually study in the classroom. Some of the Black writers we will study are novelist, poets, and playwrights, but they are also journalists, lyricists/song writers, athletes and essayists. These writers and their work are prevalent and instrumental in modern American society and the lives of the students I would like to teach.

I hope to teach American literature at in inner city school, because I believe that these schools and their students have the most potential, need the most help, and are the most ignored. Inner city schools are on average 90% or more Black, yet these students must read the same canonical texts taught across the board. Why is that? These texts are extremely difficult for them to relate to and are therefore often utterly boring to them. How are they expected to not only study and learn these texts but perform well on assessments of these texts, in which that have no personal interests? This is a great challenge that we set for our students, and I don't believe that we should. If the purpose of teaching literature is to expose our students to the "classics" and not much else, simply to say that we did it and they "know" it, but in actuality, they don't know it, they don't care about it, and they hate literature as a result of it, then we are succeeding. On the contrary, if our purpose is to expose our students to literature which will open their minds, intrigue them, and turn

them on to literature as a whole, we are failing. With a four week unit on contemporary African American literature I would like to change that.

Contemporary African American literature by no means encompasses everything that a student should learn in an American literature course. As I stated before, I would like to teach in an inner city school. In this type of school, I believe that a four week unit on contemporary African American literature should be standard procedure. Why not? Aren't most of these students contemporary African Americans, and shouldn't they have the opportunity to learn about themselves in the literature classrooms? Even if I were to teach in a school that was not majority Black, I would include this unit because Black writing transcends racial lines, and is prevalent and influential in modern American society. Contemporary Black writers are on the pages of magazines, in the lyrics of songs, and on the movie screens—things that greatly affect the minds of all teenagers today. Thus, this unit will be beneficial to any race of student.

I expect to have complaints about teaching a four week unit on one genre of literature, but in actuality, we will not study only one genre. Within studying Black literature, we will study poetry, essays, memoirs, and song writing among other types of writing. And the focus will not simply be African Americanism—for example, when studying Sonya Sanchez's "Haiku," we will simply study the art of writing this form of poetry. Therefore, this unit is not simply a means by which to study Black

people, but a means of studying literature through the eyes of Black people.

Much of the literature we will study will likely raise some brows. We will discuss race often, as it is common in the writing of many Black authors. Race is not easy for many to discuss, and I am sure that parents and administrators may take issue with this, but they should understand the necessity of discussing race in this country where so much revolves around the issue. Consequently, I intend to insure my students' parents and the administration that when discussing race, I will be sensitive to my students' feelings.

I anticipate having to defend some of the texts that I have chosen because they have risqué scenes and some inappropriate language. The story that I will most likely have to defend is "The Two" by Gloria Naylor, which involves two lesbians and one is gang raped at the end of the story. Just the homosexuality alone is enough to get it turned down, but the rape scene will surely lessen my chances of being able to use this story. One option is to leave out the last scene. I hope to get this story approved because it is extremely powerful and would serve as a basis for a discussion on homosexuality and discrimination within our society.

The authors I've chosen for this unit cover many topics including race, sexuality, gender, relationships, love, youth, intellectualism, and life's challenges. These are issues that affect every single person on Earth, including the young people I will teach. It only seems fitting that

they should be able to study these issues through the writing and work of people to which they can relate.

Focusing on contemporary Black authors is by no means to ignore great writers such as Langston Hughes, Frederick Douglass and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who for the sake of my unit, I do not consider contemporary, because these and other Black writers are important and should be taught, and in my class they will be. I intend to incorporate Black literature throughout my American literature course, but I will set aside at least four weeks just for contemporary Black writers.

We will study writers such as Cornell West, Essex Hemphill, India Arie, Ernest Gaines, Nikki Giovanni and Haki Madhubuti. Many of these authors are people that my students as well as many people have never heard of; others are people they “know” well. I want to open my students’ eyes to this untapped genre of literature, and show them how even songs and the writings of athletes are quality literature. Most high school students view literature as some foreign subject matter, which they study in school, which is only necessary to get through school, and is irrelevant to their personal lives. They don’t see literature in the John Singleton movie they watched the other night, nor in the Tupac song they listen to every morning while getting dressed for school. Vibe magazine is not literature to them; it’s just something they read every month for fun. They should know that it is literature; all of these—songs, movies, magazines,

etc., things that they naturally find interesting and take joy in—are literature. I think my students will be fascinated to realize that.

During this unit my students will not only learn to value this genre of literature, but also learn to see literature in a whole new light, and hopefully, in the process, be turn on to several types of literature. Because my students will be studying writers which they “know” or can relate to, places they’ve been or at least heard of, and issues that are personal to them, they should be intrigued and imaginative throughout this unit on contemporary African American literature.

A large part of studying literature is entertaining multiple perspectives. While I hope that each of my students will enjoy this literature and find purpose in it, I want them to remain open minded during the unit and even consider problems concerning this genre of literature. Throughout the unit, we will analyze different perspectives, discuss and write about our own views, and finally argue two competing perspectives. The culminating project for this unit will show me if my students have successfully learned how to accept and consider multiple perspectives.

GOALS & RUBRICS

Grade Distribution

- 10% Homework Reading Quizzes
- 10% Literary Groups
- 25% Short Writing Assignments
- 25% Journal
- 30% Final Project

Goal 1: Class Discussion

My students will participate in a classroom discussion following many of the readings or groups of readings. I will initiate the discussion and then allow my students to contribute with questions and/or comments. I would hope that each student will contribute to the classroom discussions, raise questions, voice personal opinions, and/or comment on the opinions of other students. Although, I do understand that not all students feel comfortable speaking in front of their peers, therefore, the discussions will not be assessed, but I will encourage my students to participate in the discussion. These discussions will allow my students to voice their opinions, frustrations, uncertainties, and general feelings about the texts, which I believe will be beneficial and necessary during this unit.

Sample Class Discussion

Two of the poems we will study are “Woman with Meaning” by Haki Madhubuti and “To Some Supposed Brothers” by Essex Hemphill. I will definitely study these two texts on the same day in order to compare the ideas presented in both. Both are written by men, but present two very different outlooks on how women are treated and considered by men. I think it will be interesting to have my students do a comparison-contrast exercise with these two poems and discuss how two men can have such very different views on the same topic. They can also examine how the authors’ personal lives may have contributed to each of their poems. Then, to broaden the discussion, we can analyze male-female relations in our society.

Goal 2: Homework Reading Quizzes

Because many of the texts we will be using are not in standard high school American literature textbooks, I will have to supply my students with printed copies of the literature. The only reading that will be done at home will be the author biographies. At some point during the class period on the day the reading is due, students will be given a short reading quiz. The quiz will consist of one short essay question in which the student must summarize the reading. The summary should be roughly half of one page in length. The purpose of the quizzes is to insure that my students complete the homework readings.

Rubric

Check + (90-100)	Check (70-89)	Check – (0-69)
Student's summary shows that he/she has read the reading thoroughly, understands the concepts or ideas presented in the text, and has thought critically about the text.	Student's summary shows that he/she has skimmed or lightly read the text enough to gain some understanding.	Student's summary shows that he/she has not read the text or the summary was insufficient or incomplete.

Sample Reading Quiz (I will ask the students to...)

Please summarize last night's reading. Your summary should be at least one half page in length. In your summary include the authors full name, three key points about the authors life, and at least two things you found interesting about the author.

A check + student summary for Tupac Shakur might resemble the following:

Last night I read Tupac Amaru Shakur's biography. Tupac was a rapper. He was born in New York City. Both of his parents were Black Panthers. Before he graduated from high school, Tupac and his family moved to California. He was murdered in 1996, and is remembered as one of the greatest rappers ever. I thought it was interesting that Tupac released so many albums and films after his death; it made it hard for some people to believe he was really dead. I also thought Tupac's connection with the Black Panther Party was interesting because it came through in his music.

Goal 3: Literary Discussion/Work Groups

At least once a week we will have literary discussion/work groups. These groups will vary from literature circles to work groups. We will typically begin by reading and briefly discussing the texts for the day; some days we might jump right into the groups. The students will work in groups of three to five, in which they will discuss, work, and do activities together. The literary discussion/work groups will allow my students to collaborate with their peers, hear and entertain other people's perspectives, learn the value of being able to work within a group, and will also be fun for them...hopefully. The discussions will not be assessed, but I will closely observe my students to make sure they are on task and participating.

Rubric for Group Work/Assignments

I will observe each groups preparation and performance/presentation to assess whether each member is contributing. They will receive a plus or minus.

+(100)	- (0)
Student contributed to the preparation and performance/presentation.	Student did not contribute to the preparation and performance/presentation.

Sample Group Discussion

After week one we will have studied Black journalism, read interviews, and short stories, all of which will introduce the students to Black literature, it's purposes, motivations, and place in American society. Therefore, during the group discussions, I expect my students to raise their questions, express their feelings, or voice their concerns about Black literature in general. A discussion question might be: *How has black literature changed and shaped American culture?*

Sample Group Assignment

Students will work in groups for 30 minutes, in which they will collectively write a song. It can be any genre and I will have instrumental tracks for them to sing along with. The rest of the class time will be performance time; each group will have 5 minutes to perform their song. (This is assuming we're on block schedule (1 hour and 30 minutes) and I have a class of about 30 students.)

Goal 4: Short Writing Assignments

I will have my students complete several short writing assignments including writing a haiku to accompany our reading of “Haiku” by Sonya Sanchez. They will also complete an essay on what they feel literature should “do.” In Toni Morrison’s “Rootedness” she discusses what she feels black literature should do. I want my students to analyze what literature in general, black literature, their own personal writing, or any form of literature should do, will do, or is doing. For example, they might discuss how poetry makes them feel or if Black literature should be revolutionary or can it simply “be beautiful” as Toni Morrison states. The short essay will be two, typed, and double-spaced pages or four full neatly written pages. There will be several other short writing assignments such as the Haiku exercise. Many of the writings will be free writes which will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Rubric for Short Essays

	A (90-100)	B (80-89)	C (70-79)	D (69-60)	F (0)
Creativity	Very thought provoking, interesting to read, and focused	Thought provoking, interesting to read, and focused	Fairly thought provoking, interesting to read, and focused	Not thought provoking, interesting to read, and focused	Not submitted
Completeness	2 full typed double-spaced pages or 4 full neatly written pages.	1 ½ typed double-spaced pages or 3 full neatly written pages.	1 typed double-spaced pages or 2 full neatly written pages.	½ typed double-spaced page or 1 full neatly written page.	Not submitted
Sentence Fluency	Good sentence structure and much variety	Good sentence structure and some variety	Sentences are structured but lacking in variety	Sentences are not structured well and incomplete	Not submitted
Conventions	Few (1-3) errors interfere with reading	Some (4-6) errors interfere with reading	Several errors (7-9) interfere with reading	Many errors (10 or more) interfere with reading	Not submitted
Punctuality	On time (100%)	One day late (80%)	Two days late (70%)	Three days late (60%)	Not submitted

Goal 5: Journal

Each student will have to keep a journal during the four week unit. I'm sure that many of my students will be sensitive to or uncomfortable with many of the issues presented during the unit. Therefore, I would like them to keep journals to express their feelings during the unit. There are certain things that students will be able to write privately that they may have difficulty expressing to other students. So the journals will serve as a nice outlet for my students and as a way for me to be aware of how the unit is going. Some of the journal entries will be responses to questions that I ask the students; others will simply be the student's thoughts for the day.

The students will be responsible for writing in their journals Monday – Thursday nights and will turn them in every Friday. Each week the student will receive a journal grade; an average of the four will reflect the overall journal grade at the end of the unit.

Rubric for Journal

A (100)	B (80)	C (70)	D (60)	F (0)
Student had at least four journal entries, which discussed his/her feelings on the issues presented during the week.	Student had three journal entries, which discussed his/her feelings on the issues presented during the week.	Student had two journal entries, which discussed his/her feelings on the issues presented during the week.	Student had one journal entry, which discussed his/her feelings on the issues presented during the week.	Student did not submit journal this week.

Example of a satisfactory journal entry:

10/24/05

Today we read "Days of Grace: The Burden of Race" by Arthur Ashe and Arnold Rampersad. I liked this story because Arthur Ashe was a tennis player and I play tennis. It was sad that he died from AIDS, but it was interesting that he said that wasn't his biggest burden, but being Black was. I'm not Black so I don't really understand what kind of burden it is, but from reading the story, Ashe had to endure a lot just because of his race.

Goal 6: Final Essay

While I hope that each of you enjoy this unit on contemporary African American literature and find purpose in it, I want you to remain open minded during the unit and even consider problems concerning this genre of literature. Throughout the unit, we will analyze different perspectives, discuss and write about our own views, and finally argue two competing perspectives. The culminating project for this unit will show me if you have successfully learned how to accept and consider multiple perspectives.

For your final essay, you will present two arguments. The first will be an argument for the teaching of contemporary African American literature in every school across the nation. The second will be an argument against teaching contemporary African American literature in every school across the nation. You do not have to agree with either stance, however, you must use evidence from the works we have read throughout the unit to support each argument. For example, if you argue that the literature should not be taught because of the language, you could back this up with a story like “The Two,” which has some vulgar language.

Each argument must contain at least three reasons/explanations as to why it should or should not be taught. Each explanation needs to be supported by texts we’ve studied throughout the unit. You can give reasons supported by other African American texts you have personally read, but at least 3 explanations for each argument **MUST** be supported by texts we have read in class. I am looking for interesting views, so although you can use examples such as my vulgar language example, I am expecting more in depth analysis of the literature we’ve studied.

Your argumentative essay will be 5 typed pages, double-spaced (10 neatly hand-written pages). Finally, in 1 typed page double-spaced or 2 neatly hand-written pages (in addition to your 5 pages) I would like you to discuss **YOUR** feelings about the literature we’ve read and the issues we discussed throughout the unit.

Rubric for Final Essay

	A (90-100)	B (80-89)	C (70-79)	D (69-60)	F (0)
Supporting Evidence	Both arguments were supported with a total of at least 6 explanations supported by literature from the unit.	Both arguments were supported with a total of 5 explanations supported by literature from the unit.	Both arguments were supported with a total of 4 explanations supported by literature from the unit.	Both arguments were supported with a total of 3 explanations supported by literature from the unit.	Not submitted
Completeness	5 typed double-spaced pages or 10 neatly written pages.	4 ½ typed double-spaced pages or 9 neatly written pages.	4 typed double-spaced pages or 8 neatly written pages.	3½ or less typed double-spaced pages or 7 or less neatly written pages.	Not submitted
Sentence Fluency	Good sentence structure and much variety	Good sentence structure and some variety	Sentences are structured but lacking in variety	Sentences are not structured well and incomplete	Not submitted
Conventions	Few (1-9) errors interfere with reading	Some (10-14) errors interfere with reading	Several errors (15-19) interfere with reading	Many errors (20 or more) interfere with reading	Not submitted
Punctuality	On time (100%)	One day late (80%)	Two days late (70%)	Three days late (60%)	Not submitted

MATERIALS

Day	Title, Author, and Genre	Literary, Thinking, and Reading Skills, Concepts
Week One		
M - T	Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation Toni Morrison <i>essay</i>	Finding purpose in literature Genre study (personal essay) Ethnic identity and pride Group identity
W	Haiku Sonya Sanchez <i>poem</i>	Poetic forms Personification Genre study (poetry)
R	Get it Together India Arie <i>song lyrics</i>	Imagery Mood & Tone Metaphor
F	Get it Together India Arie <i>song</i>	How music & words work together Genre study (music)
Week Two		
M - R	The Sky is Gray Ernest Gaines <i>short story</i>	Allegory Self reflection & identification Ethnic identity & pride Facing adversity Roles in family and society Making choices & Coming of Age Genre study (short story)
F	The Rose that Grew From Concrete Tupac Shakur <i>poem</i>	Symbolism Imagery Interpreting poetry Cultural awareness Individual identity
F	The Rose that Grew From Concrete Nikki Giovanni <i>narration of poem</i>	Interpreting poetry How music & words work together
Week Three		
M - R	from Days of Grace: The Burden of Race Arthur Ashe Arnold Rampersad <i>memoir (excerpt)</i>	Irony Point of view Comparing perspectives (with “American Hero”) Race Relations Genre study (Memoir)
W	American Hero Essex Hemphill <i>poem</i>	Comparing perspectives (with <i>Days of Grace</i>) Reading & Interpreting objectively Meaning of title Turning point Irony
R	Ego Tripping Nikki Giovanni <i>poem</i>	Interpreting poetry Imagery Personification Feminism
Week Four		
M - R	The Two Gloria Naylor <i>short story</i>	Stereotypes Making assumptions about individuals Destructive nature of prejudice Foreshadowing
F	To Some Supposed Brothers Essex Hemphill <i>poem</i>	Comparing perspectives (with “Woman With Meaning”) Interpreting objectively Meaning of title Male / Female relationships
F	Woman With Meaning Haki Madhubuti <i>poem</i>	Comparing perspectives (with “To Some Supposed Brothers”) Style Male / Female relationships

Quashie, K.E., Lausch, R .J., & Miller, K.D. (2001). *New bones: Contemporary black writers in America*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY
Week One - Day One

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
5min	<p><u>Introductory Activity</u> After students have settled direct their attention to the large collage on the wall, where you will have laid out photographs of the contemporary Black writers we will discuss during the unit.</p> <p>Then, ask students to take a few minutes to view the collage.</p>
10min	<p>Next ask these questions: Who are these people? What do they do? Why are they important?</p> <p>Students will likely recognize some of the faces and be able to offer answers to these questions.</p>
10min	<p>Then ask: Would you consider their work African American literature? Why or why not? What characterizes African American literature? What purposes should African American literature serve?</p> <p>Moderate the students' discussion of these questions.</p>
30min	<p>Hand out "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation Toni Morrison" (Section 3, Tab 6)</p> <p><u>Volunteer Reading:</u> Start by reading the paragraph (including the opening quote) to the students. Then ask for volunteers to read the remainder of the essay.</p> <p>After a student volunteers to read, allow them to read only a paragraph or two, so that other students will have the opportunity to read. Try to maintain students' attention by walking around the room and monitoring whether they are on task. If a student is sleeping, wake him. If students are talking, quiet them.</p>
10min	<p><u>Free Write:</u> After reading "Rootedness" have students do a 1-page free write to the following prompt:</p> <p>What is your favorite type and/or genre of literature and why? Is it magazines, romance novels, essay, civil rights literature, poetry, comic books, etc.? It can be any type/genre of literature. What does this type of literature offer you or do for you and how do you feel when you read it. Write freely about this type of literature and why you like it for about 10 minutes. It can be a prose or poetry.</p>

	<p>Inform students that their writings do not have to follow conventions, but will be taken up for a pass/fail grade, and should be at least 1-page in length.</p>
10min	<p>After the students have completed their writing, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote. (They do not need to read their entire writing but briefly discuss) *Take up free writes for a grade*</p>
10min	<p>Introduce students to the journal they will maintain throughout the unit. (Section 1, Tab 2)</p> <p><u>Homework Reading</u> – Morrison’s Biography (there will be a quiz)</p> <p>The prompt for the first journal entry will be for the students to compare their free write about their favorite type of literature to Morrison’s essay.</p>
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week One - Day Two

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Reading Quiz – Toni Morrison
10min	<u>Discuss</u> – Toni Morrison’s Biography Open discussion on what the students found interesting about Morrison.
20min	Discuss ethnic identity and how it relates to “Rootedness.” <u>A working definition:</u> Ethnic Identity – common characteristics that connect a group of individuals which creates a sense of unity or belonging <u>A question to help with discussion:</u> According to Morrison, what are some of the key elements, which have helped shape Black culture?
10min	Genre Study: What is an essay? Explain to the students that “Rootedness” is a personal essay and has characteristics of a persuasive essay. Handout: Guide to Different Kinds of Essays Go over handout with class
25min	<u>Argumentative Essay Lesson:</u> Debatable and Non-Debatable Statements Section Use projector to show students the following website, which you will navigate through as a class. Also make copies of “Debatable and Non-Debatable Statements” section to handout to students. (Section 4, Tab 1) http://www.santarosa.edu/philosophy/essaytutorial.htm If technology is limited just go through handout with students.
5min	Handout “Goal 6” & Rubric for goal 6 to students (Section 1, Tab 2) Introduce students to the final project.
5min	<u>Homework:</u> Have each student bring in a poem that they like for the next class. It can be an original or something that they’ve read outside of class. Keep poems rather short and make sure they have NO EXPLICIT LANGUAGE (vulgarity, violence, sex, etc.)
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week One – Day Three

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
20min	Study of Poetic Forms: Handout “Poetry Terms” (Section 5) Go through the list of poetic forms with class.
25min	Have students get into groups of 3 to 4 and analyze which type of poem theirs might be. (This is referring to the poems they were asked to bring in.) Have students to volunteer and discuss their poems with the class. Ask: Which form does it appear to be? How can they tell?
10min	Write “Haiku” on the board. (Section 3, Tab 8) Ask: Can anyone tell me what type of poem this is? Surely someone will say “haiku.” <u>Read and discuss Haiku as a class</u> A question to ask: What could these words mean?
25min	Have each student write their own haiku. Remind them that they must be in the correct form: (three unrhymed lines, five, seven, and five syllables) *Take up haikus for a grade*
5min	Homework Reading – Sonya Sanchez Biography (there will be a quiz)
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week One - Day Four

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
5min	Students will enter to the sweet sounds of “Little Things” by India Arie.
25min	<p><u>Tool Sharpener</u>: Discuss</p> <p><u>Mood</u> - a feeling, emotional state, or disposition of mind</p> <p><u>Tone</u> - the means of creating a relationship or conveying an attitude or mood. By looking carefully at the choices an author makes (in characters, incidents, setting; in the work's stylistic choices and diction, etc.), careful readers often can isolate the tone of a work and sometimes infer from it the underlying attitudes that control and color the story or poem as a whole.</p> <p><u>Metaphor</u> – a comparison or analogy stated in such a way as to imply that one object is another one, figuratively speaking.</p> <p><u>Simile</u> - An analogy or comparison implied by using an adverb such as <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>, in contrast with a metaphor which figuratively makes the comparison by stating outright that one thing is another thing.</p> <p><u>Imagery</u> - A common term of variable meaning, imagery includes the "mental pictures" that readers experience with a passage of literature. It signifies all the sensory perceptions referred to in a poem, whether by literal description, allusion, simile, or metaphor. Imagery is not limited to visual imagery; it also includes auditory (sound), tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and kinesthetic sensation (movement).</p>
10min	<p>Read the lyrics to “Get it Together” aloud while students follow along.</p> <p>Have students look for and analyze the following: Mood, Tone, Metaphor, Simile, Imagery</p>
20min	After the reading ask students to explain which of the literary devices they found in the reading and point out others.
10min	<p>Ask:</p> <p>How do you think this song should sound and why, considering what you have learned today about mood and tone?</p> <p>Listen to students opinions.</p>
5min	<p>Let’s see if you’re right!</p> <p>Play “Get it Together” for the class.</p>
10min	Reading Quiz – Sonya Sanchez
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week One - Day Five

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Review: Mood, Tone, Metaphor, Simile, Imagery
5min	Have students get in to pairs (possibly one group of three) and hand out the assignment (Section 5, Tab 1)
25min	Give students time to work on assignment.
30min	Recitations
5min	Take up Journals
	<i>Remind students to be thinking about their final projects</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Two - Day One

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
5min	Return Journals
25min	<p><u>Argumentative Essay Lesson: Using Connectives and Paragraphs Section</u></p> <p>Use projector to show students the following website, which you will navigate through as a class. Also make copies of “Using Connectives and Paragraphs in a Larger Argumentative Text” section to handout to students. (Section 4, Tab 2)</p> <p>http://www.santarosa.edu/philosophy/essaytutorial.htm</p> <p>If technology is limited just go through handout with students.</p>
10min	<p>Free Write: What is your role in society? (i.e. teenager, child, parent, sibling, girl, Black person, etc.) What responsibilities does this role entail? How do you feel about your role? Write freely for about 10 minutes.</p> <p>Inform students that their writings do not have to follow conventions, but will be taken up for a pass/fail grade, and should be at least 1-page in length.</p>
10min	<p>After the students have completed their writing, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote. (They do not need to read their entire writing but briefly discuss) *Take up free writes for a grade*</p>
30min	<u>Volunteer Reading: “The Sky is Gray” (1-4) (follow the same procedure as “Rootedness”)</u>
5min	<p>Ask: Is James’, the young male narrator, role in the story that of a typical pre-teen boy? Why or why not?</p> <p>Allow them to discuss for remainder of class.</p>
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Two - Day Two

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
20min	Volunteer Read: "The Sky is Gray" (5-6)
40min	Prediction Activity: Have students get into 5 groups. Read chapter 7 as a class but stop at the following places, so that students can make predictions as to what will come next: "look at him." (end of 337) "I'm sorry for you," he says to the boy. (near end of 338) "Get up boy," preacher says. (near top of 339) Give students 5 minutes between each section to make predictions. Then read to the end of chapter 7.
25min	Discussion of what led them to their predictions <u>Some questions to ask:</u> When did you notice the preacher's mood change? Who did you expect to react more violently, the boy or the preacher? Were you surprised by the ending?
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Two - Day Three

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
35min	Volunteer Reading: "The Sky is Gray" (8-10)
30min	<u>Body Biographies:</u> Hand out the body biography assignment (Section 5, Tab)
20min	Have students get into groups according to which character they chose. (no more than 5 students per group) Discuss your characters and see how your biographies are alike and different.
	<i>Remind students to write in journals</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Two - Day Four

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
25min	<p>Read “The Sky is Gray” (11-13) to the class.</p> <p>*Be expressive to maintain students’ attention.*</p>
25min	<p><u>Tool sharpener:</u> Discuss</p> <p><u>Allegory</u> - loosely describes any writing in verse or prose that has a double meaning. This narrative acts as an extended metaphor in which persons, abstract ideas, or events represent not only themselves on the literal level, but they also stand for something else on the symbolic level.</p> <p>http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_A.html</p> <p>Discuss with the students ways in which “The Sky is Gray” is an allegory.</p> <p><u>Possible themes to discuss:</u> ethnic identity pride facing adversity making choices self-reflection and identification</p>
30min	<p><u>Argumentative Essay Lesson:</u> Showing you are Aware of Both Sides of the Issue Section</p> <p>Use projector to show students the following website, which you will navigate through as a class. Also make copies of ‘Showing you are Aware of Both Sides of the Issue’ section to handout to students. (Section 4, Tab 3)</p> <p>http://www.santarosa.edu/philosophy/essaytutorial.htm</p> <p>If technology is limited just go through handout with students.</p>
5min	<u>Homework Reading</u> – Ernest Gaines Biography (there will be a quiz)
	<i>Remind students to write in journals and have them ready to turn it tomorrow.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Two – Day Five

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
5min	Students enter to “Keep Ya Head Up”
20min	<p><u>Tool Sharpener:</u> Discuss</p> <p><u>Personification</u> - A figure of speech in which abstractions, animals, ideas, and inanimate objects are given human character, traits, abilities, or reactions.</p> <p><u>Symbolism</u> - Frequent use of words, places, characters, or objects that mean something beyond what they are on a literal level.</p>
5min	<p>“The Rose that Grew from Concrete”</p> <p>Read along with the students, and have them look for symbolism and personification.</p>
15min	Have students lead a discussion of personification and symbolism found in the poem.
20min	<p>Have students lead a discussion of themes found in the poem.</p> <p><u>Some themes to point out:</u> Individual Identity Cultural Awareness</p>
8min	<u>Play:</u> “The Rose that Grew from Concrete” for the class.
10min	Reading Quiz: Gaines
2min	Take up journals and quizzes.
	<i>Remind students to be thinking about their final projects</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Three - Day One

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
5min	Return Journals
10min	Genre Study: Memoir - an account of the personal experiences of an author
20min	Free Write: Write a brief memoir recalling an event that had an immense impact on your life. <i>*Take up free writes*</i>
35min	Volunteer Reading: “Days of Grace: The Burden of Race”
15min	Discuss themes and issues in the story: Self Identification Race Relations Ethnic Identity
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals and be thinking about the final projects.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Three - Day Two

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Finish Discussing “Days of Grace” Discuss the Black male’s role in American society.
10min	Read “American Hero”
25min	Have students get into 5 groups and generate four questions and/or ideas connecting “Days of Grace” to “American Hero.”
30min	Each group will present one of their ideas or questions to the class to lead the class discussion. (5 minutes per group)
10min	Free Write: What has been your heaviest burden in life? *Take up free writes*
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals and tell them to be ready to have individual conferences with me about the final projects.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Three - Day Three - Essay Workshop Day

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
125min	<u>Individual Conferences with each students: (5 minutes per student)</u> <u>During the conference ask the following questions (among others):</u> Have you started thinking about your final? Have you found your evidence to support your argument? While conferencing with each student, the other students need to be working on their final projects.
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Three – Day Four

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Recite “Ego Tripping” to the class. Be Expressive!
10min	Review Imagery and Personification
20min	Have students reread the poem while looking for examples of imagery and personification.
40min	Have students draw a scene from the poem as they envision it.
5min	Take up drawings
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Three - Day Five

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Pass back drawings and have students get into groups of 5.
35min	Have students discuss their drawings with their group. The students should explain the scene and what imagery devices helped create the picture in their minds.
30min	Show my drawing of my favorite scene from the poem and discuss what imagery devices helped create it.
10min	Take up drawings and journals.
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Four - Day One

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
30min	Volunteer Reading: "The Two" (804-809)
40min	Ask questions to spark discussion. <u>Some questions to ask:</u> What type of people live in Lorraine and Theresa's neighborhood? Why aren't these people accepting of them? Are homosexual people still being treated this way? Why?
10min	<u>Free Write:</u> Write about a time when you were ostracized or ostracized someone else. How did you or the other person feel?
5min	Return journals and take up free writes.
	<i>Remind students to that their final projects are due next Monday.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Four - Day Two

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
30min	<p><u>Volunteer Reading: "The Two"</u></p> <p>Homework: Have student write in their journals about the reading for today.</p>
25min	<p><u>Argumentative Essay Lesson: Choosing your own Conclusion and Writing a Paragraph Section</u></p> <p>Use projector to show students the following website, which you will navigate through as a class. Also make copies of "Choosing your own Conclusion and Writing a Paragraph" section to handout to students. (Section 4, Tab 4)</p> <p>http://www.santarosa.edu/philosophy/essaytutorial.htm</p> <p>If technology is limited just go through handout with students.</p>
25min	<p><u>Argumentative Essay Lesson: A Model Argumentative Essay Section</u></p> <p>Use projector to show students the following website, which you will navigate through as a class. Also make copies of "A Model Argumentative Essay" section to handout to students. (Section 4, Tab 5)</p> <p>http://www.santarosa.edu/philosophy/essaytutorial.htm</p> <p>If technology is limited just go through handout with students.</p>
5min	Homework Reading – Gloria Naylor’s Biography (there will be a quiz)
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals and work on their finals.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Four - Day Three

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Reading Quiz: Naylor
30min	Volunteer Reading: (816-820)
15min	Have students get into groups of 5. Each group should generate 3 questions. Give the following examples. Inference – Why don't the people accept Lorraine and Theresa? Generalization – How does this story relate to how homosexual people are treated in American society? Personal Connection – How do you feel about the way Lorraine and Theresa were treated by their neighbors?
30min	Have each group pose one of their questions to lead the class discussion. (5 minutes per group)
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals and work on their finals.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Four - Day Four

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
50min	Volunteer Reading: "The Two" (821-829) (leave out the last scene)
15min	Have students get into pairs. Hand out "Important Word Assignment" Explain assignment to students. Inform them that after responding to what they feel is the most important word in the paragraph, they will exchange papers and complete the assignment by responding to what they feel is the most important word in their partner's response. Allow students time to work on the assignment.
10min	Discuss student responses.
10min	Ask students for their final thoughts and opinions on "The Two."
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals and work on their finals.</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>

Week Four - Day Five

5min	Attendance, Settling Down, Housekeeping
10min	Read "To Some Supposed Brothers"
10min	Ask: What is the speaker saying? Listen to students' responses.
10min	Read "Woman with Meaning"
10min	Ask What is the speaker saying? Listen to students' responses.
40min	Analyze how both male writers can have such competing perspectives on the same topic. Connect this to the final project.
15min	Answer any questions students have about the final project.
	<i>Remind students to write in their journals and work on their finals which are due on MONDAY!</i>
	<i>Dismiss</i>