

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Trumbull, Connecticut

African American Literature
Grade 12

2025

(Last revision date: 2008)

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African American Literature

Grade 12

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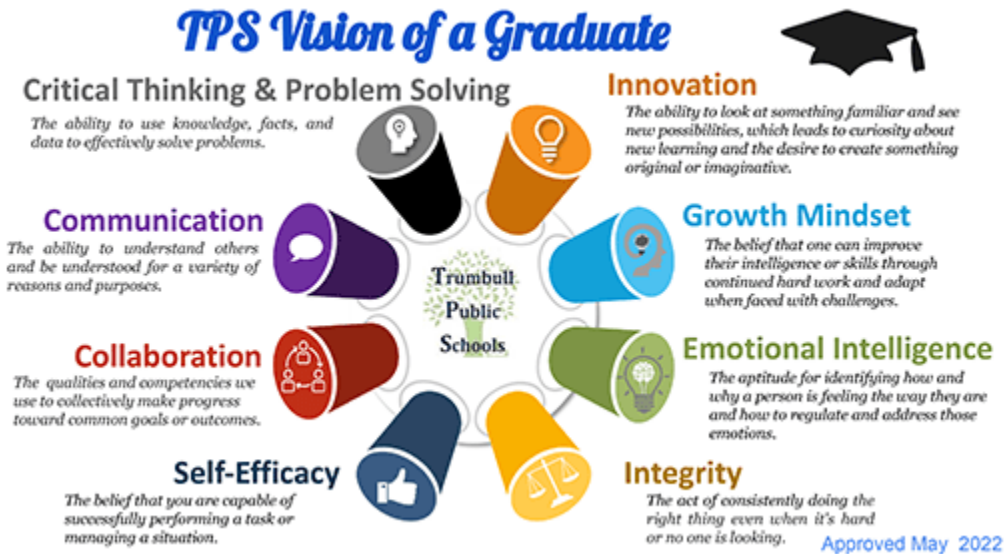
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The Trumbull Board of Education will continue to take Affirmative Action to ensure that no persons are discriminated against in its employment.

CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Trumbull High School community engages in an environment conducive to learning which believes that all students will **read and write effectively**, therefore communicating in an articulate and coherent manner. All students will participate in activities **that present problem-solving through critical thinking**. Students will use technology as a tool applying it to decision making. We believe that by fostering self-confidence, self-directed and student-centered activities, we will promote **independent thinkers and learners**. We believe **ethical conduct** to be paramount in sustaining the welcoming school climate that we presently enjoy.
Approved 8/26/2011

VISION OF THE GRADUATE



INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

The African American Literature course is offered to Trumbull High School students who are interested in learning about and immersing themselves in a study of a wide variety of African American authors and artists. Although students are exposed to multicultural experiences in other literature classes, a class focusing solely on African American Literature provides a fuller look at a multitude of African-American writers and students will get an indepth look at thoughts, attitudes and values of the African-American community and how they have transformed over time.

Students will read a rich selection of writings by African-American authors including novels, short fiction, poetry and non-fiction. The writings will span classical and contemporary texts from many literary periods and genres. In addition to examining the wide variety of stories and storytellers that the course offers, the African-American Literature course also examines the evolution and impact of a unique artistic expression and the way it has helped to shape American culture.

The course fosters independent thinking and learning. Students will analyze, make inferences, and generate questions about the texts that go beyond the literal elements of the stories and move into a greater level of understanding. In order for students to come to see the way African-American roles have evolved, the course will bridge classic and contemporary literature and allow them to reference and reflect on the stories shared in class. After taking this course, students will be motivated to explore the works of classic and new literary voices and become life-long readers, seeking out types of writing that entertain and also speak to relevant issues that concern the modern world.

COURSE GOALS

The following course goals derive from the 2010 Connecticut Core Standards.

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging or beautiful.
CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.10	By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the

grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1
1-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the top

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve

problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

The following standards derive from the 2016 International Society for Technology in Education Standards. ISTE Digital Students recognize the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of living, Citizen learning, and working in an interconnected digital world, and they act and (Standard 2) model in ways that are safe, legal, and ethical.

ISTE Knowledge Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to
Constructor construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts, and make meaningful
(Standard 3) learning experiences for themselves and others.

ISTE Creative Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a
Communicator variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats, and digital
(Standard 6) media appropriate to their goals.

COURSE ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will understand that...

- African-American Literature reflects on a diverse set of beliefs and ideas concerning race, society, and the individual
- A single text may elicit a variety of responses
- Cultural and societal experiences shape a story and storyteller
- African-American Literature has had a significant influence on the rich tapestry of American Literature

COURSE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- To what extent do authors speak for a culture; a generation; a period in history; the African American race in general; and/or any combination of these?
- How do African-American writers reveal truths about our society, culture, and politics through their fictional worlds, stories, and characters?
- How do the themes found in African-American Literature change to reflect the times in which the stories are written?
- What common threads of African-American Literature connect to all cultures and people?

COURSE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Students will know . . .

- How African-American writers reveal truths about our society, culture, and politics through their fictional worlds, stories, and characters.
- How time, place, geography, government, religion, and society shape a story.
- How stylistic choices in writing can enhance storytelling techniques and differentiate story tellers from each other.
- How authors are influenced by writers from the past to tell their stories.
- How genre writing can also reflect on African-American culture and experiences.

Students will be able to . . .

- Participate meaningfully in full group and small group discussions.
- Read with a critical lens.
- Analyze texts for purpose, meaning, and audience.
- Analyze stories through the lenses of story, culture, and human nature.
- Work effectively in small groups.
- Write analytical essays of 4-5 pages in length in response to selected stories.
- Write on-demand essays (in-class) in response to selected stories.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Name

African-American Literature

Level

Advanced College Prep

Prerequisites

Successful completion of grades 9, 10, and 11 English

General Description of the Course

The African American Literature course is offered to Trumbull High School students who are interested in learning about and immersing themselves in a study of a wide variety of African American authors and artists. Although students are exposed to multicultural experiences in other literature classes, a class focusing solely on African American Literature provides a fuller look at a multitude of African-American writers and students will get an indepth look at thoughts, attitudes, and values of the African-American community and how they have transformed over time.

Students will read a rich selection of writings by African-American authors including novels, short fiction, poetry and non-fiction. The writings will span classical and contemporary texts from many literary periods and genres. In addition to examining the wide variety of stories and storytellers that the course offers, the African-American Literature course also examines the evolution and impact of a unique artistic expression and the way it has helped to shape American culture.

The course fosters independent thinking and learning. Students will analyze, make inferences and generate questions about the texts that go beyond the literal elements of the stories and move into a greater level of understanding. In order for students to come to see the way African-American roles have evolved, the course will bridge classic and contemporary literature and allow them to reference and reflect on the stories shared in class. After taking this course, students will be motivated to explore the works of classic and new literary voices and become life-long readers, seeking out types of writing that entertain and also speak to relevant issues that concern the modern world.

Assured Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Written Responses/Journal Writing
- Reading Understanding Check-ins
- Class Participation

Summative Assessments:

- Analytical Essays

- Narrative Writing
- Final Examination

Course Texts

- Ayala, Vita, ChrisCross, and Nikolas Draper Ivey. *Static: Season One*. Print
- Butler, Octavia. *The Parable of the Sower*. Print
- Coogler, Ryan. *Black Panther*. Film.
- Douglass, Fredrick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave and Essays*. Print.
- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. Print.
- Gilyard, Keith and Anissa Ward. *African American Literature*. Print.
- Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Print.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Print
- Johnson, Charles. *Middle Passage*. Print
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Print
- Larsen, Nella and Deborah McDowell. *Quicksand; and, Passing*. Print
- LaValle, Victor. *The Ballad of Black Tom*. Print
- Lee, Spike. *Malcolm X*. Film
- Lee, Spike. *BlacKkKlansman*. Film
- Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*. Print
- Mosley, Walter. *Devil in a Blue Dress*. Print
- Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day*. Print
- Peele, Jordan. *Nope*. Film
- Richards, Lloyd. *The Piano Lesson* (1995). Film
- Washington, Malcolm. *The Piano Lesson* (2024). Film.
- Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson*. Print
- Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. Print

Unit 1
The Emerging African American Literary Tradition

Unit Goals

At the completion of this unit, students will:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1 | Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. |
| CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2 | Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. |
| CCS.ELA- LITERACY.RL.11-12.3 | Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). |
| CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging or beautiful. |
| CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.5 | Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. |
| CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.6 | Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement). |
| CCS.ELA- | |

LITERACY.RL.11-12.10	By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1 1-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D	Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the top
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively,

orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Unit Essential Questions

- How does the work of Pre and Post-Civil War writers establish the foundation for future generations of African-American writers?
- How do readers make text to self, text to text, and text to world connections when studying early African-American texts?
- How does the influence of Harlem renaissance writers show an enduring impact on the artists that follow them?

Unit Scope and Sequence

- Survey/discussion of Pre-Civil War literature such as [“The Interesting Narrative of Oludah Equiano,”](#) [“On Being Brought Africa to America,”](#) (Phillis Wheatley) “Stagolee,” “The Sinking of the Titanic,” “John Henry,” and/or other anonymous selections from anthology from this time period.
- Written reader responses and discussion of stories/poems from textbook/anthology.
- Examination of how the earliest African-American literature from the folk tradition and Pre-Civil War enslavement established the foundation for future generations of writers/artists.
- Comparison of earlier stories, poems, and folk tales to the writing style and techniques of Harriet Jacobs’ [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl](#) and/or Fredrick Douglass’ [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave and Essays](#)
- Read Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and/or Nella Larsen’s *Passing* and compose a synthesis essay which compares Hurston or Larsen’s styles and themes to an earlier work of African-American literature that students previously engaged with in class.

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Informal written response scored with rubric
- Small group and full group discussions

Summative Assessments:

- Four to Five page (1000-1250 word) synthesis essay which compares Zora Neale Hurston and/or Nella Larsen’s styles and/or themes to an earlier work of African-American literature that students previously engaged with in class. The essay will contain equal parts from both the selected novel and story/poem/narrative, containing direct evidence from each text. Students will examine word choice, figurative and connotative meanings, and subtext in their essays and analyze the connections they find.

Resources

Core

- Douglass, Fredrick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave and Essays*. Print.
- Gilyard, Keith and Anissa Ward. *African American Literature*. Print.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Print
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Print
- Larsen, Nella and Deborah Mcdowell. *Quicksand*; and, *Passing*. Print

Supplemental

- Selected [poems](#), short stories, narratives, songs, and [folk tales](#) from the Pre-Civil War period.
- Selected [poems](#), short stories, narratives, songs, and folk tales from the Post-Civil War period.
- Selected [poems](#), short stories, narratives, songs, and folk tales from the Harlem Renaissance (all supplemental materials can be found in the African-American Literature anthology)
- Hall, Rebecca. *Passing*. Film

Time Allotment

- Approximately 5-7 Weeks

Unit 2 Contemporary Examination of African-American Authors

Unit Goals:

At the completion of this unit, students will:

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging or beautiful.

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Unit Essential Questions

- How is African American literature affected by changes in society?
- How do African American authors comment on the times they live in while telling engaging, unique stories?
- How do writers/artists establish their voice and a recognizable style?
- How do the main characters in the texts and people in general make decisions based on both their moral and ethical beliefs and what happens when they stray from those beliefs?

Unit Scope and Sequence

- Read two to three novels/plays that focus on notable African-American writers and analyze how the writers tell their stories, create memorable characters, use distinct

voices, and comment on the past and the future regarding civil and human rights, family and community, and moral and ethical decisions. Selections include: Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Alex Haley's *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Toni Morrison's *The Song of Solomon*, August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*, Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage*, and Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*.

- Supplement discussions and responses to novels with multiple selections from African-American Literature anthology from sections titled "Urban Landscapes," "A Strand of Social Protest," "Discourses of Black Nationalism," and "Statements of Feminism." Select from a wide variety of writers such as Terry McMillan, Wanda Coleman, W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Gwendolyn Brooks, June Jordan, Bell Hooks, and Alice Walker to ensure a cross-section of ideas, styles, points of view, and opinions.
- Written reader responses and discussion of stories/poems from textbook/anthology.
- In-class analytical essay comparing and contrasting how two of the writers tell their stories, create memorable characters, use distinct voices, and comment on the past and the future regarding civil and human rights, family and community, and moral and ethical decisions through analysis of narrative technique and literary devices.

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Informal written response scored with rubric
- Small group and full group discussions

Summative Assessments:

- Three to four page in-class analytical essay comparing and contrasting how two of the writers tell their stories, create memorable characters, use distinct voices, and comment on the past and the future regarding civil and human rights, family and community, and moral and ethical decisions through analysis of narrative technique and literary devices.

Resources

Core

- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. Print.
- Gilyard, Keith and Anissa Ward. *African American Literature*. Print.
- Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Print.
- Johnson, Charles. *Middle Passage*. Print.
- Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*. Print
- Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day*. Print
- Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson*. Print.
- Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. Print

Supplemental

- Selected poems, short stories, narratives, songs, and folk tales (found in the African-American Literature anthology)

- Lee, Spike. *BlacKkKlansman*. Film
- Lee, Spike. *Malcolm X*. Film.
- Richards, Lloyd. *The Piano Lesson* (1995). Film
- Washington, Malcolm. *The Piano Lesson* (2024). Film.

Time Allotment

- Approximately 6-8 Weeks

Unit 3 Contemporary Examination of African-American Genre Writing

Unit Goals:

At the completion of this unit, students will:

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging or beautiful.

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

CCS.ELA-
LITERACY.RL.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Unit Essential Questions

- How do writers/artists establish their voice and a recognizable style?
- How do African American authors comment on the times they live in while telling engaging, unique stories within the confines of genre writing?
- How do the main characters in the texts embody the traits that are expected in their genre and also represent contemporary African-American viewpoints/sensibilities?

Unit Scope and Sequence

- Read/view two to three works that represent a variety of genres (horror, detective story, science fiction, magical realism) by African-American writers/filmmakers and analyze how the creators tell their stories, within the confines of the selected genre and yet also imbue the characters and story elements with aspects of African-American culture. Selections include: Vita Ayala, ChrisCross, and Nikolas Draper Ivey’s *Static: Season One*, Victor LaValle’s *The Ballad of Black Tom*, Walter Mosley’s *Devil in a Blue Dress*, Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day*, and Jordan Peele’s *Nope*.
- Discuss and research genre conventions for each novel/work.
- Out-of-class analytical essay that asks students to choose one of the works in the unit as the best representation of both the genre and African-American culture/sensibilities.

Unit Assured Assessments

Formative Assessments:

- Informal, on-demand written responses scored with rubric
- Small group and full group discussions

Summative Assessments:

- Four to five page out-of-class analytical essay that asks students to choose one of the works in the unit as the best representation of both the selected genre and African-American culture/sensibilities. The essay will contain direct evidence from the text and examine word choice, figurative and connotative meanings, and subtext in their essays to substantiate their analysis about the genre conventions and connections to modern African-American culture and sensibilities.

Resources

Core

- Ayala, Vita, ChrisCross, and Nikolas Draper Ivey. *Static: Season One*. Print
- Butler, Octavia. *The Parable of the Sower*. Print
- Coogler, Ryan. *Black Panther*. Film.
- Gilyard, Keith and Anissa Ward. *African American Literature*. Print.
- LaValle, Victor. *The Ballad of Black Tom*. Print.
- Mosley, Walter. *Devil in a Blue Dress*. Print
- Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day*. Print
- Peele, Jordan. *Nope*. Film

Supplemental

- Selected poems, short stories, narratives, songs, and folk tales (found in the African-American Literature anthology)

Time Allotment

- Approximately 6-8 Weeks

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

The following is a list of Academic Language terms that will be used to discuss the novels, plays, and films in the course.

- alliteration
- allusion
- antagonist
- archetype
- characterization
- conflict (external and internal)
- dialogue
- diction
- foreshadowing
- flashback
- genre
- imagery
- irony (dramatic, situational, verbal)
- juxtaposition
- metaphor
- mood
- motif
- narrator
- personification
- plot
- point of view
- protagonist
- setting
- simile
- symbolism
- tense
- theme
- tone

CREDIT

One-half credit in English

PREREQUISITES

Successful completion of grades 9, 10, and 11 English

CURRENT REFERENCES

- Gilyard, Keith and Anissa Ward. *African American Literature*.
- R. Means Coleman, Robin. *Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films From the 1890s to Present*. Routledge
- Womack, L. Ytasha. *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*. Lawrence Hill Books

ASSURED STUDENT PERFORMANCE RUBRICS

- Trumbull High School School-Wide Reading Rubric
- Trumbull High School School-Wide Writing Rubric
- Trumbull High School School-Wide Independent Learning and Thinking Rubric
- Vision of the Graduate Rubric
- African-American Literature Informal, On-Demand Writing Assignment Rubric
- Major Essay Rubric

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Trumbull High School School-Wide Reading Rubric

Category/Weight	Exemplary 4	Goal 3	Working Toward Goal 2	Needs Support 1-0
Respond X_____	Demonstrates exceptional understanding of text by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identifying the purpose of the text • Providing initial reaction richly supported by text • Providing a perceptive interpretation 	Demonstrates understanding of text by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the fundamental purpose of the text • Providing initial reaction supported by text • Providing a clear/straight forward interpretation of the text 	Demonstrates general understanding of text by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially identifying the purpose of the text • Providing initial reaction somewhat supported by text • Providing a superficial interpretation of the text 	Demonstrates limited or no understanding of text by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not identifying the purpose of the text • Providing initial reaction not supported by text • Providing an interpretation not supported by the text
Interpret X_____	Student is able to exceptionally interpret text by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensively reshaping, reflecting, revising, and/or deepening initial understanding • Constructing insightful and perceptive ideas about the text. • Actively raising critical questions and exploring multiple interpretations of the text 	Student is able to interpret text by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reshaping, reflecting, revising, and/or deepening initial understanding • Summarizing main ideas of text • Actively interpreting text by raising questions and looking for answers in text 	Student is able to interpret text by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided reflection and/or revision of initial understanding • Summarizing some main ideas of text • Guided interpretation of text by answering questions locating answers in text 	Student demonstrates limited ability to interpret text as evidenced by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to implement guided reflection and/or revision of initial understanding • Struggle to summarize any main ideas of text • Struggle to answer questions by locating responses in text
Connect X_____	Demonstrates perceptive connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text to text • text to self • text to world 	Demonstrates specific connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text to text • text to self • text to world 	Demonstrates general connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text to text • text to self • text to world 	Struggles to make connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text to text • text to self • text to world
Evaluate X_____	Insightfully evaluates the text by one or more of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical analysis to create a conclusion supported by the text • Perceptive judgments about the quality of the text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of text • Express a personal opinion. 	Evaluates the text by one or more of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critical analysis to form a conclusion from the text • thoughtful judgments about the quality of the text • Evaluation of text to express personal opinion(s) 	A general evaluation of the text by one or more of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a superficial conclusion from the text • Assesses the quality of the text • Uses text to express personal opinion(s) 	Struggles to evaluate the text by any of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming a conclusion from the text • Assessing the quality of the text • Using text to express personal opinion(s)

Trumbull High School School-Wide Writing Rubric

Category/Weight	Exemplary 4	Goal 3	Working Toward Goal 2	Needs Support 1-0
	Student work:	Student work:	Student work:	Student work:
Purpose X_____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and maintains a clear purpose Demonstrates an insightful understanding of audience and task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and maintains a purpose Demonstrates an accurate awareness of audience and task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a purpose Demonstrates an awareness of audience and task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not establish a clear purpose Demonstrates limited/no awareness of audience and task
Organization X_____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects sophisticated organization throughout Demonstrates logical progression of ideas Maintains a clear focus Utilizes effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects organization throughout Demonstrates logical progression of ideas Maintains a focus Utilizes transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects some organization throughout Demonstrates logical progression of ideas at times Maintains a vague focus May utilize some ineffective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects little/no organization Lacks logical progression of ideas Maintains little/no focus Utilizes ineffective or no transitions
Content X_____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is accurate, explicit, and vivid Exhibits ideas that are highly developed and enhanced by specific details and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is accurate and relevant Exhibits ideas that are developed and supported by details and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May contain some inaccuracies Exhibits ideas that are partially supported by details and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is inaccurate and unclear Exhibits limited/no ideas supported by specific details and examples
Use of Language X_____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates excellent use of language Demonstrates a highly effective use of standard writing that enhances communication Contains few or no errors. Errors do not detract from meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates competent use of language Demonstrates effective use of standard writing conventions Contains few errors. Most errors do not detract from meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates use of language Demonstrates use of standard writing conventions Contains errors that detract from meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates limited competency in use of language Demonstrates limited use of standard writing conventions Contains errors that make it difficult to determine meaning

Trumbull High School School-Wide Independent Learning and Thinking Rubric

Category/Weight	Exemplary 4	Goal 3	Working Toward Goal 2	Needs Support 1-0
Proposal x_____	Student demonstrates a strong sense of initiative by generating compelling questions, creating uniquely original projects/work.	Student demonstrates initiative by generating appropriate questions, creating original projects/work.	Student demonstrates some initiative by generating questions, creating appropriate projects/work.	Student demonstrates limited or no initiative by generating few questions and creating projects/work.
Independent Research & Development x_____	Student is analytical, insightful, and works independently to reach a solution.	Student is analytical, and works productively to reach a solution.	Student reaches a solution with direction.	Student is unable to reach a solution without consistent assistance.
Presentation of Finished Product x_____	<p>Presentation shows compelling evidence of an independent learner and thinker.</p> <p>Solution shows deep understanding of the problem and its components.</p> <p>Solution shows extensive and appropriate application of 21st Century Skills.</p>	<p>Presentation shows clear evidence of an independent learner and thinker.</p> <p>Solution shows adequate understanding of the problem and its components.</p> <p>Solution shows adequate application of 21st Century Skills.</p>	<p>Presentation shows some evidence of an independent learner and thinker.</p> <p>Solution shows some understanding of the problem and its components.</p> <p>Solution shows some application of 21st Century Skills.</p>	<p>Presentation shows limited or no evidence of an independent learner and thinker.</p> <p>Solution shows limited or no understanding of the problem.</p> <p>Solution shows limited or no application of 21st Century Skills.</p>

Skill Rubric: Critical Thinking/Problem Solving 9-12 (rev. 2024)

(Note: VOG Rubrics may revised as the district committee as needed)

Indicator of Attainment	Beginning 1	Meets 2	Exceeds 3	Score
<p>UNDERSTANDING</p> <p>Identifies the problem, question or issue being addressed.</p>	<p>Exhibits limited and/or no understanding of key concepts.</p>	<p>Exhibits an understanding of key concepts.</p>	<p>Exhibits a thorough and accurate understanding of key concepts and can access those concepts from multiple perspectives.</p>	
<p>PLANNING</p> <p>Applies systematic thinking and selects strategies to address the problem, question or issue.</p>	<p>Shows limited to no evidence of a plan, model or strategy to solve a problem.</p>	<p>Shows a plan, model or strategy to solve a problem.</p>	<p>Shows innovative and creative thinking to solve a problem.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONING</p> <p>Analyzes relevant information related to the problem, question or issue.</p>	<p>Unable to or has difficulty questioning and analyzing numerical, written, or visual data and identifying related evidence.</p>	<p>Questions and analyzes numerical, written, or visual data and selects the relevant evidence.</p>	<p>Questions and analyzes numerical, written, or visual data and selects the most relevant and impactful evidence.</p> <p>Describes why different approaches to a problem or situation could yield the same or similar results.</p>	
<p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Makes evidence-based conclusions/solutions and makes adjustments as needed to address the problem, question or issue.</p>	<p>Solution is inadequately supported or supported with minimal evidence, limited analysis of data and relevant information.</p>	<p>Solution is accurately supported by evidence and the student makes conclusions based on appropriate evidence.</p>	<p>Solution is thorough, accurate, and evidence-based.</p> <p>Shows extensive, thoughtful and reflective thinking on how a problem is solved and makes adjustments as needed.</p>	

SCORING

Beginning: 4 - 6

Meets: 7 - 8 GOAL

Exceeds: 10 - 12

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Skill Rubric: Communication 9-12 (currently under revision)

Indicator of Attainment	Beginning 1	Meets 2	Exceeds 3	Score
<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>Expresses ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.</p>	<p>Limited demonstration of understanding. Purpose is not identified and/or not fully articulated.</p> <p>Does not or partially expresses ideas in alignment with purpose.</p>	<p>Purpose is identified and articulated but may be occasionally unclear.</p> <p>Expresses ideas with purpose.</p>	<p>Purpose is identified and clearly articulated and enhanced.</p> <p>Clearly expresses ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.</p> <p>Makes connections beyond the intended purpose.</p>	
<p>AUDIENCE</p> <p>Demonstrates an awareness of the intended audience.</p>	<p>Demonstrates little to no awareness of the audience.</p> <p>Language and content is inappropriate and/or ineffective for the audience.</p>	<p>Demonstrates an awareness of the audience.</p> <p>Language and content is appropriate and helps the audience understand the topic/position.</p>	<p>Clearly and consistently demonstrates a complete awareness of the intended audience by connecting to the audience and adjusting as needed. Engages with and responds to the intended audience in a developmentally appropriate manner.</p> <p>Language and content is appropriate and precise which helps the intended audience further understand the topic/position.</p>	
<p>ORGANIZATION</p> <p>Organizes and supports ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.</p>	<p>The organizational structure is not and/or minimally effective for the purpose.</p> <p>The topic/position is not focused and/or minimally supported by details.</p>	<p>Effective organizational structure supports the purpose.</p> <p>The topic/position is focused, well thought out, and supported by accurate and effective details.</p>	<p>Clearly expresses ideas in alignment with the intended purpose. Purpose is clearly identified and connections are made beyond the intended purpose.</p> <p>Substantive and accurate details support and extend the topic/position with exceptional development, specificity, and depth.</p>	
<p>LISTENING</p> <p>Receives and responds to ideas in alignment with the intended purpose.</p>	<p>Limited to no ability to listen to others.</p> <p>Unable to ask relevant questions.</p> <p>Can not paraphrase/restate the message.</p>	<p>Listens to, evaluates, and responds to others.</p> <p>Asks relevant questions.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding by accurately paraphrasing/restating the message.</p>	<p>Actively listens to, evaluates and responds to others.</p> <p>Asks relevant questions that indicate an interest to learn more and understand further.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding by accurately paraphrasing/ restating the message and expanding upon the ideas presented.</p>	

SCORING

Beginning: 4 - 6

Meets: 7 - 8 GOAL

Exceeds: 10 - 12

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Skill Rubric: Collaboration 9-12 (currently under revision)

Indicator of Attainment	Beginning 1	Meets 2	Exceeds 3	Score
<p>PLANNING</p> <p>Works effectively with and is receptive to the ideas/contributions of group members.</p>	<p>Does not or lacks a discussion on the strengths of each group member.</p> <p>Does not define group roles.</p>	<p>Assigns roles and defines contributions of those in the group.</p> <p>Suggests ways the group can approach the task.</p>	<p>Assigns roles and defines contributions based upon the unique knowledge, abilities, or interests of those in the group.</p> <p>Plans the approach to the task and anticipates challenges and resolutions.</p>	
<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Thinks with the group and acknowledges multiple perspectives.</p>	<p>Does not or rarely listens to the thinking of the group.</p> <p>Provides little to no feedback.</p>	<p>Utilizes the thinking of the group in order to work toward the completion of the task.</p> <p>Provides feedback.</p>	<p>Synthesizes and expresses the multiple perspectives of the group in order to complete the task.</p> <p>Provides feedback that improves the quality of the task.</p>	
<p>CONTRIBUTION</p> <p>Works with others to complete a task and shares the credit.</p>	<p>Little or no contribution to the task.</p>	<p>Shares work, reviews others' contributions and offers general feedback.</p>	<p>Shares work beyond the individual task, constructively critiques others' contributions, and offers feedback to improve the overall quality of the task.</p>	
<p>REFLECTION</p> <p>Monitors individual and collective contributions of each group member throughout the completion of the task.</p>	<p>Little or no reflection on ways to adjust the group's collaboration process throughout the task/product.</p> <p>Focuses only on individual contributions to the task.</p>	<p>Reflects and suggests individual and/or collective contributions to adjust the group's collaboration process to improve the quality of the task.</p>	<p>Applies relevant and diverse individual and collective contributions to monitor and adjust the quality of the task.</p>	

SCORING

Beginning: 4 - 6

Meets: 7 - 8 **GOAL**

Exceeds: 10 - 12

__ / 12

African-American Literature Informal, On-Demand Writing Assignment Rubric

20-18:

- Strong thesis or main idea which is expertly threaded throughout the document
- Fully developed ideas with exceptional support
- Many solid, insightful examples from the event or source
- Well-written in terms of structure, word choice, and voice. Virtually flawless.
- Between 3-4 full pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point type)
- Answers the question fully, directions followed

17-16:

- Solid thesis or main idea which is threaded throughout the document
- Developed ideas with adequate support
- Some strong examples from the event or source
- Structure is effective and word choice is appropriate
- Between 2-3 full pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point type)
- Answers the question, directions followed

15-13:

- Unclear thesis or main idea which is not consistent throughout the document
- Partially developed ideas with some support
- Few examples from the event or source, unrelated examples
- Unstructured and confusing, simple word choice, lacks voice
- Between 1-2 full pages in length, with inconsistent formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point type)
- Questions not fully answered or considered

12-8:

- Unusual or Unknown thesis or main idea which is not present throughout the document
- Undeveloped ideas with little support
- One example or less from the event or source, unrelated examples
- Lack of coherency, difficult to follow
- Between 1-½ full pages in length, with improper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point type)
- Questions ignored or not answered

Major Essay Rubric

A Range:

- Your essay contains a solid, original, arguable thesis.
- Your focus on summarizing the text(s) is minimal. All body paragraphs focus on assessing the text(s) based on all of the criteria of the assignment.
- Your quotes are properly cited using MLA format. They are present to support your thesis, and you analyze them completely. You select compelling quotes from all sources.
- Well-written in terms of structure, word choice, and voice. Virtually flawless.
- Between four and six full pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, 12 point type)

B Range:

- Your essay contains a solid, original, arguable thesis.
- You focus a little too much on summarizing the text(s). Many of your body paragraphs focus on assessing the text(s) based on all of the criteria of the assignment.
- Your quotes are properly cited using MLA format. They are present to support your thesis, and you analyze them sufficiently. You select good quotes from all sources.
- Structure is effective and word choice is appropriate.
- Between four to six pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, 12 point type)

C Range:

- Essay contains an unclear thesis or restates the prompt.
- Your essay focuses heavily on retelling the events that occur in the text(s). The majority of your body paragraphs focus on plot. Your body paragraphs do not always assess the text(s) based on all of the criteria of the assignment or prove why the article of your thesis is the definitive article.
- Your quotes are properly cited using MLA format. They are present to retell the facts and your statements about them retell the details instead of assessing their quality. Some ideas may lack quotes for support. Placement and/or length of quote(s) may be questionable.
- Structure may not meet the needs of the prompt due to content and/or grammatical issues, including word choice or voice.
- Between four to six pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, 12 point type)

D Range:

- Essay contains a flawed thesis or restates the prompt.

- Your essay almost entirely retells the events that occur in the text(s). Your body paragraphs do not assess the text(s) based on all of the criteria of the assignment.
- Your quotes may not be properly cited using MLA format. They are present to retell the facts of the story, and your statements about them retell the story instead of assessing their quality. Some ideas may lack quotes for support. Placement and/or length of quote(s) is questionable.
- Un-structured and/or confusing, simple word choice, lacks voice.
- Between three and six pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, 12 point type)

F Range:

- Essay contains a confusing thesis or no thesis.
- Your essay almost entirely retells the events from the text(s).. You do not use the criteria of the assignment to assess the text(s). Prompt questions are ignored or not answered.
- Your quotes may not be properly cited using MLA format. They are present to retell the facts of the story, and your statements about them retell the story instead of assessing their quality. Most ideas may lack quotes for support. Placement and/or length of quote is questionable..
- Lack of coherency, difficult to follow
- Between two to six pages in length, with proper formatting and spacing (typed, double-spaced, 12 point type)

Essays must be four to six pages in length, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 point type, cited in MLA format. If you have questions or would like your teacher to look at a draft, please let me know and we can meet to discuss it.

OTHER RESOURCES

- *The Piano Lesson* Essay Assignment
- *The Ballad of Black Tom* Essay Assignment
- *Middle Passage* Essay Assignment
- *Passing* Essay Assignment

The Piano Lesson Essay

Choose one of the topics below to compose a full 4-5 page essay on. Use Times New Roman, 12 point font. Your essay should be double-spaced as well. Be sure to have quotes in each of your body paragraphs (5-6 quotes total) with a page number citation from the same edition of the novel that we used in class. Remember that your evidence should back up your thesis statement. It should be specific to your thesis and be sure to explain how this evidence supports your thesis. Avoid use of the first person in the essay (no "I" statements).

1. After reading the play and watching the film adaptation, which character do you side with in the debate over selling the piano? Do you agree with Boy Willie or Bernice? Use evidence from the play to support your point of view and reasoning.
2. There are many aspects of African-American culture found in the play such as the music, history, and folklore of the South. Which one aspect plays the largest part in supporting the themes and motifs in *The Piano Lesson*? How/why does it have this impact?
3. Compare and contrast Troy Maxson from *Fences* and Boy Willie from *The Piano Lesson*. Focus on 2-3 main differences or similarities between them.
4. The supernatural plays a major role in the play with the appearance of Sutter's Ghost and the Ghosts of the Yellow Dog story. If a director were to remove the paranormal elements from *The Piano Lesson*, would it help or hurt the play?

The Ballad of Black Tom Essay

Respond to one of the following questions in a four to five page critical analysis essay. Use plentiful quotes throughout (4-6 quotes) and be sure to explain your evidence. Please use 12 point font and standard margins, double spacing, and MLA Format. Choose one of the following prompts:

1. How does Victor Lavalle use *The Ballad of Black Tom* to tell a horror story in the vein of H.P. Lovecraft and also comment on events that impact modern Americans? Be sure to comment equally on both aspects.
2. By the end of the novel, do you view Black Tom as a villain? Why or why not?
3. Read H.P. Lovecraft's short story "The Horror at Red Hook" and analyze what elements Lavalle uses in *The Ballad of Black Tom* and also how his story differs.
4. Near the end of the novel, Black Tom's last words to Malone, Howard, and Suydam are "I'll take Cthulhu over you devils any day" (143). How does this quote relate to Tommy's experiences in the novel with them and why would an ancient, evil cosmic god be better?

You can access an electronic version of Lovecraft's "The Horror at Red Hook" right here:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/72966/pg72966-images.html>

Middle Passage Essay

Respond to one of the following questions in a four to six page critical analysis essay (1000-1250 words). Use plentiful quotes throughout (4-6 quotes) and be sure to explain your evidence (and use page numbers from our edition). Please use 12 point font and standard margins, spacing, and MLA Format. Choose one of the following prompts:

1. What elements (no more than three) of the Hero Cycle show the most about Rutherford Calhoun as a reluctant hero? Reference the Hero Cycle and specific examples of Rutherford's choices and actions.
2. Consider the ways that characters in the novel are enslaved-to marriage, to money, to ignorance, to habit, to traditions, to debt, etc.? Is anyone in the novel "free"? If so, who and why?
3. How does "the principle of Never Explain and Never Apologize" (found on page 143) define people like Captain Falcon and his actions?
4. Which character, besides Rutherford or Captain Falcon, does the most to highlight and support Johnson's themes in *Middle Passage*?
5. How does Rutherford embody the traits of the trickster hero in *Middle Passage*? This question requires a little research into mythology or the section in the anthology.

Passing Essay

Choose one of the topics below to compose a full 4-5 page essay on. Use Times New Roman, 12 point font. Your essay should be double-spaced as well. Be sure to have quotes in each of your body paragraphs (5-6 quotes total) with a page number citation from the same edition of the novel that we used in class (-10 penalty if you have no page numbers). Remember that your evidence should back up your thesis statement. It should be specific to your thesis and be sure to explain how this evidence supports your thesis. Avoid use of the first person in the essay (no “I” statements).

1. Is *Passing* Irene’s story or Clare’s?
2. Irene and her husband Brian argue over explaining racism to their sons (pages 102-104). How does their disagreement/philosophy inform the themes and motifs in the novel?
3. Compare and contrast the novel and the 2021 film adaptation. Choose one major similarity and one difference or two similarities or two differences to focus on in your analysis.
4. Do you feel that the subtle nature of the novel works for a modern audience?
5. Is Clare’s choice “to pass” more about shame over her racial background or about social climbing and class?