

Summer Reading 2026
American Literature—Grade 10

DUE MONDAY, AUGUST 31

Directions: You are to read *Kindred* by Octavia Butler and complete the following two assignments. Be prepared for a Socratic Seminar (a type of whole-class discussion) and an in-class write within the first few weeks of school. Please submit both assignments to Canvas by the start of your class period on Monday, August 31st.

Students who use AI for any portion of this work, including tools that fix/enhance writing like Grammarly, will be turned in to Mr. Harris for an Honor Code violation, be required to re-do the summer reading, and receive only UP TO HALF CREDIT.

Please either borrow a copy of *Kindred* from your local library or purchase a copy. It is often available at bookstores, or use this link to purchase a copy on Amazon (paper or ebook both acceptable) = [Kindred by Octavia Butler](#)

Assignment #1—Consider these open-ended questions related to *Kindred*. They are intended to spark discussion and introduce participants to new ideas, as you will participate in a Socratic seminar.

Answer each question based on your beliefs and understanding of the novel. Aim for about 4 complete sentences in response for each. **You must include a well-integrated direct quote in your response to each question (cite the page number) to support your answer.** Please type your responses in a separate document.

Question 1—"I never realized how easily people could be trained to accept slavery." Dana says this to Kevin when they have returned to the present and are discussing their experiences in the antebellum South. Do you agree with Dana's statement? Use text and specific examples to support your opinion. Do we also in the twenty-first century still see the impact of slavery/have conditioned responses to slavery? In other words, Have people learned to react to it in certain ways without thinking?

Question 2-How do you think Butler confronts us with the issues of difference in the novel? How does she challenge us to consider boundaries of black/white, master/slave, husband/wife, past/present? Use specific examples from the text when addressing each issue of difference. What does each of these dichotomies make you think about?

Question 3- Describe some of the ways both Kevin and Dana **reinforce** the prejudices and social roles of the time period. Describe some of the ways they **resist** their classification. Both Kevin and Dana realize they can't change history. What, then, might be the purpose of Dana's travels?

Question 4 - What would change about the story if Dana is not the narrator? Do you think Dana is the right choice to narrate the story? Would you like to see the story told in 3rd person? Which character would you most like to see his/her side of the story? Why?

Question 5-When Dana and Kevin return from the past together, she thinks: "I felt as though I were losing my place here in my own time. Rufus's time was a sharper, stronger reality" (191). Why would the twentieth century seem less vivid to Dana than the nineteenth century?

Question 6-What are some of the different levels of love portrayed in *Kindred*? How about family? Discuss the ways in which the title encapsulates the relationships within the novel. Is it ironic? Literal? Metaphoric? What emphasis do you place on your own kinship? How does it compare with that of the novel?

Assignment #2—Complete the character chart below. You will be able to use this on your in-class write that will take place within the first few weeks of school.

As you read, trace and annotate major conflicts throughout the novel. How do those conflicts help develop the growth of the characters?

For each of the following characters, record 2 instances where the character faces a conflict. Explain the conflict and how it develops their character (changes them, helps them grow). Record the quote **word-for-word** and **cite the page number**. It is important that you record the exact lines from the book for each box, as well as the page number where the lines are found.

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