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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

2005 Volume II: The Challenge of Intersecting Identities in American Society: Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Nation

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## **Investigating the Multiple Identities of African American Women Fictional and Real**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 05.02.10

by Jean E. Sutherland

This integrated unit focuses on two groups of African American women, one group living during and immediately after the period of enslavement, and the other representing women who influenced or could have influenced the Civil Rights Movement. Some lived in the years leading up to the movement and one was an actual participant. Some of these women are creations of fiction, while others are actual people. They include Harriet Tubman, Faith Ringgold, and characters from the writings of Mildred Taylor, Connie Porter and others.

With each group, students examine the various identities assumed by each individual, learn of the conflicting and/or supporting pressures that these identities had upon each other, and speculate regarding how students would have reacted to some of these influences. Activities are integrated, with emphasis on Social Studies, Social Development, and Language Arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Several detailed art activities are included. The unit is aimed at third graders, but could easily be adapted to a fourth or fifth grade class and some middle school groups.

(Recommended for Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Social Development and Art, grades 3-6.)

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