



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2020 Volume I: The Place of Woman: Home, Economy, and Politics

Born Naked: Gender Roles in Literature and Life

Guide for Curriculum Unit 20.01.11
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In this unit, students in a grade 12 English class will read and discuss the social implications of two literary classics, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. Prior to reading these texts, learners will define and discuss the concept of gender as a social construction. Students will engage in activities that ask them to reconsider and challenge notions of what is "normal," and to think about how societal norms dictate a person's behavior and self-perception. While reading and discussing both core texts for this unit, students will seek to identify the extent to which individuals are able to subvert the expectations that society has placed upon them based on gender. To demonstrate their mastery of key concepts in the unit, learners will work independently and in small groups to create written arguments and multimedia projects exploring the actions and decisions of characters in the texts and trends in the real world. In doing so, students will develop an understanding that gender is not a concrete indicator of a person's abilities or potential, and that challenging societal norms can allow individuals greater freedom of expression, as well as empathy and compassion toward one another.

(Developed for English, grade 12; recommended for English, grade 12)

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