



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1980 Volume III: Drama

Images of Black Women in Drama

Guide for Curriculum Unit 80.03.04
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This unit is intended to modify the apathetic behavior of black female students who fail to recognize their worth and need to acquire a good education. Through reading plays and poems that focus on the various roles of the black woman, the student will be able to decide for herself whether a role is deplorable or admirable. She will be able to compare and contrast and reject and accept character(s). The quality or trait of the character(s) that the student finds to be admirable will be absorbed by the student and will, hopefully, contribute to transforming the student into an independent thinking and striving individual. The plays and poems will focus on black women as loving mothers, abusive mothers, educated women, prostitutes, frustrated wives, domineering grandmothers, annoyed sisters, women in love, incarcerated women and liberated women. Although this unit focuses on black women, the active participation of male students is vital to the success of this unit. Most of the plays include male characters. All of the readings and discussions require male input and feedback. Male criticism of the female roles will be viewed as incentive for the females to modify their behavior. Males will also learn to become more sensitive to the plight of the black woman. Students of other cultural backgrounds will be allowed to participate in this unit because although this unit deals with the various problems of black women, these problems are not unique to them. These students will find situations in the plays and poems that mirror their problems of worthlessness and lack of education. Improvisation activities, borrowed from Spolin and Chaikin, will be used as warm-up activities before the students attempt to read the plays and poems.

(Recommended for 10th through 12th grade General English.)

Key Words

Women Literature Afro-American Improvisation Basic Performance Drama Poetry

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