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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1985 Volume III: Twentieth Century American Fiction, Biography, and Autobiography

Autobiography: Maya Angelou

Guide for Curriculum Unit 85.03.03
by Anna K. Bartow

This is a unit based on the autobiographical novels of Maya Angelou. Students who study this unit will be asked to read “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” and one or more of her other novels as well as some of her poetry. The first objective of the unit is to expose students to the concepts of autobiography, biography, and fiction as literary genres. The second objective is to enable students to read, study, and analyze Maya Angelou’s autobiographical writings in terms of what she intended to accomplish by her writings. The third objective is to encourage students to develop and enhance their literary competence by lessons which focus on figurative and symbolic language and on voice or point of view. Students will also learn to understand the use of flashbacks and other distorted time sequences.

(Recommended for Intermediate/Advanced English classes, grades 10 through 12)

Key Words

Angelou Maya Writing Autobiography Literature American

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