



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1999 Volume I: Women's Voices in Fiction

Mothers Represented in Short Stories by Women

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.01.05
by Sandra K. Friday

The unit, *Mothers Represented in Short Stories by Women*, is designed for at-risk high school students. I have found that short stories, by nature of their brevity, are not intimidating to the students that I teach in a program for students who have had little success in a large urban high school.

Many engaging stories about women who are mothers have been written by women. The unit examines, through short stories, the lives of six women who all have daughters. These women come from different cultural backgrounds, and the life issues with which they are confronted differ as well. It is the aim of this unit to raise the consciousness of my students about how mothers differ from one culture to another, and how issues confronting mothers vary; and yet how much mothers, the world over, have in common.

Ultimately, this unit invites students to take a close look at the lives of their own mothers and the women (or fathers for that matter) who have raised them, and even to think about their own present or future parenthood.

The lesson plans that I have developed have the CAPT (Connecticut Academic Performance Test) in mind, with two lessons focusing on the types of questions asked in the Language Arts section of the test, following the reading of the short story. Another lesson plan offers a strategy for guiding students through the five-paragraph essay process.

My unit focusing on mothers can be taught in conjunction with the unit by Dianne Marlowe that focuses on daughters titled *Daughters Come of Age in Women's Fiction*.

(Recommended for English Literature and Writing, grades 9-12.)

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