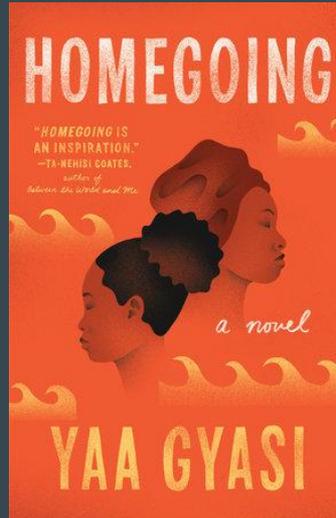


Critically Diverse Voices

African and African American Literature Through the Ages



Introduction and Rationale

- Oftentimes, American high school English courses are primarily focused on white American literature.
- The span of time in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* reflects 250 years of horrific moments in history, focusing on the integration of colonialism and slavery in both Ghana and the United States, as well as the aftermath in both countries.
- Gyasi is both a Ghanaian immigrant as well as a woman, providing a direct antithesis to the typical authors studied in high school English classes.
- Students will be able to read a novel that reflects important historical moments and feelings from an author who does not fit the canon, showing students of different ethnicities, races, cultures, and genders that their voice matters and can be learned from.

Texts/Media in Use

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

“The Weaver Bird” by Kofi Awoonor

”Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” by Harriet Jacobs

“Give Your Daughter’s Difficult Names” by Assetou Xango

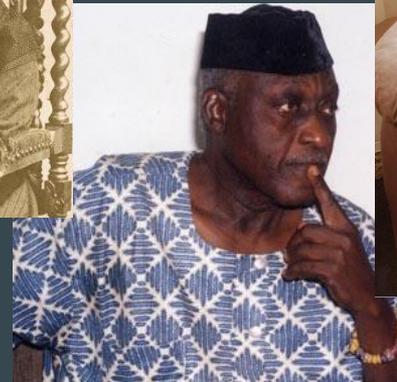
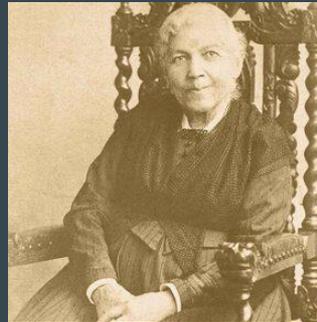
“One Way Ticket” by Langston Hughes

“The Lord’s Prayer“ by Sanna Aabam

“Alright” by Kendrick Lamar

“Harlem” by Langston Hughes

“Drop Me Off In Harlem” Ella Fitzgerald



Introducing the Unit

- Introduce the primary text, focusing directly on author Yaa Gyasi
- Pose a group reflection question to students in which they would answer the question: “What work have you read by African or African American authors during your time in school?”
- YouTube video titled “Yaa Gyasi on *Homegoing*”
- After video, silent written reflection answering questions such as: “What are you most interested in learning about in terms of what Gyasi had mentioned in her brief introduction of the novel?” And “What is something you are hoping to take away from this unit experience?”
- I would then begin reading the first chapter of the novel as a class

Working Through the Text

- As a way to reinforce the themes and ideas from the core text Homegoing, I would pair this alongside multiple accompanying texts of different formats and medias (speech, poetry, literature excerpts, music)
- Incorporating different forms of media to present alongside the core text allows all students to gain access and understanding of the text in ways that suits each of their needs
- I have included some older and newer texts, the newest being a poem from the beginning of rapper Kendrick Lamar's music video "Alright" in which themes of police brutality of the African American race are discussed
- Each supplemental material is written by someone who identifies as African or African American, further pushing the function and theme of the unit.

Working Beyond the Text

- During my observation of an Ethnic Studies Literature class at Abraham Lincoln High School, the teacher made it a point to allow students to perform self analysis in regards to their own culture, ethnicities, race, sexual orientations etc. in order to come to a more complete understanding of the core text and its themes (the teacher did this with Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*)
- I would allow students the opportunity to perform these same self analysis practices alongside their work with this novel as it is important for young students to look within and understand themselves and where they come from in order to understand others.

Concluding the Text

- To conclude the unit, I would provide a final assessment of an essay in which students can take one supplemental material discussed as a class and further relate it to the core text.
- Prompt: Over the course of this unit, we have been introduced to various forms of literature written by both African and African American authors, and have analyzed their literature alongside our reading of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*. Please write a 3-5 page typed, double spaced essay in which you compare and/or contrast one of the short pieces of literature we've analyzed together as a class with the novel *Homegoing*.