

11th grade Honors American Literature
2022-2023 Summer Assignment *Kindred* by Octavia Butler
Instructor: Roachcp@fultonschools.org

Course Overview: 11th grade Honors American Literature is a survey of American Literature that encompasses a diligent study of literature and composition. We will engage in ongoing conversation as we attempt to discover what it means to be an American.

Required Text: *Kindred* by Octavia Butler

****This book uses profanity and racial/racist language that we no longer find acceptable. It is used deliberately for purpose and effect and Butler, a black woman, did not choose to use it without careful consideration of its impact on the reader. Please keep in mind that any discomfort that you feel is likely intentional and necessary to understand Butler's message****

Read and annotate (yes, annotate 😊).

“To annotate” simply means to make notes, to write in the margins and pages of the book as you read and not after you have finished reading. Annotating is not simply underlining or highlighting. If you underline anything, you should write a note in the margin that has an explanation/ thought/reaction. While it is preferred to write in the book, sticky notes with notes attached to the specific page the notes apply will be acceptable.

Part I: Annotate As you read:

A. Annotate for the following symbols and images:

- water (in the form of rivers, rain, etc.)
- dogs
- violence (weapons, whips, assaults, etc.)
- spiritual/religious references (there will not be many)
- historical elements related to the setting/time period.
- As you notice these symbols, write why you think they are being used and what they symbolize

B. Annotate for the following themes:

- Power
- Violence
- How characters are treated differently because of race, sex, class, and/or wealth?

C. Annotate how the following characters develop (change, grow) throughout the novel:

- Dana
- Rufus
- Kevin
- Alice
- Mr. Weylin

D. Annotate major conflicts throughout the novel. How do those conflicts help develop the growth of the characters?

Some students like to use different colors for different topics. While this can slow down your work, it is okay if it helps you to stay organized. You do not have to annotate every page. You do have to annotate all the key elements listed above.

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Part 2: Use your understanding of the novel to answer the following questions. Your answer should be around 150 words, in MLA format, with textual evidence to support your answer.

1. Both Kevin and Dana know that they cannot change history: "We're in the middle of history. We surely can't change it." (page100); and "It's over.... There's nothing you can do to change any of it now." (page 264). Why must you, the reader, experience this journey with Dana? As a member of the human race, must we experience different cultures in order to understand and accept them?
2. How do you think Butler confronts us with issues of difference in *Kindred*? How does she challenge us to consider boundaries of black/white, master/slave, husband/wife, past/present? What other differences does she convolute? Do you think such dichotomies are flexible? Artificial? Useful?