

**141 Summer Assignment (Due on the first day of school in August. No late work accepted.)
DO NOT BEGIN THIS ASSIGNMENT UNTIL MID-JULY OR SO! USE THE EARLY SUMMER TO
READ A FEW BOOKS JUST FOR FUN!**

Beloved
By Toni Morrison

The Pulitzer Prize (1988) winning novel *Beloved* by contemporary American author Toni Morrison is a ghost story of sorts. Based on the true story of Margaret Garner, an escaped slave from Kentucky, the novel explores the **haunting effect of the past on one's present and future** (Look! It's a theme!). Set in the 1870's, the novel recounts the attempts of the characters to grapple with the legacy of slavery in the period of history immediately following the Civil War, which necessitated the **formation of a new personal and cultural identity** for black Americans. The ghost who appears is Morrison's symbolic representation of the brutal past of slavery which haunts each of the characters in different ways. Not until they each acknowledge and reconcile with their past can they move forward, and the envisioning of themselves as human beings is a dramatic leap for most characters. While their past continues to hold them captive, each struggles with how to reconcile past and future.

The following tidbits are designed to help you in the creation of your booknotes. **Peruse the booknotes instructions before you begin to read to figure out how to use the hints below.**

SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERS: Sethe, Paul D., Denver, Baby Suggs, Beloved.

DEVICES: Symbol (several of these!), juxtaposition, flashback.

POST-MODERN TRAITS:

1. Fragmented telling (often non-linear)
2. Quest for Meaning
3. Altered World View
4. Anti-Hero
5. Detached Narrator
6. Ambiguous moral absolutes

Note of Caution!! This should be your own analysis. I'm genuinely interested in what you find in the novel. Using cheap distillations of a work (sparknotes, etc.) makes you a bottom feeder who is content to suck up the digested bits left by others who may have only the most superficial grasp of the work. Worry less about impressing me with what's "right" and more about delving into the messages of the book.

141 Book Notes

Keep these guidelines close to you at all times. You will be using this format throughout the year.

With these, you are creating your own study guides for the AP exam. I will correct them for their completeness and for their depth; however, during class discussion, you can add to them. Above all, you must remember to keep all of your information in **note format** (bullet points, few or no complete sentences, etc.). Although, keep in mind that whatever your choice of organizational format, I must be able to comprehend the information. Furthermore, remember to type your notes, and **please do not allow them to exceed ten pages. Avoid repetition from one section to another! (ie, if two characters are juxtaposed, note it in the character section but not again in the devices section.)**

THESE NOTES SHOULD REFLECT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT. YOU MAY USE OUTSIDE RESEARCH ONLY FOR THE SECTIONS ON AUTHORIAL BACKGROUND AND LITERARY PERIOD. DO NOT USE OUTSIDE RESOURCES FOR ANY OTHER SECTION OF THESE NOTES. THAT IS CHEATING, (and you brand yourself as a bottom feeder who sustains himself on the regurgitated goo of other "scholars.")

Format:

**Begin with your MLA heading. The title of the notes should be *The Name of the Novel* Notes.

I. Section One – Authorial Background

In approximately ½ page of notes, you need to record the key events or statistics of the author's life. Include dates for birth and death and details (and, again, dates) for the **major** works of writing. Aside from those basics, try to **restrict all information to those occurrences that in some way may have affected the novel or play that you've read.**

II. Section Two – Setting

In approximately ½ to 1 page of notes, give details of all **major** settings. Include era and social milieu (what the world/society is like.)

III. Section Three – Characters

In one to two pages, list the **major** characters along with the **key defining characteristics** for each. Also, for each character write out a key quotation (can either be said by or about the character) that is illuminating for the reader. Remember to include a page number for the quote.

IV. Section Four – Themes

In approximately one page, list three major themes for the work and explain how each is developed.

V. Section Five—Plot Summary

In no more than two pages, write a concise summary of the **major** plot developments in the work. Yes, it should be specific, but ten pages of summary won't help anyone. Be smart about what you include. Also, try to avoid repeating information that you include in other sections of the notes. For instance, you don't need to mention setting or themes again.

VI. Section Six – Literary Devices

In ½ - 1 page, identify literary techniques or devices (and page number) used by the writer. Include such devices as allusion, symbolism, point of view, juxtaposition, foreshadowing, and extended metaphor. Avoid relatively minor devices such as a simile or use of personification that occurs once in the work. Look for **pervasive use** of the element. (For example, don't tell me that the leaf mentioned only once on p.143 of a 700 page novel represents mankind's tireless efforts to transcend the bleak existence of this post-modern world. I won't buy it.)

VII. Section Seven— Striking Quote

Choose one quote from the piece that was particularly thought-provoking or that crystallized some aspect of the novel for you. Include a brief explanation about your choice. (1/2 pg or less)

VIII. Section Eight—Literary period

In ½ page, discuss the literary period in which the novel was created. You may have to do a little research for this section. Once you have determined the period, list specifics from the novel that demonstrate tenets or trends of that period.

IX. Section Nine—Works Cited

Credit your sources. **The vast majority of this will be your own work!!! Extensive “borrowing” will result in a zero for the entire work. Please don't test me on this one!!**