



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

Bless Me, Ultima

based on the book by
Rudolfo Anaya

Written by
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A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR RUDOLFO ANAYA

ANAYA, Rudolfo (1937-). Rudolfo Anaya is one of the most widely read modern Mexican-American writers. He is best known for *Bless Me Ultima*, his first novel and winner of the Premio Quinto Sol, a national Chicano literary award.

Rudolfo Alfonso Anaya was born on October 30, 1937, in Pastura, New Mexico. His father, Martín, was a laborer. His mother was Rafaelita Mares Anaya. Anaya is married to Patricia Lawless, a counselor, and lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Anaya received a BA in English from the University of New Mexico in 1963, and a MA in English in 1968. He also received an MA in guidance and counseling from the same university in 1972.

In addition to writing, Rudolfo Anaya has taught at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, since 1974. He became a full professor in 1988. He has also lectured at la Universidad Anahuac in Mexico City, Mexico, Yale, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Indiana, and the University of Texas at Houston.

His professional memberships include the Modern Language Association, The American Association of University Professors, and the National Council of Teachers of English. He was the founder and first president of the Rio Grande Writers Association.

In 1971 Anaya received the Premio Quinto Sol literary award for *Bless Me, Ultima*. He received the University of New Mexico Mesa Chicana literary award in 1977, the New Mexico Governor's Public Service Award in 1978 and 1980, and the New Mexico Governor's award for Excellence and Achievement in Literature in 1980. His third novel, *Tortuga*, received the Before Columbus American Book Award in 1980. The script for his play, "Rosa Linda," received a script development award from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1982. In 1983 he received the award for achievement in Chicano literature from the Hispanic Caucus of Teachers of English. In 1986 the Mexican consulate of Albuquerque awarded him the Medal of Friendship. In addition, Anaya has received fellowships from the National Chicano Council on Higher Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Kellogg Foundation.

Bless Me, Ultima (1972) was Anaya's first novel. He based it and subsequent writings on the Spanish-American background of his childhood and youth in New Mexico. Several critics have commented positively on his use of traditional Spanish-American folktales in *Bless Me, Ultima*. While the novel contains mystical overtones, its main theme is faith and the loss of faith. The protagonist's conflicts come from Anaya's own questioning of beliefs that began while he was a student at the University of New Mexico.

Anaya's second novel, *Heart of Aztlán*, (1976) is the story of a family's move from rural to urban life. It is more political than his other works, and was not as well-received as *Bless Me, Ultima*.

Tortuga, (1979) his third novel, concerns a young boy who wears a body cast due to paralysis (tortuga is the Spanish word for turtle.) Anaya considers these three novels a trilogy depicting the Hispanic experience in America.

In addition to these novels, Rudolfo Anaya has written plays, screenplays, children's stories and nonfiction essays. He contributes to many periodicals including *La Luz*, *Bilingual Review-Revista Bilingüe*, and the *Before Columbus Review*. He is the regional editor of *Viaztlán and International Chicano Journal of Arts and Letters*. His manuscript collection is housed at the Zimmerman Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

INTRODUCTION

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, listening and speaking skills through exercises and activities related to *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya. It includes nineteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to the main themes of the novel: good vs. evil; a struggle with religious beliefs; and choosing a way of life. Following the introductory activity, students are given an explanation of how the activity relates to the book they are about to read.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 8 to 10 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. It might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 8 to 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II gives students dictionary definitions of the words and has them match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have an understanding of the words when they meet them in the text. This unit has a supplementary section containing translations of the Spanish phrases used in the novel.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete extra discussion questions, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the separate vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the reading of the book, two lessons are devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding

of the novel. These questions are done as a **group activity**. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to the themes of the novel.

The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their ideas about the book with the entire class; thus, the entire class gets exposed to many different ideas regarding the themes and events of the book.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is **inform**. Students will construct a family tree, then write an anecdote about one member of their family. The second assignment is to **persuade**. Students will take the point of view of either the father or the sons, and try to persuade the other to agree with his opinion. The third assignment is to **express personal opinions**. Students will take a stand on whether or not Ultima was a witch.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *Bless Me, Ultima*. After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

There is an optional **project** (Project Storyteller) through which students will gain knowledge of the folklore of various cultures.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: all multiple choice-matching-true/false or with a mixture of matching, short answer, and composition. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **unit resource section** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** are located directly after the **reproducible student materials** throughout the unit. The student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without infringement of copyrights.

UNIT OBJECTIVES *Bless Me, Ultima*

1. Through reading *Bless Me, Ultima*, students will analyze characters and their situations to better understand the themes of the novel.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
3. Students will practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
4. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with it.
5. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *Bless Me, Ultima*.
6. Students will practice writing through a variety of writing assignments.
7. The writing assignments in this are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - b. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - c. To make students put those ideas into perspective
 - d. To encourage critical and logical thinking
 - e. To provide the opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
8. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

UNIT OUTLINE - *Bless Me, Ultima*

1 Unit Intro Distribute Unit Materials PV 1-3 (Uno-Tres)	2 Read 1-3 Study ?? 1-3 Non-Fiction Assignment	3 PVR 4-8 (Cuatro-Ocho) Oral Reading Evaluation	4 Quiz 1-8 PVR 9-10 (Nueve-Diez) Project Introduction	5 Writing Assignment #1
6 Study ?? 9-10 PVR 11-12 (Once-Doce)	7 Study ?? 11-12 PVR 13-14 (Trece-Catorce)	8 Study ?? 13-14 Writing Assignment #2	9 Writing Conference	10 Quiz 9-14 PVR 15-17 (Quince- Diecisiete)
11 Study ?? 15-17 PVR 18-20 (Dieciocho- Veinte)	12 Study ?? 18-20 PVR 21-22 (Veintiuno- Veintidós)	13 Study ?? 21-22	14 Extra Discussion ??	15 Writing Assignment #3
16 Library Work	17 Project Storyteller Presentations	18 Non-Fiction Assignment	19 Vocabulary Review	20 Review
21 Test				

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET
Bless Me, Ultima

Date to be Assigned	Chapters	Completion Date
	Chapters 1-3 (Uno-Tres)	
	Chapters 4-8 (Cuatro-Ocho)	
	Chapters 9-10 (Nueve-Diez)	
	Chapters 11-12 (Once-Doce)	
	Chapters 13-14 (Trece-Catorce)	
	Chapters 15-17 (Quince-Diecisiete)	
	Chapters 18-20 (Dieciocho-Veinte)	
	Chapters 21-22 (Veintiuno-Veintidós)	

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce the *Bless Me, Ultima* unit
2. To relate students' prior knowledge to the new material
3. To distribute books and other related materials
4. To do the prereading work for Chapters 1-3 (Uno-Tres)

Activity #1

Show a map of New Mexico. Have some pictures of the area and the Mexican-Americans who live there. Locate the towns of Pastura (Las Pasturas) and Puerto de Luna (El Puerto de la Luna) and Guadalupe county. Explain that this is the setting of the novel. You may want to play some traditional Mexican-American music to get students in the mood for reading the novel. Give students some background about the Mexican-American settlement of New Mexico, including the following: New Mexico was originally inhabited by the Navajo, Pueblo, and Apache tribes. It was next settled by Spaniards and Mexicans who migrated from Mexico. New Mexico was ceded to the United States in 1848. It is the 47th state, admitted in 1912. The official languages are Spanish and English.

Activity #2

Invite students to think back to what they were like when they were seven years old. Have them discuss what they were like, what they thought about, and what they did. Ask if they thought about topics such as good vs. evil, a struggle with religious beliefs, and choosing a way of life. Tell them Antonio, the central character, thinks about all of these.

Activity #3

Ask what students think the title could be referring to. Do a group KWL sheet with the students (form included.) Put any information the students know in the K column (What I Know.) Ask students what they want to find out and put that information in the W column (What I Want to Find Out.) Keep the sheet and refer back to it after reading the novel, and complete the L column (What I Learned.)

Activity #4

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should preview the study guide questions before each reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in that section. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *Bless Me, Ultima*

PROMPT

One of the main conflicts in the story is between the Luna and Márez ways of life. Antonio knows a lot about his family background from listening to Ultima and his parents. Your assignment is to find out more about your family background, or genealogy. Go as far back in your family as you are able. You will display this information in the form of a family tree, and with a more in-depth report about one family member.

PREWRITING

The first thing you need to do is think about how to approach the research phase of your assignment. If you want to get information from relatives, which ones will you ask? Will you write them or interview them in person or over the telephone? Are there any other sources of information besides relatives? Then, make appointments with the people you have chosen. Ask their permission if you want to tape record the conversations.

Next, make a list of questions you want to ask. Make enough copies of your list so that you have one for each person being interviewed.

When you have finished your interviews, divide the information into two parts, one for each side of your family. You will use all of this for the family tree. Then choose one family member for your in-depth written report.

DRAFTING-Family Tree

Make a rough draft of your family tree. Check the information against your notes for accuracy. Decide on the size and presentation of your final project. Will you use poster board, make a mobile, or try another creative approach? Make sure to check with your teacher first if you want to do anything unusual. Then make your display.

DRAFTING- In-depth Report

Write about your interesting family member. In the introductory paragraph, give his/her full name and dates of birth and death. Tell how the person is related to you. In the body of the paper, tell the story about the person. Make sure to include names of other people involved, the dates when the event or events took place, and the location. In your closing paragraph, tell why this person interested you, and how you have been influenced by the story or the actual person. Tell how you are similar to, and different from, this relative.

PROOFREADING

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, ask another student to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.