



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

The Color Purple

based on the book by
Alice Walker

Written by
Christina Stone

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Walker

Alice Walker was born and raised in Eatonton, Georgia. She was the eighth child in a family of sharecroppers and always felt labeled by living in the South. After high school, Walker went to Spelman College on a full scholarship and later attended Sarah Lawrence College in New York.

While in college, Walker was inspired by one of her professors to take part in the Civil Rights Movement. She worked in the South helping to register voters, promote children's programs, and work for welfare rights. She has since become known as a feminist but prefers the term womanist instead.

In 1965, Walker married a Jewish Civil Rights lawyer, and they became the first legally married inter-racial couple in Mississippi. During their marriage they received numerous threats from the Ku Klux Klan but persevered and took joy in the birth of their daughter. The two eventually divorced, and their daughter became an author as well.

Alice Walker remains active in environmental, feminist/womanist causes and issues of economic justice while continuing to write.

Major Works

Novels and short story collections:

The Third Life of Grance Copeland (1970), *Everyday Use* (1973), *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973), *Roselily* (1973), *Meridian* (1976), *The Color Purple* (1982), *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down: Stories* (1982), *Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self* (1983), *Am I Blue?* (1986), *To Hell With Dying* (1988), *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989), *Finding the Green Stone* (1991), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), *The Complete Stories* (1994), *By The Light of My Father's Smile* (1998), *The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart* (2000), *Now Is The Time to Open Your Heart* (2005)

Poetry collections:

Once (1968), *Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems* (1973), *Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll See You in the Morning* (1979), *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* (1985), *Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems* (1991), *Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth* (2003), *A Poem Traveled Down My Arm: Poems And Drawings* (2003), *Collected Poems* (2005), *Poem at Thirty-Nine*

Non-fiction:

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose (1983), *Living by the Word* (1988), *Warrior Marks* (1993), *The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult* (1996), *Anything We Love Can Be Saved: A Writer's Activism* (1997), *Go Girl!: The Black Woman's Book of Travel and Adventure* (1997), *Pema Chodron and Alice Walker in Conversation* (1999), *Sent By Earth: A Message from the Grandmother Spirit After the Bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon* (2001), *Women We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For* (2006), *Mississippi Winter IV*

Awards

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction - 1983 (First African American woman to win)

National Book Award

O. Henry Award- 1986

Humanist of the Year - 1997

The Lillian Smith Award from the National Endowment for the Arts

The Rosenthal Award from the National Institute of Arts & Letters

The Radcliffe Institute Fellowship, the Merrill Fellowship, and a Guggenheim Fellowship

The Front Page Award for Best Magazine Criticism from the Newswoman's Club of New York

Inducted into the California Hall of Fame located at The California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts - 2006

INTRODUCTION *The Color Purple*

This LitPlan has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *The Color Purple*. It includes twenty lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** prompts students to think about letter writing, the format in which the novel is written.

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 selected 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.

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 selected 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 nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students 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.

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 reading of the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is 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.

There is a **relationship project** in this unit. This project requires students to analyze the relationships in the novel and explain how these relationships help characters to grow and change throughout the story.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or expressing personal opinions. The first writing assignment asks students to mimic Celie and write a personal narrative about something difficult they've endured. The second writing assignment asks students to persuade a friend to speak up for him or herself and find a voice as Celie does in the text. In the third assignment students will take on the role of a character in the novel and write from that perspective to inform others about the hardships experienced by that character.

There is a non-fiction **reading assignment**. Students must read non-fiction articles, books, etc. to gather information about the themes discussed in the novel.

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: multiple choice or short answer. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included. There is also an advanced short answer unit test for advanced students.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **Unit Resource Materials** section includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra 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 **Vocabulary Resource Materials** section includes similar worksheets and games to reinforce the vocabulary words.

The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

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UNIT OBJECTIVES *The Color Purple*

1. Through reading the novel *The Color Purple*, students will learn about the power words can have in helping someone find her voice and discover who she really is.
2. Students will learn about gender roles and sexism while reading about women who endure hardships and use their relationships to find their strength.
3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.
4. Students will make connections with the material in the text and apply the lessons learned to their lives.
5. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
6. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *The Color Purple* as they relate to the author's theme development.
7. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
8. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
9. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *The Color Purple*

Date Assigned	Assignment	Completion Date
	<i>Assignment 1</i> Entries 1-21	
	<i>Assignment 2</i> Entries 22-35	
	<i>Assignment 3</i> Entries 36-48	
	<i>Assignment 4</i> Entries 49-60	
	<i>Assignment 5</i> Entries 61-68	
	<i>Assignment 6</i> Entries 69-75	
	<i>Assignment 7</i> Entries 76-81	
	<i>Assignment 8</i> Entries 82-90	

UNIT OUTLINE *The Color Purple*

1 Introduction Project Assignment PVR1	2 Study Questions 1 Gender Roles PVR2	3 Study Questions 2 Oral Reading Evaluation PVR3	4 Nonfiction Reading	5 Study Questions 3 Community Discussion PVR4
6 Study Questions 4 Writing #1 PVR5	7 Study Questions 5 Venn Diagram PVR6	8 Study Questions 6 Climax Analysis	9 Writing #2 PVR7	10 Speaker
11 Background Information	12 Study Questions 8 Character Timeline	13 Gender and Community Discussion	14 Writing Assignment #3	15 Extra Discussion Questions
16 Extra Discussion Questions Cont.	17 Musical Analysis	18 Vocabulary Review	19 Unit Review	20 Unit Test

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

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce *The Color Purple* unit
2. To distribute books, study questions, and other related materials
3. To preview the vocabulary and study questions for Assignment 1
4. To read Assignment 1
5. To introduce the project assignment for this unit

Activity #1

The first lesson will require several handouts to introduce students to the unit. Prior to the class, create an envelope full of all necessary unit materials for each student, making sure to address each envelope to a student in your class. The goal is to make their unit materials look like a piece of mail, so a stamp of some sort and proper labeling may be a nice addition to each student's letter/packet of resources.

NOTE: If you have time a week before this unit begins, write each of your students a letter and mail it to them. In Lesson One, discuss how getting the letter in the mail made them feel. If you do this, you can skip the letter in the materials packet.

At the start of the unit, distribute envelopes to the students in your class. Ask students not to open them until you give them permission. Before opening the envelopes and beginning to go over the unit, ask students to think about the purposes of a letter. Hold a class discussion on the reasons people write letters, and talk with your students about the reasons people often write both to others and for personal reasons.

Discuss why people don't write as many letters now as they used to (email, instant messenger, texting, etc.). Ask how many times a day your students check their email or phones for messages. Ask why they check so often (Everyone anticipates hearing from friends or family. People used to look forward to the arrival of the mail each day, which would be like only being able to "check your messages" one time each day.)

After the class has talked about the many purposes of letters and writing, explain to students that they will be reading *The Color Purple*, a novel written in a series of letters. You may want to tell students that these letters are not only written as a form of communication, but also as a way of coping and dealing with things in life, almost a method of self-discovery and growth for Celie, the main character.

Activity #2

Ask students to open their envelopes to find the materials they will need for the unit. Direct students to the unit project and spend a few moments going over the project in detail, answering any questions your students may have.

NOTE: If you think your students need more guidance on this project, take time after each reading assignment (perhaps when you do the study questions) to review items from the reading assignment that could/should be included on the character charts. Do as much or as little as you feel your students need. If you choose to do this, make a note on the daily lessons in which the study questions are reviewed for each reading section, so you don't forget.

Activity #3

Direct students to the other materials in their envelopes they will need for the unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 *The Color Purple*

PROMPT

Nettie writes to Celie, "I remember one time you said your life made you feel so ashamed you couldn't even talk about it to God, you had to write it, bad as you thought your writing was." Celie uses her letters to God as a way of sorting through what happens to her in life. Through these personal narratives, the reader is able to understand the hardships Celie endures and learn more about her life. Your assignment is to write a short narrative in the form of a letter about something you struggled with or had to endure in your own life, just as Celie writes in her letters to God.

PREWRITING

Think about the difficult times you've experienced in your own life. Make a list of all the difficult times you've endured, jotting down a few details about each event. Your list can include smaller problems like struggling in a class at school, to large problems like dealing with the death of a family member. After compiling your list, select an event you feel comfortable writing about. Make sure the event you select is one you remember clearly so you can include specific details in your writing.

DRAFTING

Begin your writing assignment by selecting someone to address your letter to. Remember, this is a personal narrative, so it should be written in first person point of view. The beginning of your letter should set the scene for the reader, giving information on your age, the location of the event, and other necessary details for the reader to later understand your problem.

The body of your letter should provide details about the struggle you endured. Celie's readers are able to sympathize with her because of the great detail she uses in her writing. Try to include your emotions, your thoughts, and any dialogue or reactions from those around you.

To conclude your letter, think about how you found the strength to resolve the hardship. Talk about who in your life gave you the support you needed, or how you found the strength on your own. If the hardship is ongoing, talk about what you are currently doing to deal with it. At the end of your letter, remember to sign your name.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your letter, ask a student who sits near you 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.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.