

## English 11 Summer Reading 2026

For summer reading, you may choose EITHER *Kindred* by Octavia Butler OR *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi.

*Kindred* is a historical science fiction novel that follows Dana, an African-American woman who travels in time from 1976 California to Antebellum Maryland to save her white ancestor so that her life does not end. She is faced with the struggles of being a free Black woman who is thrust into a world of slavery.

*Homegoing* is historical fiction that chronicles 14 descendants of one character that spans 200 years in both Ghana and America. Throughout their stories is the shared trauma of slavery.

**Complete two tasks** from the chart below for whichever book you choose. You must choose one activity from row 1 (Written Responses) and one activity from row 2 (Creative/Artistic Response). Specific directions for each choice for each novel follow the chart.

AI Usage – The expectation is that you read the novel and respond to the assignments through your own merits. AI usage is not approved for this assignment. AI includes but is not limited to Grammarly, Co-Pilot, Gemini, ChatGPT, etc.

|                                    |                                |                                  |  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Written Response Choices           | Keep a reader response journal | Write a new ending for the novel | Create a diary from the perspective of a minor character |
| Artistic/Creative Response Choices | Create a scrapbook             | Make a boardgame                 | Create a timeline of events                              |

## *Kindred* by Octavia Butler

### **Written Response Choices (Choose one):**

#### **Reader Response Journal for *Kindred***

As you read, you will keep a hand-written reader response journal to answer the questions below. No digital files will be accepted (unless you have documented learning accommodations). You must include quotes from the novel with page numbers to support each of your responses. When you use a quote, follow the says, means, matters formula. What does the quote say, what does it mean in the context of your argument, and why does it matter to the point you are trying to make? Answer each question thoughtfully that demonstrates you are truly thinking about the text as well as proving that you read the text. No response should be shorter than 7 sentences.

#### Journal Entry #1 to be completed after reading “Prologue” and “The River”:

Using textual evidence, predict what you believe the conflicts of the novel will be, how will the relationship between Dana and Rufus grow, and what the book will ultimately be about.

#### Journal Entry #2 to be completed after reading “The Fire”:

How does Dana saving Rufus in this chapter reflect how she saved Rufus in “The River”? Discuss the power dynamic between Rufus and Dana. Consider their age, gender, race, education, and experiences. Use textual evidence to support your response.

#### Journal Entry #3 to be completed after reading “The Fall”:

Why is time travel happening? What kind of influence can Dana have during these sporadic visits? How does the time travel affect Dana and Kevin? Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

#### Journal Entry #4 to be completed after reading “The Fight”:

Pick one character and trace their choices from the first time you met them in the novel until the end of this chapter. Describe whether they are in an upward or downward spiral. How has time travel played a role in their character development? Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.

#### Journal Entry #5 to be completed after reading “The Storm”:

How have your feelings for Rufus changed since the beginning of the novel? Who do you sympathize with and why? What are your feelings about Dana continually helping Rufus even though she disagrees with his actions? Use quotes from the text to support your answer.

#### Journal Entry #6 to be completed after reading “The Rope” and “Epilogue”:

Science Fiction bends reality and places the reader in an unfamiliar setting and/or situation. Historical Fiction transports the reader to a past event and allows the reader to experience it. Octavia Butler combined these two genres in her novel, *Kindred*. How does the addition of time travel make the story more powerful for a modern reader? Use evidence from the novel to support your response.

### **Write a New Ending to *Kindred***

If you were the author of *Kindred*, consider how you would change the ending of the text. What two characters or more would it affect? How would it affect the plot? How would the resolution of conflicts change? Once you have considered the answers to these questions, write a 2-3 page new ending of the novel as if you were Octavia Butler. You are not explaining your changes, rather you are re-writing the ending and it should sound like the author wrote it and it is a part of the novel. Your new ending can replace any portion of the section titled “The Rope”.

### **Create a Diary - *Kindred***

Choose a minor character: Alice, Margaret Weyland, Tom Weyland, Sarah, or Nigel.

Write at least 6 one-page diary entries from the point of view of your chosen character. Your entries must include crucial plot points, conflicts, and character development. Be sure that your character discusses Dana’s impact on their storyline.

### **Artistic/Creative Choices (Choose one):**

#### **Scrapbook for *Kindred***

Create a scrapbook for one of the main characters of the novel. You may choose Dana, Rufus, Kevin, Alice, or Mr. and Mrs. Weyland as a couple. Your scrapbook must be a physical book, no electronic versions, of at least 10 pages not including the title page. The scrapbook must show events, conflicts, symbols, themes, and/or character interactions that demonstrate your character’s growth from the beginning to the end of the novel.

Requirements:

1. Pages must be at least 8”x11” and no larger than 12”x12”.
2. There must be at least 3 pictures on each page. These pictures may be hand drawn, printed, or from a magazine/newspaper.
3. Each picture must have a caption of at least 2 sentences explaining its importance to topic of the page
4. Each page must have a title to represent what is on the page (character, conflict, event, etc) and a year to demonstrate approximately when it happened in the novel.
5. Each page must include a quote that represents why the topic of the page is important to the character’s growth. It can establish the personality of the character at the beginning of the novel or show a change in character. You must incorporate says, means, matters when you use the quote.
6. Pages must be bound together. They can be stapled along the left side or tied with ribbon.

### **Boardgame about *Kindred***

Make a board game that tests the players knowledge of plot, characters, setting, conflict, theme, and symbols. Your board must feature the setting (which include time periods) of the novel and the players must travel through those time periods as they play the game. The board itself must visually depict the settings. Be sure to include directions, game set up, game play, how to win, and all game pieces necessary to play the game.

### **Timeline of *Kindred***

Create a hand drawn timeline on posterboard. Your timeline should include at least 10 events. The events should be building toward a shared identified theme and follow one character's development. Draw a picture for each event and write a 2-sentence explanation about why each event is important to both the previous event and the novel as a whole. At least 2 symbols and 2 quotes must be included in your timeline. The last event in your timeline must include how your character developed from the beginning to the end of the novel.

## *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi

### **Written Response Choices (Choose one):**

#### **Reader Response Journal for *Homegoing***

As you read, you will keep a hand-written reader response journal to answer the questions below. No digital files will be accepted (unless you have documented learning accommodations). You must include at least one quote from the novel with page numbers in each journal entry. When you use a quote, follow the says, means, matters formula. What does the quote say, what does it mean in the context of your argument, and why does it matter to the point you are trying to make? Answer each question thoughtfully that demonstrates you are truly thinking about the text as well as proving that you read the text. No response should be shorter than 7 sentences.

#### **Journal Entry #1 to be completed after reading “Effia” and “Esi”:**

- How are Effia and Esi’s stories similar?
- What quality and possession do they each have? Why is this important?
- How are the two women related to each other?
- In what ways could their paths have met?
- Each woman is influenced by the mother that raised her. How?
- What do you believe the author’s purpose is for these two characters?
- What predictions can you make about each woman’s descendants?

#### **Journal Entry #2 to be completed after reading “Part 1”:**

- Reflect on the importance of characters’ names in Part 1. How do the names reflect their identities? Or, how may they show a connection or disconnection with their heritage?
- How have you seen the themes of trauma, family/home, identity, and justice develop so far? This can be a bulleted list.
- How do generations seem to impact trauma?
- What does the main theme of Part One seem to be?

#### **Journal Entry #3 to be completed after reading “Majorie” and “Marcus”:**

- What makes Marjorie feel like she does not belong regardless of whether she is in America or Ghana?
- Were you surprised that Marjorie had the family stone? Why/why not? Does her attachment to its importance surprise you? Why/why not?
- Is Marjorie’s story a fitting end to her family’s lineage? Why/why not?

- How do you feel about Marjorie and Marcus meeting? Is it a fitting end to the novel or does it feel contrived (forced/predictable)?
- Why does Marjorie give Marcus her stone? How did that make you feel?
- How do Marjorie and Marcus' stories compare?

Journal Entry #4 to be completed after reading "Part 2":

- In what ways do James, Yaw, and Sonny choose to end cycles? In your opinion, which other characters are also breaking cycles? How so?
- Why end the novel with Marjorie and Marcus in Ghana with the stone?
- Discuss the title of the novel. Why "*Homegoing*"? Why not, "*Going Home*"?

Journal Entry #5 to be completed after reading the entire novel:

Consider the Ghanaian side of the family (Effia, Quey, James, Abena, Akua, Abena, Majorie). How did generational trauma affect each character?

Journal Entry #6 to be completed after reading the entire novel:

Consider the American side of the family (Esi, Ness, Kojo, H, Willie, Sonny, Marcus). How did generational trauma affect each character?

**Write a New Ending for *Homegoing***

If you were the author of *Homegoing*, consider how you would change the ending of the text. How would the changes affect Majorie and Marcus? How would it affect the theme of the novel? Once you have considered the answers to these questions, write a 2-3 page new ending of the novel as if you were Yaa Gyasi. You are not explaining your changes, rather you are re-writing the ending and it should sound like the author wrote it and it is a part of the novel. Your new ending would replace Marcus' chapter but should include changes to Marjorie's story as well.

**Create a Diary - *Homegoing***

Choose any character. Pretend that character has found letters from any of his/her ancestors and so they know the whole story of that person.

Write at least 6 one-page diary entries from the point of view of your chosen character. How would the information found in the letters have changed their perspective and/or actions? Discuss how it may have impacted choices that your character made. What advice might they leave to their descendant in their journal?

## **Artistic/Creative Choices for *Homegoing* (Choose one):**

### **Scrapbook for *Homegoing***

Create a scrapbook for 10 of the 14 characters. Your scrapbook must be a physical book, no electronic versions, of at least 10 pages not including the title page. The scrapbook must show events, conflicts, symbols, themes, and/or character interactions that demonstrate your knowledge of the novel. Each of your 10 characters should have their own page. You must include Effia, Esi, Marjorie, and Marcus.

Requirements:

1. Pages must be at least 8"x11" and no larger than 12"x12".
2. There must be at least 3 pictures on each page. These pictures may be hand drawn, printed, or from a magazine/newspaper.
3. Each picture must have a caption of at least 2 sentences explaining its importance to topic of the page
4. Each page must have a title to represent what is on the page (character, conflict, event, etc) and a year to demonstrate approximately when it happened in the novel.
5. Each page must include a quote that represents why the topic of the page is important to the character's growth. It can establish the personality of the character at the beginning of the novel or show a change in character. You must incorporate says, means, matters when you use the quote.
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### **Boardgame about *Homegoing***

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### **Timeline for *Homegoing***

Create a hand drawn timeline on posterboard. Your timeline should include at least 10 events. The events should be building toward a shared identified theme and follow the development of that theme. Draw a picture for each event and write a 2-sentence explanation about why each event is important to both the previous event and the novel as a whole. At least 2 symbols and 2 quotes must be included in your timeline.