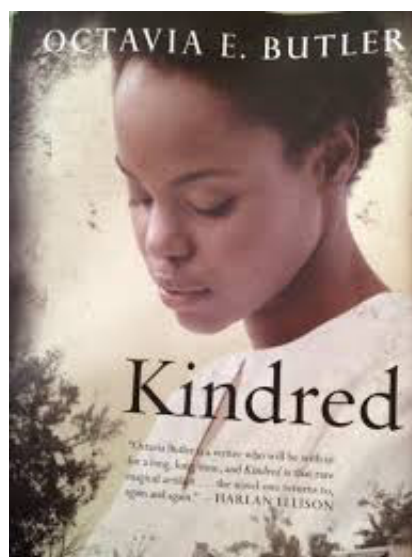
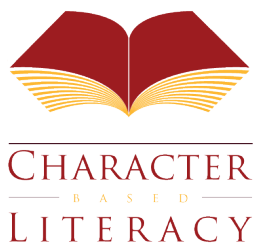


Kindred



ISBN-10	
ISBN-13	978-0-8070-8369-7
Author	Butler, Octavia
Publisher	Beacon Press
Copyright	1979
Lexile	580L
Genre	Novel, Fiction, Speculative fiction, Feminist science fiction
Synopsis	A contemporary Los Angeles woman travels back in time to an Antebellum plantation, where she is assumed to be a slave and discovers the identity of her ancestors. Violent confrontations and emotional intensity are aspects of this novel depicting the political, ethical, and social influences of slavery on both black and white Americans.
Themes	Role of environment in shaping people's attitudes and personalities, Race and gender, slavery
Protagonist	Female, African American
Setting	various towns in the United States
Note	Over the years, these books have been published in multiple editions. The page numbers in your book may be different than the ones on the lesson plan.
Content Warning	This book contains offensive language.
More Information	www.scu.edu/character



Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. ix

“The American slave narrative is a literary form whose historical boundaries are firmly marked. Slave narratives ceased to be written when the last American citizen who had lived under institutionalized slavery died. The only way in which a new slave-memoir could be written is if someone were able to travel into the past, become a slave, and return to tell a story. Because the laws of physics...preclude traveling backwards in time, such a book would have to be a hybrid of autobiographical narrative and scientific fantasy. That is exactly the sort of book Octavia Butler imagined when she wrote *Kindred*, first published in 1979. Like all good works of fiction, it looks like the truth” (p. ix).

Writing Prompt

The theme responsibility requires action states, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.”

Write a short narrative product discussing a time when you felt called to change something, and what you did about it. Why was this important to you?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. xxiii

“In the end, what may be most powerful and valuable for readers of *Kindred* is the simple reminder that all that history is not so very long ago. Butler focuses our attention on the continuity between past and present. The reader of *Kindred* may discover a closer kinship with the characters and events of the antebellum South than we often care to admit. Readers of this fantastic invention may also find their understanding of history enriched and deepened. In *Kindred* Octavia Butler has designed her own underground railroad between past and present whose terminus is the reawakened imagination of the reader” (p. xxiii).

Writing Prompt

Dana, the protagonist in the *Kindred*, is presented in the introduction. The theme responsibility requires actions is defined as, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.”

Dana is faced with moral battles in this novel, some of which are mentioned in the introduction. **In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative product about how reading about others’ moral battles influences your own moral compass. Use specific examples to support your ideas.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 17

“I wondered bitterly whether he was worried about my vanishing again or worried about my sanity. I still didn’t think he believed my story. ‘Maybe you’re right,’ I said. ‘I hope you are. Maybe I’m just like a victim of robbery or rape or something—a victim who survives, but who doesn’t feel safe any more.’ I shrugged. ‘I don’t have a name for the thing that happened to me, but I don’t feel safe any more’” (p. 17).

Writing Prompt

The theme responsibility requires actions is defined as, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.”

Write a short narrative product describing a time when you helped someone only to have your kindness backfire on you. What happened? How did you feel afterwards? If you could do it over, would you still help them?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 24

“Fact then: Somehow, my travels crossed time as well as distance. Another fact: The boy was the focus of my travels—perhaps the cause of them. He has seen me in my living room before I was drawn to him; he couldn’t have made that up. But I had seen nothing at all, felt nothing but sickness and disorientation” (p. 24).

Writing Prompt

Again and again, Dana is called to save this boy from near-death situations. The theme responsibility requires actions is defined as, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.” The second time Dana saves the boy by putting out the fire.

In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative product about a time when you or someone you know continued to make the same mistakes, regardless of any else’s help or advice. What happened? How did you feel about these situations? How did the others involved feel?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 37

“She stopped, peered at me through the darkness. She was Alice, then. These people were my relatives, my ancestors. And this place could be my refuge” (p. 37).

Writing Prompt

“Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.” Dana watches secretly as a black man is getting whipped in front of her.

Write a short narrative product about a time in your life when doing nothing was more responsible than doing something. Why is it difficult to determine this? What ultimately happened?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 39

“And there in her words was a reason for the risk I had taken. I hadn’t thought of it until now, but if Rufus was one to tell what he shouldn’t, Alice’s mother should know so she could either hide more or send me away. I waited to see what she would say” (39).

Writing Prompt

Responsibility requires action is defined as, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.”

Alice’s mother is hurt and scared, and refuses to let Dana sleep in her home. **In one to two paragraphs, write about a time when you let fear determine your actions. Be specific. How did you feel? What was your thought process like? How did you feel after the fact?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 47

"I moved closer to him, relieved, content with even such grudging acceptance. He had become my anchor, suddenly, my tie to my own world. He couldn't have known how much I need him firmly on my side" (p. 47).

Writing Prompt

Responsibility requires action is described as, "Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now."

When Rufus was alive, slavery was not considered wrong by most people; today, we know that slavery was not morally responsible. People often make different mistakes during some parts of their lives than they do during other parts. **In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative product about a mistake you made when you were younger than you wouldn't make today. What happened? How did you learn from it?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 57

“It was a good evening. I brought him home with me when it was over, and the night was even better. Sometime during the early hours of the next morning when we lay together, tired and content in my bed, I realized that I knew less about loneliness than I had thought—and much less than I would know when he went away” (p. 57).

Writing Prompt

How responsible is someone for making their dreams come true? Responsibility requires action is described as, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.” Dana and Kevin are determined to reach their dream of being writers.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 65

“Good. Best not to tell anyone about us now either. Nothing about California or nineteen seventy-six.” I took Kevin’s hand and held it. “We’re going to have to fit in the best we can with the people here for as long as we have to stay. That means we’re going to have to play the roles you gave us.” (p. 65).

Writing Prompt

In this reading, Nigel is hesitant to call Mr. Weylin because he thinks he will get in trouble for leaving Rufus or for letting him get hurt. Even though Nigel is not responsible for Rufus’ actions, he may get blamed for Rufus’ mistakes.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 74

"You'll get into trouble," he said. "Marse Tom already don't like you. You talk too educated and you come from a free state."

"Why should either of those things matter to him? I don't belong to him."

The boy smiled. "He don't want no niggers 'round here talking better than him, putting freedom ideas in our heads" (p. 74)

EXTEND

10. Write Have each student write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Think about everyone's initial reaction to Dana when she arrives to Mr. Weylin's plantation. All the characters react to her differently based on what they know or think they know about her.

Write a short narrative product about a time when you based your reactions to someone based on what you thought you knew about them. What happened? Were you right to act the way you did? How did you feel afterwards?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 82

"You'll try. Maybe that will be enough. I hope so. But if it isn't, if I do have to come here alone, I'll have a better chance of surviving if I stay here now and work on the insurance we talked about. Rufus. He'll probably be old enough to have some authority when I come again. Old enough to help me. I want him to have as many good memories of me as I can give him now" (82).

Writing Prompt

Our theme of "Responsibility Requires Action" states that responsibility is "doing what is best for everybody." Dana wants to try to win Rufus over in case she returns again. She believes if he has good memories of her that he may help her the next time she returns. **In one to two narrative paragraphs, write about a time when you changed your actions to influence someone else's behavior. What happened? Did it work?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 85

"I knew which children he meant. They had different mothers, but there was a definite family resemblance between them. I'd seen Margaret Weylin slap one of them hard across the face. The child had done nothing more than toddle in to her path. If she was willing to punish a child for her husband's sins, would she be any less willing to punish me if she knew that I was where she wanted to be with Kevin? I tried not to think about it." (p. 85).

Writing Prompt

The theme "Responsibility Requires Action" states that responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now." **Write a short narrative product about a time when you took your anger out on someone who did not deserve it.** What happened? How did you feel afterwards?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 97

“Time passed. Kevin and I became more of the household, familiar, accepted, accepting. That disturbed me too when I thought about it. How easily we seemed to acclimatize. Not that I wanted us to have trouble, but it seemed as though we should have had a harder time adjusting to this particular segment in history—adjusting to our places in the household of a slaveholder” (p. 97).

Writing Prompt

In this reading Dana says, “But now and then, like with the kids’ game, I can’t maintain the distance. I’m drawn all the way into eighteen nineteen, and I don’t know what to do. I ought to be doing something though. I know that.”

Write a short narrative product about a time when you knew you should change something, but you didn’t know what to do. What happened? How did you resolve the situation?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 117

“Then, somehow, I got caught up in one of Kevin’s World War II books—a book of excerpts from the recollections of concentration camp survivors. Stories of beatings, starvation, filth, disease, torture, every possible degradation. As though the Germans had been trying to do in only a few years with the Americans had worked at for nearly two hundred” (p. 117).

Writing Prompt

In this text, Dana is comparing the Nazis during World War II to slavery in the South. It was only through the responsible action of many brave people that both of these unjust periods of time were finally ended.

In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative about a time when you were treated unjustly. What happened? How did you resolve the situation?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 120

“She turned and followed Isaac, leaving me alone with the unconscious Rufus—alone to wonder where she and Isaac would go. North to Pennsylvania? I hoped so. And where had Kevin gone? Why had he gone anywhere? What if Rufus wouldn’t help me find him? Or what if I didn’t stay in this time long enough to find him? Why couldn’t he have waited...?” (p. 120).

Writing Prompt

In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative about a time when you felt alone or abandoned by someone who was supposed to care about you. How did you act in this situation? Did this person act responsibly?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 16



Key Paragraph, p. 131

I kept going, glad to get away from him. He had known more about me than he wanted to talk about. That was clear from the questions he hadn't asked. He had seen me vanish twice now. And Kevin and Rufus probably told him at least something about me. I wondered how much. And I wondered what Kevin had said or done that made him a 'damn fool' (131).

Writing Prompt

Our theme is "responsibility requires action." Dana is worried that some people know too much about her; she is trying to hide certain facts to keep herself and Kevin safe.

In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative product about a time when hiding something about you was more responsible than sharing it. What happened? Was it hard to make this choice?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Kindred, Day 17



Key Paragraph, p. 142

"I turned to face him, dismayed. More blackmail. I had thought that was over between us. I hoped it was over; I needed so much to trust him. I didn't dare stay with him if I couldn't trust him" (p. 142).

Writing Prompt

Responsibility is "doing what I should do." If you always do what you should do, and do "the one thing you should be doing right now" then people will trust you. Trust is a very important part of any relationship.

Write a short narrative product about a time when someone broke your trust. What happened? Were you able to rebuild the relationship?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 18



Key Paragraph, p. 157

She drew back a little in surprise. I had shouted at her. She probably thought I was angry—and I was. But not at her. I wanted to pull her back from the edge of a cliff. It was too late though. She would have to take her fall.

“I’ll tell you whatever you want to know,” I said wearily. “But believe me, you don’t want to know as much as you think you do” (p. 157).

Writing Prompt

In this reading, Dana sees that Rufus got what he wanted: Alice. He went about it without having to deal with her husband or any repercussions. Now, Alice has been destroyed. The theme responsibility requires action states, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.”

Write a narrative product about a time when you tried to protect someone by withholding the truth from them, like Dana tried to do with Alice. Why is it hard to decide how to act responsibly in a situation like this? What was the result of your actions?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 19



Key Paragraph, p. 162

“His mind was on Alice. She was stronger now, and his patience with her was gone. I had thought that eventually he would just rape her again—and again. In fact, I was surprised the he hadn’t already done it. I didn’t realize that he was planning to involve me in that rape. He was, and he did” (p. 162).

Writing Prompt

In this reading, Rufus tries to convince Dana to help him with Alice. He wants Alice to come to him willingly so he does not have to whip her. He tries making Dana feel bad by telling her she is not a good friend if she does not keep her from being beaten. Dana decided to help Rufus because she wanted Alice to avoid some pain. The theme responsibility requires action states, “Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.”

In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative product about a time when you had to try to choose the lesser of two evils. What happened? How did you make your choice?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 20



Key Paragraph. p. 178

"I longed for my sleeping pills to give me oblivion, but some small part of me was glad I didn't have them. I didn't quite trust myself with them just now. I wasn't quite sure how many of them I might take" (p. 178).

Writing Prompt

After Dana is captured she agrees with Mr. Weylin that even though she is educated she isn't very smart. She becomes frustrated and wonders what she did wrong. She does not understand why she is a slave to someone she tried saving. The theme responsibility requires action states, "Responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now."

In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative about a time when doing what you thought was right backfired on you. What happened? How did you feel about the situation afterwards?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 21



Key Paragraph, p. 186

“People kept warning me about him, dropping hints that he was meaner than he seemed to be. Sarah had warned me, and most of the time, she loved him like one of those sons she had lost. And I had seen the marks he occasionally left on Alice. But he had never been that way with me—not even when he was angry enough to be. I had never feared him as I’d feared his father. Even now, I wasn’t as frightened as I probably should have been. I wasn’t frightened for myself. That was why I challenged him” (p. 186).

Writing Prompt

Relationships are very fluid; they change frequently throughout our lives. Dana and Rufus’ relationship has changed considerably since they first met when he was just a young boy. While Dana has continued to be responsible, Rufus has gotten less and less responsible as time has gone on. **In one to two narrative paragraphs, write about how one of your relationships has changed based on changing levels of responsibility. What happened? How is the relationship now?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
***Kindred*, Day 22**



Key Paragraph, p. 192

“Home at last, I thought, and you...’ He [Kevin] looked at me [Dana].

’Well I got half of what I wanted. You’re still you.’

I went to him with relief that surprised me. I hadn’t realized how much I’d worried, even now, that I might not be “still me” as far as he was concerned” (192).

Writing Prompt

People change quite a bit over the course of their lives. Their personalities, values, and beliefs change, just as their responsibilities change: doing what you said you would do, and doing what is best for everybody will have different results every time. **Write a short narrative product about how you have changed recently. Was it a good change or a bad one? How do you want to change next?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Kindred, Day 23



Key Paragraph, p. 206

“He’s as close to being scared of you as he’s ever been of anything’ said Nigel. ‘I think he’d rather try to kill you than admit it though,’” (p. 206).

Writing Prompt

Rufus’ life is put into Dana’s hands, and she is threatened with death if Rufus does not live. **Write a short narrative product about a time when you were given a responsibility that felt impossibly unfair. How did you handle the situation? What was the end result?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 24



Key Paragraph, p. 214

“The threat stunned me. He meant it. He’d send me back out. I stood staring at him, not with anger now, but with surprise—and fear. He could do it. Maybe later, I would have a chance to make him pay, but for now, he could do as he pleased. He sounded more like his father than himself. In that moment, he even looked like his father” (p. 214).

Writing Prompt

Responsibility is “the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.” In this reading, Rufus is selling slaves because his father had already arranged the sale. He had agreed to do what his father asked of him.

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell whether it is more responsible to do what you said you would do, or do what you should do. **In one to two paragraphs, write about a time when you faced this struggle. What did you decide to do? How did the situation turn out?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 25



Key Paragraph, p. 230

“His smile was still in place, but there was no longer any humor in it. I noticed, now, that he was watching the big muscular man who had tried to get me to dance—the same man who had spoken to me at the corn husking. I would have to ask Sarah to tell him not to speak to me again. He didn’t mean anything, but that would be save him if Rufus got angry” (p. 230).

Writing Prompt

Alice says, “I guess so. Anyways, all that means we’re two halves of the same woman—at least in his crazy head.” Alice says, “I guess so. Anyways, all that means we’re two halves of the same woman—at least in his crazy head.” Is it a responsible action to deny two people’s individuality? Rufus seems to think that Dana and Alice are nearly interchangeable; he does not treat them as complete human beings.

Write a short, narrative product about a time when you felt as though your individuality had been taken away from you. What happened? How did you feel?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 26



Key Paragraph, p. 239

“At the cookhouse, I heated water, got it warm, not hot. Then I took a basin of it up to the attic. It was hot there, and empty except for the pallets and my bag in its corner. I went over to it, washed my knife in antiseptic, and hooked the drawstring of my bag over my shoulder. And in the warm water I cut my wrists” (p. 239).

Writing Prompt

Many of Rufus’s neighbors think he is wrong for educating slaves. They think teaching them how to read and write makes them dissatisfied with slavery, disobedient, and spoils them. In many countries even today, certain people are not allowed to pursue an education, and can be punished severely or even killed for trying.

Write a narrative product about your feelings toward education, using examples from your own life to illustrate your points. Why is education important? Does everyone deserve to have the opportunity to be educated, or should it be an exclusive right for certain individuals?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 27



Key Paragraph, p. 247

“But how do I come home? Is the power mine, or do I tap some power in him? All this started with him, after all. I don’t know whether I need him or not. And I won’t know until he’s not around” (p. 247).

Writing Prompt

Our theme of “responsibility requires action” hints at the idea that everyone has an internal power that cannot be taken away from them. This power can be used to “do what is best for everybody,” or it can be used to act irresponsibly, which can hurt others rather than help them. Sometimes, it can be hard to remember that we alone are responsible for our actions and behavior. **In one to two paragraphs, write a narrative product about a time when you found it difficult to ignore someone else’s opinion and do what you thought was best. What happened? How did you both feel afterwards?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Kindred, Day 28



Key Paragraph, p. 264

"I looked back at the brick building of the Historical Society, itself a converted early mansion.

'If we told anyone else about this, anyone at all, they wouldn't think we were so sane.'

'We are,' he said. 'And now that the boy is dead, we have some chance of staying that way'" (p. 264).

Writing Prompt

Responsibility requires action is defined as responsibility is the active side of morality: doing what I should do, doing what I said I would do, doing what is best for everybody; especially doing the one thing I should be doing right now.

Looking back at the entire novel and on your daily writings, reflect on how this theme plays out throughout the book. Who is the most responsible character in this story? Why? Who is the most irresponsible? How do these characters differ? Who made the right decisions and put others before themselves? Who acted, without hesitation, when they needed to act? **In a short, narrative product, write about how reading about these characters and their choices encouraged you to reflect on your own life and choices. What will you take away from the novel?**