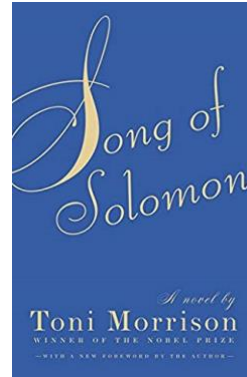


Song of Solomon

Independent Study Guide



Duration	This study guide takes three weeks to complete.
ISBN-13	978-1-4000-3342-3
Author	Toni Morrison
Publisher	Houghton Mifflin
Copyright	1977
Print Year	2004
Lexile	870L
Genre	Realistic fiction
Synopsis	Macon "Milkman" Dead is seeking a way to live independently without parental assistance. His journey for self-discovery and independence involves revealing the truth about three generations in his family, starting from the abolition of slavery. His family's story is interwoven with other African American families in town and their experience of discrimination.
Themes	Identity Development; American History; Stereotypes; Resilience
Other materials	Song of Solomon Assessment

Character-Based Literacy Program Independent Study

Lesson Plan, *Song of Solomon*, Week 1



Kindness Requires Empathy. Kindness is the desire to lift others' spirits, help the ones in need, and mend relationships. Kindness requires that I take the time to listen, understand, and take action to benefit other people and the world.

PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.

What is the History of Michigan and the Lives of Black People in the State?

The name "Michigan" is attributed to the Indian word "Ojibwa" which means "large lake." Four of the largest lakes in the United States, including Lake Superior, border Michigan. In 1837, Michigan became the nation's 26th state. As it gained its statehood, Michigan enforced some laws concerning African Americans less strictly than its neighbors. For example, A Wayne County court document included the statement: "We do not believe that a human being, who is a freeman, although possessing a black or yellow complexion, or being one or more shades darker than is common to white freemen, should be deprived of those rights and privileges, which are the common heritage of this happy and republican country. Attempts have been made to carry into execution said law. But owing to public opinion to the contrary, on account of its unconstitutionality, it cannot be effected." The pro-civil rights attitudes of the early settlers welcomed freed and fugitive slaves into the state. However, disputes about the civil rights of African American happened in Michigan just as in other states. For example, in 1867, when the legislature in Michigan prohibited segregation in public schools, the city of Detroit did not enforce the law in its schools. At the time the protagonist of the book *Song of Solomon*, Macon Dead III, was born in 1931, African American people were segregated in Detroit – they lived in separate neighborhoods, held separate private business practices, and their children attended separate schools.

How Did Former Slaves Get Their Names?

Today, you will learn how Macon Dead, Milkman's grandfather, received his unusual name after the emancipation. Slaves who were brought to America were often stripped of their names as a way of taking their identity away from them. Some slave owners assigned new names to the while others have left their slaves nameless. Slaves did not have legal surnames, although they sometimes adopted the owner's family name. Slave owners and the law identified slaves by their first names only. After the Civil War, [the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands](#) (the Freedmen's Bureau)

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provided services to the freed slaves. These services included food and clothing, health care and temporary camps, reunification of families, education, employment, and legal representation. To register for services, former slaves had the option of selecting new names for themselves or to record the names they were used to. Some, for example, chose “Freeman” as their last name. However, before they were freed, slaves were prohibited to read and write by law. Therefore, when the time came to register in the Freedman’s Bureau, they could not fill out the forms or check for the accuracy of the forms completed by others.

What Did African American Soldiers Experience During World War II?

Over 2.5 million African-American men registered for the draft during World War II. They served in the Army, Army Air Forces, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. In most cases, African American soldiers were placed in separate units. The 332nd Fighter Group included predominantly African-American soldiers. After initial reluctance of the air force to train African American pilots and to deploy them overseas, the pilots received their initial assignments. Records of Congressional hearings showed the intent to disband the squadron due to failure to show aggressiveness and daring. However, further investigation reported that the pilots performed as well as other units in their area. The pilots received a Distinguished Unit Citation for their performance in combat in the Mediterranean region.

What Was the Lynching of Emmett Till?

Between the late 19th century and the middle of the 20th century, thousands of lynching incidents were carried out against African American men. The highest number of recorded lynching was in Mississippi. Typically, lynching involves several dozen people. This story, however, involves two men who took the law into their own hands. One of most publicized cases was the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till in 1955. Till came from Chicago to visit family in Mississippi. He was shopping at a store owned by Roy and Carolyn Bryant. Till allegedly grabbed the hand of Mrs. Bryant and let out a “wolf whistle” as Mrs. Bryant exited the store to get a gun from her car. Mrs. Bryant told about this incident to her husband and half-brother. They abducted Till. The two men then beat Till nearly to death and shot him in the head. They tied a large metal fan to his neck with barbed wire, and threw the boy into the Tallahatchie River. His body was soon recovered. In a court trial, Roy Bryant and his half-brother J.W. Milam were accused of the murder. An all-white, all male jury acquitted both of them. No one else was ever indicted or prosecuted for involvement in the kidnapping or murder.

How Did Law Enforcement Treat African American People?

Based on the national registry of exonerations, African American people are about seven times more likely to be falsely convicted of murder than white people.¹ African Americans are also likely to be investigated, arrested, and spend more time in prison

¹ This information is based on the report, Gross, Samuel R, et al. *Race and Wrongful Convictions in the United States*. National Registry of Exonerations, 2017, *Race and Wrongful Convictions in the United States*.

before they are released compared to White people. The reasons for the false convictions include racial bias, errors in eyewitness identification of the suspects, and lack of financial means to obtain legal representation selected by the defendants.

What is The Great Migration?

Between 1910 and 1970, an estimated six million African American people left the South to other parts of the country. Some sought work in large cities such as Detroit, Chicago, and New York, while others found seasonal farm work in rural parts of the country. African American left the South because of lack of jobs, unequal access to public services including education and public transportation, as well as discrimination and violence. Other factors that influenced the Great Migration were national policies and events. For example, following World War I as well as the United States attempted to halt immigration in the 1920s, the demand for factory and farm workers increased. The wages of African American laborers were approximately one-half to two-third of white people's wages. Despite this lack of equality, it was an opportunity for African Americans, particularly those from the South, to build a better life. African American migrants earned as much as African American people who were born and raised in the North.

Word Wall Here are fifteen vocabulary words to define and add to the Word Wall.

genuinely (4)	privileges (5)	verification (13)	monumental (15)	propriety (20)
unobstructed (31)	defensive (38)	deferential (46)	deftly (47)	reminisced (51)
squat (57)	folly (61)	emulate (63)	audacity (64)	impregnable (67)
acquisitiveness (92)	garrulous (95)	dragnet (99)	begrudge (103)	earnestness (107)
righteousness (120)	forays (129)	Manifestation (129)	befuddled (132)	truculent (151)

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far. Note the setting and main characters.

Read Read the selection.

Read Chapters 1–5 in the book, *Song of Solomon*.

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important events on the timeline.

Enter the timeline into the table on page 4.

Song of Solomon: Chapters 1–5 Timeline

Instructions: Think about what you read today and begin your timeline

- First, get the facts about the characters, events, and settings: who, what, where
- Then, decide on the most important events.
- Write one sentence per event.

Map Add to ongoing class activities like a KWL chart or map: Mark key places in the barrio.

In this unit, you will learn about African American history from the Antebellum Period to the Civil Rights Movement. For the Map activity in this unit, you will need five large sheets of paper, preferably 11 x 17 inches. Write and illustrate on this paper in landscape format. Add your name and a title: “African American History Chart.” Dedicate each sheet to one of the following historical topics:

- The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877
- Industrialization and Urbanization, 1880–1929
- The Great Depression, 1929–1939
- World War II, 1939–1945
- African-American Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968

Keep the five posters in your folder and add to it throughout the unit.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 begins in 1931, the year Macon Dead III was born. Look up and write three facts about the 1930s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “The Great Depression, 1929–1939.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested websites:

- Library of Congress: [Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945 \(Race Relations in the 1930s and 1940s\)](#)
- Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum: [The Great Depression](#)
- National Archives: [The Great Depression and the New Deal](#)

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 includes information about the childhood of Macon Dead II and about his father. Look up and write three facts about the 1930s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested resources:

- Library of Congress: The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship: [Reconstruction and Its Aftermath](#)
- National Archives: African American Records: [Freedmen’s Bureau](#)
- [Black Farmers in America](#): The Pursuit of Independent Farming and the Role of Cooperatives.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 mentions the role of African American soldiers in World War II. Look up and write three facts about World War II and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “World War II, 1939–1945.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested resources:

- National Archives: [Military Resources: Blacks in the Military](#)
- Library of Congress: The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom [World War II and Post War \(1940–1949\)](#)
- U.S. Department of Defense: African American History in the Defense Department: [African Americans in Times of War](#)
- United States House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives: [The Second World War](#)

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 alludes to the actions taken by the police in the 1950s to stop, search, and arrest African Americans, presumably to protect white people. Look up and write three facts about the 1950s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “African-American Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested resources:

- National Institute of Justice: [Race, Trust, and Police Legitimacy](#)
- United States House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives: [The Civil Rights Movement and the Second Reconstruction, 1945–1968](#)
- Humanities, The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities: [Fighting Jim Crow](#)

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 provides details on the life of Pilate during the 20 years that passed between the death of her father and the time she found her brother (1910–1930). Look up and write three facts about American History in the 1910s and 1920s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “Industrialization and Urbanization, 1880–1929.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested resources:

- Library of Congress: The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom [The Segregation Era \(1900–1939\)](#)

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- United States Census Bureau: [1910 Fast Facts](#)
- United States Census Bureau: [1920 Fast Facts](#)

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

In this unit, you will create a plot chart poser for the book, *Song of Solomon*. For each chapter, write 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. If you are typing, a font size of 24 points is recommended for the title and a font size of 14 points is recommended for the body text. Create or draw a border around the text. You may add an illustration under the text.

Chapter 1

Write or type what you know about the **exposition** – the background information about the main characters and the setting – based on the *first* chapter of the book. The details may be directly conveyed through a description of the setting and characters. It can be indirectly presented through dialogue and other literary devices in the story.

Chapter 2

Write or type what you know about the **exposition** based on the *second* chapter of the book. The details may be directly conveyed through a description of the setting and characters. It can be indirectly presented through dialogue and other literary devices in the story.

Chapter 3

Write or type what you know about the **rising action** – the sequence of events that leads to the tension, conflict, or main problem in the story – based on the *third* chapter of the book. Create 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. The details may be directly conveyed through a description of the events that build the suspense and tension in the plot. It can be indirectly presented through dialogue and other literary devices in the story.

Chapter 4

Write or type what you know about the **rising action** based on the *fourth* chapter of the book. Create 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. The details may be directly conveyed through a description of the events that build the suspense and tension in the plot. It can be indirectly presented through dialogue and other literary devices in the story.

Chapter 5

Write or type what you know about the **rising action** based on the *fifth* chapter of the book. Create 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. The details may be directly conveyed through a description of the events that build the suspense and tension in the

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plot. It can be indirectly presented through dialogue and other literary devices in the story.

Discussion Ask discussion questions.

Chapter 1

1. How has Ruth lived her life differently than other African Americans in her town?
2. Why does Macon Dead II refuse to stay in touch with his sister, Pilate?

Chapter 2

1. Why did the newspapers announce the second-place winner rather than the first-place winner in the raffle commissioned by Sears, Roebuck and Co.?
2. What family responsibilities did Macon Dead II have when he was a child?

Chapter 3

1. Why did Milkman hit his father? How did his father respond?
2. What argument was evoked by the news about the murder of Till?

Chapter 4

1. In Chapter 4, Milkman discover that some of the things that tied him to his town have changed and are less meaningful or salient in his life. Identify at least two and describe how they have changed.
2. How have Guitar's behavior and attitudes changed?

Chapter 5

1. Why is Milkman hiding from Hagar?
2. Why does Ruth visit her father's grave?
3. Why did Pilate decide to find her brother and how did he welcome her when they met?

Analyze the key paragraph.

P. 10

"Solid, rumbling, likely to erupt without prior notice, Macon kept each member of his family awkward with fear. His hatred of his wife glittered and sparked in every word he spoke to her. The disappointment he felt in his daughters sifted down on them like ash, dulling their buttery complexions and choking the lilt out of what should have been girlish voices."

PP. 53–54

"He didn't have to keep the name, did he? He could have used his readl name, couldn't he?"

"Mama liked it. Liked the name. Said it was new and would wipe out the past. Wipe it all out."

P. 82

"How can they *not* give 'em time?" Walter's voice was high and tight.

"How? Just *don't*, that's how." Porter fidgeted with hi watch chain.

"But everybody knows about it now. It's all over. Everywhere. The law is the law."

"You wanna bet? This is sure money!"

Independent Study, Week 1

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“You stupid, man. Real stupid. Ain’t no law for no colored man except the one send him to the chair,” said Guitar.”

P. 104

“This definitely is not Montgomery, Alabama. Tell me. What would you do if it was? If this turned out to be another Montgomery?”

“Buy a plane ticket.”

“Exactly. Now you know something about yourself you didn’t know before: who you are and what you are.”

P. 138

“You’re botherin me!” Hagar was shouting and digging her fingers in her hair. It was an ordinary gesture of frustration, but its awkwardness made Ruth know that there was something truly askew in this girl. That here was the wilderness of Southside. Not the poverty or dirt or noise, not just extreme unregulated passion where even love found its way with an ice pick, but the absence of control. Here one lived knowing that at any time, anybody might do anything. Not wilderness where there was system, or the logic of lions, trees, toads, and birds, but wild wilderness where there was none.”

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

In this unit, you will write an analytical essay about the impact of key events in American history on the lives on individuals.

1. In Chapter 1, you have read about two different ways men have built their identity and place in society. Macon Dead I was a free man who owned a small farm. Ruth Foster’s father was a doctor and a respected man in his community. Ruth Foster’s husband was a business man who owned multiple properties in town. For these men, having opportunities to grow were critical to their identity and self-esteem. Write an introductory paragraph about the importance of having opportunities in life to pursue dreams and accomplish goals.
2. Write a paragraph about racial segregation in America in the 1930’s, 1940’s, and 1950’s. How did it affect Milkman’s family and other people in his neighborhood? Use evidence from the text.
3. In Chapter 3, you have learned about lynching. According to historical reports, lynching was meant to instill fear and prevent African American people from both taking part in public life and interacting with white women, and to curb their economical success. For example, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, an African-American teacher and journalist, public advocacy was influenced by the 1892 Memphis lynching of three black businessmen whose success had outraged their white competitors. Write a paragraph about the importance of feeling physically and emotional safe and protected by the law to being able to thrive and pursue one’s dreams.

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Song of Solomon

4. In Chapter 4, you have learned about the rising tension between Guitar and Milkman who have different worldviews. Write a paragraph about the different views that Guitar and Milkman have on life, social responsibility, and fighting for civil rights.
5. In Chapter 5, you have learned about Pilate's life as a migrant worker. Write a paragraph about the types of jobs, working conditions, and wages of African American migrant workers during the Great Migration.

Character-Based Literacy Program Independent Study Lesson Plan, *Song of Solomon*, Week 2



Kindness Requires Empathy. Kindness is the desire to lift others' spirits, help the ones in need, and mend relationships. Kindness requires that I take the time to listen, understand, and take action to benefit other people and the world.

PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.

What Was the Difference Between Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X's Approaches?

Two civil rights leaders with contrasting viewpoints – Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X – disagreed on the methods and goals of the movement. Malcolm X preached for seeing White people as the enemy. In his Message to the Grassroots speech in November 1963, in Detroit, he said: "We have a common enemy. We have this in common: We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter, and a common discriminator. But once we all realize that we have this common enemy, then we unite on the basis of what we have in common. And what we have foremost in common is that enemy -- the white man. He's an enemy to all of us. I know some of you all think that some of them aren't enemies. Time will tell."

In contrast, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. believed that there are many white people in America who advocate for equal rights for African Americans, and their moral voice will prevail. In 1963, at the "March on Washington," he said: "But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the richness of freedom and the security of justice." As you read Chapter 6, reflect: Whose philosophy does Guitar Bains convey?

When Was Gold Ownership Illegal in the US?

President Roosevelt's Executive Order 6102, signed in 1933, made gold ownership illegal and punishable by fine and up to ten years in prison. This Order was part of the President's Gold Program which intended to retain the value of the dollar. Americans were required to surrender the gold in their possession to the government in return to compensation determined by the government. The prohibition against owning gold wasn't lifted until 1974.

Who Suffers the Most from Water and Air Pollution?

Chapter 8 begins with a description of the Detroit River pollution and its impact on poor families that cannot afford window screens and air conditioners. Research shows that in the US, hazardous waste sites, municipal landfills, incinerators, and other hazardous

facilities are disproportionately located in poor and minority neighborhoods.² Also, poor families have more limited access to air and water filtering amenities as well as health care services following poisoning from toxic chemicals in the air and water.

In What Event Were Four African American Girls Killed in Church?

On September 15, 1963, during prayers on a Sunday morning, a bomb exploded under the steps of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Four girls were killed and many other people were injured. The church, which served the African American community, was headquarters for civil rights movement meetings. Four girls died in the explosion. Prior to the bombing, civil rights leaders reached an agreement with local authorities to begin the integration of schools. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. responded to the event with a telegram addressed to Alabama Governor George Wallace, saying: "The blood of our little children is on your hands." The public funeral for three of the girls attracted more than 8,000 people. However, Alabama state officials and Birmingham City officials did not attend the funeral. The four Ku Klux Klan members responsible for the murders were not charged until 45 years later. Three men were eventually convicted. The Ku Klux Klan members hoped to impede the progress of the civil rights movement. Instead, the bombing fueled great public support of the movement.

What Gender Disparities Existed in the 1960s?

Women in the 1960s had less employment opportunities, advancement in the workplace, and salaries than men. Generally, women's employment was discouraged and the most typical jobs for women were as teachers, nurses, and secretaries. African American women had the most difficulty finding employment. Although African American women made significant contributions to the civil rights movement and the fight for equal civil rights, they received little recognition.

How Did the Public and the Police Treat African American Soldiers During and After World War I?

In Chapter 10, Reverend Cooper tells the story of attempting to participate in the post-World War I Armistice Day Parade in Philadelphia. The white people at the parade violently rejected the African American marchers. Instead of protecting the victims, the police trampled the Reverend and his friends with their horses. The Reverend has carried a large scar on his neck since that day. The patriotic feelings and hopes of the marchers exemplify the treatment of African American soldiers and veterans in World War I.

The Great Migration to northern states (partly driven by wartime demand for workforce), the framing of World War I as a fight for democracy and human rights, and opportunities to enlist in the army raised the hopes of many African American people to find a better life with greater social and economic mobility. However, many of them saw the opposite.

² Robert D. Bullard. (2000). *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*, Third Edition.
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In urban areas in the north, new arrivals of African Americans found residence in overcrowded neighborhoods, stigmatized as ghetto. In the U.S. Army, African American soldiers faced segregation and discrimination. In some instances, it has led to violent clashes.

An example of the tensions resulting from this gap is the Houston Riots of 1917. In the summer of 1917, an all-black 3rd Battalion, 24th Infantry was posted in Houston, TX to guard the construction of a new training camp – Camp Logan. Some of the soldiers in the 24th Infantry came from states that did not have Jim Crow laws (e.g., Ohio and New Mexico) and were willing to tolerate the abuse inflicted by construction workers in the camp and the local police when they visited Houston. Being U.S. army soldiers, they expect to be treated as equals. On August 23rd, 2017, Corporal Charles Baltimore had been arrested and beaten by the police because he inquired about the arrest and beating of another African American soldier. Back at Camp Logan, the soldiers heard rumors about a white mob that was about to arrive at the camp. Some of the soldiers fled the camp, but others marched towards the jail. Having their rifles confiscated earlier, they stole their weapons. This event triggered an armed riot of members of the Infantry. After the riots, 19 soldiers were hung, and 63 others were given life sentences.

Word Wall Here are fifteen vocabulary words to define and add to the Word Wall.

meddling (153)	shriveled (155)	unequivocally (156)	inconvenience (156)	depraved (157)
landlocked (162)	pervaded (164)	beckoning (169)	fitful (169)	exertion (170)
expansiveness (174)	escapade (177)	sauntered (169)	asceticism (179)	whimsical (179)
amanuensis (187)	intricate (187)	fastidiousness (191)	surreptitiously (192)	mediocrity (196)
oblivious (219)	consciousness (222)	consternation (237)	coiffure (242)	substance (244)

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- Mention the setting and main character
- Point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

Read Chapters 6–10 in the book, *Song of Solomon*.

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important events on the timeline.

Complete the template on Page 4.

Map Add to ongoing class activities like a KWL chart or map: Mark key places in the barrio.

In Week 2 and Week 3 of this unit, you will add to each of the five charts you started in Week 1. Add sheets of paper as needed.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 alludes to the split in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Look up and write three facts about American History in the 1960s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “African-American Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested resources:

- National Archives: [JFK Assassination Records](#)
- Our Documents: [Official Program for the March on Washington](#)
- American RadioWorks: [Malcolm X \(1926–1965\)](#)

Chapter 7

In Chapter 7, Macon tells the story of homeless twelve-year-old Pilate and sixteen-year-old Macon in the early 1910s. Look up and write three facts about American History in the 1910s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “Industrialization and Urbanization, 1880–1929.” Add illustrations and color to complete your work.

Here are some suggested resources:

- Library of Congress: Chronicling America: [African American History](#)
- [U.S. History and Historical Documents](#)
- National Archives: [Resources for African American Research](#)

Chapter 8

In Chapter 8, Milkman and Guitar break into Pilate’s house on September 19, 1963 – four days after the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. Look up and write three facts about American History in the 1960s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “African-American Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968.”

Here are some suggested resources:

- **FBI:** [Baptist Street Church Bombing](#)
- **Library of Congress:** [President Kennedy’s Civil Rights Address](#)
- **United States Census Bureau:** [1960 Fast Facts](#)

Chapter 9

In Chapter 9, Milkman is stopped by the police although he did not make a traffic violation. He is searched and arrested for possession of White man's bones in his car. Being pulled over by the police for no legitimate reason was one of many reasons for the fight for equal rights in the 1960s. Look up and write three facts about American History in the 1960s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section "African-American Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968."

Here are some suggested resources:

- **United States Census Bureau:** [1960 Fast Facts](#)
- **History & Headlines:** [June 30, 1966: National Organization for Women Founded](#)
- **United States Department of Labor:** [An Overview: 1920–2012](#)

Chapter 10

In Chapter 10, Milkman visits the house of the people responsible for his grandfather's murder and family tragedy. These stories bring him back in time to the reconstruction era. Look up and write three facts about American History in the 1890s and 1900s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section "Industrialization and Urbanization, 1880–1929."

Here are some suggested resources:

- **Library of Congress:** [Rise of Industrial America, 1876–1900](#)
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture:** [A Condensed History of American Agriculture, 1776-1999](#)
- **NPR:** [Black Farmers in America](#)

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Continue to the plot chart poster you have begun in Week 1.

Chapter 6

Write or type what you know about the *rising action* based on the sixth chapter of the book. Create 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. The details may be directly conveyed through a description of the events that build the suspense and tension in the plot. It can be indirectly presented through dialogue and other literary devices in the story.

Chapter 7

Write or type what you know about the complication in the story based on the seventh chapter of the book. Create 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. The

complication begins when key characters decide to take action to resolve a problem, but they are unsuccessful. Instead, their actions trigger further conflict.

Chapter 8

Write or type what you know about the complication in the story based on the eighth chapter of the book. Write 1–2 concise paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. The complication begins when key characters decide to take action to resolve a problem, but they are unsuccessful. Instead, their actions trigger further conflict.

Chapter 9

Write or type what you know about the *story conflict(s)* based on the today's reading selection. Create 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. Note the different types of conflict that may exist in a story:

- Internal conflict is an inner struggle of the protagonist. For example, a tension between two moral values or two goals, or the making a difficult decision.
- External conflict is a spiritual, moral, or physical battle with the antagonist, societal norms, or forces that stand between the protagonist and his/her goals.

Chapter 10

Write or type what you know about the *climax* – the turning point in the plot – based on the today's reading selection. The climax may be indicated by something the protagonist discovers. It can be an action, a finding, or an insight. Several actions and thoughts may be part of the climax. Write 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points.

Discussion

Ask discussion questions.

Answer the key questions. Use evidence from the text.

Chapter 6

1. What does Guitar give up to be part of the Seven Days?
2. Why is Guitar part of the Seven Days?
3. Make a list of all the reasons Milkman gives for avoiding the killings of innocent people.

Chapter 7

1. Who helped Macon and Pilate after the murder of their father?
2. Why does Macon want to get the green sack that Pilate keeps in her house?

Chapter 8

1. What were Milkman's concerns about stealing the green sack?
2. In what ways was stealing the sack easier than anticipated?

Chapter 9

1. What did the green sack contain?
2. How did Pilate change her behavior when she talked with the police officers?
3. Why was Lena angry at Milkman?

Chapter 10

1. As compensation for the death of her husband, what did Guitar's mother receive from the sawmill owner instead of life insurance?
2. How is Milkman's father, as portrayed in the stories told by people who knew him in his youth, different from the man Milkman knows?
3. Why did the murder of Macon Dead I spread hopelessness around town?
4. Based on Circe's story, whose bones did Pilate carry in the green sack?
5. Why was Circe angry when Milkman asked her why she loved white people?

Analyze the key paragraph.

P. 160

"There are places now where a Negro still can't testify against a white man. Where the judge, the jury, the court, are legally bound to ignore anything a Negro has to say. What that means is that a black man is a victim of a crime only when a white man says he is."

P. 166

"Circe bit her tongue trying to get the words out. 'You crazy? You say you saw the men what killed him. You think they don't know you saw them? If they kill a grown man, what you think they do to you? Be sensible. We got to plan and figure this thing out.'"

P. 180

"He screamed and shouted 'Woeeeeee!' at Guitar's list, but because his life was not unpleasant and even had a certain amount of luxury in addition to its comfort, he felt off center. He just wanted to beat a path away from his parents' past, which was also their present and which was threatening to become his present as well."

P. 208

"You can't take a life and walk off and leave it. Life is life. Precious. And the dead you kill is yours. They stay with you anyway, in your mind."

P. 235

"Sixteen years later he had one of the best farms in Montour County. A farm that colored their lives like a paintbrush and spoke to them like a sermon. 'You see?' The farm said to them. 'See? See what you can do? Never mind you can't tell one letter from another, never mind you were born a slave, never mind you lose your name, never mind your daddy dead, never mind nothing. Here, this here, is what a man can do if he puts his mind to it and his back in it. Stop sniveling.' It said."

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

1. In Chapter 6, you have learned about Guitar's views on justice and inequality. Write a paragraph about how lack of employment choices, competitive educational attainment, economic resources, and negative interactions with community members, individuals can lose their trust in other people's willingness and capacity to become fair, just, and compassionate.
2. In Chapter 7, you have learned about the fear and loneliness of young Macon and Pilate after they were orphaned and kicked out of their house. Write one paragraph about the potential effects of violence and discrimination on children of victims. How does the need to survive may impact their decisions, attitudes, and behavior?
3. In Chapter 8, you have learned about Guitar's assassination assignment and his desperate attempt to find the resources necessary to do this terrible crime. Write a paragraph about the rage of the African American population in 1960s and how such events impacted those who were no longer willing to wait for justice.
4. Different characters in the book have different perceptions of justice. Pilate kept the bones of a man in her sack because she wanted to show respect to human life. Guitar wanted to avenge the death of innocent African American people. Write a paragraph about the virtue of justice and how it can be influenced by societal norms and life events.
5. In Chapter 10, you have read about the need of the people in town to hear from Milkman about the success of his father. Knowing that he has not only survived but also became a wealthy man, cheered up the town people. Write one or two paragraphs about the need of people to know about role models and people who have succeeded against all the odds. Include an argument or a thesis about the impact of such stories on people's hope and the importance of hope in people's lives.

Character-Based Literacy Program Independent Study Lesson Plan, *Song of Solomon*, Week 3



Kindness Requires Empathy. Kindness is the desire to lift others' spirits, help the ones in need, and mend relationships. Kindness requires that I take the time to listen, understand, and take action to benefit other people and the world.

PREPARE

Background Gather background knowledge about a place, time, event, person, or thing.

Where Did the Freed Slaves Go After the Emancipation?

At the end of the Civil War, the freed slaves needed to find housing and employment. They wanted separate residential units as opposed to the shared quarters where slaves were forced to live. Because it was illegal for slaves to have education, absent the ability to read and write, many freed slaves sought work in agriculture. Some made tenancy arrangements under rental contracts with white land owners. Others became sharecroppers, which means they worked a farm or section of land in return for a share of the crop rather than wages. In both cases, the freed slaves were vulnerable to economic exploitation because of discrimination, limited employment options, their inability to negotiate, read, or sign contracts, and lack of protection by law enforcement. Jim Crow laws in the South enables white landlords to demand more income from their tenants and sharecroppers with less compensation. Consequently, African American farmers lived in a constant state of debt and poverty and only a fraction of the next generation of African American farmers in the early 1900s owned farmland.

How Did Freed Slaves and Their Descendants Kept Track of Relatives?

Being able to know about their past, family tree, and family history, is one of the many things stolen from slaves and their descendants. Commonly, slave owners separated husbands and wives, as well as children and parents, selling them to work in plantations in remote areas and other states. Some slaves ran away to find their loved ones, but many lost connection with their families. After the emancipation, thousands of freed slaves posted "information wanted" ads in newspapers. Some of them wrote letters with the help of church ministers and government agencies. One of the stories featured on the project's website [Last Seen: Finding Family after Slavery](#), features the story of Mrs. Anna Mollie Wright and her daughter, Mrs. Anna Freedman. The mother and the daughter were sold to different slave owners in Dover, Tennessee in 1863. After 29 years, an African American man who came from West Virginia, noted to the mother that a young woman from his town has been writing letters to Dover, Tennessee, looking for information about her mother. The mother contacted the minister in West Virginia and eventually was reunited with her daughter, whom she has not seen since she was a

little girl.

How Do People Respond to Romantic Breakup?

Generally, interpersonal relationships have a key role in people's physical and mental well-being. Some people react more strongly than others to social exclusion and romantic breakup. Research suggests that people used to close relationships and emotional dependence on others feel greater pain as a result of separation than people used to living alone. People who have been alone for a substantial length of time, tend to experience emotional numbness rather than intense emotions and distress. One's ability to adapt to change affects their response to separation and breakup. The ability to adapt sometimes triggers adaptive responses, such as seeking new relationships or new personal growth opportunities. Those who have not practiced the skills of adapting to change may be more vulnerable and respond with depression, anxiety, withdrawal from social contact, and self-neglect.

What is the Origin of the Flying Slaves Folktales?

In 1803, members of the Igbo tribe who were kidnapped and brought to Georgia as slaves rose in a memorable rebellion. While on the slave ship, *The York*, which was to deliver them from Georgia to the plantations on the St. Simons Island, 75 members of the Igbo tribe took over the ship and drowned their captors. According to historical records, the Igbo tribe members committed mass suicide when they arrived to shore, by marching to the water and choosing to drown in the ocean over being kept as slaves. However, because most of the bodies were never recovered, storytellers provided other accounts of the story. According to one version, the member of the Igbo tribe gained magical powers that lifted them to the air and brought them back to Africa. These tales of courage and hope were preserved and retold through oral traditions.

Why are Names Important?

During the Civil Rights Movement era, many African Americans chose names that expressed their identity, aspirations, and desire to counteract past and present racial oppression. In 1843, a runaway slave, Isabella Baumfree, changed her name to Sojourner Truth to reflect her calling to travel and tell the truth about slavery. In 1952, Malcolm Little changed his last name, originally given by his ancestors' slave owner, to X – indicating lack of knowledge of the original names of his ancestors. Names reflected the right of African Americans to reclaim recognition of their unique identity, personal choices, and ancestry.

Word Wall Here are fifteen vocabulary words to define and add to the Word Wall.

noncommittal (268)	abated (271)	contempt (276)	vengeance (276)	melancholy (279)
arch (287)	indignant (291)	sauntering (299)	conviction (301)	imminent (301)
mindlessness (305)	opulence (311)	prosperous (312)	oblivious (313)	reassurance (318)
frayed (320)	speculations (323)	tallow (323)	departure (324)	dull (325)
iridescent (327)	yearnings (330)	defuse (330)	abide (332)	dull (325)

Review Review the timeline from the beginning every day.

Start at the beginning and review the story so far

- Mention the setting and main character
- Point to each timeline item as you quickly review it

Read Read the selection.

Read Chapters 11–15 in the book, *Song of Solomon*.

RESPOND

Timeline List the 15-20 most important events on the timeline.

Complete the template on Page 4.

Map Add to ongoing class activities like a KWL chart or map: Mark key places in the barrio.

In Week 3 of this unit, you will add to each of the five charts you started in Week 1. Add sheets of paper as needed.

Chapter 11

In Chapter 11, Milkman witnesses poverty and unemployment in Shalimar, VA. He is attacked by young men who interpret his behavior as arrogant and disrespectful because of their socio-economic status. Identify three general facts about employment in the south in the 1960s and three facts about employment among the African American population in the south at this time.

Here are some suggested resources:

- **Encyclopedia Virginia:** [Gender, Race, and Industrial Development](#)
- **Pew Research Center:** [Black Unemployment is Consistently Twice That of Whites](#)
- **Eisenhower Foundation:** Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (Kerner Report): [Summary of Report](#)

Chapter 12

In Chapter 12, Milkman explores his ancestry during the reconstruction era, focusing on his grandfather and grandmother (Jake Solomon and Singing Bird). Look up and write three facts about American History in during the Reconstruction era and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877.”

Here are some suggested resources:

- **Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian:** [Indivisible](#)
- **National Archives:** [No Pensions for Ex-Slaves](#)
- **NPR:** [After Slavery, Searching for Loved Ones in Wanted Ads](#)

Chapter 13

In Chapter 13, Hagar, seen by everyone as a very pretty woman, expresses doubts about her beauty. In the 1960s, civil rights movements advocated for racial pride, and criticized Eurocentric beauty practices of African American women, such as hair straightening. Look up and write three facts about American History in during the 1960s and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “African-American Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1968.”

Here are some suggested resources:

- **Smithsonian, National Museum of American History:** [Make-Up](#)
- **National Archives:** [Women in Black Power](#)

Chapter 14

In Chapter 14, Milkman learns that his grandmother was American Indian, and like many other American Indian children at that time she was about to go to a boarding school. Look up and write three facts about American History in during the Reconstruction era and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877.”

Here are some suggested resources:

- **Smithsonian, National Museum of the American Indian:** [The Boarding School Tragedy](#)
- **National Park Service:** [Indian Children Forced to Assimilate at White Boarding Schools](#)
- **Library of Congress:** [Assimilation Through Education](#)

Chapter 15

In Chapter 15, Milkman goes back to Virginia with Pilate to finish the task she has taken on herself when she took the bones from the cave. Their journey back to Virginia closed a circle that began in the reconstruction era. Look up and write three facts about American History in during the Reconstruction era and three facts about the lives of African American people at that time. Add these facts under the section “The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877.”

Here are some suggested resources:

- **Constitutional Rights Foundation:** [The Southern “Black Codes” of 1865-66](#)
- **United States Senate:** [Freedmen’s Bureau Acts of 1865 and 1866](#)
- **U.S. Capitol Visitor Center:** [Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Circular No. 9](#)

EXPLORE

Activity Explore the reading more deeply with a visual or oral language activity.

Continue to the plot chart poster you have begun in Week 1.

Chapter 11

Write or type what you know about the *Falling Action* – the part of the plot in which questions are being answered, and the protagonist is approaching resolution and closure. Write 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points.

Chapter 12

Write or type what you know about the *Falling Action* – the part of the plot in which questions are being answered, and the protagonist is approaching resolution and closure. Write 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points.

Chapter 13

Write or type what you know about the *Falling Action* – the part of the plot in which questions are being answered, and the protagonist is approaching resolution and closure. Write 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points.

Chapter 14

Write or type what you know about the *Falling Action* – the part of the plot in which questions are being answered, and the protagonist is approaching resolution and closure. Write 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points.

Chapter 15

Write or type what you know about the Resolution – the part of the plot in which the main questions are answered, or the problem is solved. Write 1–2 paragraphs or 5–8 bullet points. Review and edit the completed poster.

Discussion Ask discussion questions.

Answer the key questions. Use evidence from the text.

Chapter 11

1. What did Milkman say and do that made the men in Solomon's store resent him? In your opinion, would the same behavior trigger a similar reaction in the neighborhood where his parents live?
2. What did Milkman believe he deserved and didn't deserve in life?

Chapter 12

1. Why did Guitar believe that Milkman was trying to take all the gold for himself?
2. What clues in the children's song connected to Milkman's family history?

Chapter 13

1. How did Guitar, Pilate, and Reba try to comfort Hagar?
2. How did the walk in the rain ruin Hagar's efforts?

Chapter 14

1. Why did Susan Byrd tell two different stories about Milkman's grandmother in the two times he saw her?
2. Why did Milkman ask about the registration of Jake and his brothers at the Freedman's Bureau?

Chapter 15

1. In Chapter 9 (p. 208), Pilate said that she heard the ghost of her father say "Sing," and "You just can't fly off and leave it." How did she interpret these words, and how did Milkman explain it in Chapter 15?
2. On page 334, Milkman solved the connection between Robert Smith, Guitar, and Pilate. Read the following quote: "The Seven Days, Milkman guessed, would be looking for a new recruit, as they had to when Robert Smith jumped off the roof of Mercy." Re-read chapter 1 sections about Robert Smith and Pilate's singing. How has your understanding of that event that happened on 2/18/1931 changed after reading the book?
3. What regret did Pilate express before she died?
4. What is the song of Solomon?

5. What did Milkman understand at the end of Chapter 15?

Analyze the key paragraph.

P. 266

“He was telling them that they weren’t men, that they relied on women and children for their food. And that the lint and tobacco in their pants pockets where dollar bills should have been was the measure. That thin shoes and suits with vests and smooth smooth hands were the measure. That eyes that had seen big cities and the inside of airplanes were the measure.”

P. 300

“As Milkman watched the children, he began to feel uncomfortable. Hating his parents, his sisters, seemed silly now. And the skim of shame that he had rinsed away in the bathwater after having stolen from Pilate returned.”

P. 306

“You can’t own a human being. You can’t lose what you don’t own. Suppose you did own him. Could you really love somebody who was absolutely nobody without you? You really want somebody like that? Somebody who falls apart when you walk out the door? You don’t, do you? And neither does he. You’re turning over your whole life to him. Your whole life, girl. And if it means so little to you that you can just give it away, hand it to him, then why should it mean any more to him? He can’t value you more than you value yourself.”

p. 323

“When you say ‘flew off’ you mean he ran away, don’t you? Escaped?”

“No, I mean flew. Oh, it’s just foolishness, you know, but according to the story he wasn’t running away. He was flying.”

P. 329

“Names that had meaning. No wonder Pilate put hers in her ear. When you know your name, you should hang on to it, for unless it is noted down and remembered, it will die when you do. Like the street he lived on, recorded as mains Avenue, but called No Doctor street by the Negros in memory of his grandfather, who was the first colored man of consequence in that city.”

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

In Chapter 11, you have read about the contrast between Milkman’s expectations for a warm southern hospitality and the hostility of the young men who resented his clothes, manners, and statements. Write one or two paragraphs about the effects of being caught in a vicious cycle of poverty – a cycle caused by a lack of employment and education opportunities, discrimination and low wages, and lack of access to food, health care and social services – on people’s behavior and attitudes.

In Chapter 12, you have read about the attempt of Milkman to piece together pieces of information about his ancestry. Write one or two paragraphs about the impact of knowing one's ancestry has on people's attitudes, behavior, self-esteem, and a sense of self-identity.

In Chapter 13, you have read about beauty and self-image concerns of Hagar. She believed that Milkman liked penny-colored silky hair. Write one or two paragraphs about the unique issues related to African American women's self-image concerning their beauty. How did the beauty and fashion industry in the 1960s affect the self-perception of African American women?

In Chapter 14, you have read about the sequence of events that have led to the joint life of Jake Solomon and Singing Bird. Write one or two paragraphs about the impact of government policies on marginalized groups and ethnic/racial minorities on life decisions of individuals.

Your final writing product is an analytical essay. Begin your essay with a statement about the effects of key events in American history on the lives of individuals. In the introduction paragraph, clarify your argument and introduce the reader to how you will analyze this relationship. In the following paragraphs, provide an analysis of your argument. Use the paragraphs you have written over the last weeks to provide examples. Reorder, edit and add connecting sentences as needed. You may choose to replace paragraphs with new ones that better support your argument.

The essay should be concise – avoid repetition and redundancy in statements. Use the following checklist to evaluate your work:

- The essay begins with a clear argument.
- Each paragraph includes a topic sentence that directly supports the arguments in the introduction paragraph.
- The essay includes quotes from the book.
- The essay includes a rich vocabulary and complex sentence structures.
- The body paragraphs lead to the conclusion paragraph logically.

Manage Your Time

Create a timeline to organize your writing schedule. Add dates in the right-side column. Add lines to the table, as needed.

What	When
Create a thesis statement.	
Collect and organize ideas and facts.	
Complete an introduction paragraph.	
Complete the body paragraphs.	
Complete the conclusion paragraph.	
Read through and refine.	
Submit the first draft.	
Revise based on feedback.	
Submit a final draft.	