

✕ Refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

The Color Purple: (c) Resolution and reconciliation

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the novel's ending, focusing on the way relationships are portrayed in the final letter.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Using **c)i Resolution and reconciliation student worksheet**, discuss which relationships are satisfactorily resolved at the end of the novel. Make notes along the arrows.
 - How satisfying and credible do we find the ending, in terms of how the relationships are left at the end of the story?
 - ✕ *The Color Purple* > Synopses and commentaries > Letter 90
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Re-read the final letter, **Letter 90**, photocopied onto paper. Lead the class in the following close analysis tasks (encourage use of highlighters / different colour pens for annotation):
 - Summarise the events narrated
 - Then consider what *extra* details Walker chooses to include beyond the needs of the plot, and discuss why these might be considered important enough to include in the final letter
 - e.g. Tashi and Adam's scarification is not really part of the narrative, but Walker chooses to mention it again at the end of the story
 - What is the significance of the list of recipients for the letter? (e.g. marks evolution of Celie's religious beliefs – the end of the novel concludes a spiritual journey.)
- How is the tension maintained for this final dramatic reunion?
 - Annotate ideas on the letter relating to how the narrative is structured (e.g. starts with the thank you which reveals the news, uses delay tactics, list of 'Could be-s', characters are described before they are named, Celie's paralysis, etc.).
- Find evidence of the following themes/issues being returned to, and highlight and annotate with observations:
 - American history
 - Black/white relations
 - African identity
 - Music
 - Non-traditional relationships
 - Female independence
 - The concept of family.
- Using **c)i Resolution and reconciliation student worksheet** as a starting point, highlight and annotate how relationships are portrayed in this letter.
- What issues are left unresolved at the end of the story and why (e.g. racial tension, colonialism)?
 - ✕ *The Color Purple* > Synopses and commentaries > Letter 90
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Hold a 'silent debate'. Print out and cut up **c)ii Resolution and reconciliation statements** and place around the room. Students circulate and write whether they agree or disagree, both with the original statement, and with the comments written by other students.
 - Next use the statements as the basis for traditional class discussion and note-taking.

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- ❖ **Recreative task:** Although the novel ends with reconciliation, the reader is perhaps left to wonder about the ongoing relationships between Celie and her family. Choose one relationship to focus on e.g.
 - Celie, Shug and Albert
 - Harpo and Sofia
 - Adam and Tashiand write a short narrative about their lives five years on.

- ❖ **Critical task:** 'The end of the novel is a victory for womanism and for spiritual regeneration. The reader is left satisfied that Celie is happy with her role in the world.' To what extent do you agree with this judgement of the novel's ending?
 - ✕ *The Color Purple* > Themes > Men, women and gender roles; God, religion and spirituality
 - ✕ *The Color Purple* > Synopses and commentaries > Letter 90

- ❖ **Extension task:** Read/research Walker's novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, the sequel to *The Color Purple*.
 - Does this story change our perception of the happy ending at the end of *The Color Purple*.