The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison
Class Packet

This is YOUR Copy of YOUR Packet. You will receive ONE Copy of this packet only. If YOU lose your packet it is YOUR responsibility to go to Springman’s Class website and Print out another copy on YOUR TIME.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date assigned/ Due date</th>
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<td>BW_1:</td>
<td>Anticipation Guide</td>
<td>4.8.15 / 4.10.15</td>
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<td>CW_1:</td>
<td>Cornell Notes Beauty</td>
<td>4.9.15 / 4.10.15</td>
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<td>HW_1:</td>
<td>Pre-reading Guide for The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison</td>
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<td>CW_2:</td>
<td>Prologues 1 and 2 (“Here is the house...Quiet as it’s kept...”)</td>
<td>4.9.15 / 4.10.15</td>
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<td>CW_3:</td>
<td>Prologues Summer Symbolism Chart</td>
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<td>CW_13:</td>
<td>Spring Newspaper Editorial / Spring Dialogue</td>
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<td>Summer Case Study</td>
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<td>CW_16:</td>
<td>Wrap-Up Letter to the Author</td>
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<td>CW_17:</td>
<td>Wrap-Up Poem</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CW_18:</td>
<td>Wrap-Up Reflections</td>
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</table>
Directions: Below are statements dealing with the ideas of beauty, self-hate, and family. Before you read the excerpt of *The Bluest Eye*, tell whether you agree or disagree with each statement by making a YES or NO next to each statement. Jot down comments to defend your stance. After you read the Novel we will revisit these statements to see if your answers remain the same. Only after we have read the novel, mark YES or NO again and see if you have changed your mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>After Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Everyone is beautiful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Everyone <em>should</em> believe that he or she is beautiful.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Everyone <em>does</em> believe that he or she is beautiful.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. There are many different types of beauty.</td>
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<td>5. Inner beauty is greater than outer beauty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. People appreciate inner beauty more than outer beauty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. People wish for lives like they see on television, even though those lives aren’t real.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Most people wish to change some aspect of their physical appearance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Most people believe they are perfect just the way they are.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. People wish for perfect families.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Most people have perfect families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Friends accept you for who you are.</td>
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<td>13. Family always looks out for one another.</td>
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<td>15. Only adults have fears.</td>
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<td>16. What other people think is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Outward appearance is important.</td>
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<td>18. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.</td>
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<td>19. Dandelions are pretty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>The perceptions of others should influence how we perceive others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Parents should <strong>ALWAYS</strong> protect their children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Movies and television are good places to find role models.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>People should give to those who are less fortunate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Our self-worth is determined by those around us.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>One failure often leads to another.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>People discriminate against each other because they are insecure about themselves.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Children should be able to take care of themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Our feelings about ourselves and our self-worth are determined by how we are treated as children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>A person’s entire life can be changed for the positive if his or her deepest desires are met.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Authority figures are helpful and have good intentions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Childhood family relationships have a strong influence over who a child will become.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Romantic love is a positive experience.</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Social class is important in determining a person’s self-worth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Adults <strong>ALWAYS</strong> do the right thing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Children have a more accurate view of the world than adults.</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>The media (magazines, movies, tv, etc.) offers a realistic portrayal of life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>It is important to take care of one’s possessions.</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Plastic surgery is a good option for those who want a higher self-esteem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Self-sufficiency is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Stereotypes are mostly accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Children are too young to understand adult issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Owning a home is more desirable than renting one.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
43. If one's family members did not accomplish much, it can be assumed that future generations will not accomplish much either.

44. Miracles are possible.

45. Family connections are important.
Pre-reading Guide for *The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison*

Directions: As you read the Bluest Eye, you will find that a major theme in the novel is the destructive nature of ideal standards of beauty. Think about the standards of beauty that are apparent in the American society today. Then think about how realistic or unrealistic those beauty standards are. Fill in the Standards of Beauty Chart with your observations. The first example is complete for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Media</th>
<th>Beauty Standards</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>How Realistic?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fashion Industry</strong></td>
<td>Female models are expected to be extremely thin and tall; males must be tall and perfectly proportioned; both gender must have perfect teeth and skin</td>
<td>Kate Moss; Naomi Campbell</td>
<td>Most models sit with a makeup artist for hours before going on the runway; they don’t just look that way naturally; many models are dangerously underweight because of the unrealistic standard of thinness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollywood Movies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TV Commercials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrity Magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Music Videos</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Discuss the ways the quotations from the primer at the start of the chapters represent the collective voice of society.

2. Infer information about characters and events when it is not explicitly stated.

3. Discuss what the following may represent in the story: milk, the quilt, the Shirley Temple cup, Pauline’s foot, the color green, marigolds, and Mary Jane candy bars.

4. Recognize Morrison’s writing style, which included interesting descriptive phrases and images.

5. Recognize when the narrator changes from Claudia (first person narration) to third person narration; discuss the advantages of each type of narration for this story.

6. Define vocabulary words from the story.

7. Discuss the importance of family love to help black children overcome or resist the social forces that promote racial self-loathing.

8. Define and cite examples from *The Bluest Eye* of the following literary terms. Metaphor, Theme, Simile, Parallelism, Symbol, Allusion, Irony, Omniscient, Folklore

9. Relate the ways each of the following characters try to escape from their unhappy lives: Cholly, Pecola, Sammy, Mrs. Breedlove, The Maginot Line, Geraldine, Soaphead Church; Comment on whether or not they succeed.

10. Discuss the reasons Pecola wishes for blue eyes.

11. Understand the overall theme of the novel: How the collective of society, which tells black people they must adhere to unattainable white standards and expectations, is destructive to black people, and result in racial self-loathing; explain how the theme impacts Pecola’s relationship with the black community, her family life, her friendships, her sexuality, and her sanity.

12. Comment on the significance of the fact that the 4 parts of the novel correspond with the 4 seasons of the year.

13. Point out examples of irony in the story, including why it is ironic the Pecola is tormented by black boys and why Cholly covers Pecola after the rape.

14. Cite incidents from the story to support the theme that when black people appear to achieve the lifestyle supported by the collective voice of society, they sacrifice passion and love.

15. Find examples of folklore in the story.

16. Write a character sketch of Pauline, tracing the roots of her inability to love Pecola.

17. Discuss the elements from Cholly’s life which make him capable of raping Pecola.

18. Discuss the significance of the following nicknames: The Maginot Line, Meringue-pie, Soaphead Church.

19. Discuss the sofa and Pauline’s tooth as a metaphor for destroyed dreams in the story.

20. Point out how the dandelions serve as a metaphor for Pecola’s place in the black community.

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**Objectives** — By the end of the Unit, students will be able to:

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2. Infer information about characters and events when it is not explicitly stated.

3. Discuss what the following may represent in the story: milk, the quilt, the Shirley Temple cup, Pauline’s foot, the color green, marigolds, and Mary Jane candy bars.

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5. Recognize when the narrator changes from Claudia (first person narration) to third person narration; discuss the advantages of each type of narration for this story.

6. Define vocabulary words from the story.

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19. Discuss the sofa and Pauline’s tooth as a metaphor for destroyed dreams in the story.

20. Point out how the dandelions serve as a metaphor for Pecola’s place in the black community.
The Bluest Eye (Prologue)
by Toni Morrison

here is the house. it is green and white. it has a red door. it
is very pretty. here is the family. mother, father, dick, and
jane live in the green-and-white house. they are very happy. see
jane. she has a red dress she wants to play. who will play with
jane? see the cat. it goes meow-meow. come and play. come play
with jane. the kitten will not play. see mother. mother is very
nice. mother, will you play with jane? mother laughs. laugh,
mother, laugh. see father. he is big and strong. father, will you
play with jane? father is smiling. smile, father, smile. see the
dog. bowwow goes the dog. do you want to play with jane? see the
dog run. run, dog, run. look, look. here comes a friend. the
friend will play with jane. they will play a good game. play,
jane, play.

eristhehouseitisgreenandwhiteitisredooritisveryprettyhereisthefa
milymotherfatherdickandjaneliveinthegreenandwhitehousetheareveryh
appysesjanesheisreddressshewantstoplaywhowillplaywithjaneseetheca
titgoesmeowmeowcomeandplaycomeplaywithjanethekittenwillnotplayst
emotherisverynicemotherwillyouplaywithjanemotherlaughslau
ghmotherlaughssefatherheisbigandstrongfatherwillyouplaywithjanefatherissmilingsmilefa
thersmileseethedogbowwowgoesthededogdoyouwanttoplaydoyouwanttoplaywithjaneseethe
dogrunrunrunrunrunlooklookherecom
esafriendsthefriendwillplaywithjanetheywillplayagoodgameplayjaneplay
The Bluest Eye – Prologues 1 and 2 (“Here is the house...Quiet as it’s kept...”)

1. The first two pages in the prologue repeat lines from the children’s reading book, *Fun With Dick And Jane*, a primer popular in school during the 1940’s and 1950’s. The primer describes incidents from the lives of a perfect white family made up of mother, father, son, daughter, and dog; most black children also had to learn to read using this book. Some critics believe the primer Morrison uses in this story represents the collective voice of the dominate white culture. Assuming this theory is accurate, what message do you think this allusion to the elementary school book might be sending to young black students?

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2. Why do you suppose Morrison repeats the words from the elementary school primer over and over without any punctuation?

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3. The first line in the second prologue is “Quiet as it’s kept, there are no marigolds in the fall of 1941.” Morrison has said that this line reminds her of their childhood. She remembers hearing black women use that expression before relating a piece of gossip or anecdote. To Morrison, it means, “Shh, don’t tell anyone else.” What secret about Pecola does the narrator reveal in the second prologue?

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4. What is the relationship between Pecola’s unborn child and the marigold seeds? What might marigolds represent in the story to follow?

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5. Parallelism is a literary term referring to a balanced arrangement of sentences or phrases suggesting some correspondence between them. Example: It was the best of time, it was the worse of times…” Find an example of parallelism in the second prologue.

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6. Who do you think is narrating the second prologue?

__________________________________________________________________________
**The Bluest Eye – Prologues Summer**

**Symbolism Chart**

**Directions:** Symbols usually stand in for abstract ideas and serve to illustrate important themes. For example, the marigolds in the story symbolize hope and renewal of life. Claudia and Frieda plant the marigolds with the belief that if the marigolds take root and survive, then Pecola’s baby will also survive.

*The Bluest Eye* is filled with symbolism. As you read the novel, look for instances of the symbols listed in the following chart. As you encounter those symbols, write what you believe the symbol represents. You may encounter many more symbol than those listed. If so, then add those to the chart or write them on a separate sheet of paper. The first one is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>What it Represents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marigolds</td>
<td>Renewal of life; hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue eyes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Color White</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Breedloves’ torn sofa</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Shirley Temple Cup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecola Breedlove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholly Breedlove</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maureen Peal</td>
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<tr>
<td>The “Whores”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Bluest Eye – Autumn Dialect

Directions: Dialect is speech that differs from a standard or accepted manner of speaking. When a person speaks in a dialect, that person might pronounce words differently or use grammar or vocabulary that deviates from the standard. Dialect can be regional or it can be associated with a particular group or social class. Many writers use dialect in order to lend a realistic element to their characters. In several passages in *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison writes in the dialect of some members of the black community in Lorain, Ohio, in the 1940’s.

Claudia’s mother and the friend with whom she speaks are both using dialect, even though it is normal or regular speech to them. Your job is to translate their conversation into Standard English, using all the grammatical rules that you know. When the speakers use slang words or metaphors, translate those into Standard English as well. If you come across a line that needs no translation, simply rewrite that line as it is. You can write your translated conversation below or on a separate sheet of paper. Begin with the line, “Well I hope don’t nobody let me roam around like that when I get senile. It’s a shame.” End with the line, “No, but he ain’t no buzzard, either.”

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The Bluest Eye – Autumn Newspaper Article

Directions: Write a Newspaper Article. Early in the story, we learn that Cholly Breedlove has burned down his own home, leaving his family homeless. We are not told any details about the circumstances surrounding his crime. Your job is to imagine the details of Cholly’s act and write a newspaper article on the incident.

You may work alone or in a group. Use the blank sheet of poster paper upon which the newspaper article will be written. You may choose to designate which person should do the writing and which decides what to include in the article. Create your article by following the instructions below.

- Devise a catchy headline for your article. Imitate actual newspaper headlines that you have seen. Make your headline short and to the point, and leave out articles such as a, an and the.

- Remember the Five W’s 1 H of newspaper writing: Who, What, When, Where Why, and How. Try to answer all five questions in the first paragraph of your article. This may be difficult, so any that are not answered in this paragraph should definitely be addressed in the second paragraph.

- In subsequent paragraphs, go into further detail about the crime and its effect on the community. In doing so, insert a quote from each of the following people:
  - Pauline Breedlove
  - Pecola Breedlove
  - A fireman
  - A neighbor
  - A police officer

- Feel free to include a drawing or a cut-out picture to go along with the article. If you do so, remember to give the drawing or picture a caption explaining it.
The Bluest Eye – Autumn through Summer Theme Chart

Directions: A theme is a broad, overarching idea in a literary work. Themes usually consist of fundamental and universal ideas about human nature or society. The Bluest Eye contains several themes, and some of them are listed for you in the first column of the chart that follows. Your job is to look out for passages in the book that support each theme. Keep adding to this chart every time you encounter a passage or event that supports any of the themes. When you are finished reading the novel, you should have a completed them chart. The first example for each theme is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Supporting Passage or Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whiteness as the standard of beauty</td>
<td>Mr. Henry flatters Claudia and Frieda by saying, “You must be Greta Garbo, and you must be Ginger Rogers.”  (These women were both white actors in black and white movies.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Destructiveness of Racism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mystery and fear of sex and/or puberty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Bluest Eye – Autumn through Winter Poetry

Directions: A “found” poem is a poem made up entirely of phrases, sentences, or quotations found in the text. Review the sections titled Autumn and Winter, and create a poem of your own. One of the best parts of writing a found poem is that it gives you the opportunity to interpret the text in any way you choose. Therefore, your poem may provide details about the plot or characters or may be totally unrelated.

Your poem should be at least ten lines long. The lines do not need to rhyme, but they certainly may. You can arrange the phrases in any way you like and change the punctuation, but do not deviate from Morrison’s actual words. Give the poem a title, which may or may not come from the book. An example taken entirely from sections Autumn and Winter follows:

Winter

An abandoned store
  quiet as lust,
  gray frame houses,
  dead grass in the field,
  no stir in the neighborhood,
  the end of something.
  The dying fire
  lights the sky
  with a dull orange glow.
  We waited for Spring.
The Bluest Eye – Winter Metaphors

Directions: In this section, Toni Morrison gives us a description of Claudia’s father. She uses many metaphors in order to creatively describe him. A metaphor is a literary device in which an object or person is described by designating it as some other, dissimilar object. Writers use metaphors in order to suggest a comparison or a likeness between things that are normally viewed as very different from one another. Metaphors, however, do not include the comparison terms like or as. Here is an example of the difference:

Metaphor: When Maureen ran, she was a cheetah darting across the plain.

Simile: Maureen ran like a cheetah darting across the plain.

Complete the following metaphors from the narrator’s description of her father on the first page of Winter. Then rewrite the metaphor in your own words; try to use a similar comparison.

Example: If the description originally were, “The music was a cool breeze across my hot forehead,” you might complete your metaphor by saying, “The music became a moist towel that eased my fever.”

Metaphor Chart

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Original Metaphor</th>
<th>Revised Metaphor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His eyes</td>
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<td>...for a jaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>...his high forehead</td>
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Now, complete the following sentences with your own metaphor.

1. My best friend is a ...
2. When I have to wake up early in the morning, I’m a...
3. Her eyes are ...
4. The warm summer sun...
5. When my brother gets angry, he can be...
6. That gun...
7. The moon shone...
8. The lion...
The Bluest Eye – Winter Word Game

**Directions:** Letters in a given word can often be reformulated to create a variety of different words. Using the letters in *winter* and *avalanche*, see how many other words you can form.

**Guidelines:** Words must be at least four or more letters. No proper nouns are allowed. No slang words are allowed.

<table>
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<th>Avalanche</th>
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<th>Winter Avalanche</th>
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The Bluest Eye – Winter Venn Diagram

Directions: A Venn diagram visually organizes the similarities and the differences between people or two things. Using the words below, fill in the Venn diagram to compare and contrast Mrs. MacTeer and Geraldine. In the center area both characters have in common, write the similarities. On the left side, write Mrs. MacTeer’s traits; on the right side, write Geraldine’s traits.
The Bluest Eye – Winter Writing a Play

Directions: Claudia and Frieda MacTeer have a conversation with Mr. Henry in the kitchen of their home. Re-read this scene, imagining the character on a stage or in a film; re-write it as a scene in a play or film. Make sure you include stage/film directions. Here are some things to remember:

- Use italics when describing a scene and when writing stage directions.
- Use brackets for stage directions.

Begin with the line, “The house was quiet when we opened the door.” The scene has been started for you.

[Claudia and Frieda enter the house. Everything is quiet. The smell of cooking turnips fills the scene.]

Claudia: Mama!

Mr. Henry [shuffling down the stairs in his bathrobe]: Hello there, Greta Garbo; hello, Ginger Rogers.
The Bluest Eye – Spring Writing with Color

Directions: In this section, Pauline describes the first time she met Cholly Breedlove/ Her description is filled with vibrant color imagery, which serves to emphasize her feeling at the time and the beauty of their early relationship:

“When I first seed Cholly, I want you to know it was like all the bits of color from that time down home when all us chil’en went berry picking after a funeral and I put some in the pocket of my Sunday dress, and they mashed up and stained my hips. My whole dress was messed with purple, and it never did wash out. Not the dress nor me. I could feel that purple deep inside me. And that lemonade Mama used to make when Pap came in out the fields. It be cool and yellowish, with seeds floating near the bottom. And that streak of green them june bugs made on the trees the night we left from down home. All of them colors was in me. Just sitting there. So when Cholly come up and tickled my foot, it was like them berries, that lemonade, them streaks of green the june bugs made, all come together.”

Pauline Breedlove feels very different about Cholly now.

Imagine that Toni Morrison wants you to write another color-filled paragraph, also in Pauline’s voice. This time, however, Pauline will be speaking about her present situation with Cholly. Write at least one paragraph in Pauline’s dialect. You should use as many color images as you can, but try to use at least four in your paragraph.

Example: “When Cholly comes home drunk, a black cloud settles over the house…”
The Bluest Eye – Spring Newspaper Editorial Option 1

Directions: In the chapter entitled Spring, we witnessed Cholly Breedlove’s rape of his own daughter. Imagine you work for the local newspaper in Lorain, Ohio. Your assignment is to write an editorial about the kind of punishment Cholly deserves for committing such an act. Make your editorial at least three paragraphs long and make sure you include the following components:

- A short description of Cholly’s crime
- A clearly stated opinion regarding what Cholly’s punishment should be
- At least three reasons why you believe he should receive the punishment
- A concluding statement that reaffirms your position on the issue

The Bluest Eye – Spring Dialogue Option 2

Directions: In this section, a long dialogue takes place in Pecola’s mind. The dialogue continues for a few pages. Reread these pages and imagine what it would be like if Toni Morrison wrote them in paragraph form instead of in dialogue form. Your job is to distill the entire dialogue into at least three paragraphs. Make sure you hit on all the major points of the dialogue. The first paragraph has been started for you. You may certainly change the beginning to suit the way you want to write your version.

Pecola stares into a mirror and speaks; she is clearly delusional. The conversation is with an imaginary friend in the form of an interior monologue. Pecola keeps checking to make sure her eyes are still blue. She is afraid the blueness may go away, despite Soaphead’s assurances that if she killed Bob, she’d have the blue eyes she wants...
The Bluest Eye – Summer Pie Chart

Directions: In Summer, we learn that, because of her life, her dreams and wishes, and her constant disappointments, Pecola has gone insane. Claudia narrates the following:

And Pecola is somewhere in that little brown house she and her mother mover to on the edge of town, where you can see her even now, once in a while. The birdlike gestures are worn away to mere picking and plucking her way between the tire rims and the sunflowers, between Coke bottle and milkweed, among all the waste and beauty of the world – which is what she herself was. All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed.

Separate into groups of four or five. As a group, brainstorm all of the factors that led to Pecola’s disintegration into her madness. After you have listed all you can think of, assign them a percentage of responsibility out of 100%. Create a pie chart reflecting how the group divides the responsibility.
The Bluest Eye – Summer Case Study

Directions: You will be writing a psychological case study. The novel ends with Pecola being almost totally removed from society, even more so than in the rest of the book and detaching herself from reality. Imagine you are a social worker and have been assigned the case of Pecola Breedlove. You must go to her house and interview her, creating a case study for her life. Make your report at least four paragraphs long.

- The first paragraph should detail Pecola’s current condition. Who is she? How does she behave? How does she look? Can she converse normally?

- The second paragraph should detail her past. What factors led up to her current condition? What answers does she give to your questions?

- The third paragraph should detail the state of Pecola’s home and Pecola’s relationship with her mother. What is the condition of the house and yard? Do Pecola and her mother get along?

- The final paragraph should make a diagnosis of Pecola’s mental state and should make recommendations regarding treatment.

PATIENT CHART

Patient: Pecola Breedlove

Current Mental Condition: __________________________________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Past History: __________________________
______________________________
______________________________

Diagnosis and Treatment: __________________________________________________
______________________________
______________________________
The Bluest Eye – Wrap-Up Letter to the Author

Directions: You will compose a letter to the author. Writing about her novel twenty-three years after its publication, Toni Morrison has discussed her reasons for writing The Bluest Eye and her feelings toward the book. She expressed some dissatisfaction with her own writing. She wrote:

One problem was centering: the weight of the novel’s inquiry on so delicate and vulnerable a character could smash her and lead readers into the comfort of pitying her rather than into an interrogation of themselves for the smashing. My solution – break the narrative into parts that had to reassemble by the reader – seems to me a good idea, the execution of which does not satisfy me now. Besides, it didn’t work: many readers remain touched but not moved…I was not able to secure throughout the work the feminine subtext that is present in the opening sentences… The shambles this struggle became is most evident in the section on Pauline Breedlove, where I resorted to two voices, hers and the urging narrator’s, both of which are extremely unsatisfactory to me.

What do you think about Ms. Morrison’s criticism of her own book? Do you agree with her? Do you disagree? Write a letter to Toni Morrison telling her your feelings about the book and giving your opinion regarding her points of criticism. Tell her what you liked about the book and what you disliked. Tell her who your favorite character was and why you liked that character. Tell her anything you would like to say about the book. Make your letter at least four paragraphs long. The first few lines have been done for you.

Dear Toni Morrison,

I really enjoyed reading The Bluest Eye. It made me think a lot about beauty and how destructive “ideal” beauty can be. I find it interesting that you are dissatisfied with the way you broke apart the narrative...
The Bluest Eye – Wrap-Up Poem

Directions: Understand character motivation. Synthesizing character traits. You will write an “I am” poem for any character in the novel. Draw your information from the character’s words and actions. You may choose to use direct quotations where appropriate.

Line 1: Begin with the words “I am”.
Line 2: Write three nouns about which your character has strong feelings.
Line 3: Write a complete sentence about two things your character likes.
Line 4: Begin with three nouns that describe qualities your character appreciates in other people. End the sentence with the words “are important to me.”
Line 5: Write a sentence explaining something positive your character likes about himself or herself.
Line 6-7: Begin a sentence in line 6 in which you show something negative your character sees in himself or herself or in others; finish the sentences in line 7 by showing that out of something bad can come good. Use the word “but” or “however” to link the two ideas.
Line 8-10: Write three short sentences explaining things about which your character has strong feelings. These can be likes or dislikes. They do not have to relate to each other or to the previous lines you have written.
Line 11: End the poem with the words, “I am...” (Fill in the name of the character you have chosen.)

Example:
1. I am
2. Rain, Forests, and Sunsets.
3. I like long walks and quiet times.
4. Honesty, Humor, and Peace are important to me.
5. I find satisfaction in a job well done.
6. I can be fearsome when my ideas are challenged.
7. But I thrive on intelligent conversation.
8. I love nature and animals.
9. I can be counted on to help.
10. I have strong feelings when a life is threatened.
11. I am __________.
The Bluest Eye – Wrap-Up Reflections

Directions: Reflecting on the novel as a whole. Now you have finished reading The Bluest Eye, reflect on what you have read. Answer the following questions.

1. What do you think about the ending of the novel? Do you think it could have ended any differently? If so, how would you have ended it?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

2. List three reasons why you think a young girl might identify with Pecola. If you disagree that someone might identify with Pecola, list three reasons why not.

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

3. Out of the many themes in The Bluests Eye, which one do you think is most important and why?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

4. List some ways in which the novel has affected you.

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_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

5. What was your favorite part of the novel? What was your least favorite part?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

6. If you had to recommend The Bluest Eye to a friend, what would you say about it?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

7. Given that it explores many controversial topics, do you think The Bluests Eye should be taught in schools or do you think it is much too controversial for that?

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________