

Dear Families -

In the upcoming weeks, we will begin a new Unit, ***The Social Construct Unit***.

During the course of our instruction, we will be using a collection of books that can be used to teach the standards, as well as provide specific skill related work in the areas of reading & writing. Our books are part of our Board approved English Language Arts curriculum. Our books are used within the Advanced Placement coursework, which is a college-level course; therefore, the text complexity and themes of the book are geared for college-level students.

As part of the unit, students will be able to choose from a variety of books to read. Our goal in offering these choices is to provide students with options that align to our intended instruction from the Iowa Core, while also allowing for book selections that align with interests and skill level.

For this unit/unit of study, students will choose to read one or more of the options below:

- ***The Happiness Myth*** by Jennifer Hecht
- ***A Passage to India*** by E.M. Forster
- ***Jane Eyre*** by Charlotte Bronte
- ***The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*** by Ann Fadiman
- ***Their Eyes Were Watching God*** by Zora Neale Hurston
- ***Breathless*** by Brian Stoker
- ***The Bluest Eye*** by Toni Morrison
- ***Cry, the Beloved Country*** by Alan Paton
- ***Methland*** by Nick Reding
- ***The Sound and the Fury*** by William Faulkner

As a point of reference, parents may want to find out more information about their student's book choice. The following are some websites that can be used to find out more information about the books on this list. While not an exhaustive list of websites containing information about books, each of the sites below contains information to support families as they preview materials. All of these websites have a free version providing information about books, but some are "for profit" and require a subscription to unlock all of its features. The free versions of subscription based sites, coupled with the other sites provided, assist families in making informed decisions. The websites represented are either used within the district, provided by our AEA partners, or were recommended as good sites from library professionals within the state.

- **[Booklist Online](#)**: is a website that compliments the Booklist magazine. Reviews on this website are written by members of the American Library Association. There is both a free and paid subscription option on this website, with the paid subscription (\$169.00/year). With the free subscription, you receive a basic book review.
- **[Common Sense Media Org](#)**: Common Sense Media is an organization that reviews and provides ratings for media and technology with the goal of providing information

Quotes: The Bluest Eye, teacher selected reading material.

*The tenderness welled up in him, and he sank to his knees, his eyes on the foot of his daughter. Crawling on all fours toward her, he raised his hand and caught the foot in an upward stroke. Pecola lost her balance and was about to careen to the floor. Cholly raised his other hand to her hips to save her from falling. He put his head down and nibbled at the back of her leg. His mouth trembled at the firm sweetness of the flesh. He closed his eyes, letting his fingers dig into her waist. The rigidity of her shocked body, the silence of her stunned throat, was better than Pauline's easy laughter had been. The confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him, and a bolt of desire ran down his genitals, giving it length, and softening the lips of his anus. Surrounding all of this lust was a border of politeness. He wanted to fuck her – tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold. The tightness of her vagina was more than he could bear. His soul seemed to slip down to his guts and fly out into her, and the gigantic thrust he made into her then provoked the only sound she made – a hollow suck of air in the back of her throat. Like the rapid loss of air from a circus balloon. Following the disintegration – the falling away – of sexual desire, he was conscious of her wet, soapy hands on his wrists, the fingers clenching, but whether her grip was from a hopeless but stubborn struggle to be free, or from some other emotion, he could not tell. Removing himself from her was so painful to him he cut it short and snatched his genitals out of the dry harbor of her vagina. She appeared to have fainted. Cholly stood up and could see only her grayish panties, so sad and limp around her ankles. Again the hatred mixed with tenderness. The hatred would not let him pick her up, the tenderness forced him to cover her. So when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quilt, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her. (162-163)*

Soaphead Church is a self-declared “Reader, Advisor, and Interpreter of Dreams” who Pecola asks to give her blue eyes. He is also a pedophile. This has made a lot of people who have challenged *The Bluest Eye* uncomfortable, so we felt him to be worth mentioning here. *He could have been an active homosexual but lacked the courage. Bestiality did not occur to him, and sodomy was quite out of the question, for he did not experience sustained erections and could not endure the thought of somebody else's. And besides, the one thing that disgusted him more than entering and caressing a woman was caressing and being caressed by a man. In any case, his cravings, although intense, never relished physical contact. He abhorred flesh on flesh. Body odor, breath odor, overwhelmed him. The sight of dried matter in the corner of the eye, decayed or missing teeth, ear wax, blackheads, moles, blisters, skin crusts – all the natural excretions and protections the body was capable of – disquieted him. His attentions therefore gradually settled on those humans whose bodies were least offensive – children. And since he was too diffident to confront homosexuality, and since little boys were insulting, scary, and stubborn, he further limited his interests to little girls. His sexuality was anything but lewd; his patronage of little girls smacked of innocence and was associated in his mind with cleanliness. He was what one might call a very clean old man. (166-167)*

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Why do I have to die? The little girls. The little girls are the only things I'll miss. Do you know that when I touched their sturdy little tits and bit them – just a little – I felt I was being friendly? I didn't want to kiss their mouths or sleep in the bed with them or take a child bride for my own. Playful, I felt, and friendly. Not like the newspapers said. Not like the people whispered. And they didn't mind at all. Not at all. Remember how so many of them came back? No one would even try to understand that. If I'd been hurting them, would they have come back? No one would even try to understand that. If I'd been hurting them, would they have come back? Two of them, Doreen and Sugar Babe, they'd come together. I gave them mints, money, and they'd eat ice cream with their legs wide open while I played with them. It was like a party. And there wasn't nastiness, and there wasn't any filth, and there wasn't and odor, and there wasn't any groaning -- just the light white laughter of little girls and me.

With little girls it is all clean and good and friendly.