

# Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred*

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Why did Butler write this novel?

For readers to “see that anybody can be a slave... And *feel* what that's like” - Butler

# Objectives and Skills

- Common Core Standards:
  - RL 11.3: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
  - RL 11.5: Analyze impact of author's choice of how to structure specific parts of the text.
  - RL 11.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the context and style of a text
- Tested Skills:
  - Point of View
  - Tone
  - Theme
  - Imagery
  - Structure



# LITERARY TERMS

# SCIENCE FICTION

- Fiction whose imagined elements are largely possible with advancements in science

(different than fantasy which doesn't coincide with science)

# HISTORICAL FICTION

- fiction that often portrays fictional accounts or dramatization of historical figures or events.



# Realism

- Shows good and bad in everyone / every situation
- Shows life “as it really is”
- Focuses on the “truth”

# Realism (Continued)

- Written in realistic DIALECT

= How someone would have talked  
in that area and time



## Point Of View

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- Narrator POV (1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, Limited or Omniscient)
- Also, Narrator or Authorial attitude towards a subject
- Dana (or Butler's) attitude towards racism/slavery/prejudice

## Tone

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- The emotion word that captures the narrator's or author's attitude towards the subject

## Theme

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- The theme of any literary work is the base topic or focus that acts as a foundation for the entire literary piece. The theme links all aspects of the literary work with one another and is basically the main subject.

## Imagery

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- Vivid descriptive imagery, including symbolism, motif, metaphors, similes, and other forms of figurative language.

## Structure

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- How the author structures the story (in chapters or sections, through frame story or flashback)

## Flashback

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- A flashback is a narrative technique that allows a writer to present past events during current events, in order to provide background for the current narration.



# Ante Bellum

- “Pre War”
- The South before the Civil War

# Themes to watch for:

- the abuse of power
- the limits of traditional gender roles,
- the repercussions of racial conflict.
- People are products of their environments
- Who is “good” and who is “bad” isn’t always easy to know

# Motifs to watch for:

- Home
- Whip
- Education
- Ownership
- Female bodies (not their own)



# Focus while reading:

- Deep (subjective) questioning
- Discussing literature

# Octavia Butler Interview

<http://www.npr.org/templates/dmg/dmg.php?prgCode=TAVIS&showDate=04-Mar-2004&segNum=2&NPRMediaPref=WM>