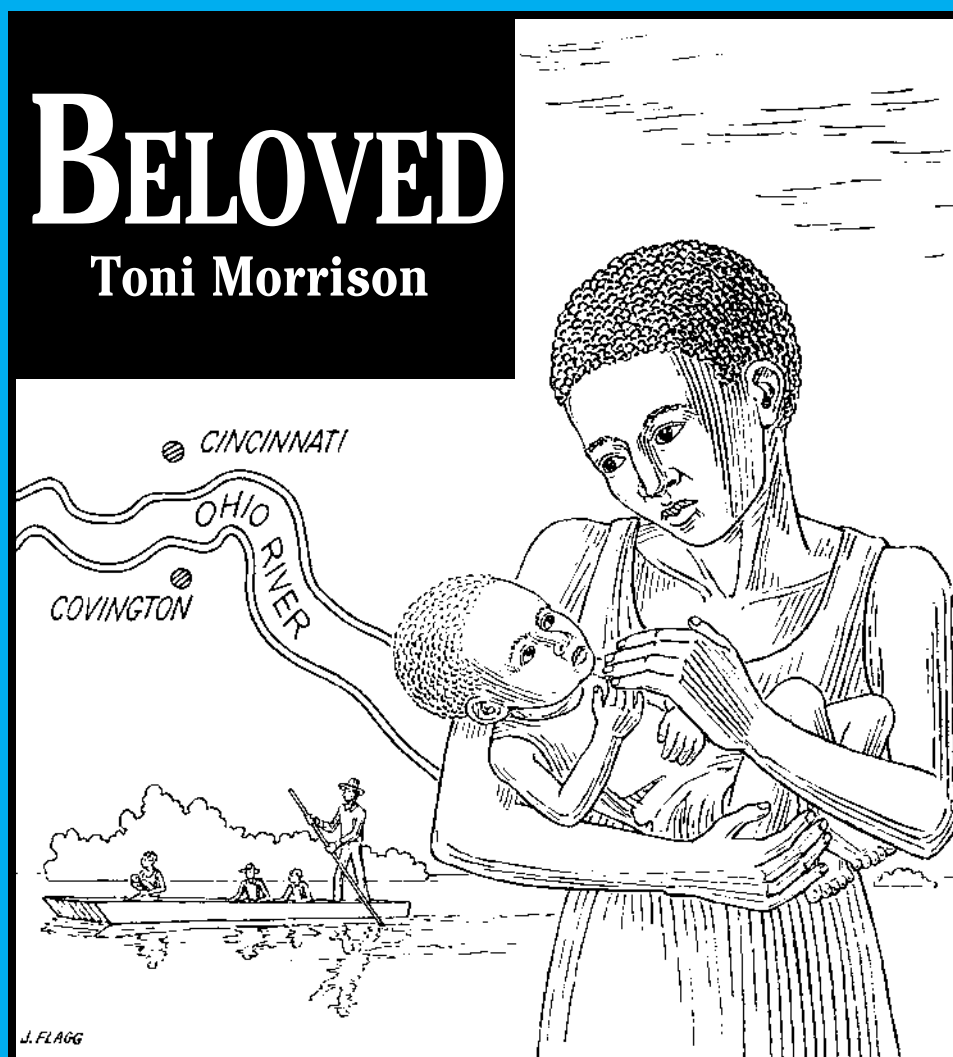


# Novel·Ties



## A Study Guide

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**LEARNING LINKS**

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## **For the Teacher**

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with *Beloved*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

Underground Railroad, in which whites and freed blacks offered shelter, food, and transportation, was developed to help slaves reach freedom. The Society of Friends, or Quakers, was especially adamant in its opposition to slavery, helping many slaves to escape and to find ways to survive once they achieved freedom.

As America expanded westward and territories became states, debate ensued over whether slavery should be allowed in the new states and territories. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 stated that Maine would be admitted as a free state, Missouri as a slave state, and that slavery would be prohibited in the Louisiana Purchase north of the 36°30' latitude line.

In the Compromise of 1850, California was admitted as a slave state, slavery was abolished in the District of Columbia, and the territories of New Mexico and Utah were established with no reference to slavery. An important part of the 1850 Compromise was the Fugitive Slave Act. It required “all good citizens” in all of the states and territories to cooperate in the return of escaped slaves to their owners. Law enforcement officers were held responsible for capturing runaway slaves. This meant that even if slaves escaped to free states, they were safe from re-enslavement only if they went all the way to Canada.

The formation of the Republican Party and the election of Abraham Lincoln precipitated the secession of the southern states and the outbreak of the Civil War. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 freed all the slaves, in word at least. The defeat of the Confederacy in 1865 legally ended slavery in the United States.

The Reconstruction period followed the war's end. This process of rebuilding the nation began in 1865 and lasted until 1877. State legislatures dominated by the Republican Party took control of the former Confederate states and quickly enacted laws that protected civil and political rights regardless of race and established public school systems. The Freedmen's Bureau was established with the goal of providing assistance of all kinds to newly-freed blacks. This included food and medical supplies, jobs, legal advice, and access to public education. In addition, the Bureau controlled about 800,000 acres of land which was intended for distribution to former slaves and Southerners who had been loyal to the Union. The plan for land distribution was abandoned, however, and the Bureau dissolved in 1869, only four years after the war ended.

Opposition to Reconstruction was intense. Whites resented being taxed to pay for a new system which they saw as corrupt. The Ku Klux Klan, organized in Tennessee in 1865 by former Confederate army officers, terrorized public officials and blacks in an attempt to destroy the Reconstruction governments that had taken over the South. Blacks were too intimidated to vote in the 1876 elections, and Democrats reclaimed the southern states. The taxes that had supported Reconstruction were cut and segregation laws were passed.

Freedom from bondage presented problems even for freed blacks in the north. Uneducated and with no financial resources, they continued to do what they knew how to do—menial tasks that paid little. Many found that racist attitudes were not confined to the South. And there were psychological hurdles to surmount as well.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Read the short biography of the author, Toni Morrison, on page four of this study guide and do some additional research to learn more about her life. Have you ever read any other books she has written, or have you ever seen her on television or in person? As you read *Beloved*, try to determine how her background and life experience influenced her writing.
2. Read the History of Slavery on page two of this study guide and do some additional research on the subject. Then begin a K-W-L chart, such as the one below. Add to it as you read the book.

### Slavery

What I Know — K —	What I Want to Know — W —	What I Learned — L —

3. *Beloved* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Do some research to learn about these two prestigious prizes. As you read *Beloved*, assess whether this book fits the criteria for each prize.
4. Spend some time looking over primary source documents about the lives of African slaves in America. A good compilation that may be available at your library is *The Black Book* (Random House, 1974). This collection of photos, newspaper clippings, recipes, anecdotes, jokes, bills of sale for slaves, songs, and other materials offers special insight into the lives of African Americans of the past. Visit the website <http://vi.uh.edu/pages/mintz/primary.htm> to learn about Margaret Garner, whose story was the inspiration for this book. Discuss the importance of materials like these to an author who is trying to recreate history. In addition, you may read some excerpts from one of these classic slave narratives:
  - Douglass, Frederick. *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Written in 1845. Published by Signet, 1968.
  - Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Written in 1861. Edited by Jean Fagan Yellin and published by Harvard University Press, 1987.
5. Have you ever read a novel or seen a play or a film in which supernatural elements played a significant part? As you read *Beloved*, consider why an author would introduce the supernatural in an otherwise realistic work.
6. Read the dedication at the beginning of the book. Who were the “Sixty million and more”? Then read the Biblical passage, also at the beginning of the book. How do you think Toni Morrison is preparing readers for what they will encounter as they read?