

***Ellen Foster* by Kaye Gibbons**

English Language Arts, 10th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Ellen Foster, set in a rural Southern community, is a coming-of-age story of a young girl in search of a loving family to replace the abuse and grief with which her life has been filled. Beginning shortly before her mother dies, the novel follows Ellen, the philosophical narrator, as she seeks the family life she has never known – a safe, happy home in which she can be the child. Included in her personal struggles is her growing awareness of racial differences and her own discriminations, which she overcomes as her relationship with her friend Starletta grows. When she is finally welcomed into her new home with “New Mama,” Ellen can finally be a child, although not without the knowledge and maturity that her experiences have brought.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Environment and Identity**
 - Essential Question: “How do adversity and environment influence an individual’s behavior and identity?”

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. RL.10.1
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development. RL.10.2
- Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. RL.10.3
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. RL.10.4
- Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. RL.10.5
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature. RL.10.6
- Analyze and evaluate the representation of a subject or a key scene in multiple mediums-- including media, artistic, and other visual formats. RL.10.7
- Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work. RL.10.9
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RL.10.12
- Analyze documents of historical and literary significance, including how they address related themes and concepts. RI.10.9