

***Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya**

English Language Arts, 9th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Bless Me, Ultima is the story of Antonio Marez, beginning when he is six years old. In the opening of the novel, Ultima joins his family. The plot deals with Antonio's coming of age. Along his ordeal he has Ultima to guide him through his tough and inquisitive times. She helps him on his quest, understanding him, teaching him, guiding him, and giving him courage to face his own ordeals. Tony faces growing up under his mother, a Luna, and his father, a Marez. The Luna heritage is one of farming and priesthood, and Tony's mother dreams of him some day being a priest since there has not been one in the family for quite some time. Marez, like la Mar (the sea) from which the name comes, is ever-changing and turbulent. His father's family members were vaqueros who traveled upon the llano and did not like to settle down. His father dreams of Tony joining him in heading west into California. Antonio is torn between these two forces guiding him. The story deals with his questioning of religion, of life, and of his heritage. With Ultima giving him guidance, he faces all the forces in his life to create himself, a mesh of everything he has dealt with.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM

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

- **Unit 1: Personal Identity**
 - Essential Question: "How does the process of reading, speaking and writing inform our ability to grasp our own identity?"
- **Unit 2: The Individual and the Community**
 - Essential Question: "How does community influence 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.9.1
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development. RL.9.2
- 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.9.4
- Analyze and evaluate the representation of a subject or a key scene in multiple mediums-- including media, artistic, and other visual formats. RL.9.7
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to

comprehend more fully when reading or listening. RL.9.10

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.9.11
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RL.9.12
- Read and comprehend high quality dramas, prose, and poetry of appropriate quantitative and qualitative complexity for Grades 9-10. RL.9.13
- Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. RL.9.3
- 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.9.5
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature. RL.9.6
- Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work. RL.9.9