



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2026 Volume IV: Resistance from Aristotle to Star Wars

From Joy to Rebellion: Exploring Resistance to Slavery

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This unit allows students to 1) explore methods of resistance to slavery 2) understand the power of the written word as a form of resistance and 3) engage with multiple genres of texts to evaluate their persuasiveness. Because of the nature of these texts, this unit is recommended for upper high school grades.

The unit centers around the novel *Kindred* by Octavia Butler, in which an African American woman in the 1970s time travels to a plantation in Maryland in the 1800s. Students will explore methods of resistance such as survival, violence, running away, and maintaining family. While reading *Kindred*, students will read excerpts of *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, by Frederick Douglass to understand his main acts of resistance, specifically education and violence. Students will explore the persuasiveness of a first-person narrative and why literacy was so key to fighting back against slavery. After reading *Kindred*, students will read *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* to understand his calls for rebellion. Students will consider what made this text so powerful and revolutionary to enslaved and free Black citizens, while stirring fear and reactionary laws amongst whites.

As students read these texts they will consider the question, what is the author saying about resistance? Students will maintain an evidence bank collecting evidence of resistance through all the texts and engage in a range of conversations and writing assignments to reflect on this question. The unit will culminate in an essay looking at how two of the authors address the topic of resistance.

(Developed for IB English Part II Standard Level, grade 12; recommended for English, grades 11-12)

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