

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

1 – 31 October



**“The function of freedom is to free someone else.”**

# BELOVED ROLE MODEL

**TONI MORRISON**

**LITERARY LEGEND**

**5**

**NEU.ORG.UK**



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## 5 FREEDOM FIGHTER TONI MORRISON

Toni Morrison was the only African American author (and one of the few women) to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

Toni's books have been read by adults and young people all over the world, and inspired many young people to start writing - especially other black authors and thinkers.

Toni's writings were popular because she was a fantastic storyteller who inspired a whole generation of writers, artists and thinkers.

Toni wrote a book of essays 'The origin of others' (2017) which explored why we create categories of otherness which are reinforced through literature and everyday speech - and how it leads us to dehumanise others.

Toni's most famous book 'Beloved' was a compelling story about the brutality and trauma caused by slavery. She is credited with creating the vocabulary for contemplating the impact of slavery upon contemporary society.

She focused in her stories about black men and women who were not leaders. She wrote about everyday racism in America, one literary critic said "she enlarged the American imagination in ways we are only beginning to understand."

## Lesson ideas BELOVED ROLE MODEL

### FREEDOM

What did Toni mean when she asked us to use the freedom we have to free others?

Read other powerful quotes from the web by Morrison who inspired figures from Barak Obama to Oprah Winfrey.

Get students to design a poster about freedom and link it to your school values - use a photo or drawing and create their own quotes.

### FEELING YOU BELONG

Toni used language to inspire us to think about who feels like they belong and why.

Your students will be hearing language and ideas everyday which label migrant families.

Our migration story has lesson plans and schemes of work and resources which are free to us. Visit [www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/information-for-teachers/teaching-resources.html](http://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/information-for-teachers/teaching-resources.html)

### STORIES

Toni Morrison believed that writing stories could change the world and that writing is a necessity for human kind.

Which book has inspired the class recently?

Think about how to widen the range of literature used in your school. Look at NEU advice "Reading for Pleasure".

### BELOVED

Find an opportunity within your subject or for your class to read the book "Beloved" or to engage with its themes.

The book explores the concept of rememory - the process of returning to memories again and again, in a way that affects your present.

Get students to write a book review.

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For more information about any of these figures or Black History Month, visit [neu.org.uk/black-history-month](http://neu.org.uk/black-history-month)