Beloved by Toni Morrison
LSC-University Park Library
Assignment Guide for ENGL 1301

124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom. ...

Beloved is Toni Morrison’s fifth book, first published in 1987. It follows former slave Sethe and her small family living with the ghost of the baby Sethe killed when her former master tried to reclaim them, a desperate act based on the real-life actions of Margaret Garner. The ghost is driven away by Paul D., a friend of Sethe’s from the plantation, but seemingly returns in the form of a mysterious young woman.

Assignment
Write a 5 page critical analysis of the Beloved by Toni Morrison. Focus on a main theme of the novel. Have your thesis approved by your instructor before you begin research. Support your writing with at least 5 scholarly sources. Use MLA style for your Works Cited page.

Themes to Consider
- The impact of slavery on individual lives
- Identity – personal and cultural
- Family, mother-daughter relationships
- The importance of community
- Race, racism
- Grief, trauma, alienation, abandonment
- Memory
- Slavery & freedom

Resources for Your Research
When you find a useful article or book, be sure to note the subject terms associated with it for your own search purposes. Also peruse the works cited pages of the sources you find to lead you to other books and articles.
### Books & Ebooks
The UP library is digital. You can request books or resources from other libraries through the [catalog](#). Or, download or read online [eBooks](#). If you’re off-campus, log in using your ID barcode number.

For example:

**Bouson, J. Brooks.** *Quiet As It’s Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison.* State University of New York Press. 2000. eBook.

### Databases
Library databases contain articles, newspapers, images, documents, papers, media and more. The databases selected for you here are best for critical analysis of literature.

Use the advanced search features.

- **Gale Literary Databases – Contemporary Literary Criticism**
  Includes databases of author biographies and bibliographies. Collection of critical essays on contemporary literature.

- **Literature Resource Center**
  Journal articles, critical essays, overviews & summaries.

- **Project Muse**
  Literary journals and publications from scholarly journals.

- **Bloom’s Literary Reference Online**
  Biographies, essays, and criticisms of authors and their works.

- **JSTOR**
  Scholarly articles for a wide variety of topics. When searching, narrow down the journals searched by selecting particular disciplines and publications.

### Videos
- **Films on Demand**
  Full-length films from reputable sources. A search for *Toni Morrison* will retrieve some interviews with her.

### Internet Sites
Be careful to evaluate sites for credibility, authority, bias, relevance, and evidence before citing them.

The Internet is NOT the best place to find information for your English criticism paper.

- **Morrison’s Nobel Prize page** includes an author biography as well as a transcript of her Nobel Lecture.

- **NPR interview** on Morrison’s writing inspirations.

- **New York Times article** from 1987 about Beloved which quotes heavily from Morrison.

- **YouTube**, National Visionary Leadership Program interview with Morrison about *Beloved*. 
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Elaine Patton, 09/2012