

Approved for use in

Summary of the Work:

Ghana, eighteenth century: two half-sisters are born into different villages, each unaware of the other. One will marry an Englishman and lead a life of comfort in the palatial rooms of the Cape Coast Castle. The other will be captured in a raid on her village, imprisoned in the very same castle, and sold into slavery. The story ends up following the parallel lives of these two sisters and their succeeding generations.

Rationale:

Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* is a sweeping exploration about what happens to the descendants of two African sisters separated at birth. Told through compelling chapters that follow the generations, the novel creates many opportunities for considering the legacy of enslavement for those of African descent. Teachers can be successful in their study of the novel by taking time to carefully equip students with a factual understanding of the African continent, particularly of western Africa. – Penguin Randomhouse

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

School Library Journal, 09/30/2016

This sweeping family saga encompasses seven generations of descendants of a Fante and his captured Asante house slave. After giving birth to a daughter, Maame manages to escape, making her way alone back to her own village. She is taken in by an Asante warrior, becomes his third wife, and has a second daughter by him. The two sisters, Effia and Esi, will never meet, their lives will follow very different paths, but their descendants will share a legacy of warfare and slavery. Effia will marry an Englishman who oversees the British interest in the Gold Coast slave trade. Esi will be captured by Fante warriors, traded to the Englishmen, and shipped to America to be sold into slavery. Progressing through 300 years of Ghanaian and American history, the narrative unfolds in a series of concise portraits of each sister's progeny that capture pivotal moments in each individual's life. Every portrait reads like a short story unto itself, making this volume a good choice for harried teens, yet Gyasi imbues the work with a remarkably seamless feel. Through the combined historical perspectives of each descendant, the author reveals that racism is often rooted in tribalism, greed, and the lust for power. Many students will be surprised to discover that the enslavement of Africans was not just a white man's crime. VERDICT Well researched, beautifully told, and easy to read, this title is destined to become required, as well as enlightening, reading for teens.— Cary Frostick, formerly at Mary Riley Styles Public Library, Falls Church, VA Copyright 2016 Reed Business Information.

Publishers Weekly Starred, 01/31/2016

Gyasi's amazing debut offers an unforgettable, page-turning look at the histories of Ghana and America, as the author traces a single bloodline across seven generations, beginning with Ghanaian half-sisters Effia, who is married off to a British colonizer in the 1760s, and Esi, who is captured into the British slave-trading system around the same time. These women never meet, never know of each other's existence, yet in alternating narratives we see their respective families swell through the eyes of slaves, wanderers, union leaders, teachers, heroin addicts, and more—these often feel like linked short stories, with each descendent receiving his or her own chapter. Esi's descendants find themselves on the other side of the Atlantic, toiling on plantations in the American South before escaping to the North for freedom, while Effia's offspring become intertwined in the Gold Coast slave trade, until her grandson breaks away and disappears to live a simple existence with his true love. In both America and Ghana, prosperity rises and falls from parent to child, love comes and goes, and the characters' trust of white men wavers. These story elements purposely echo like ghosts—as history often repeats itself—yet Gyasi writes each narrative with remarkable freshness and subtlety. A marvelous novel. Agent: Eric Simonoff, WME Entertainment. (June)

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- **School Library Journal**, 09/30/2016
- **Publishers Weekly Starred**, 01/31/2016

Readability

- Lexile Score: 910
- Readability Level: 6

Learning Resources Guidelines

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

The novels unique format and varying voices offer multiple perspectives for students. The authenticity of the characters will connect with students throughout the time-span of the story from the eighteenth century Ghana through jazz-age America.

Connection to the Curriculum:

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

Homegoing aligns with the following works of interest:

13th, Ava DuVernay, 2016, film

Ethnic Notions, Marlon Riggs

"Finding Your Roots," PBS, Henry Louis Gates <http://www.pbs.org/weta/finding-your-roots/home/>

Beloved, Toni Morrison

Moonlight, Barry Jenkins, A2, film, 2016

The Underground Railroad, Colson Whitehead