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# Toni Morrison

Today we're going to talk about Toni Morrison...in just a minute.

Toni Morrison was born Chloe Wofford in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio. She is considered one of the greatest American authors of all time.

After earning a bachelor's degree from Howard University and a master's from Cornell, Morrison taught literature and worked at a textbook publishing company. Later she became the first Black female editor at Random House, where she edited works by prominent Black Americans like Angela Davis, Toni Cade Bambara, Gayl Jones, Huey P. Newton, and Muhammad Ali.

It wasn't until she was 39 years old that her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published. She went on to write 10 more novels, including *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Beloved*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Morrison's writing centered Black lives and experiences, which had often been minimized in Western literature. She explored questions that define the human experience: Are good and evil truly opposites? Do race, class, and gender determine where we end up in life? And how do the past and present intersect in our lives and society as a whole?

In 1993, Morrison won the Nobel Prize in Literature, and in 2012, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But she also endured a lot of criticism, and her books have been banned in some schools and libraries for their frank depictions of violence and sexuality. Throughout her life, Morrison fought against censorship, believing it erased valuable perspectives.

How do you think Toni Morrison has influenced other writers?