

Detail

Consider:

If my mother was in a singing mood, it wasn't so bad. She would sing about hard times, bad times, and somebody-done-gone-and-left-me times. But her voice was so sweet and her singing-eyes so melty I found myself longing for those hard times, yearning to be grown without "a thin di-I-ime to my name." I looked forward to the delicious time when "my man" would leave me, when I would "hate to see that evening sun go down . . ." 'cause then I would know "my man has left this town." Misery colored by the greens and blues in my mother's voice took all of the grief out of the words and left me with a conviction that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet.

— Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Discuss:

1. Why are parts of the passage in quotes? What do the quoted details add to the passage?
2. Which details in the passage contribute to the conclusion that pain is sweet? Fill in the chart below to show how Morrison sets up this oxymoron.

"Sweet" Details	"Pain" Details

Apply:

Think of a paradoxical feeling such as sweet pain, healthful illness, or frightening comfort; then make a chart listing two details for each side of the paradox. Use the chart above as a model. Share your chart with a partner.