

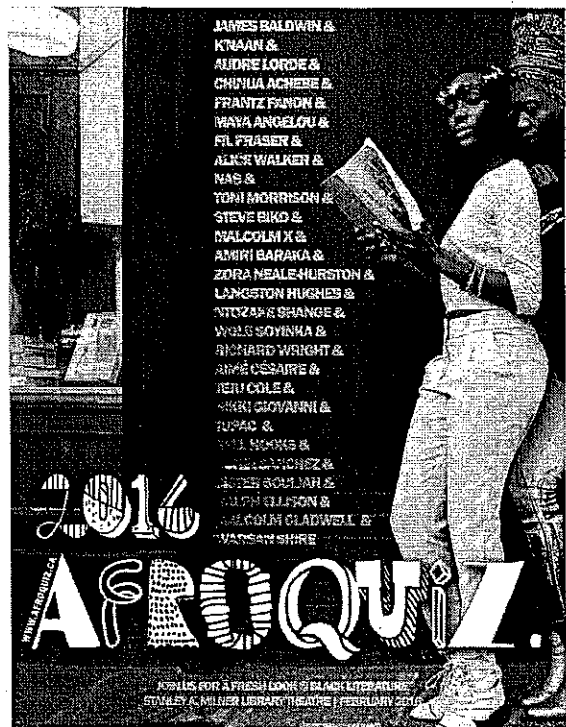
# Enjoying Poetry:

An introduction to poetry by Americans and Canadians of African and Caribbean Heritage

1. Read the attached poetry package and answer the questions.

- Poetry package assessment *learning goal*: I can and do find meaning in poetry.
- You will complete a KWL chart, read four poems and respond to the questions about each poem. Marks will be assigned for each task on a 1-2-3 scale.
  - 1 = unclear, not finding meaning.
  - 2 = somewhat clear, finding a bit of meaning.
  - 3 = clear, making meaning.

Total marks for poetry package: /58 (reading)



## KWL CHART

Look at the KWL Chart below. What do you already know about Poets or Poetry? Write what you know in the column 'K'. What do you want to know about it? Write down what you want to know about poetry in the "W" column.

What I <i>know</i> about poetry written by African American poets.	What I <i>want</i> to know about poetry written by African American poets.	What I <i>learned</i> about poetry written by African American poets.

## READING ACTIVITY

### Poems

Food plays a very important part in cultures of African heritage. A lot of African foods and recipes came to America, Europe, and the Caribbean with the African slaves. Some examples of these foods are okra, sorghum, lima beans, and yam. These foods were incorporated into European and American cooking. The slaves used food and cooking as a way to express themselves creatively. It was also a way for them to re-build (or build) their cultural identity in this foreign land. Since food itself was used as a form of expression, it is no wonder that poets today who are of African descent write poems with a food theme. Here is a poem by Maya Angelou.

### I Love the Look of Words

Popcorn leaps, popping from the floor  
of a hot black skillet  
and into my mouth.  
Black words leap,  
snapping from the white page.  
Rushing into my eyes. Sliding  
into my brain which gobbles them  
the way my tongue and teeth  
chomp the buttered popcorn.

When I have stopped reading,  
ideas from the words stay stuck  
in my mind, like the sweet smell of butter  
perfuming my  
fingers long after the popcorn  
is finished.

I love the book and the look of words  
the weight of ideas that popped into  
my mind  
I love the tracks of new thinking in my  
mind.



<http://www.poets.org/sites/default/files/styles/286x289/public/images/biographies/mangelou.jpg?itok=17zceaOs>

*Ms. Angelou was born name Marguerite Annie Johnson. She was born in April 1928 in Missouri and died in May 2014. She was an American poet, singer, author, dancer, and actress.*

*In 1993, Angelou recited her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" (1993) at President Bill Clinton's inauguration, making her the first poet to make an*

From *Soul Looks Back in Wonder*. Ed. Tom Feelings. Puffin, New York. Copyright ©1993 by Maya Angelou

*inaugural recitation since Robert Frost at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961.*

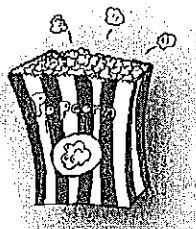
### Food for thought

- 13
1. Maya Angelou describes how popcorn is like reading and writing. She uses specific words that remind us of popcorn. She uses words such as leap and snap. Can you write down some words in the poem that are used to compare to popcorn?

---

---

---

- 13
2. What sounds does popcorn make? Think of the sounds that are made when you are making popcorn in stove. What about the eating popcorn? Read the words such as *pop* that are sound of popcorn popping. that make us think of the  the microwave or on the sounds made when you are poem again. There are some used that remind us of the What other words are used sounds of popcorn?

---

---

---

- 13
3. Can you think of a reason why this poem is compared to popcorn?

---

---

---

Here is another food poem called *Chocolate* by Rita Dove.

### Chocolate

Velvet fruit, exquisite square  
I hold up to sniff  
between finger and thumb --

how you numb me  
With your rich attentions!  
If I don't eat you quickly,

you'll melt in my palm.  
Pleasure seeker, if I let you  
you'd liquefy everywhere.

Knotted smoke, dark punch  
of earth and night and leaf,  
for a taste of you

any woman would gladly  
crumble to ruin.  
Enough chatter: I am ready

to fall in love!

-----  
From *American Smooth*.

[http://www.poetryfoundation.org/downloads/BHM\\_Elementary.pdf](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/downloads/BHM_Elementary.pdf)



*Rita Dove was born in 1952 in Akron, Ohio in the United States of America. As a child she loved to read. She has won many awards for her poetry such as: the Folger Shakespeare Library's Renaissance Forum Award and the General Electric Foundation award. Rita Dove's first work, The Yellow House on the Corner was published in 1980. She has published 16 poems in total.*

### Food for thought

1. The poet likes chocolate. What words are used in the poem that show us how much the poet loves chocolate?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13

3

2. What kinds of food do you love?

---

---



3. This poem is like a love poem. Write a short love letter to your favorite food.

3

---

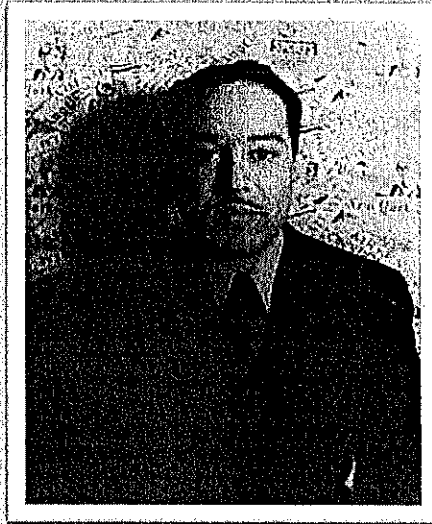
---

---

---

---

---



*James Mercer Langston Hughes (February 1, 1902 - May 22, 1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri.*

*He was one of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called jazz poetry.*

*He travelled to many countries in Africa and Europe where he met many other poets and writers. Hughes loved listening to blues, jazz, and writing poetry.*

Everywhere people dream of a better life or a better future. Dreams play an important part in the history of people of African descent. There is the famous "I have a dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr; and there were many other famous people who also wrote and talked about dreams. Here are two poems on dreams by a famous poet called Langston Hughes.

<p><b>Dream Boogie</b></p> <p>Good morning, daddy! Ain't you heard The boogie-woogie rumble Of a dream deferred?</p> <p>Listen closely: You'll hear their feet Beating out and beating out a —</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>You think It's a happy beat?</i></p> <p>Listen to it closely: Ain't you heard something underneath like a —</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What did I say?</i></p> <p>Sure, I'm happy! Take it away!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hey, pop! Re-bop! Mop!</i></p> <p>Y-e-a-h!</p>	<p><b>Harlem</b></p> <p>What happens to a dream deferred?</p> <p>Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore — And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over — Like a syrupy sweet?</p> <p>Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.</p>
	<p><i>Or does it explode?</i></p>

## Questions on Harlem

1. What dream do you think Langston Hughes is referring to in his poem?
2. What does it mean to defer something?
3. What do you think Langston Hughes is talking about when he refers to a "dream deferred"?
4. Hughes uses very descriptive language to ask questions about what might happen to a dream deferred. Write down what you think he is saying in each question below:

Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

---

Or crust and sugar over — Like a syrupy sweet?

---

Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.

---

Or does it explode?

---

## Background information to Dream Boogie

From the very beginning, African-American poets have been creators and critics of social values as they envisioned a world of justice and equality. As they reflected their values in the context of the American Dream, they created a body of poetry that grew out of their folk roots. Langston Hughes' "Dream Boogie" shows the importance of music, improvisation, and inventive style. With it he creates a poem which is inspired by boogie-woogie rhythms that accompanied the popular dance crazes of the period. The music encouraged African-Americans to dance and dream of brighter days even when their realities were the blues.

13

13

13

12

12

12

12

answer  
on  
a  
separate  
piece  
of  
paper.



H I U W U D E K E Y T U 0

Listen to a poetry reading of the poem Harlem by clicking this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79YjXKYeWck>

Listen to a poetry reading of the poem Dream Boogie by clicking on this link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDTEYeeBtek>

Compare and contrast the two poems "Dream Boogie" and "Harlem". How are they alike? How are they different? Write your answers in the chart below:

Dream Boogie and Harlem	
Similarities (How these poems are alike)	Differences (How these poems are different)

10

10

Task 1 / pg 8