

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Curriculum Unit



The Center for Learning

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

Curriculum Unit

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Contents

	Page	Handouts
Introduction	v	
Teacher Notes	vii	
1 Life with Momma: Characterization	1	1, 2, 3
2 Segregation in Stamps: Conflict	7	4, 5, 6
3 Extended Family: Plot/Subplots	13	7, 8, 9
4 Loss of Innocence: Themes	19	10, 11, 12
5 Literary Lifelines: Allusions	25	13, 14, 15
6 Communal Identity: Symbols.....	31	16, 17, 18
7 Securing the Future: Tone.....	37	19, 20, 21, 22
8 California Experience: Setting	45	23, 24, 25
9 Experiencing Diversity: Point of View.....	51	26, 27, 28, 29
10 Transitions: Motifs	57	30, 31, 32, 33
11 Accepting Responsibility: Coming of Age	63	34, 35, 36
12 <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> : The Movie.....	69	37, 38
Supplementary Materials		
Quiz	72	
Answer Key	73	
Essay Topics	74	
Research Projects	75	

Introduction

Maya Angelou, born Marguerite Anne Johnson on April 4, 1928, is a member of a very elite group in America's cultural consciousness. She is a familiar face with a familiar name. Whether she is recognized for her poetry, her song, her acting, her leadership, or her line of inspiring products, she is *our* Maya Angelou.

Maya Angelou's voice is so recognizable because it is a voice heard in many unique and memorable places. She was only the second poet to be invited to a presidential inauguration to present an original poem. Following the example of John F. Kennedy, who asked Robert Frost to write and deliver a poem, Bill Clinton asked the same of Maya Angelou. Her poem, "On the Pulse of Morning" was delivered with the emotion that permeates her work and her life.

Angelou's body of work includes the following: performance in *Porgy and Bess*; editor of *African Review*; professor at the University of Ghana; coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; membership on the American Revolutionary Bicentennial Advisory Commission and the National Commission on the Observance of the International Woman's Year. Her poetry and her nonfiction rank with the best America has to offer.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is the first of many autobiographical works that offer an honest and personal glimpse of Maya Angelou's life. This work follows the life of young Marguerite as she moves through her precarious childhood. Though there are periods of stability and security, her young life is often interrupted by traumatic events that throw her into tailspins. A strength that comes from deep within this remarkable young girl carries her into adulthood with dignity, purpose, and a sense that she will take her song with her and will sing it throughout her life.

Maya Angelou continued writing her autobiography over the years. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is the first autobiographical work. It was followed by these works.

Gather Together in My Name (1972)

Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas (1976)

The Heart of a Woman (1981)

All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes (1986)

Teacher Notes

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is a work that reads like poetry, drama, mystery, and personal reflection. The book, however, falls into the category of nonfiction since it is the autobiography of young Marguerite Anne Johnson, who would one day be known to the world as Maya Angelou.

This work follows Marguerite from age three to the time she becomes a teenage mother. It is tender, sad, inspiring, and, often, very harsh and direct as it handles some hard realities that were a part of Marguerite's young life. Be prepared to deal with issues of sexual abuse, racial prejudice, and teenage sexual activity and pregnancy.

For the sake of this study, the book has been divided into segments that allow for breaks in the narrative. Since this is a retelling of actual events in a person's life, the flow may not be the same as that of a novel or a play. Incidents are sometimes revisited or analyzed from a point of view that indicates a passing of time and/or a maturing perspective.

Students should read assigned chapters before each lesson:

Lesson 1	prologue, chapters 1–3
Lesson 2	chapters 4–7
Lesson 3	chapters 8–10
Lesson 4	chapters 11–14
Lesson 5	chapters 15–18
Lesson 6	chapters 19–22
Lesson 7	chapters 23–25
Lesson 8	chapters 26–29
Lesson 9	chapters 30–32
Lesson 10	chapters 33–34
Lesson 11	chapters 35–36
Lesson 12	<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> : the movie

The film runs one hundred minutes and is not rated.

Each lesson in this unit provides a brief summary for the teacher and works with particular literary devices or themes. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* deals with several topics that may be the subject of further research. These research topics, which are listed in the Supplementary Materials, could be assigned to individual students or to small groups. A quiz and a list of short essay topics are included at the end of this curriculum unit.

Answers to handouts will vary unless otherwise indicated. Students may need additional paper to complete some handouts.

Lesson 1

Life with Momma: Characterization

Objectives

- To summarize the prologue and chapters 1–3
- To meet the main characters in the story
- To review the concept of characterization in light of its reliance on real-life situations

Notes to the Teacher

Students need to understand that *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is not a work of fiction. It is the first of five works that are autobiographical accounts of the life of Marguerite Johnson, who would come to be known as beloved and versatile writer Maya Angelou.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings starts with a question that seems to be floating from the mind of young Marguerite Johnson. The question is asked: “What you looking at me for? I didn’t come to stay.” The setting is the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. It’s Easter, and Marguerite stands before the congregation. She is dressed in her lavender taffeta dress. The scene provides an interesting contrast between reality and fantasy. The reality is that she is a young black girl who is standing before her church community in a dress that is a hand-me-down from a white woman. Marguerite cannot remember the words of a poem she needs to recite. She gives in to her panic and flees the church. She wets her pants and ends up crying and laughing as she runs home.

In the midst of this whole scene, Marguerite is fantasizing that she is going to wake up and find she has blond hair and blue eyes. At her very young age, she already knows that she is going to have to deal with being at a disadvantage because she is a black girl in a society that looks down on her because of her race. She observes: “If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is the rust on the razor that threatens the throat.”

The first three chapters of the book introduce the major characters that make up Marguerite’s core family unit. Marguerite and her brother, Bailey, are three and four years old respectively when their parents divorce.

Their parents send them to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their paternal grandmother (Annie Henderson) and their Uncle Willie. The young children are entrusted to the care of a porter as they leave California on the way to Arkansas. The porter abandons the children in Arizona. They have papers tacked onto them, papers that identify their final destination. Through the kindness of strangers, they reach their destination.

The strong woman who welcomes the children into her life is Annie Henderson, also known as Momma. She owns the Store. She is a respected resident of the community and represents a stable, religious anchor for Marguerite and Bailey. Her store is a gathering place for the laborers who live the hard and hopeless life of cotton pickers. Marguerite sees the despair that descends upon them at the end of each day as their hopes of a good life die. Marguerite is enraged at the stereotype of the happy pickers who are resigned and accepting of their plight.

Uncle Willie emerges as the disciplinarian in the lives of the young Johnson children. He is physically handicapped and is the butt of jokes in the community. Marguerite sees him trying to hide his handicap from two strangers who enter the store. This incident makes her feel close to Willie, who shows that he would love to be accepted as normal to others.

Marguerite’s awareness of the workers, her Uncle Willie, and her grandmother’s significance in the community gives her insights not often attributed to young people. She discovers the joy of reading and falls in love with William Shakespeare. She feels guilty that her first love is a white man, but this basic love of literature carries her through many hard times.

The frightening reality of life in Stamps, Arkansas, is epitomized in the event that is contained in chapter 3. Mr. Steward, the white former sheriff, comes to warn Momma that whites are on the warpath. They believe that a black man “messed-with” a white woman. As a precaution, Momma hides Willie in a potato and onion bin. Uncle Willie’s moans from the bin are a sad comment on the effects of fear in the lives of decent people.

Students should use this work as an opportunity to observe real people who are presented in this autobiographical account of Maya Angelou's experience. The same techniques that are used to draw fictional characters are used in portraying real people. This process of drawing characters is needed in dealing with all literary genres.

You can use the opening chapters of the book to elaborate on the process of characterization. The crossover from students' own awareness of different personalities to recognizing traits and characteristics in fictional characters is an easy and interesting one.

This lesson deals not only with the plot developments in the story but also with types of characters in literature and techniques used to define these characters.

Procedure

1. Students should have read the prologue and chapters 1–3 before starting this lesson. Subsequent chapters will be assigned at the end of each lesson.
2. Briefly review the story to this point.
3. Clarify the difference between creating characters and describing real-life people. This work is autobiographical, but the author uses general literary techniques to present her characters and her story.
4. Review *characterization* with students.
characterization—the art by which an author imbues characters with life
5. Have students write the following four techniques used by an author to draw and create a character:
 - physical appearance
 - the words, actions, and thoughts of the character
 - other characters' words, actions, and thoughts about the character
 - the author's direct comments on the character
6. Define the following terms, and have students write them in their notebooks.

protagonist—the central character who engages the reader's interest and empathy

antagonist—the character, force, or collection of forces that stand directly opposed to the protagonist and give rise to the conflict of the story

static character—a character who does not change throughout the work

dynamic character—a character who undergoes some kind of change because of the action of the plot

flat character—a character who embodies one or two qualities, ideas, or traits that can be easily recognized; type characters who may embody many stereotypes

round character—more complex character who displays the inconsistencies and conflicts found in real people

7. Distribute **Handout 1**, and have students complete it. Instruct them to base their responses on their reading and their observations about people they have already encountered in the book.

Suggested Responses:

Marguerite—*shy, intuitive, sensitive, awkward*

Bailey—*personable, outgoing, confident, charming*

Momma—*religious, stable, solid*

Uncle Willie—*ashamed, strict, self-conscious, scared*

8. Have students share answers with the whole class. Put a time or number limit on the session.
9. Distribute **Handout 2**. Allow time for students to complete the handout. Discuss it as a class.
10. Distribute **Handout 3**. Have students work in small groups. After groups finish have them share their answers with the class.
11. Assign chapters 4–7 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 2.

Evaluating Personalities

Directions: Basing responses on your reading, list qualities, traits, or dispositions for each of the following people. Consider how the four techniques used by an author to create a character or by a person help to depict a real person: physical appearance; the words, actions, and thoughts of the character; other characters' words, actions, and thoughts about the character; and the author's direct comments on the character.

Character	Qualities, Traits, or Descriptions
Marguerite	
Bailey	
Momma	
Uncle Willie	

Fiction Reflects Reality

Directions: List as many names as you can of people from television, movies, or novels who parallel each character.

Person from Story	Television, Movie, or Novel Characters
Marguerite	
Bailey	
Momma	
Uncle Willie	

Attributes and Qualities

Directions: Answer the following questions after eliciting responses from all the members of the group.

1. What qualities and attributes would be found in a good parent or guardian?

2. What qualities and attributes would be found in a good child or grandchild in a family?

3. What qualities and attributes would be found in a responsible member of a local community?

4. What qualities and attributes would be found in a responsible employer?

5. What qualities and attributes would be found in a responsible employee?

Lesson 2

Segregation in Stamps: Conflict

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 4–7
- To note the general nature and types of conflict
- To identify some conflicts between whites and blacks in Stamps, Arkansas

Notes to the Teacher

Chapters 4–7 contain snatches of what daily life and periodic indignities were like in the segregated South. The assault on the psyche was as devastating as the physical assaults that often took place.

Marguerite is aware of the general perception that she is ugly. She blames her dark skin and her kinky hair for her perceived unacceptable appearance. Her brother Bailey, on the other hand, is small, graceful, and attractive. His confidence adds to his overall appeal. The relationship between the two is a solid and important anchor for Marguerite. Bailey is the most important person in her life.

Maya Angelou gives the reader some vivid examples of the feelings and attitudes that existed in the two separated communities. She notes that segregation was so complete that most black children in Stamps did not know what whites looked like. To many, white people were not real.

Encounters with both blacks and whites brought lessons to be learned and attitudes to be formed. An incident involving Momma and a group of poor white children leaves Marguerite enraged by the actions of the children and impressed by the dignity and control of her grandmother. When the children call Momma by her first name and engage in disrespectful and vulgar behavior in her presence, Momma responds by quietly singing a hymn and by addressing them as “Miz.” Marguerite is astute enough to realize that her grandmother is the winner in this degrading battle.

Marguerite’s encounter with a black church elder is also enlightening. She and Bailey hate the man because he arrives every three months and eats the best parts of their Sunday meal. Though she tunes him out, she cannot help but feel a certain rage at a man who seems to

abuse his position in the community. When an overly dramatic and out-of-control church member makes a scene at a church service, Marguerite and Bailey laugh themselves into the beating of their lives. There is some comfort in the thought that their actions are a small retaliation for the aggravation they endured from the churchman.

Momma’s attitudes about interactions with whites are cautious and distant. She does not believe it safe for black people to speak to whites, and she certainly does not see any occasion when insolence would be wise. When she must deal with white people, she seems to handle herself well. She even became a Stamps legend when a white judge, not realizing she was a black woman, called her “Mrs.” Henderson. Acknowledging a black person’s title was not the habit of whites.

Many of the conflicts that present themselves in this book are a result of prejudice and the effects of Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow laws were named after a famous black character in minstrel shows. From the 1880s into the 1960s, a majority of American states enforced these segregation laws. Legal punishments were given to people for consorting with members of another race. These laws controlled behavior in almost all areas of life.

After Reconstruction, the new freedoms presented to blacks threatened many white Southerners. They could not control their environments in the same informal ways they used to control blacks in the past. The Jim Crow laws were a response to a new reality that led white supremacy to exert itself in rigid legal and institutional ways.

In 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court began to strike down the foundations of post-Civil War Reconstruction, declaring the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. The Court also ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment prohibited state governments from discriminating against people because of race but did not restrict private organizations or individuals from doing so. This opened the door for railroads, hotels, theaters, and other entities to practice segregation legally. In 1896, the Supreme Court legitimized the principle of “separate but equal”

in its ruling *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The Court held that separate accommodations did not deprive blacks of equal rights if the accommodations were equal. In 1899, the Court went even further declaring in *Cumming v. County Board of Education*: Laws establishing separate schools for whites were valid even if they provided no comparable schools for blacks. By 1914, every Southern state had passed laws that created two separate societies.

Starting in 1915, victories in the Supreme Court began to chip away at the Jim Crow laws. In *Guinn v. United States* (1915), the Supreme Court supported the position that a statute in Oklahoma law denying the right to vote to any citizen whose ancestors had not been enfranchised in 1860 (grandfather clause) was unconstitutional. In *Buchanan v. Worley* (1917), the Court struck down a Louisville, Kentucky, law requiring residential segregation.

The first major blow against Jim Crow laws was struck in 1954 by the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, which declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

In order to understand all levels of conflict in the childhood of Maya Angelou, students must have a clear historic point of reference. Consider spending significant time on presenting the scope and injustice of Jim Crow.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 4–7.
2. Review the following term with students:
conflict—a struggle between opposing forces that moves a story along
3. Review the following kinds of conflict. Have students write this information in their notebooks.
person vs. person—one person tries to block another from reaching a goal
person vs. nature—a person's goals are thwarted by animal, place, weather, or other natural forces
person vs. self—a person works against something within himself or herself
person vs. society—a person is held back from a goal by an attitude in society

person vs. fate—a person seems doomed by preternatural situations

person vs. machines—a person is challenged by technology

4. Distribute **Handout 4**. Students should work on their own.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Person vs. society*—The perception of people surrounding Marguerite makes her feel ugly.
2. *Person vs. person*—Mamma's strength is challenged by the bad behavior of the girls.
3. *Person vs. self*—Marguerite has to control the inner rage she feels.
4. *Person vs. self*—Individuals have problems with other individuals.

Person vs. society—The structure in the segregated South facilitates fear.

5. Have students share their responses from **Handout 4**.
6. Distribute **Handout 5**. Students can work in groups. Have each group share its responses.
7. Discuss the conflicts that might be imposed on individuals by unjust laws. Introduce the concept of Jim Crow laws. Give a brief history of Jim Crow laws as outlined in Notes to the Teacher.
8. Distribute **Handout 6**, which is an Internet assignment. Set a deadline for the assignment. Determine how you will evaluate student work.

Suggested Responses:

1. *laws that allowed discrimination against or segregation of black people*
2. a. Health care
 - Whites and blacks must use separate entrances (Mississippi).
 - Hospitals for the blind must have segregated quarters (Louisiana).

- *In mental hospitals, patients must never associate with members of the opposite race (Georgia).*
 - *No white nurse could be required to tend to a black patient (Alabama).*
- b. Marriage
- *The marriage of a white person with a Negro or Mulatto who shall have one-eighth or more of Negro blood is unlawful (Mississippi).*
 - *All marriages between white and Negro and white and Mongolians are prohibited (Missouri).*
 - *All marriages between a white person and Negro, or between a white person and a person of Negro descent to the third generation is prohibited (Maryland).*
 - *The marriage of a person of Caucasian blood with a Negro, Mongolian, Malay, or Hindu is null and void (Arizona).*
- c. Prisons
- *Children of white and colored races committed to the houses of reform shall be kept entirely separate from each other (Kentucky).*
 - *The warden shall see that the white convicts shall have separate apartments for both eating and sleeping from the Negro convicts (Mississippi).*
 - *There shall be separate buildings, not nearer than one-fourth mile to each other, one for white boys and one for Negro boys (Florida).*
- d. Education
- *Separate schools shall be maintained for the children of the white and colored races (Mississippi).*
 - *Separate free schools shall be established for the education of children of African descent; it shall be unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school or any white child to attend a colored school (Missouri).*
 - *Separate rooms shall be provided for teaching pupils of African descent (New Mexico).*
- e. Transportation
- *All railroad companies and corporations are required to provide separate cars or coaches for the transportation of white and colored passengers (Maryland).*
 - *All passenger stations (buses) shall have separate waiting rooms and ticket windows (Alabama).*
 - *The conductor of each passenger train is authorized to assign seats according to race (Alabama).*
- f. Other areas
- *No colored barber could cut hair of whites (Georgia).*
 - *No colored person could be buried in the same cemetery as a white (Georgia).*
 - *No amateur baseball colored team could play a white team (Georgia).*
9. Assign chapters 8–10 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 3.

Identifying Conflict

Directions: After reviewing the six kinds of conflict, identify the kind of conflict the following examples represent. Explain your answers.

Example	Kind of Conflict	Explanation
1. Marguerite's thought that she is ugly.		
2. Momma's encounter with the children.		
3. Marguerite's reaction to the churchman.		
4. The black community's apprehension about interactions with the white community.		

Daily Conflict

Directions: Discuss the following kinds of conflict a teenager may have in his or her daily life. Give examples of each.

Type of Conflict	Examples
1. person vs. person	
2. person vs. nature	
3. person vs. self	
4. person vs. society	
5. person vs. machine	

Researching Jim Crow

Directions: Use any one or more of the major Internet search engines. Read material that will give you some basic information about Jim Crow laws. Address the following topics:

1. A definition of the Jim Crow laws in the United States

2. A list of some of the laws that covered the following areas:
 - a. Health care

 - b. Marriage

 - c. Prisons

 - d. Education

 - e. Transportation

 - f. Other areas

3. Examples of resistance to Jim Crow

4. The dates that mark the inception and the end of Jim Crow and some of the things that brought about the end

Lesson 3

Extended Family: Plot/Subplots

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 8–10
- To meet Marguerite’s parents and maternal family members
- To relate fictional plot development to real-life evolution of situations and events

Notes to the Teacher

Chapters 8–10 contain a major development in the lives of Marguerite and Bailey. When they receive Christmas gifts from their parents, the children go outside and cry. Somehow they learned to deal with the fact that they were not with their parents by convincing themselves that their mother was dead. They wonder what they did so wrong that made their mother send them away. Momma reprimands the pair for being ungrateful for the gifts and the gift-givers. The children do not share this sentiment, and they destroy the toys. One of the gifts, a blue-eyed China doll, seems to be an ironic gift to Marguerite, who already experienced a sense of inferiority to blue-eyed, blond-haired people.

The arrival of their father, Big Bailey, signals more change in their lives. He arrives in Stamps and stays for three weeks. They observe that he speaks like a white man. He is a stranger to the children, and Marguerite feels a great indifference for him. Big Bailey’s announcement that he will take the children to St. Louis to see their mother is the preamble to an experience that will forever change both children.

The introduction of their natural parents opens up a multitude of feelings for Marguerite and Bailey. Marguerite notes that she has never met a cynic before meeting her father. Big Bailey is extremely good-looking, but he has a worldly air to him that does not reflect his country roots. When the children meet their mother, Vivian, their world becomes forever changed. Bailey falls in love with his mother and refers to her as “Mother Dear.” When Big Bailey leaves St. Louis, the children become part of their mother’s world.

Grandmother Baxter is a respected member of a society that works closely with organized crime and underworld figures. Her sons all have city jobs and appear to be well established in Grandmother Baxter’s world. They are not men to tangle with. When a man, Pat Patterson, insults their sister, they arrange for Vivian to crash the man’s head with a policeman’s billy club.

After living with Grandmother Baxter for six months, Marguerite and Bailey move in with their mother and her live-in boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. This will prove to be a move that leads Marguerite down a sad, traumatic road that sees her childhood shattered.

Students need to see that plots and subplots in fictional works have similarities to real-life developments. Their own daily lives are subject matter for fictional depictions. They should also be able to dissect and plot storylines from television, movies, and other literary genres.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 8–10.
2. Define the following terms. Have students write them in their notebooks for future reference.

exposition—the initial part of a story where the setting, the beginning situation, the principal characters, and background information needed to understand the story are introduced

rising action—series of actions which lead up to the climax of the story

climax—high point or turning point; the highest dramatic tension

falling action—the events that follow the climax of a story, diminishing the tensions and leading to a conclusion

resolution—point of closure in a story when the principal dramatic complication or dilemma is worked out

subplot—secondary line of action that reinforces or contrasts with the main plot of a story

3. Distribute **Handout 7**.

Suggested Responses:

exposition—*Parents are divorced*

rising action—*Children sent to grandmother*

Children adjust to Stamps

Children receive Christmas gifts

Father arrives in Stamps

climax—*Children enter mother's world*

falling action—*Grandmother's place in society is clarified*

Uncles are men to be feared

resolution—*The children settle in with their mother*

4. Distribute **Handout 8**. Have students work in groups. Each group should summarize its responses and present them to the class.

Suggested Responses:

Big Bailey—*The entrance of their father starts up a chain of events that has long-term ramifications. The children now have to deal with the reality that their parents gave them over to the grandmother. Big Bailey takes them to the seedy world of the Baxter clan with all the negative elements involved in this lifestyle. Big Bailey inadvertently delivers Marguerite into the hands of her abuser.*

Vivian—*She changes Bailey's life in the most dramatic way. He falls in love with his mother, and he experiences many traumatic circumstances as a result of his longing for his mother's attention and love.*

Grandmother Baxter—*She is a sharp contrast to the values of Momma. She introduces Marguerite to the concept of a strong black woman who is ruthless and cold.*

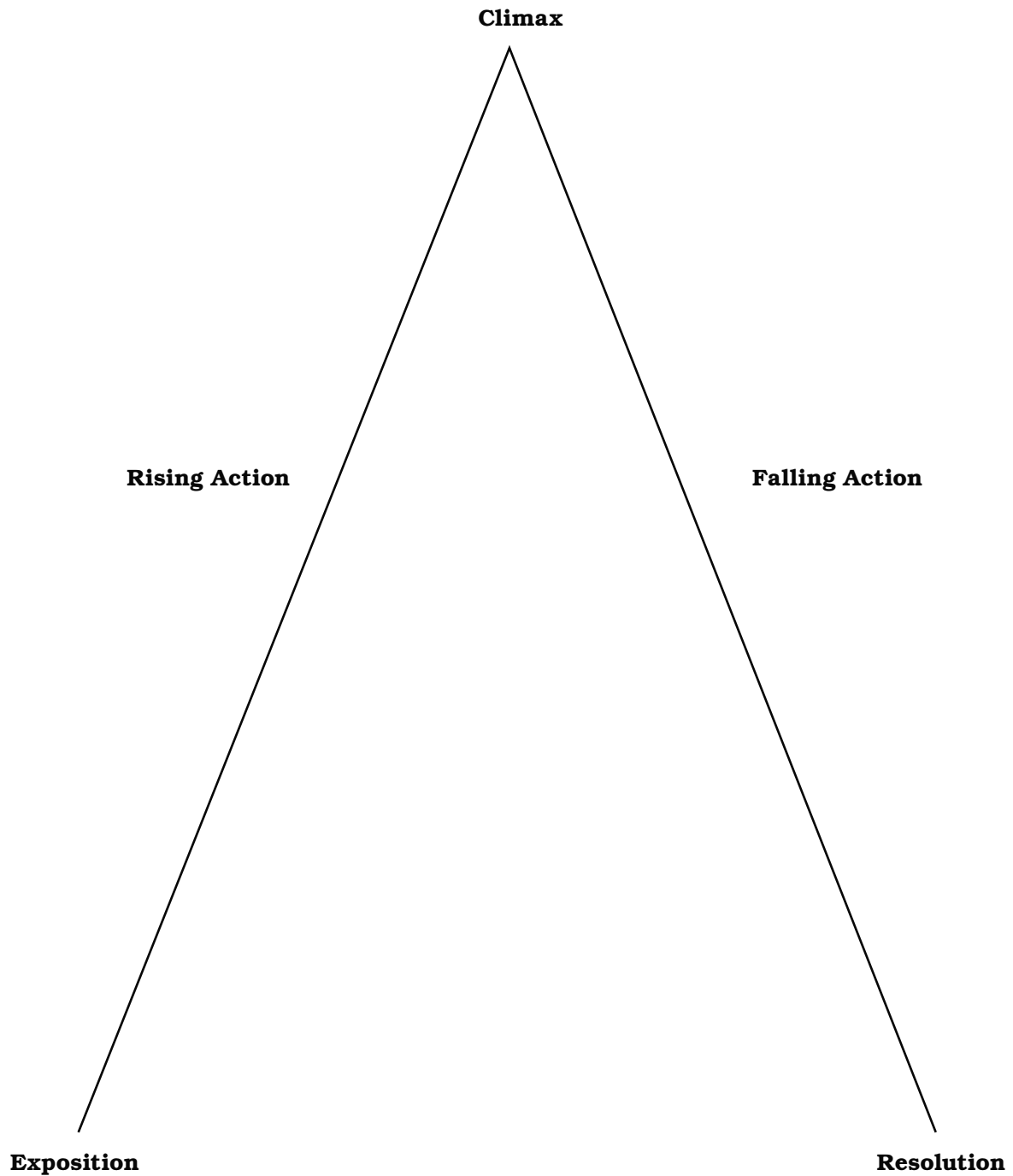
The Baxter uncles—*These men are most likely murderers who do more harm than good in their distribution of so-called justice for Marguerite.*

5. Distribute **Handout 9**. This is a creative writing assignment. Give a date for its completion.

6. Assign chapters 11–14 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 4.

Plotting a Story

Directions: Refer to your notes on plot development. Take the story that has already been told in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (even if all parts are not yet revealed), and identify the different parts to the story.



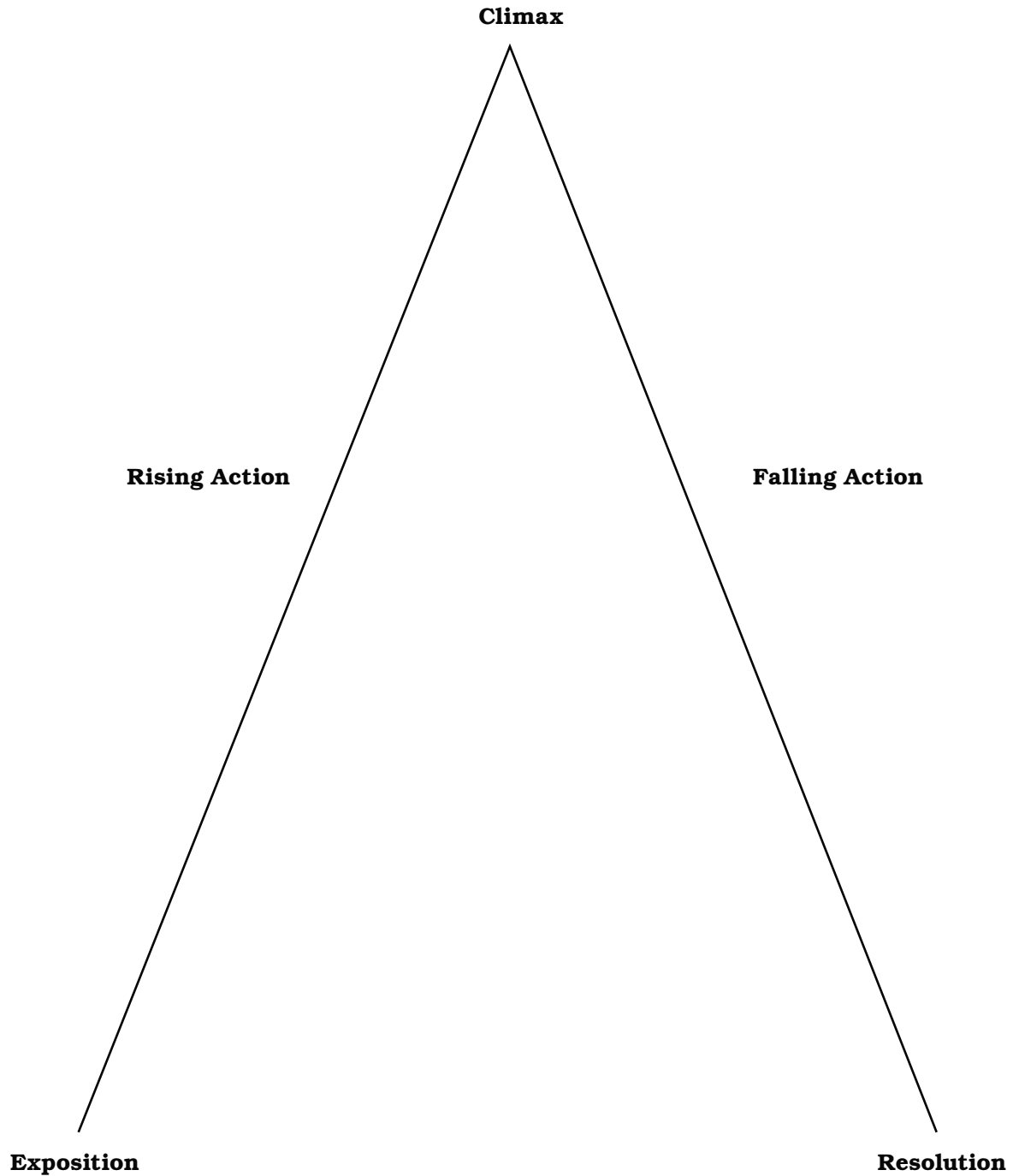
People and Plot Development

Directions: Note how each of the following people brings a complication, change, or twist to the story as told to this point.

Person	Complication, Change, or Trust
Big Bailey	
Vivian	
Grandmother Baxter	
The Baxter uncles	

A Child's Story

Directions: Think about your own childhood, and select an incident that you can relate using the standard parts to a plot. Try to go from exposition to resolution in as concise a manner as you can. In keeping with the concept of autobiography, your story should be a real episode from your life.



Lesson 4

Loss of Innocence: Themes

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 11–14
- To deal with the concept of loss of innocence
- To recognize major themes in this work

Notes to the Teacher

Chapters 11–14 contain the details of the event that will forever change young Marguerite. The young girl is in an environment that is foreign to her and that stands in sharp contrast to the safety that Momma's home offered. There is a sad irony here. Though Stamps, Arkansas, is obviously dangerous for blacks who fall victim to the arbitrary distribution of white justice, St. Louis, Missouri, has a danger lurking within the sanctity of Marguerite's home and family.

Marguerite reads fairy tales to pass her time in St. Louis. Her mother works in a gambling parlor, and Vivian's gentleman friend, Mr. Freeman, spends his days waiting for her to return home. After being frightened by nightmares, Marguerite starts sleeping in the bed with her mother and Freeman. This sets up the circumstances that allow Freeman to molest Marguerite. She is ambivalent about the first encounter. She seems to realize that this is wrong, but she is grateful for the fact that she is being held. Freeman, on the other hand, is not ambivalent about the immorality of his action. He threatens to kill Bailey if Marguerite tells about the event.

Unfortunately, the original molestation becomes even more violent when Freeman rapes Marguerite. In a series of events, Vivian puts Freeman out (even before she realizes what has happened); Marguerite hides her bloodstained pants; and Vivian finds the pants and realizes what has happened to her child. Marguerite becomes violently sick and survives the physical trauma only to be exposed to another trauma that would scar her for years to come.

While recuperating in the hospital, Marguerite is urged by Bailey to name her attacker. When she does, Freeman is arrested and brought to trial. Marguerite appears in

court, and she is asked if the rape was the only incident of sexual abuse inflicted on her by Freeman. Afraid that her family will reject her if they realize that she concealed the first event, she lies in court and says that this incident was the only one. Freeman is sentenced to one year and one day in jail. When he is temporarily released from jail, he is beaten and kicked to death. When hearing of the murder, Marguerite is convinced that Freeman died because of the lie she told in court, and she decides to stop speaking to anyone but Bailey. Her family accepts her silence at first but eventually becomes angry and offended. The decision is made to send the children back to Stamps.

Marguerite doesn't know if Momma sent for them or if the family sent them away. Though she realizes that Bailey misses their mother terribly, she is relieved to be back in Stamps. Bailey passes his time in Stamps by entertaining the people with the exaggerated wonders of the city. He also seems to develop a new sarcasm that Marguerite detects though it is lost on the neighbors. Her family, friends, and neighbors accept Marguerite's silence.

In order to understand any piece of literature, it is critical to have the ability to identify themes. Consider discussing the concept of universal themes with the class before this lesson. Have students identify themes that do not rely on historic period, age, race, religion, or any other incidental consideration. Direct students to surface such themes as love, hate, joy, sorrow, hope, and despair.

Since this lesson deals with some harsh situations that became a part of Marguerite's reality, be sensitive while directing all discussions.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 11–14.
2. Define and discuss the concept of theme.

theme—the main idea or underlying meaning that an author attempts to convey; a central idea or message; a perception about life or human nature shared with the reader; common thread

or repeated idea that is incorporated throughout a work

3. Distribute **Handout 10**. Divide students into small groups to discuss each topic and give examples that show what the particular themes are in the story.

Suggested Responses:

Racism—*blond hair is better than dark hair; blue eyes are better than brown; the symbolism of the Joe Lewis fight; the behavior of the white children towards Momma*

Displacement—*the moving of the children from one location to another; no stable home life*

Parent/child relationships—*parents are not present in early years; grandmother is primary caregiver*

American South, 1930s—*segregation; hatred and distrust; blacks treated unjustly*

Child abuse—*children vulnerable to abuse; laws did not deal harshly with child abuse offenders; children had no voice*

4. Distribute **Handout 11** for students to do as a homework assignment. Determine how to evaluate the work. Consider posting some of their information.

5. Distribute **Handout 12**. Allow time for each student to do research.

Examples:

Racial prejudice

Novel—*To Kill a Mockingbird*

Movie—*A Lesson before Dying*

Child abuse

Novel—*The Color Purple*

Movie—*Mommy Dearest*

Family dysfunction

Novel—*As I Lay Dying*

Movie—*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Despair yielding to hope

Novel—*Jane Eyre*

Movie—*It's a Wonderful Life*

6. Assign chapters 15–18 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 5.

Detecting Themes

Directions: Consider the five themes listed below. Discuss their significance in general terms. After doing this, discuss them as they were revealed in Maya Angelou's work. Give examples for each theme.

Themes	Significance in General Terms	How These Themes Are Revealed in the Book
Racism		
Displacement		
Parent/child relationships		
American South, 1930s		
Child abuse		

Locating Local Support

Directions: Using your local telephone directory and/or listings on the Internet, identify local community organizations that are devoted to helping people handle the following problems. When possible, list phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses.

Problem	Organization	Phone Number/E-Mail Address
Child abuse		
Discrimination		
Families in crisis		

Literary and Cinematic Connections

Directions: Write the name of one novel and one movie that contain the themes listed below.

Theme	Novel	Movie
Racial prejudice		
Child abuse		
Family dysfunction		
Despair yielding to hope		

Lesson 5

Literary Lifelines: Allusions

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 15–18
- To appreciate the importance of literature as a connection to other viewpoints and as a lifeline to hope
- To work with the concept of allusion

Notes to the Teacher

Most of the events that take place in chapters 15–18 revolve around the interactions with various adults in Stamps. The encounter that becomes a lifeline for Marguerite is the one with Mrs. Bertha Flowers. Known as the “Aristocrat of Black Stamps,” Mrs. Flowers takes Marguerite under her wings. She invites Marguerite to her home and gives her books to read aloud. She bakes cookies for Marguerite and sends some home for Bailey. After an unfortunate use of the phrase “by the way” (Mamma considers this to be blasphemous), Marguerite gets a whipping. However, her newfound interest in the finer things valued by Mrs. Flowers seems to put many things in perspective for the young girl.

Mrs. Flowers becomes the vehicle for Marguerite’s escape from her self-imposed silence. She admonishes Marguerite about the importance of language. She notes: “. . . language is man’s way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone which separates him from the lower animals.” After Mrs. Flowers encourages Marguerite to read her books aloud, Marguerite starts to share her voice with others.

Marguerite’s encounter with another adult in Stamps does not have such a pleasant outcome, though it is also an opportunity for learning. She takes a job with Mrs. Viola Cullinan. Mrs. Cullinan’s cook, Miss Glory, is a descendant of Cullinan slaves. When Mrs. Cullinan decides it’s more convenient to call Marguerite “Mary,” Marguerite reacts with indignation. She intentionally slacks in her work, and she breaks some china that Mrs. Cullinan treasures. Mrs. Cullinan insults Marguerite with racial slurs as she dismisses her from her job. Marguerite is happy with this outcome and makes this observation about the offense: “Every person I knew had a hellish horror of

being ‘called out of his name.’” The young girl has the incredible insight that a person’s name is important because it uniquely identifies him or her.

Bailey is having his own encounter with the adult world in this section of the book. One night he stays out after dark and he offers no explanation when a frantic Mamma finds him on the road. A severe beating doesn’t seem to faze Bailey. Marguerite notes that he seems to have no soul. In time, Bailey tells Marguerite that he was at the movies, where he stayed for a second showing of a film starring a white actress, Kay Francis. This actress looked like their mother, Vivian, and Bailey wanted to spend time pretending this actress was his beloved mother.

Chapter 18 focuses on a revival meeting that brings together the adults and children of Stamps. The preacher admonishes those who practice false charity, and he rails against Christian hypocrisy. When congregation members wander home after the service, they pass a busy honky-tonk. The author notes that both groups of people—the church people and the party people—are trying to find comfort and escape.

Maya Angelou provides a wonderful example of the value of reading and of the incredible power of education and learning. Make the best of this section of the book by pointing out the fact that reading was a lifeline for Marguerite.

There should be emphasis put on the importance of building an internal resource of information. The more a person can understand literary, historic, biblical, and cultural allusions, the more he or she can own a body of knowledge that facilitates learning and thinking.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 15–18.
2. Define the term *allusion*.

allusion—a brief reference to a person, place, thing, event, or an idea in history or literature

3. Make sure students are aware of the importance of being able to recognize various kinds of allusions. Use the following examples, or use any of your own that would make the point.
 - a. Historic allusions
 - He met his Waterloo.
 - Remember the Alamo!
 - It's like winning passage on the Titanic.
 - b. Biblical allusions
 - Don't be a Judas to your friends.
 - It all started with the apple.
 - They had the bad luck of Job
 - c. Literary allusions
 - She is a ruthless Lady Macbeth.
 - My brother thinks he's a Romeo.
 - It was a Huck Finn summer.
4. Distribute **Handout 13**. Inform students of all requirements that you expect them to meet with this assignment. Give students enough time outside of class to do the research. Establish a date for the completion of this assignment.
5. Distribute **Handout 14**. Have students work one-on-one in an interview mode. After a reasonable length of time, have students share answers. If students need prompting, offer an example or two for each question. For instance, Hester Prynne and King Arthur are recognizable literary characters; characters from *Friends* and *The Brady Bunch* are recognizable; and Forrest Gump and E.T. the Extra Terrestrial are recognizable movie characters.
6. Distribute **Handout 15**. This is a creative writing assignment. Determine a due date and any other requirements.
7. Assign chapters 19–22 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 6.

Literary Allusions

Directions: Select three writers or works from the following list. These are all mentioned in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* up to the end of chapter 15. Write a short report on each writer or work you choose. Include significant information about each.

1. William Shakespeare
2. Rudyard Kipling
3. Edgar Allan Poe
4. Paul Lawrence Dunbar
5. Langston Hughes
6. James Weldon Johnson
7. W. E. B. Du Bois
8. *A Tale of Two Cities*
9. *Beowulf*
10. *Oliver Twist*

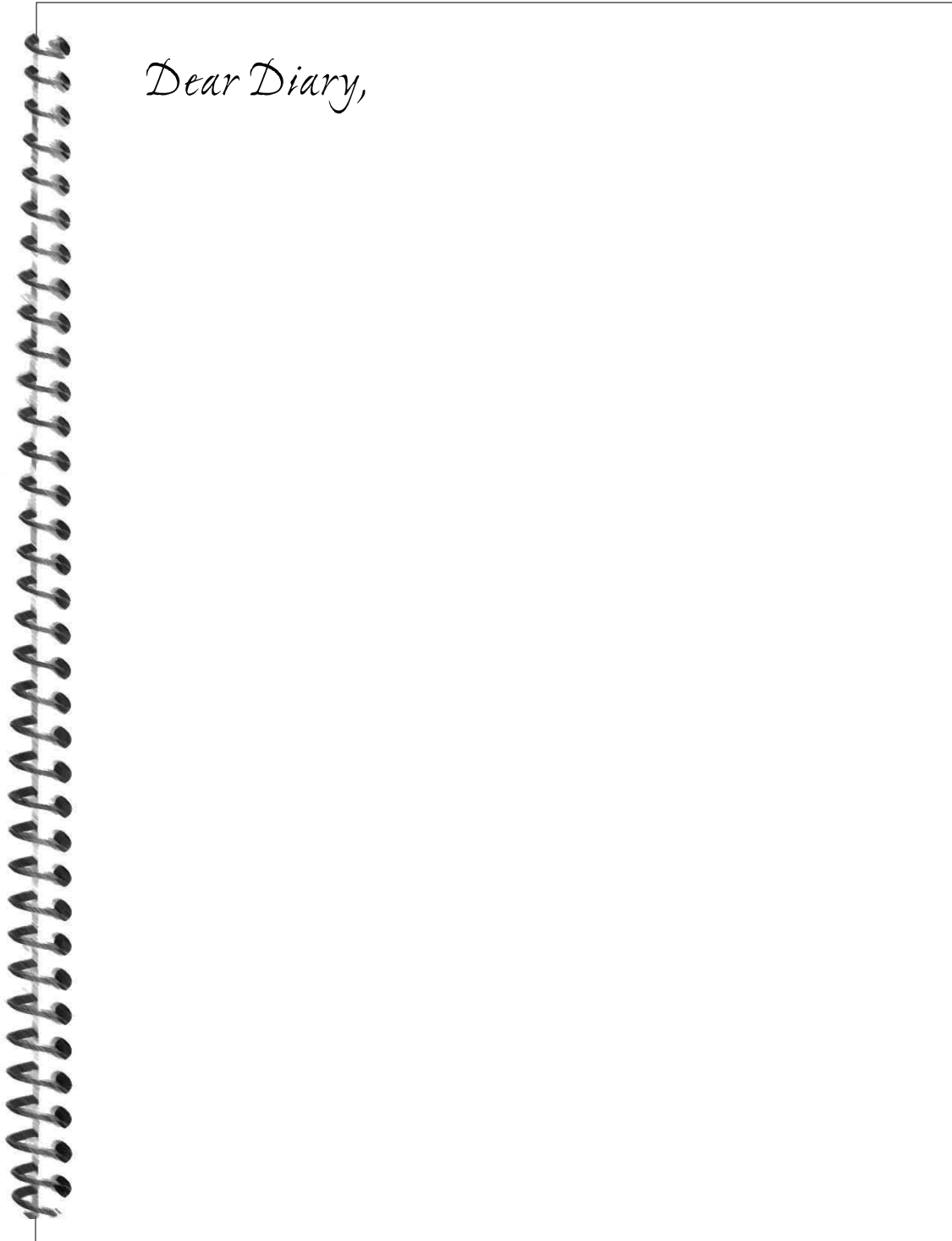
Cultural Allusions

Directions: You will interview and be interviewed in this session. Determine who will go first in this process. Record the answers you get. If you are not clear about the answers, ask for clarification.

1. What characters from literature do you think are easily recognized by a majority of people?
Explain your answer.
2. What characters from television do you think are easily recognized by a majority of people?
Explain your answer.
3. What characters from movies do you think are easily recognized by a majority of people?
Explain your answer.

Reaching Out

Directions: Imagine that you are Marguerite and that you have just read the opening words of *A Tale of Two Cities*. “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . .” Write a diary entry that would explain how and why you relate to these words. But before you begin writing, consider to whom you are writing and what your general attitude is as you write.



Dear Diary,

Lesson 6

Communal Identity: Symbols

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 19–22
- To observe the interactions in Stamps' black community
- To identify symbols in everyday life

Notes to the Teacher

Chapters 19–22 include some insights into the collective pride of the black community in Stamps. They also contain accounts of a side of life that contributes to the harsh realities that rob many children of their innocence and childhood.

Boxer Joe Lewis, a black man, is fighting a white man for the heavyweight championship. Lewis, the black Bomber, represents a kind of hope for blacks. If he were to lose, the racist whites would be right about the inferior status of blacks. His loss would represent all that is bad in their world: lynchings, rapes, and beatings. When Lewis wins the fight, Marguerite thinks that the win proves that blacks are the strongest people in the world. The feeling of victory and triumph is quickly tempered by the fear of being out on this night. Blacks could easily become the object of white rage.

Marguerite meets Louise Kendricks, and for the first time in her life, she has a best friend. She and Louise share the secrets of girls who have crushes on boys and have dreams for the future. Marguerite notes that Louise reminds her of Jane Eyre.

As Marguerite develops her friendship with Louise, Bailey is developing a premature and dangerous relationship with Joyce, an older and worldly girl. Though he is not yet eleven years old, he loses his virginity to this girl and he steals things from the Store for her. Joyce runs away with a railroad porter, but Bailey's childhood has come to a crashing halt.

In the midst of all this change, Momma remains a solid force. She has an incredible ability to help people who are in distress. This is evident in her dealings with George Taylor. George comes to the Store and stays the night. He is heartbroken over his wife's death. George is convinced that his wife is appearing to him and bemoaning the fact that they didn't have

children. Momma convinces George that he is meant to work with children. She breaks through to this man and proves that she can, in her own way, drive away frightening spirits.

Symbolism is important not only in literary works, but also in everyday life. Students should use their knowledge of universal symbols and fine-tune this information to cover the personal symbolism that permeates their own lives.

People hold the symbolic edge in this section of the book. They represent hope (Joe Lewis), love and friendship (Louise Kendricks) and strength (Momma). Marguerite, herself, is symbolic of a quest for the meaning of life.

This lesson gives students a chance to identify familiar symbols and to work with a medium that is important to them—music. There is an opportunity to select and analyze songs that are symbolic and meaningful to them. Allow sufficient class time for each student to present his or her song selection.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 19–22.
2. Define *symbolism*.
symbolism—the use of objects, words, or events that stand for different realities; using things represent abstract ideas or concepts
3. Distribute **Handout 16**. Have students work on their own. When the allotted time is up, call on some students to share their responses.

Suggested Responses:

dove—*peace*

Star of David—*Judaism*

cross—*Christianity*

heart—*love*

water—*life*

country's flag—*patriotism*

darkness—*fear, ignorance*

light—*hope, wisdom*

ring—*commitment*

anchor—*stability*

4. Distribute **Handout 17**. Have students bring to class a song that would contain some symbolism. Give them clearly defined directives about the kind of material that would be acceptable. Consider using this assignment as a long-range one with one or two presentations a day or a week.
5. Distribute **Handout 18**. Ask students to work in groups. They need to make definite reference to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Have them use the book as they discuss symbols.

Suggested Responses:

Caged bird—*trapped, unable to fly free*

Marguerite's lavender dress—*dependency on others; poverty*

The Store—*hard work; community*

Joe Lewis fight—*pride, hope*

Books—*key to future; learning; breaking bonds*

6. Assign chapters 23–25 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 7.

Universal Symbols

Directions: Write the generally accepted meaning for the following symbols.

Symbol	Meaning
Dove	
Star of David	
Cross	
Heart	
Water	
Country's flag	
Darkness	
Light	
Ring	
Anchor	

Symbolism in Song

Directions: Select a song that you think has strong symbolic value. When you have made your selection, provide the following information. Be prepared to present your song and your analysis of the song.

Song Title:

Artist:

Basic Meaning:

Symbolism:

Symbolism in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Directions: Discuss the meaning behind the following words, events, and objects found in Maya Angelou's work.

Symbol	Meaning
Caged bird	
Marguerite's lavender dress	
The Store	
Joe Lewis fight	
Books	

Lesson 7

Securing the Future: Tone

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 23–25
- To listen for attitudes through awareness of tone

Notes to the Teacher

Maya Angelou, in writing chapters 23–25, again captures the emotional roller coaster that was her life as a young girl. Her eighth grade graduation is a major event. She receives a Mickey Mouse watch, money, and an Edgar Allan Poe book. Two people stand out in this event: Mr. Edward Donleavy (a white speaker who manages to alienate and insult the black community), and Henry Reed (the class valedictorian, who is a source of pride to his community).

Donleavy notes that many graduates from the black school have gone on to be great athletes. The students in the white schools, however, are enjoying new lab equipment and other things that will determine their accomplishments in the future. The observations he makes are degrading and hurtful. Marguerite finds herself filling up with a dreadful cynicism. This feeling is dissipated when the white speaker leaves and Henry Reed takes center stage. His speech is based on Shakespeare's "To Be or Not to Be" speech from *Hamlet*. It is a powerful speech, and he ends by inviting the audience to stand and sing "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." This anthem for the black community had been part of all their school assemblies and functions. However, it was abandoned in the presence of the white guests. Henry Reed calls forth a feeling of pride and identity when he starts the song.

Marguerite sees the ugly side of life once again when she is hit with a painful toothache. Momma takes her to Dr. Lincoln, a local white dentist. During the Depression, Momma lent Lincoln money, and she feels certain that he will return the kindness by relieving the girl of the dreadful pain. Instead, Momma hears Lincoln state that he'd rather put his hands into the mouth of a dog than into the mouth of a black person. Though she is humiliated and defeated, Momma does manage to feel some satisfaction when she gets ten dollars from the

dentist. This money represents interest that she did not impose before but does now. The money gets them to Texarkana, where a black dentist tends to Marguerite.

Bailey has his own encounter with the hatred directed to the black community. He comes upon a black man's dead, rotted body that has been pulled from a pond. A white man, who is grinning at the sight of the body, orders Bailey and some other black men to help load the body onto a wagon. The white man then pretends he is going to lock Bailey and the men in with the body. Bailey is traumatized by this event and does not know what black people did to whites to make them hate black people so much. This episode with Bailey leads Momma to make plans to go to California, where she will leave Marguerite and Bailey to live with their mother.

All people, no doubt, have been told that their tone of voice is not acceptable. Since these observations are usually made in a negative vein, people don't always focus on the many dimensions of tone. Direct students in the art of defining tone and identifying various tones taken by writers.

In this lesson, attitudes are evident in the behavior of many of the adults who interact with Marguerite and Bailey. The disrespect and disdain of Dr. Lincoln and the white man who frightens Bailey are indicative of an attitude that expresses ignorance and hatred.

Before starting this lesson, distribute **Handout 19**, which is a copy of the words of the song "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." Go over the song with students so that they understand the general message and tone of the song mentioned in this section.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 23–25.
2. Define the term *tone*.

tone—the author's attitude towards the subject matter; the mood that is set in a book or situation

3. Discuss the various manifestations of tone. Tone may be overt or covert. It can be conveyed in the following ways:

- imagery
- narration
- action
- conversation

4. Distribute **Handout 20**. Allow students time to work on part A on their own. When they are finished, ask for volunteers to act out their answers in front of the class. Allow some time for student to complete part B. Have some volunteers share some answers.

5. Distribute **Handout 21**. Have students complete this activity on their own. If students need prompting, offer an example for each category. For instance, *Saturday Night Live* is an example of satirical comedy; *Everybody Loves Raymond* is an example of light comedy; *Joan of Arcadia* is an example of sentimental drama; broadcast news is an example of real life.

6. Distribute **Handout 22**. Allow time for students to complete it.

Suggested Responses:

1. *superior, insulting*
 2. *dignified, proud*
 3. *degrading, ignorant*
 4. *cunning, clever*
 5. *amused, repulsive*
 6. *frightened, apprehensive*
7. Assign chapters 26–29 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 8.

Conveying Message and Tone through Song

Directions: Read the following song lyrics. Be prepared to discuss the general message and tone of the song.

Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing

Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading out path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

—James Weldon Johnson

Detecting Attitudes through Tone

Part A.

Directions: Look at the following five commonly used comments or questions. Be prepared to say these aloud in two different ways. The first way should convey a positive attitude. The second way should convey a negative attitude. Write an explanation for each about the two different meanings that come about with the use of each tone.

Comment or Question	Positive Attitude	Negative Attitude
1. "I hear you."		
2. "Thank you."		
3. "What did you say?"		
4. "That's nice."		
5. "Are you talking to me?"		

Tone on Television

Directions: Give examples of television shows or broadcasts that take a specific tone that is in keeping with the following categories. Give three examples for each.

Category	Examples
Satirical comedy	
Light comedy	
Sentimental drama	
Real life (serious/comical)	

Racist Tone and Attitudes

Directions: Consider the following incidents from chapters 23–25. What attitude is conveyed in each episode by the people mentioned?

Incident	Attitude Conveyed
1. Mr. Donleavy at graduation	
2. Henry Reed at graduation	
3. Dr. Lincoln's response to Momma	
4. Momma's response to Dr. Lincoln	
5. The white man's attitude at viewing the dead body	
6. Bailey's attitude at viewing the dead body	

Lesson 8

California Experience: Setting

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 26–29
- To examine the effect of setting in the development of a story

Notes to the Teacher

California represents a whole new world and experience for the Johnson children. Chapters 26–29 record the adjustments and awakenings that take place in their lives. Momma stays with them for six months, and she manages to find her own little safety zone while in California. Marguerite and Bailey work to find their place in this new world.

The reintroduction of Vivian into their lives is a major adjustment. Vivian throws them a party at 2:30 A.M. She is trained as a nurse, and she also works in a gambling environment. She is prone to melodramatic outbursts but is a fair person in her dealings with others. Her approach to justice and retribution is direct and, at times, violent. She shoots one of her partners for verbally insulting her. She does this after warning him about her intentions.

Vivian brings the first real father figure to her children when she marries Daddy Clidell. When the family moves to San Francisco, Marguerite perceives herself as a real part of something. It is World War II, and the Japanese Americans are disappearing from the neighborhoods. The black community moves into the homes of these neighbors and the area becomes San Francisco's version of Harlem.

The prejudice that is directed to the Japanese-American community does not seem to make a connection with the black community. They are still experiencing forms of prejudice. Marguerite hears the story of a white woman who refused to sit beside a black man on the streetcar. The man had made room for her on the seat. The woman said that she would not sit beside a draft dodger who was a Negro as well. She announced that her sons were fighting on Iwo Jima. The black man revealed an armless sleeve and asked the woman to ask her sons to look around for the arm he lost there while fighting for freedom.

Marguerite attends George Washington High School. It is here that she meets Miss Kirwin, a teacher she would never forget. Miss Kirwin is fair and just. She does not view her students in light of their race, and she treats Marguerite as she treats all the students.

At this point in her life, Marguerite realizes the allegiances she owes to various people who have entered her life. Momma has shown her solemn determination; Mrs. Flowers has given her a love of books; Bailey offers unconditional love; Vivian contributes gaiety; Miss Kirwin introduces information, drama, and dance.

Marguerite is introduced to a very interesting group of men who are friends of Daddy Clidell. They are con men who know how to swindle bigoted whites out of their money. Though this activity is not to be condoned, they do enjoy a certain sweetness in their victories.

Setting can be secondary to a story, or it can be a critical element in plot development. Maya Angelou's movement from California to Arkansas to Missouri to Arkansas to California represents significant developments in her life. Setting is, indeed, important in this story. Encourage students to note the various things that came about as Marguerite and Bailey changed residents.

Consider using the following general warm-up for this lesson: Have students take out a piece of paper. Give them ten minutes to jot down as many of the fifty states as they can. This activity is meant to expand students' minds to start thinking in more general geographic terms than most people do.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 26–29.
2. Define the term *setting*.

setting—the time and place in which the action occurs; it may include the social and moral environment that form the background of the narrative

3. Distribute **Handout 23**. Have students work on their own. When they are finished, allow them some time to share their observations.

Suggested Responses:

1. *atmosphere of hope, excitement; safe place for blacks to verbalize*
2. *symbol of community; haven for pickers and others*
3. *worldly; unsafe environment for children*
4. *segregated; violent; unsafe for many blacks*
5. *exciting; land of hope*

4. Distribute **Handout 24**, which is an Internet assignment. Give students a deadline and any requirements you want to set forth.
5. Distribute **Handout 25**. This is a creative writing assignment. When this assignment is completed, allow some students to read their work.
6. Assign chapters 30–32 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 9.

Importance of Setting

Directions: Consider the following places that have been visited so far in this story. Determine what is unique to each. List two things for each place.

Place	Unique Feature
1. Colored Methodist Episcopal Church	
2. The Store	
3. St. Louis, Missouri	
4. The American South (1930s)	
5. San Francisco, California (1940s)	

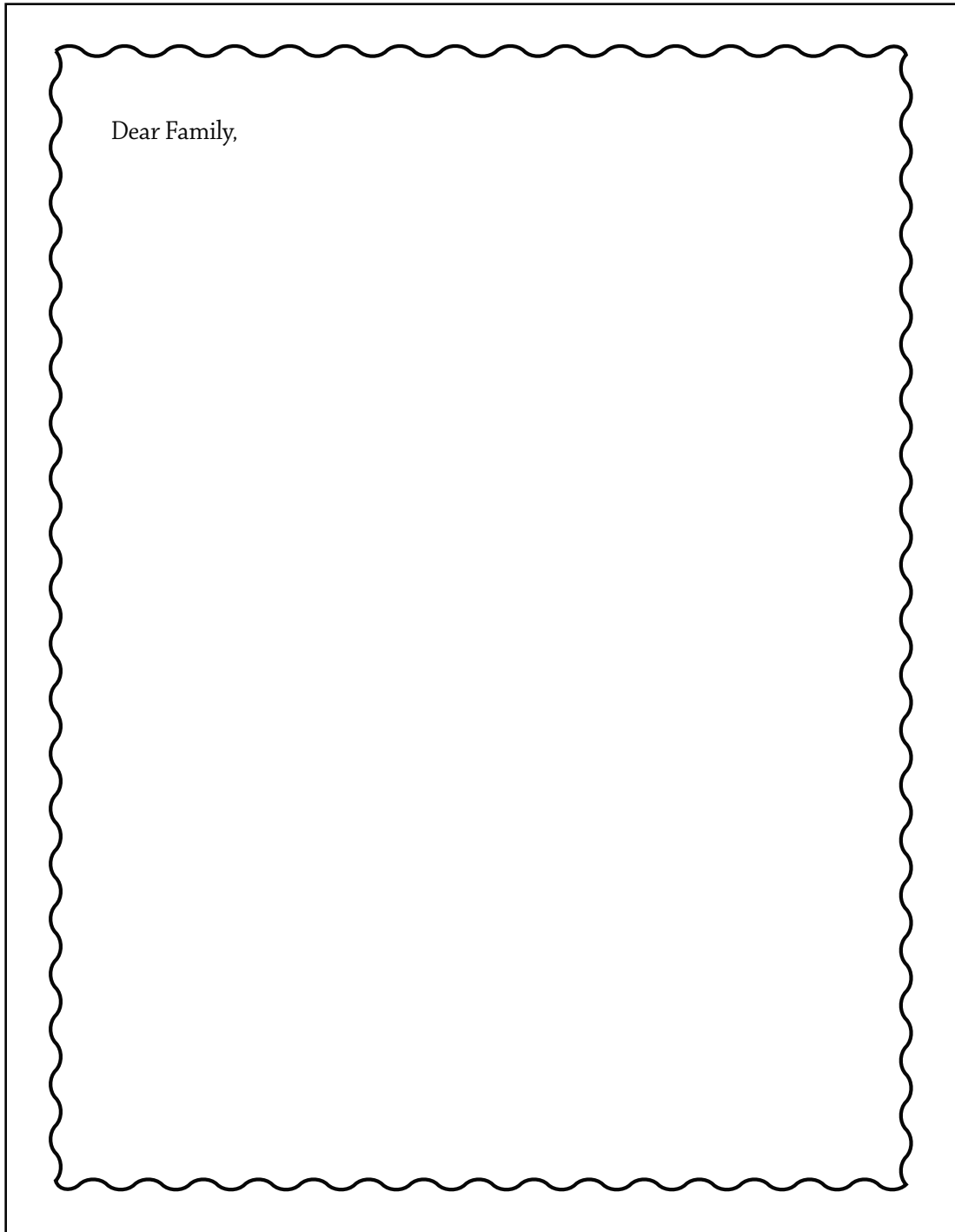
Researching Various Settings

Directions: Use any of the major Internet search engines. Select one of the following topics and write a brief research paper on it. Include any historic, social, and/or general interest items you can find.

1. San Francisco cable car (streetcar) system
2. Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II
3. The general cultural, sociological, and historic environment of (your town, city) in the 1940s

Trading Places

Directions: Imagine that you are suddenly living in a new place that is the total opposite environment of the one you grew up in. For example, you lived in Florida—now in Alaska; you lived in the North—now in the South; you lived in the United States—now in Russia. Write your family a letter in which you give an idea of the differences you are experiencing.



Dear Family,

Lesson 9

Experiencing Diversity: Point of View

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 30–32
- To examine point of view

Notes to the Teacher

The reintroduction of Vivian into Marguerite's life has a profound impact on Marguerite. In chapters 30–32, Marguerite is reunited with her father, Big Bailey, and the experience is anything but uplifting.

Big Bailey invites Marguerite to spend the summer with him. When Marguerite arrives at her father's trailer, she meets his girlfriend Dolores, who does not appear to be much older than Marguerite. Big Bailey is a chef, and he speaks perfect Spanish. He takes many trips to Mexico, supposedly to buy groceries. When he invites Marguerite to go along on one of these trips, Dolores is jealous and becomes hostile towards Marguerite.

Big Bailey seems to be at ease in Mexico. When he disappears at a party, Marguerite fears he has secretly sold her to some Mexicans. However, he reappears and is too drunk to drive the fifty miles back to the border. Marguerite manages to drive the car the fifty miles and, though she has never driven before, she does this with incredible skill and courage. Her only misstep is a minor accident near the end of the trip. Her father awakes and takes over. Marguerite is mad that her father doesn't realize the magnitude of her feat.

Upon their return home, they are greeted by an irate Dolores, who fights with Big Bailey. Dolores thinks that Marguerite has come between them, but Big Bailey ends his participation in the fight when he leaves the house. Marguerite tries to be a peacemaker but becomes infuriated when Dolores calls Vivian a whore. Marguerite tells Dolores that she will slap her and does just that. Dolores stabs Marguerite with scissors. Marguerite locks herself in a car, and when her father finds her, he takes the bleeding girl to a friend who tends to her wound. She stays at another friend's house for the night. Her father has given her some money, and Marguerite decides to leave.

She doesn't want to return to Vivian for fear of starting trouble. She then gets involved in her first venture outside any family environment.

Marguerite spends the night in a car in a junkyard. When she wakes, she meets a group of black, Mexican, and white homeless teens. She is invited to stay with them if she follows their rules. There is to be no sleeping with people of the opposite sex, no stealing, and she must be willing to share money with the others.

Marguerite stays one month. During this time, she learns to appreciate diversity and tolerance. However, she knows it's time to go home, so she calls Vivian and asks for airfare.

Students know that autobiographies are written in the first person. They should be aware of the fact that first person does not always mean objective. Everyone's story is slanted insofar as people see things from their own perspective.

This section of the story allows for the consideration of many points of view. We see Big Bailey as he deals with Marguerite, Dolores, and his Mexican friends. Dolores views Marguerite in a way that is new and unflattering. Marguerite views the whole world differently after her experiences with Big Bailey, Dolores, the Mexican community, and the homeless teens.

Emphasize the need for identifying and understanding the point of view used in any narration. Tell students to factor in any conditions that would affect one's perspective when recounting a story.

Procedure

1. Briefly review plot development in chapters 30–32.
2. Define the term *point of view*.
point of view—the narrative perspective from which a story is told
3. List the three points of view:
first person—The narrator is a participant in the story.

third person limited—The narrator is observing from outside the story.

third person omniscient—The narrator is all-knowing and can see into the minds of all involved in the story.

4. Remind students that autobiographical works are told in the first person. Point out that readers are getting the point of view of Maya Angelou the adult looking back on what really happened to her when she was a young girl.
5. Distribute **Handout 26** for students to do on their own. After they complete the handout, divide them into small groups to share their observations.
6. Distribute **Handout 27**. Allow students to work in groups. Share general comments with the whole group.
7. Distribute **Handout 28**. Give students sufficient time to complete it.
8. Distribute **Handout 29**, which is geared for some upper-level work. Students need to locate the literary criticisms they will read, read the articles, summarize the authors' points of view, and decide whether they agree with the article. Alternatively, you may allow students to exercise their research skills by locating criticisms of Maya Angelou's work on their own.
9. Assign chapters 33–34 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 10.

Suggested Responses:

1.
 - a. Girls—*harmless prank*
 - b. Momma—*test of her faith*
 - c. Marguerite—*disrespectful and vulgar*
2.
 - a. Dr. Lincoln—*reasonable attitude*
 - b. Momma—*slap in the face*
 - c. Marguerite—*opportunity to admire Momma*
3.
 - a. Big Bailey—*great chance to get away*
 - b. Dolores—*insult to her*
 - c. Marguerite—*frightening adventure*
4.
 - a. Homeless teens—*opportunity to accept a new friend*
 - b. General observer—*horrible reality*
 - c. Marguerite—*great insight into diversity and friendship*
5.
 - a. Dolores—*justified*
 - b. Big Bailey—*inconvenience*
 - c. Marguerite—*shock*

Seeing Things Differently

Directions: Complete the chart by listing five experiences that teenagers would view one way and their parents would view in another way.

Situation	Student	Parent
Listening to some favorite music	Meaningful experience; represents wonderful sentiments	Horrible noise; can't understand a word

Perceptions and Realities

Directions: Consider these five situations from Marguerite's experience, and write possible interpretations of the events as seen by different people.

1. The white girls misbehaving in front of Momma
 - a. Girls
 - b. Momma
 - c. Marguerite
2. Dr. Lincoln's refusal to treat Marguerite
 - a. Dr. Lincoln
 - b. Momma
 - c. Marguerite
3. Big Bailey's trip to Mexico
 - a. Big Bailey
 - b. Dolores
 - c. Marguerite
4. Marguerite's stay in the junkyard
 - a. Homeless teens
 - b. General observer
 - c. Marguerite
5. Dolores stabbing Marguerite
 - a. Dolores
 - b. Big Bailey
 - c. Marguerite

Learning from Diversity

Directions: Interview one person from each of the following groups. Ask him or her to share some insights into values that he or she holds. Make sure you communicate in an open and respectful manner. Your goal is to learn something you did not know before. Record your findings. Use names only if you ask permission to do so. Important information such as age group, ethnic group, and racial group.

Groups

- An elderly family member, friend, or neighbor
- A fellow student, friend, or neighbor who is from a different ethnic or racial group
- A teacher, counselor, or moderator who is from a different ethnic or racial group

Questions

- What values did you learn from your family?
- What customs or rituals do you embrace as being meaningful in your life?
- What values, customs, or rituals would you like to adapt to your own life?

Working with Literary Criticism

Directions: Select any two of the following literary criticisms. When you have made your selection locate the literary criticisms, read the articles, summarize the authors' points of view, and decide whether you agree with the writers' viewpoints, observations, and conclusions. Be prepared to report on your work.

Alden, Daisy. Review of *The Heart of a Woman*, by Maya Angelou. *World Literature Today* 46, no. 4 (1982): 697.

Angelou, Maya, and Carol E. Neubaeur. Interview in *The Massachusetts Review* 28, no. 2 (1987): 286–92.

Bailey, Hilary. "Growing Up Black" *Guardian Weekly* 130, no. 6 (1984): 21

Casey, Ellen Miller. Review of *The Heart of a Woman*, by Maya Angelou. *Best Sellers* January 1982: 376–77.

Cosgrave, Mary Silva. Review of *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?*, by Maya Angelou. *The Horn Book Magazine* 59, no. 3 (1983): 336.

Gaines-Carter, Patrice. "Home Is Where the Heart Is." In *Book World—The Washington Post* May 11, 1986: 11–12.

Lewis, David Levering. "Maya Angelou: From Harlem to the Hearth of a Woman." In *Book World—The Washington Post*. October 4, 1991: 1–2.

Review of *And Still I Rise*, by Maya Angelou. *Publisher's Weekly* 214, no. 5 (1978): 87.

Lesson 10

Transitions: Motifs

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 33–34
- To focus on the concept of motif
- To recognize major motifs in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Notes to the Teacher

Maya Angelou pens the last significant occurrences of her young life. After her experiences with Big Bailey, Dolores, and the homeless teens, she returns to Vivian and Bailey Jr. and finds changes in her brother and in her relationship with her mother.

Bailey seems to have become indifferent. The only interest Marguerite can share with her brother is dance. They both like to dance to the music of the Big Bands. Bailey has become estranged from his beloved mother. He wears flashy clothes and dates white prostitutes. He tries to model himself after Vivian's male associates. When his mother demands that he follow rules, Bailey moves out of her home. The rebellion subsides after a while, and Vivian gets Bailey a job with the South Pacific Railroad. All this upsets Marguerite, who is sad when her brother leaves.

Marguerite decides to take a semester off from school. She tries to get a job as a streetcar conductor. After many obstacles are surmounted, she does become the first black person to work on a San Francisco streetcar. As all this goes on, Marguerite and Vivian start to admire and appreciate each other. Perhaps Angelou's observation at this point explains the common bond between the two women: "The Black female is assaulted in her tender years by all those common forces of nature at the same time that she is caught in the tripartite crossfire of masculine prejudice, white illogical hate and Black lack of power."

As this story comes to its conclusion, the author starts to show an acceptance of responsibility and empowerment. Marguerite is still young, immature, and inexperienced, but she is stepping into adulthood with a commitment that will not allow for faltering.

There are many motifs in Marguerite's story. The constant setbacks followed by advances reflect the growth process that takes the child into adulthood. Good people, as well as bad people, are stepping stones or stumbling blocks.

Reciting (or distributing) Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "Sympathy" (**Handout 30**) is an appropriate activity for this lesson. Provide students the time to absorb the words of this poem. Elicit responses as to their understanding of the poem.

Procedure

1. Briefly review plot development in chapters 33–34.
2. Distribute **Handout 30**. Have a student (or the teacher) read the poem aloud. Provide time for each student to think about the poem. Have a general classroom discussion on the meaning of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem and ways it relates to Maya Angelou's story.

Suggested Responses:

1. *A caged bird is a bird that is being deprived of the sun, the wind, and the total joy of moving about in nature. The caged bird is in an environment that is contrary to its very nature. It is not allowed to be what it is intended to be—an active participant in joys of life outside the confines of a prison.*
2. *The caged bird experiences the pain that comes frustration (not pain) from the futile attempt to gain freedom. The physical attempts and mental scars are there and they are an ever-painful reminder that all attempts to break out are doomed to failure.*
3. *The caged bird has one thing that cannot be taken from it—its song. Maya Angelou held on to her core being (her song) and she never let people take that from her. When she finally escaped the bonds of childhood tragedies and challenges, she realized that it was up to her to sing her song loud and clear.*

3. Define the term *motif*.
motif—a recurring concept or story element
4. Identify the following three motifs that run through *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Have a general discussion about their meaning and significance.
 - strong black women
 - importance of reading and education
 - rising above adversity
5. Distribute **Handout 31**. Have students respond on their own. After they finish, conduct a class discussion based on their answers.
6. Distribute **Handout 32**. This is a creative writing assignment. Set a date for completion and any other requirements you may have.
7. Distribute **Handout 33**. Give students sufficient time to research this assignment. Set dates and requirements.
8. Assign chapters 35–36 to be read or reviewed in preparation for Lesson 11.

Suggested Responses:

1. Strong black women—*Momma, Vivian, Grand mother Baxter, Mrs. Flowers, Marguerite*
2. Importance of reading and education—*Reading brought Marguerite out of her silence; education provided a hopeful future; pride was fostered in school.*
3. Rising above adversity—*breaking the period of silence; Momma never gave into despair; Marguerite breaks through racial barriers in San Francisco job market*

Paul Dunbar's "Sympathy"

Directions: Read the following poem, and answer the questions.

Sympathy

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
 When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
 When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats its wing
 Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
 And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
 When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
 But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

—Paul Laurence Dunbar

1. What is a caged bird?
2. According to the poet, what does a caged bird experience?
3. How does the poem's last line relate to Maya Angelou's autobiography?

Recognizing Motifs

Directions: List three examples for each of the following motifs contained in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Give reasons to support your responses.

1. Strong black women

2. Importance of reading and education

3. Rising above adversity

Reporting on Strong Women

Directions: Write a segment for a local newscast. Include items that talk about the good deeds and extraordinary feats of Momma, Vivian, Marguerite, and Mrs. Flowers.

Turning to Maya's Poetry

Directions: Maya Angelou uses poetry as a powerful genre to express her feelings and insights. Many of the motifs that are contained in her real-life experiences are also contained in her poetry. Select any three poems written by Maya Angelou, and give a poetic explication for each one.

Poetic Collections—Maya Angelou

Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diie

Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well

And Still I Rise

Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?

I Shall Not Be Moved

On the Pulse of Morning

Phenomenal Woman

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou

A Brave and Startling Truth

Lesson 11

Accepting Responsibility: Coming of Age

Objectives

- To summarize chapters 35–36
- To get an understanding of the concept of coming of age

Notes to the Teacher

Chapters 35 and 36 end this autobiographical account of Marguerite Johnson's youth. Marguerite reaches a turning point in her life as she deals with doubts about her sexuality, teen sex, and pregnancy.

Because Marguerite has a deep voice and she does not seem to have developed physically as other girls her age, she wonders whether she might be homosexual. Her mother assures her that there is nothing wrong with her development, and Marguerite feels relieved. However, in order to be absolutely sure, she decides to get a boyfriend. This leads her to a sexual encounter that leaves her pregnant, alone, and afraid. She keeps her pregnancy a secret until her eighth month. When she finally delivers her son, Guy, she is afraid to touch the baby. She is devastated when she realizes that her maternal instincts do not seem to be kicking in, and she thinks she will not be able to care for and protect this child.

Vivian is the person who intervenes at this point. She refuses to allow Marguerite to hide from her new responsibility. She assures her daughter that she will not harm her baby. She puts Guy in bed to sleep with his mother. When morning arrives, the baby is no longer in the center of the bed where he was placed by his grandmother. Marguerite finds that she is lying on her stomach with her arm bent at a right angle. Under the tent of blanket, the baby sleeps next to his mother. Vivian's point is made. Marguerite is doing what mothers do without thinking about it.

This episode ends the first book in the five book autobiographical series. Marguerite has come to this moment after years of ups and downs. The young child who was sent by train to Stamps, Arkansas, when she was three years old is now the teen mother of her beloved

son, Guy. The caged bird has been trying to sing her song in all different stages of her life. Her coming of age has had painful moments and joyful highs. However, she is a survivor, and she will go on to be a sign of hope to thousands of people who are also looking to sing their song.

The story that has taken Marguerite Johnson from a little girl to a young mother is finished in these last chapters. The concept of coming of age is clearly exemplified in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Marguerite has had to come into her own. The example (both good and bad) of others, knowledge through reading, experience, and accepting responsibility have all converged to transform Marguerite Johnson into Maya Angelou.

For this lesson, share with students the poem "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" written by Maya Angelou. All things have come together at this point. The young girl has her singing voice, and her poetry delivers her message. The poem is readily available in anthologies and on the Internet.

Procedure

1. Briefly review the plot development in chapters 35–36.
2. Read Angelou's poem "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" aloud, or choose a student to do so. Provide time for each student to think about the poem. Have a general classroom discussion on the meaning of Angelou's poem.
3. Discuss the concept of *coming-of-age literature*. Define the term.
coming-of-age literature—a type of story where the protagonist is initiated into adulthood through knowledge, experience, or both; a process of disillusionment often occurs
4. Distribute **Handout 34**. Instruct students to work on it alone.

5. Have students write the following information in their notebooks:

Five shifts that are integral to the coming-of-age process:

- ignorance to knowledge
- innocence to experience
- false view of world to accurate one
- idealism to realism
- immature responses to mature responses

6. Distribute **Handout 35**. Instruct students to work in small groups and report back to the larger group.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Marguerite learns the ways of the South. She adjusts her behavior to the culture.*
2. *She learns that some people do intend to hurt others.*
3. *She learns that all people do not love others.*
4. *Her experiences in San Francisco make her see the need to be practical and persistent.*
5. *In the opening moments of this book, she wets her pants in response to pressure. At the end, she embraces her responsibility as an adult.*

7. Distribute **Handout 36**. Have students share responses.

8. Prepare for the showing of the film version of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Personal Coming of Age

Directions: Drawing on your own experiences, list times in your life that might be considered coming-of-age moments. Give one example for each situation.

1. Time when a childhood myth was taken from you

2. Moment when a spiritual awareness came to you

3. A childish habit you overcame

4. A responsibility you assumed as you got older

Coming of Age in Other Works

Directions: Choose a main character from any other book or from a movie, and apply the five shifts integral to the coming-of-age process. Your character may be a real person or a fictional person.

Character/Person: _____

Title of Book or Movie:_____

1. Ignorance to knowledge

2. Innocence to experience

3. False view of world to correct one

4. Idealism to realism

5. Immature responses to mature responses

Lesson 12

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings: The Movie

Objectives

- To view a made-for-television movie of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
- To compare the written autobiographical work to the film

Notes to the Teacher

The made-for-TV film of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was filmed on location in Vicksburg, Mississippi. It was adapted for television by Maya Angelou and Leonora Thuna. It was first telecast April 28, 1979. The hundred-minute movie was directed by Fielder Cook and produced by Jean Moore Edwards. Though it is not rated, it has been deemed suitable for children.

The main characters are played by the following actors and actresses:

Marguerite:	Constance Good
Bailey Jr.:	John Driver
Momma:	Esther Rolle
Uncle Willie:	Sonny Jim Gaines
Vivian:	Diahann Carroll
Big Bailey:	Roger Mosley
Grandmother Baxter:	Ruby Dee
Mrs. Flowers:	Madge Sinclair
Freeman:	Paul Benjamin

The book ends with the birth of Marguerite's son. The movie does not go beyond the elementary school experiences of Marguerite.

Students are probably used to seeing movies that have been adapted from some form of literature. Prior to having students view the film version of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, consider asking them to identify movies that were based on existing fiction or nonfiction. During discussion, see how many students have dealt with both components—the book and the movie.

Procedure

1. Obtain the video. Then schedule time for student viewing.
2. When the movie is over, ask students for their initial reactions. This should be a general session.
3. Distribute **Handout 37**. Have students work in small groups. Have each group summarize comments for the whole class.
4. Distribute **Handout 38**, and assign it for homework. Discuss it as a class.
5. Encourage students to have parents or guardians read this book and view this film.

Comparing Genres

Directions: Answer the following questions. Every person in the group should contribute to this discussion. Record answers so that you can report back to the whole group.

1. What major events are not included in the movie that were part of Maya Angelou's book?
2. What elements in the movie are not true to the book?
3. How well do you think the movie conveys the spirit of the book?

Portraying Real People

Directions: Imagine that you are a movie critic. You are reviewing the film *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Your task is to evaluate how well the actors and actresses portray the real-life people. Fill in the following chart with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating. Be prepared to explain your choices.

Person	Actor or Actress	Rating	Reasoning
Marguerite	Constance Good		
Bailey Jr.	John Driver		
Momma	Esther Rolle		
Uncle Willie	Sonny Jim Gaines		
Vivian	Diahann Carroll		
Big Bailey	Roger Mosley		
Grandmother Baxter	Ruby Dee		
Mrs. Flowers	Madge Sinclair		
Mr. Freeman	Paul Benjamin		

Quiz

Part A.

Directions: Write the letter of the best answer in the blank before each name.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Marguerite | a. Marguerite's mother |
| _____ 2. Bailey Jr. | b. handicapped |
| _____ 3. Vivian | c. aristocrat; book lover |
| _____ 4. Big Bailey | d. Maya's name |
| _____ 5. Annie Henderson | e. Marguerite's first employer |
| _____ 6. Uncle Willie | f. chef |
| _____ 7. Bertha Flowers | g. St. Louis relative |
| _____ 8. Grandmother Baxter | h. San Francisco teacher |
| _____ 9. Mrs. Cullinan | i. sees dead body |
| _____ 10. Miss Kirwin | j. Marguerite's grandmother |

Part B.

Directions: Label each statement *true* or *false*.

- _____ 1. This book is a fictional work.
- _____ 2. Marguerite is the older Johnson child.
- _____ 3. When the story opens, the children live with their mother.
- _____ 4. Stamps is in Arkansas.
- _____ 5. Momma owns and operates The Store.
- _____ 6. Big Bailey takes the children to St. Louis.
- _____ 7. Mr. Freeman rapes Marguerite.
- _____ 8. Marguerite gets along with her father's girlfriend, Dolores.
- _____ 9. Marguerite is the first black streetcar worker in San Francisco.
- _____ 10. Marguerite names her son Guy.

Answer Key

Part A.

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. d | 6. b |
| 2. i | 7. c |
| 3. a | 8. g |
| 4. f | 9. e |
| 5. j | 10. h |

Part B.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. false | 6. true |
| 2. false | 7. true |
| 3. false | 8. false |
| 4. true | 9. true |
| 5. true | 10. true |

Essay Topics

Directions: Respond completely to the following topics.

1. Select any major character in this story. Give a detailed description of this person. Include information about his or her traits, strengths, and flaws.
2. Discuss the various settings in this story. How does each create a unique feel? What events happen in these settings that are significant to the life of Marguerite and the other people in the story?
3. Discuss the prejudice and injustice expressed in this story. Give examples that show how they are manifested.
4. What is your reaction to the film version of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*? Do you think it does justice to the book? Which do you prefer? Why?

Research Projects

Directions: Complete one of the following assignments.

1. Research segregation in twentieth-century America. Include laws, restrictions, antisegregation movements, and general reactions to segregation that you can find. Present your findings in a written report.
2. Select five poems written by Maya Angelou. Study these poems, and prepare a dramatic reading of them to be delivered to your class.
3. Select another African-American writer. Do a report on his or her life. How do experiences influence literature?

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I Know Why the Caged Bird SingsISBN 978-1-56077-787-8

Entire Unit

- | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RL.8.1 | Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. |
| RL.8.2 | Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. |
| RL.8.3 | Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. |
| RL.8.4 | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. |
| RL.8.5 | Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. |
| RL.8.6 | Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor. |
| RL.8.7 | Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors. |
| SL.8.1 | Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. |
| SL.8.1a | Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. |
| SL.8.2 | Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. |
| SL.8.4 | Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen |

details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

- L.8.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L.8.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- L.8.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- L.8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.8.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- RL.9-10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
- RL.9-10.7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).
- SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.9-10.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

- SL.9-10.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- SL.9-10.1d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.9-10.5a Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.

Source

Common Core State Standards (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)



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