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ABSTRACT

This research project has been designed to develop students' reading and thinking competences through the major Autobiographical work of Maya Angelou: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

In this core knowledge unit, students will explore the impact of personal relationships on the author's life. They will understand that characters undergo a transformation due to event in their lives, and how the environment plays a major role in human development. Students will also develop a sense of historical empathy by connecting personal experiences, information, insights and ideas with the experiences of others. Finally, students will determine and understand how the author's or point of view affects the text.

With the purpose of producing students who can use reading strategies to maximize their comprehension of the novel, I have provided authentic reading material for students to absorb vocabulary, and discourse structure as they occur in authentic contexts. Students thus will gain a more complete picture of the ways in which the elements of the language work together to convey meaning. They will also find that they can control their reading experiences, and they will gain confidence in their ability to read the new language.

KEY-WORDS: autobiography, memoir, autobiographical novel, fiction, facts, opinion, genre, voice, reading through tasks, purpose in reading, skimming, scanning, making inferences, drawing conclusion, literature-based Instruction.



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TEMA

Helping Students to Read through *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

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The present work is its author's exclusive responsibility.

ROSA CRESPO ARÍZAGA



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DEDICATION

THIS RESEARCH WORK IS DEDICATED TO

Many thanks to Fabian, who made it possible for me to accomplish my goal. Thank you for your patience, brilliant mind, and dedication that is reflected in all you do.

My father who since I was a little girl encouraged me to read and recite poetry. Since then, I perceived the power of the written words.

My mom, thank you for your love and support even in the times you may not have understood me with my decisions about entering to the University at a middle age!

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My deepest gratitude to my brother Oswaldo. Thanks for your kindness, generous heart, and the precious gift of being my brother.

Finally, thanks to Maya Angelou. I did not perceive her to be a stranger. Having read her literary works made me feel as if she were a high-school classmate or one of my favorite cousins.



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INTRODUCTION

This research project is based on the major literary work written by Maya Angelou: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. It is designed for high school students who are reading on an advanced level. Moreover, it is developed through a series of lessons which could be covered from 17 to 20 periods length.

The first objective of the project is to expose students to the concepts of autobiography, biography, and fiction as literary genres. The second objective is to enable students to read, study, and analyze Maya Angelou's autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, in terms of what she intended to accomplish by her writings. The third objective is to encourage students to develop and improve their reading competence by lessons which focus on descriptive and figurative language, as well as references to a historical time periods. Finally, to invite the students to think about their lives in different time periods, and the influence that people and places can have on their lives.

Students who are using *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* as a project will also expand their knowledge on thematic issues such as setting and character development. In this way, students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of writing resources in which they will apply thinking abilities to their reading skills.

In order to achieve my objectives, I have divided my work into three Chapters. Chapter one deals with "Maya Angelou Life and Works;" This Chapter briefly explores the life of this brilliant woman from her childhood, her difficult formative years and adulthood, to her emergence as a powerful writer she is today.

Chapter two focuses on "Strategies for Developing Reading Skills". I considered it was convenient to analyze reading strategies with the intention of planning meaningful activities that can help maximize students' comprehension of the novel. I have also reflected on the importance of



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establishing basic concepts of literary genres as well as presenting students the purpose of reading.

Chapter three centers its attention to “Reading Through *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*”. A series of lesson plans have been designed to connect the above chapters by using contextual clues, followed by a variety of task sheets for activities practicing previous reading. Some of the lessons are presented through visual aids such as images and videos. It will help the students to deepen their reading progress, increase awareness, in new words, and motivate them to construct meaningful learning.

Finally, with the purpose of explaining the meanings of unfamiliar words encountered in the novel, a vocabulary/definition word list is presented in the Annexes section.



CHAPTER I

MAYA ANGELOU: LIFE AND WORK



Figure 2. Maya Angelou Photo Gallery: (Academic of Achievement)

Collage by Rosa Crespo A.



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1.1 Family:

Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Annie Johnson on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. Her father, Bailey Johnson was a doorman and navy dietitian. Her mother Vivian Baxter, was a sometime nightclub performer and owner of a large rooming house in San Francisco in the 1940s. She also was a real estate agent, trained surgical nurse, and later a merchant marine. She used to call her Ritie or Baby, and she kept Rita Johnson until her marriage to Tosh Angelos, a Greek sailor in 1952. Her new name was a nickname given to her by her older brother, Bailey Johnson Jr. He called her "Maya" instead of "my sister". He was unable to pronounce her name because of a speech impediment, A few years later, when he read a book about the Maya Indians; he began to call her "Maya" which is the name that she chose to keep.

Maya Angelou's family is descended from the Mende people of West Africa¹ Her maternal great-grandmother, Mary Lee, had been emancipated after the Civil War. After that Lee was sent to Missouri with her daughter, Marguerite Baxter, who became Angelou's grandmother.

1.2 Early life

When Maya Angelou was three and her brother four, their parents' "unfortunate marriage" ended. After the divorce, their father sent them by train with name tags on their wrists, from California to Stamps, Arkansas, to stay in the care of their grandmother, Mrs. Annie Henderson who soon became as their real mother. Mrs. Henderson, or "Momma" as Maya and her brother used to call her, raised her grandchildren with the strict Southern principles such as "wash your feet before you go to bed; always pray to the savior and you shall be forgiven; chores and school come before play; and help those in need and you shall be helped yourself." Bearing those basic principles, Maya and Bailey grew older and wiser in Stamps. Each year they

¹The Mende people are one of the two largest and most dominant ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, who live throughout West Africa.



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watched the Negro cotton-pickers come and go with the burdens and respect. As Angelou states, “Momma intended to teach Bailey and me to use the paths of life that she and her generation and all the Negroes gone before had found, and found to be safe ones” (47).

Annie Henderson had been able to survive in the early 1930s, during the Great Depression and World War II because she made wise and honest investments. She owned a general store with basic commodities where people in the neighborhood met at the store to buy a variety of goods, give haircuts, tell stories, and gossip with each other. Angelou often remembers the smell of the items as well as the variety of goods her ‘Momma’ used to sell. “I remember the wonderful smells: the aroma of the pickle barrel, the bulging sacks of corn, and the luscious ripe fruit. You could pick up a can of snuff from North Carolina, a box o matches from Ohio, a yard of ribbon from New York. All of those places seemed terribly exotic to me. I would fantasize how people from there have actually touched those objects. It was a magnificent experience!” (11).

Between her grandmother’s customers, the young Maya often wrote poetry and read from her beloved books, besides that she learned how to sell merchandise, This helped her mind off the pain of growing up in the segregated South where the violence of racial discrimination was the obligatory way of life in the American South, but on the whole, she absorbed the deep faith and values of traditional African American family, as well as the sense of community and culture. She particularly credits her grandmother of inspiring in her the values that learned her later life and career.

Four years later, when Maya was seven, her father, an adventurer, came to Stamps without warning and returned the children to their mother’s care in St. Louis, Missouri. Maya was frightened by the idea of big cities and strange people, and St. Louis, was presented as a city with completely different lifestyle. She expresses, “In my mind I decided that Sr. Louis was a foreign country. As quickly as I understood that I had not reached my home, I sneaked away to Robin Hood’s forest and the caves of Alley Oop where all



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reality was unreal.... I carried the same shield that I had used in Stamps: I didn't come to stay" (54).

While she was living with her mother in St. Louis, she was sexually abused and raped by her mother's boyfriend. Maya experienced disturbing and traumatic moments that caused her craving and longing for the quiet safety of Stamps. She was shocked and too ashamed to tell any of the adults in her life. The only person she confided was her brother Bailey. The author of the rape was found guilty, but after his release, he was found death. When she later heard the news that an uncle had killed her attacker, she felt that her words had killed the man. Since then, she became mute, believing as she has stated, "I thought my voice killed him; I killed that man, because I told his name. And then I thought I would never speak again, because my voice would kill anyone..." (87).

Maya kept silent and did not speak to anyone except her brother for five years. Even at this young age she was convinced that words could be powerful. Maya and Bailey were shipped back to Momma in Stamps, and it was with the help of Mrs. Bertha Flowers, Momma's friend and a literature teacher, who knowing that Maya was fond of books, introduced her to classic literature and encouraged to read poetry aloud, that she finally found her voice again. Since then, she buried herself in the shield of her grandmother's store and in her vivid imagination, and started to read widely. Books became her lifeline and prepared the terrain for her artistic and literary career.

Maya set aside what Mrs. Bertha Flowers suggested: "Now no one is going to make your talk –possibly no one can. But bear in mind language is man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone which separates him from the lower animals," (98). This recommendation helped her a lot in those moments of great despair, as she expresses, "I opened the first page and I heard poetry aloud for the first time in my life" (Angelou 100).



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One of what Angelou considers her first lesson in living is what Mrs. Flowers said about being intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy. “She encouraged me to listen carefully to what country people called “mother wit” or the collective wisdom of generations” (100).

1.3 Education

Maya Angelou spent her difficult formative years moving back and forth between her mother’s and grandmother’s. As many of the great African American writers of the twenty century, Angelou had not earned a college degree. Instead, her advanced education was achieved through what she describes as the “direct instruction” of African American cultural forms: “If you grown up in an environment where the lore is passed on by insinuation, direct instruction, music, poetry, dance, and all other forms of instruction, the, ...that is still the thing our of which you have to move” (Lupton 16).

However, with the help of Mrs. Bertha Flowers, Maya developed a love for the works of some writers that served Angelou as a role models and inspiration such as Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, and James Weldon Johnson. However, at the same time, Angelou was also very interested in reading black women writers such as Frances Harper, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Anne Spencer, and Jessie Faucet. All of them became a source of inspiration on Angelou’s path toward self-enlightenment.

In Stamps, Maya Angelou attended the Lafayette County Training School. Unlike the white school, her school was very simple without any decoration. At the black schools the only “extra” was a rusty hoop for basketball. Despite these poor conditions, she did well at school. She learned to say quickly their multiplication tables, and over all, she loved to read books. Marguerite Annie Johnsons was graduated with honors in the eighth grade.

Soon after that, during World War II in 1941, Maya and her brother left their grandmother’s house, and store for their mother’s pension in San Francisco where Maya attended George Washington High School. Here she was assisted by Miss Kirwin, a teacher, who like Mrs. Flowers from Stamps, took a special interest in Maya’s education. Because she was a good



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student, she received a scholarship to study dance and theater at the California Labor Mission School. Once there, she was exposed to the progressive ideals that animated her later political activism. She dropped out of school in her teens to become San Francisco's first African American female cable car conductor. Later she returned to high school and graduated in 1945, at the end of the Second World War, a few weeks before giving birth to her son, Guy, who also became a poet.

1.4 Adult Years and Early Career

Angelou went by the name of "Marguerite Johnson" or "Rita" up to 1949, but she changed her professional name to "Maya Angelou" when her manager at San Francisco nightclub "The Purple Onion" suggested that she adopt a more theatrical name in order to capture the audience of her "*Calypso*" dance performances. She won a scholarship and trained in African dance in 1952. In the 1950s, Angelou started as a stage performer, working as an actress, singer, and dancer. During 1954 and 1955, Angelou toured through Europe with the opera "*Porgy and Bess*". She began to learn the language of every country she visited, and in a few years she increased her skills in several languages.

She studied modern dance and in 1954, while she was working as a dancer in San Francisco, a group of friends encouraged her to become a singer and go for an audition. As a result, in 1957, Angelou recorded her first album, 'Miss Calypso', and it was her first steps on making music for poems. Angelou in her third autobiography, *Singin' And Swingin' And Getting' Merry* declares, "I began making up music for poems I had written years before and writing new songs that fit the calypso form" (128).

By the 1960s, Angelou threw herself into acting roles, and began publishing poetry and plays. She received the proposal to join the company of 'Porgy and Bess' as a principal dancer playing the role of 'Ruby' on its European tour. So, she decided to join the group because she wanted to travel abroad and have new opportunities as she concludes,



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“...There really was no contest. I wanted to travel, to try to speak other languages, to see the cities I had read about all my life, but most important I wanted to be with a large, friendly group of Black people who sang so gloriously and lived with such passion” (*Singin’ And Swingin’* ch.15 143,144).

In the late 1950s Angelou joined the Harlem Writers Guild² where she met a number of major African American authors, including James Baldwin, one of the leading African-American writers of his generation who soon became her close friend and mentor. After hearing civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak for the first time in 1960, Angelou joined the Civil Rights movement, and became a Northern Coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference³.

During the early 1960s, Angelou and her son moved to Cairo, Egypt, where, she became an associate editor at the weekly newspaper *The Arab Observer*. In 1962, she moved to Ghana and became an assistant administrator and instructor at the University of Ghana’s School of Music and Drama where she wrote plays, and was a feature editor for *The African review journal*.

In Ghana, Angelou met Malcolm X and became friends. Then, she returned to the US in 1964 to help him build new civil rights organization, the Organization of African American Unity. Shortly after Angelou’s return, Malcolm X was assassinated on her birthday.

² The Harlem Writers Guild (HWG) was founded in 1950 by wordsmiths/scholars/activists. HWG The purpose of HWG is to develop and aid in the publication of works by writers of the African Diaspora.

³ The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is an American civil rights organization founded in January 1957 Their goal was to form an organization to coordinate and support nonviolent direct action as a method of desegregating bus systems across the South. It was closely associated with its first president, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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1.5 Literary Works and Awards

Although Angelou's career has included many years as an actress, singer, dancer, director, and producer on stage and on television, however, she is best known for her writing, particularly her autobiographical writing *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. This work led her to meet the foremost black essayist and novelist of his time James Baldwin, who heard her tell stories about her childhood and challenged her to write them down. The result was the first volume of her autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), which covers her life up to age 17.

Mary Jane Lupton in her work *Maya Angelou A Critical Companion* declares:

“Maya Angelou in having created these five autobiographies has assured herself a prominent place in American Literature. She has expanded the scope of the typical one-volume book about the self, creating a saga that covers the years 1941 to 1965- from the beginnings of the Second World War to the days preceding the assassination of Malcolm X. She guides the reader through a quarter of a century of American and African American history, revealed through the point of view of a strong and affectionate black woman...”(Lupton xiv).

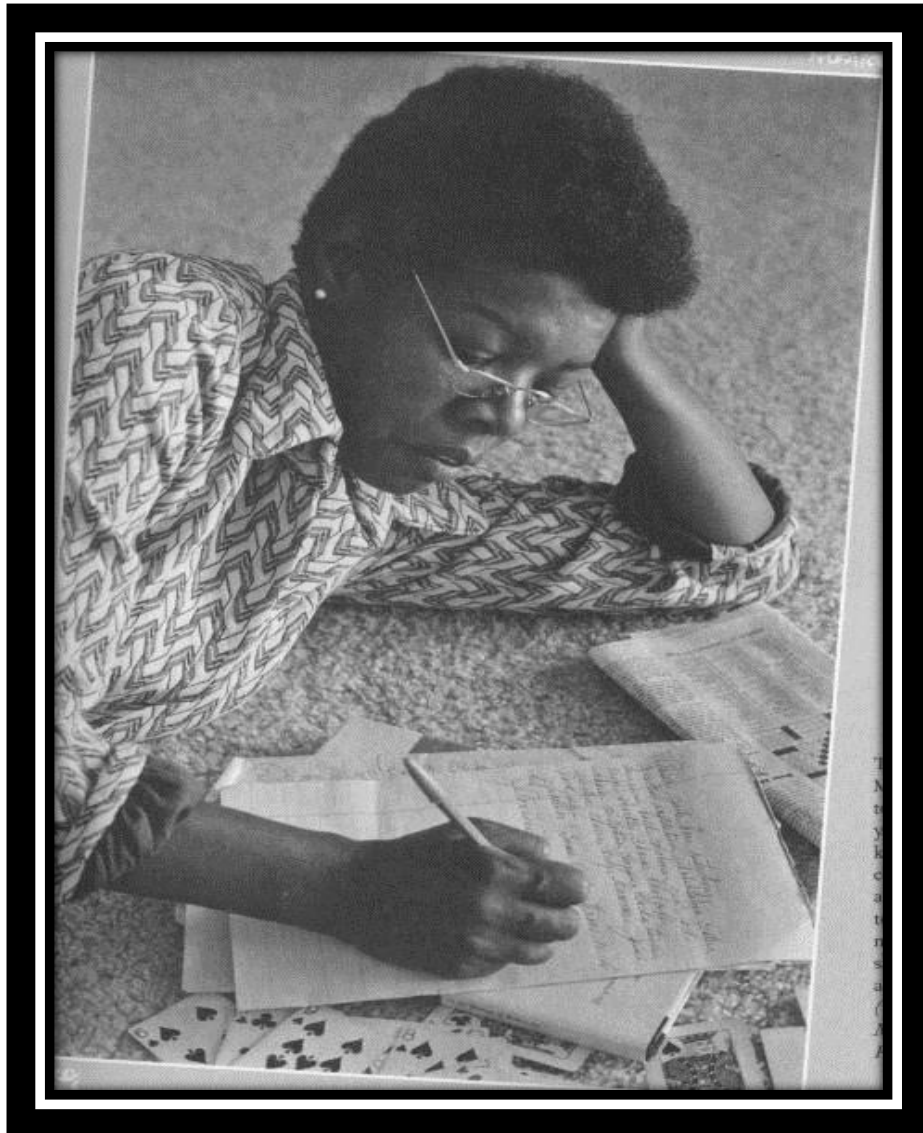
Angelou has written countless of poems. She was the first African American in United States history to compose and deliver a poem for a presidential inauguration on January 20, 1993. And hers is a rich life. She has been honored by universities, literary organizations, government agencies, and special interest groups. Her honors include a National Book Award, a Pulitzer Prize, a Tony Award and three Grammys. Angelou's publishing company, Bantam Books, recognizes her for having the longest-running record on the New York Times Bestseller List.



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CHAPTER II

Strategies for Developing Reading Skills



The writer at work

Figure 3. Photo by Wayne Miller (Gillespie,Johnson,Long)



2. 1 Identify the purpose in reading

Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information, verify existing knowledge, and analyze writer's ideas or a writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to improve knowledge of the language being read. The purpose for reading also determines the appropriate approach to reading comprehension.

In order to maximize reading comprehension, H. Douglas Brown urges as a first step strategy to identify the purpose in reading.

“When students have been told to read something that they don't know, and why they are being asked to read it, only a poor job of retaining information about what they 'read' will be as a result. On the other hand, when the purpose in reading is clearly identified, and they know what they are looking for, they can prevent from distracting information. Whenever an instructor is teaching a reading technique, make sure students know their purpose in reading something” (306).

With the aim of building the reading activity around a purpose that has significance for the students, scholar Heidi Byrnes stands out that it is very important to make sure students understand what the purpose for reading is when she declares; “to get the main idea, obtain specific information, understand most of the message, enjoy a story, or decide whether or not to read more”. Therefore, defining the activity's instructional goal and recognizing the purpose for reading will help students to select appropriate reading strategies.

Heidi Byrnes also declares that “reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text resulting in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is”.



2.2 Using Reading Strategies

Teachers are constantly frustrated by the fact that students do not automatically transfer the strategies they use when reading in their mother language to reading in a language they are learning. Instead students think that reading means starting at the beginning and going word by word, stopping to look up every unknown word, until they reach the end. When they do this, students are relying exclusively on their linguistic knowledge. For this reason, one of the most important functions of the English teacher, then, is to help students to adjust their reading behavior as if they were reading in their native language. In addition, to produce students who even if they do not have complete control of the grammar or an extensive glossary, can find themselves in communication situations. In the case of reading, this means producing students who can use reading strategies to maximize their comprehension of the text, identify relevant and non-relevant information, recognize the purpose in reading, skim the text for main ideas, and scan the text for specific information.

The following series of techniques of course may not fit all classes and contexts, but it would serve as a general guide for a reading class.

2.2.1 Skim the text for main ideas

H. Douglas Brown reports that “skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information by running one’s eyes across a whole text. It is not essential to understand each word when skimming. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of a chapter or text. It also helps to predict the main topic, or meaning, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. A teacher can train students to skim passages by giving them a specific period of time to look through a few pages of material, then, ask them to close their books, and then tell the class what they have learned so far” (308).



2.2.2 Scan the text for specific information

Scanning is used to find a particular piece or pieces of information in a text. It is run your eyes over the text looking for the specific information you need. The purpose of scanning is to extract specific information without reading through the whole text. Scanning is useful for students to look for names or dates, to find a definition, or to register a certain number of supporting details. When students are scanning they are not asked to read through the whole text. Scanning is mostly used on schedules, meeting plans, and for academic purposes (Brown 308).

2.3 Extensive and intensive reading

Extensive reading is usually a classroom oriented activity in which students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a passage. Intensive reading, on the other hand, calls students' attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, propositions, and metaphorical relationships. Intensive reading is also used on shorter texts in order to extract specific information. It includes very close accurate reading for detail. Extensive reading on the contrary, is used to achieve general understanding of longer texts such as novels, essays, long articles, etc. Although extensive reading is mostly performed outside of the class time, it can also be practiced inside the classroom. Intensive reading skills are used to grasp the details of a specific situation. In this case, it is important to understand each word, number, or fact (Beare Kenneth).

2.4 Integrating Reading Strategies

During the reading process, instructions in reading strategies are an integral part of the use of reading activities in the language classroom. The teacher can help students become effective readers by teaching them how to use strategies before, during, and after reading.



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By raising student's awareness and by explicitly teaching reading strategies, the instructors can help their students to develop both the ability and the confidence to handle communication situations they may encounter beyond the classroom. In this way a teacher give students the foundations for communicative competence in the new language.

The activities the teacher uses during the pre-reading stage may serve as a preparation in several ways. For example:

a. Before reading: Plan for the reading task

The activities the teacher develops during the pre-reading stage may serve as a preparation in several ways:

- Asses student's background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text.
- Activate the existing knowledge that the students have.
- Clarify any cultural information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage.
- Make students aware of the type of text they will be reading and the purposes for reading.
- Finally, provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for class discussion activities. (Houghton Mifflin)

The teacher must spend some time introducing a topic, encouraging skimming, scanning, predicting, and activating a plan. The teacher needs to set a purpose or decide in advance what to read for, and decide if more linguistic or background knowledge is needed. The Plan for the reading task should determine, for example, whether students attend to the overall meaning or focus on the words and phrases.

Sample pre-reading activities:

- The teacher can use the title of the book, subtitles, and divisions within the text to predict content and organization or sequence of information.
- Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs and their subtitles.



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- Talking about the author's background, writing style, and usual topics.
- Skimming to find the theme or main idea and eliciting related prior knowledge.
- Reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures.
- Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding specific information while reading.
- Doing guided practice with meaning

b. While reading:

During this step, Jack C. Richards and Eckstut-Didier in their book titled, *Building Effective Reading Skills*, point out that “there may be certain facts or symbolic devices that students should take notes while they read. The teacher needs to give them a sense of purpose for reading rather than just reading because he/she orders to do it. One skimming or scanning activity accompanies every reading in the book. Through this step students can verify predictions made in the pre-reading activity, and check for inaccurate guesses. They can decide what is and is not important to understand” (11).

c. After reading:

Through this phase, students can evaluate comprehension in a particular task or area. Evaluate overall progress in reading and in particular types of reading tasks. They can also decide if the strategies used were appropriate for the purpose and for the task in order to modify strategies if necessary. One common type of activity to be developed by the students is a comprehension question. Vocabulary is also considered as a way to identify the author's purpose. Besides discussing the author's point of view, structure, or steering students toward a follow-up writing exercise.

. Richards and Eckstut in their study describe a variety of task types that go along with reading activities.



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These include:

- Understanding main ideas and details.
- Making inferences and guessing meaning from context.
- Understanding the organization and cohesion of a text.
- Distinguishing fact from opinion, multiple choice, matching, true/false, and fill in the blanks.
- Understanding the sequence of events. (11)

2.5 Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

According to an article titled “Reading Comprehension” from Cuesta College, “drawing conclusions refers to information that is implied or inferred. This means that the information is never clearly stated. Writers give hints or clues that help the reader between lines. Using these clues to give a deeper understanding of the reading is called *inferring*. When the reader infers, he/she goes beyond the surface to see other meanings that the details suggest or are not stated. When the meanings of words are not stated clearly in the context, they may be 'implied', that is, suggested or hinted”

2.6 Differences between Fact and Opinion

Because writers don't always say things directly, sometimes it is difficult to figure out what a writer really means or what he or she is trying to say. The reader needs to “read between the lines”. Writers often tell us what they think or how they feel, but they don't always give us the facts. It is important to be able to interpret what the writer is saying so you can form opinions of your own. Since the two may appear close together, even in the same sentence, the reader has to be able to distinguish between them.

The key difference between facts and opinions is that facts can be verified or checked for accuracy by anyone. Facts are objective and can be found in official records, reference books, and in the physical sciences. However, not all facts are absolute. Once they are verified, they are generally agreed upon by people. On the other hand, opinions are based on subjective judgment



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and personal values rather than on information that can be verified. An opinion is a belief that someone holds without complete proof or positive knowledge that it is correct. Moreover, opinions are what someone personally thinks or how he/she feels about an issue. Writers often express their opinions as comparisons (more, strongest, less, most, least).

2.7 Selecting Literature to teach reading

According to Heidi Byrnes, “selecting Literature to teach reading refers to authentic narrative and expository texts that are written in the original and natural language of the authors. These texts are often referred to as “real books”. These are the books that can be found in the library and include a wide range of fiction and nonfiction texts that authentically represent many cultures presented from diverse perspectives.

The use of authentic literature in the classroom is a wonderful way to provide students with natural language that serves as a model for expanding their language knowledge, helps to increase their vocabulary, excites and captivates their imagination, and motivates them to learn. Researches show that when different types of students at various grades or levels are given authentic literature as the core of their reading program, their achievement is higher and they have more positive attitudes about reading and writing.

2.7.1 Literature-based Instruction and Task-based Learning

According to the article titled “Literature based Instruction” It is the type of instruction in which the author’s original narrative and expository works are used as the core for experiences to support students in developing literacy. The types of activities done with the literature are the natural types of things students would do when reading and responding to any good book. For example, it is natural to share and talk about a good book after reading it. It is not natural to answer ten questions about the book. So, the teacher’s role becomes one of planning and supporting authentic learning experiences (Houghton Mifflin Company Education).



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The article also clarifies the following:

“Literature-based Instruction is much more than giving students quality literature; it is doing the authentic things with the literature that all writers and readers would naturally do, and giving students support with these activities as they need it. Through literature, young adults develop literacy that means reading, writing, thinking by having real literacy experiences and getting support from more experienced individuals, who may be teachers or adults. This research clearly shows that literature-based instruction helps all students become better readers, writers, and thinkers”.

Task-based Learning

Scholar Jane Willis differentiates task-based learning from traditional systems. She points out that “the characteristic of task-based learning is that rather than concentrating on one particular structure, function or vocabulary based lessons, these tasks exploit a wider range of language.” In this way, students use a range of different communicative language skills.

In traditional classes, tasks have been ‘extension’ activities as part of a graded and structured course. In task-based learning, on the other hand, the tasks are central to the learning activity. Task-based learning is based on the belief that students may learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are using.

2.7.2 The Role of the Teacher in Literature-Based Instruction

The role of the teacher in Literature-based Instructions is one of decision maker, mentor, and coach. This role includes planning themes and strategies; using passages or chapters for specific purposes, helping students activate the appropriate prior knowledge, and supporting students in reading. As a mentor, the teacher serves as a model for reading and



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writing. By reading aloud to students, the teacher models language for them. By supporting students with such activities as collective reading literature discussion circles, and response activities, the teacher plays the role of a coach.

2.8 Main and Secondary ideas

The following definitions taken from the Web page titled, “Principles for interactive Reading” from Saint Luis Cuesta College emphasize “When authors write they have an idea in mind that they are trying to communicate. An author organizes each paragraph with a main idea, and each paragraph has a key concept. The main idea is the most important piece or information the author wants you to know about the concept of that paragraph. An author also organizes each paragraph’s main idea with details in support of the topic or central theme, and each paragraph supports the paragraph preceding it.

The main ideas may be stated at the beginning of the paragraph, in the middle, or at the end. The sentence in which the main idea is stated is the topic sentence of that paragraph. The topic sentence announces the general theme to be dealt with in the paragraph. Although the topic sentence may appear anywhere in the paragraph, it is usually first. This sentence provides the focus for the writer while writing and for the reader while reading (3).

2. 9 Defining basic literary genres

An autobiography which is about the self or the “I” can be as varied as the self is. For this reason, a teacher who uses an autobiography for students to analyze must start exposing the pupils to basic concepts about autobiography and genres.

Autobiography

The word autobiography comes from the Greek words meaning “self”, “life”, and “write”. Autobiography is a style of writing that has been around nearly as long as history has been recorded. One form of writing is known that dates back to 400 A.S when a Christian missionary, Saint Augustine



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wrote one. However, the original term was coined around 1800 A.D., when an English poet Robert Southey first used it. However, autobiography was not classified as a genre within itself until the late eighteenth century (Hub Pages).

In his book, *Inside Out*, E. Stuart Bates offers a functional definition of autobiography as “a narrative of the past of a person by the person concerned” (2). That information however is too broad for some literary critics. For example, researcher Linda Anderson cites Lejeune who defines autobiography as “a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his own existence, focusing on his individual life, in particular on the development of his personality” (qtd in Anderson 2).

2.9.1 Characteristics of an autobiography

Despite disagreements concerning how comprehensive the category of autobiography should be, there are characteristics that are common to the majority of autobiographical works. For example, most autobiographies are written from the first person singular perspective. “This is correct because autobiography is usually a story one tells about oneself. It would not be naturally to follow then that the writer would recount his or her past from a second or third person perspective. Moreover, we tell what happened, what we said, what we did” (Anderson 3).

Anderson also notes that the author, the narrator and the protagonist must share a common identity for the work to be considered an autobiography. She points that this common identity could be similar, but is not identical. The self that the author constructs becomes a character within the story that may not be a completely factual representation of the author’s actual past self (3).

2.9.2 Autobiographical novel

An autobiographical novel is a novel based on the life of the author. The literary technique is distinguished from an autobiography or memoir by the stipulation of being fiction. Because an autobiographical novel is partially fiction, the author does not ask the reader to expect the text to fulfill the



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“autobiographical pact.” Names and locations are often changed and events are recreated to make them more dramatic but the story still bears a close resemblance to that of the author’s life. While the events of the author’s life are recounted, there is no pretense of exact truth. Events may be exaggerated or altered for artistic or thematic purposes.

To be considered an autobiographical by most standards, there must be a protagonist modeled after the author and a central plotline that mirrors events in his or her life. Novels that do not fully meet these requirements or are further distanced from true events are sometimes called semi-autobiographical novels (Cudjoc 26).

2.9.3 Semi-autobiographical novel

A semi-autobiographical novel is freely based on the experiences of the author’s own life. A semi-autobiographical novel may be written to protect the privacy of the author’s family, friends, and loved ones. It is also done to achieve emotional distance from the subject or for artistic reasons, such as simplification of plot lines, themes, and other details. In this type of novel, the writers often use what other people felt, seen or experienced during the time of the event.

2.9.4 Fictional autobiography

The term “fictional autobiography” has been coined to define novels about a fictional character written as though the character were writing their own biography. For that reason, some sociologists and psychologists have noted that autobiography offers the author the ability to recreate history. Due to the inability or unwillingness of the author to accurately recall memories, autobiographical works have been classified by nature subjective.

2.9.5 Biography

The American Heritage Dictionary defines biography as “the story of a person’s life written by someone other than the subject of the work (89).



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According to Esther Lombardi, “Biography’ is a written depiction of a person’s life. The biography should include basic data about a person, such as the dates of birth and death, family members, key points in their life, and their significance to history or to their area of expertise. Important biographical information includes a person’s education, military service, employment history and their career, as well as the story of their personal life.”

A biography tells anecdotes, memories, trips, and valued moments. “It involves a whole life, building a link between generations, bringing us close to our children and future generations, and planting in their hearts the pride of belonging”. A biographer usually includes the beginning, middle, and the end of a person’s life. An autobiographer, on the other hand, may live on and on, perhaps long enough for several more lives or changes of the self (Lombardi 6).

2.9.6 Memoir

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines memoir as “a narrative composed from personal experience” (436).

Memoir comes from the Latin word “memoria” meaning memory. A memoir is slightly different in character from an autobiography. While an autobiography typically focuses on the “life and times” of the writer, a memoir; on the other hand, has a narrower, more intimate focus on his or her own memories, feelings and emotions. Memoirs have often been written by politicians, spiritual and military leaders as a way to record and publish an account of their public development. Although true memoirs will sometimes seem fictional, due to their emotionally charged story, a memoir does not need to be a best-seller written for the whole world to read. A memoir is written for a personal reason and for whatever result the writer wants.

2.9.7 Genre

The French word genre means a classification of literary works according to type. Genre in literature could be lyric, narrative, dramatic which can be



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further divided into novel, short story, epic poem, tragedy, and so forth. This division of the world of literature into types and the naming of those types has existed since classical times. According to Meyer H. Abrams, 'genre' is of use to the reader because it "creates a set of expectations, which ...enable the reader to make the work intelligible" (Lupton Mary Jane 29).



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CHAPTER III

Reading through *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sing*



Figure 4. Maya Angelou in 1971 with a copy of what remains her best-known work, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Picture Researcher Wendy P. Wills (Shapiro, Miles)



3.1 Introducing students to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and the Author's Autobiography

Since reading an autobiography 'properly' means reading with an already existing knowledge of the text meaning (theme, style, genre, author, etc.) These components need to be recaptured for a proper understanding of the autobiographic effort. Therefore, the teacher can give the students some basic details about the title, the author, the plot development, the settings, the characters, and about the major themes used in the novel.

The teacher can start using the title of the book and the picture for students to predict and discuss about the topic. Then, the teacher can give an explanation about it. For example: When selecting a title, Angelou turned to Paul Laurence Dunbar, an African-American poet whose works she had admired for years. Angelou has also credited Dunbar with forming her "writing ambition". The title of the book comes from the third stanza of his poem "Sympathy" At this stage; the teacher can ask students to read the poem (Task Sheet 3).

As students continue analyzing the title, the teacher should explain about Angelou's vivid use of symbolic language as a tool to express her feelings of entrapment, anger, and violation. Then, a short explanation about what a metaphor is should be given for students to compare with the title.

3. 2 Plot summary

The plot of *Cage Bird* begins when Maya and her brother are sent by train from California to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their paternal grandmother Annie Henderson. Many of the problems Maya encounters in her childhood stem from the evident racism of her white neighbors. Although her grandmother is relatively wealthy because she owns a general store at the heart of the Stamps' black community, the white children of their town



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annoy Maya's family persistently. In one event, "Momma", as Maya used to call her grandmother, had to protect Uncle Willy from Ku Klux Klan raiders.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings depicts Maya's interaction with her mother, brother, and grandmother, and solidify her experiences. Although they are strong relationships, Maya's ties with her grandmother are probable the most important ones in forming her character.

3.3 Voice

Angelou uses two distinct voices, the adult writer and the child who is the focus of the book. She reports that maintaining the distinction between herself and "the Maya character" was difficult, but it was very necessary. She also recognizes that there are fictional aspects in the novel and that sometimes she tends to "diverge" from the conventional form of autobiography as "truth", specially in a time when telling the truth was censored.

Scholar Lyman B. Hagen places Angelou in the long traditions of African American autobiography but insist that "she has created a unique interpretation of the autobiographical form called "Autobiographical Fiction" (qtd in Lupton 34).

In class discussion, the teacher should ask the students to consider the idea that black writers entered the world of literature through the door of autobiography. The author in her novel makes extensive use of the form in order to reveal her own identity and that of Black women in general. The teacher can direct the attention of the students to the question of 'voice'. Who is telling the story? How does the reader distinguish between the private self, Maya as a person, and the public self, Maya, the representation of all Afro-American women? As students read the first few chapters of *Caged Bird*, the teacher can ask them to figure out if they can hear who is talking?

3.4 Overall Objectives and Lesson Content



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This monographic research project has been designed for high school students who are reading on an advanced level, and will help them to develop reading and thinking skills through exercises and activities related to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. It includes 17 lessons from 30 to 45 minutes length, which have been developed in chronological order with emphasis on character, description, and places.

Some lessons are shorter and some are longer, and are supported by extra resource materials.

This project explores the impact of the environment and personal relationships on Angelou's life. Lessons will include opportunities for students to reflect upon what Angelou wants to say and why. Students will also deepen their understanding of the genre of autobiography. In addition, the students will develop a realistic feel for the different settings of the autobiography through the use of visuals, photographs, and videos. The reading activities will make students recognize literature as a record of human experience as well as understand how the environment plays a major role in human development.

The introductory session leads students to basic definitions of literary genres. Lesson two gives pupils an explanation about the author's background and explores the title of the novel. At this point, students recognize 'metaphor' as an important literary element used in the novel.

The study guide questions are fact-based questions. Students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in different formats, for example, short answers, circle the right answer, match the meaning to the letter, complete the sentences, or multiple choice. The word study is intended to enrich student's vocabulary, as well as to aid in the student's understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will check a worksheet vocabulary word for each chapter in the upcoming reading assignment. Lessons will also include the use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word



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appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the use of the word. Students will be allowed to use dictionary definitions of the words and match the words to the correct definition based on the text. In this way, students should have an understanding of the words when they find them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Class discussion questions serve as a review of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments. During one class period, students can work in pairs and prepare a role-play using imaginary conversations. They can act out their oral presentations about the pieces of information they have read. It also gives students the opportunity to practice public speaking.

Finally, the Unit Tasks come in different formats considering the most relevant events along the novel and in chronological order. The items are exercises with multiple choice, matching, true/false, or statements combinations.



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INTRODUCTION

Lesson One

Lesson topic: Biography and Autobiography

Overall Objective: To define the word 'autobiography' and understand its morphology.

Skill Objective (s) Students will learn, explore and define basic literary genres.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain to students that everyone has a story to tell. Some stories are sad. Others are joyous. Some illustrate defeat. Others triumph.• Tell students that they are about to read one extraordinary woman's life story. It is taught in high schools and universities and has been translated into several languages.• Clarify students that the name for a life story is 'autobiography', an account of the writer's own life. Explain the difference between biography and autobiography. Discuss morphology of the word.• Ask students to think about what kind of feelings can/do autobiographies evoke?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand outs with definitions of biography and autobiography.• Task Sheet one for students to answer definitions of new terms and give examples.• Dictionary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define biography and autobiography and put it into your own words.• Make a list example of autobiographies/biographies that you have read.• Answer questions about what makes autobiographies enjoyable/interesting and what feelings can/do autobiographies evoke?• Discuss the definitions and differences between autobiography and biography.

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Maya Angelou: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Lesson Two

Lesson topic: Maya Angelou’s background and title of the novel.

Overall Objective: Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience.

Skill Objective (s) Students will predict the story, make inferences, and recognize the author’s purpose.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by giving students a brief overview of Maya Angelou’s life and works. • Tell students they will be reading an autobiographical novel entitled <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> by Maya Angelou. • Explain that the autobiography they will read is based on the poem “Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar, and that reading the poem will help them to predict the story. • Read the poem aloud as students read along. Clarify the story in the poem and share predictions 	<p>Photograph of Maya Angelou.</p> <p>Picture book version.</p> <p>Video with the poem “Sympathy”</p> <p>Hand outs with the poem “Sympathy”.</p> <p>Task Sheet 3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a brief summary about Angelou’s life and main literary works. • Discuss about the title of the book and give predictions. • Give the significance of the title as it relates to Maya’s true life. • Assess inferences about Angelou’s background, race, age, life, and experience.



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CHAPTER ONE

Lesson Three

Lesson topic: Growing Up Black

Overall Objective: To understand how the environment plays an important role in human development.

Skill Objective (s) Students will identify the most important issues in the novel.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin by asking the students to read through the first unfinished lines that the author uses to introduce the chapter.• Ask students to pay close attention to what the author argues by capturing the most significant issues she struggles with racism, appearance, and abandonment.• Elicit students' answers about what are the most significant issues that they struggle with, and ask them to imagine not belonging anywhere.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter One.• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Video "My Arkansas"• Paper and pen.• Background notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students read the opening scene lines from the text and are aware of the meaning of the phrases.• Describe the dress Maya wore at Easter's morning.• Identify the author's sense of displacement and give some examples using the text words.• Students complete Task Sheet Four "Growing Up Black"



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CHAPTER TWO

Lesson Four

Lesson topic: The Store

Overall Objective: Students will explore and define new vocabulary, and infer meaning from context.

Skill Objective (s) Students will identify the use of simile, and describe a character in the novel.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students read Chapter Two paying close attention to how Maya describes her and her brother arrival to Stamps for the first time. • Explain the use of a figure of speech used in literature to compare two unlike things that is often introduced by like and as. • Give each group a reading task to find out the physical description of Uncle Willie, and about the basic food that customers could find at the Annie Henderson’s Store. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Two. • Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List. • Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Two. • Collage with the pictures of the town and the store. • Paper and pen. • Students’ previous knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the use of simile in the text and give the examples. • Make a list of words related to Uncle Willie’s condition. • Describe the significance of the Store, and what does it show. • Match the list of basic food that customers could find at the Store with the definitions. • Find out and discuss about the author’s evening chores. • reading each others work.



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CHAPTER THREE

Lesson Five

Lesson topic: Life in Stamps

Overall Objective: To grasp the importance of ‘setting’ in a narrative work.

Skill Objective (s) To describe people, places and infer meaning from context.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .Read the passage aloud and have students to fill out charts with information on how the author describes herself and Bailey. • Teacher divides the class into two groups. Group one describes Maya, and Bailey and group two describes the store and the lives of the people. • See the pictures about the life in Stamps, Arkansas, to gain perspective of the importance of the setting to the characters. • Explain that setting in a narrative work is the time and place in which a narrative occurs. . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Three. • • Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List. • Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Three. • Collage with the pictures of people and the town at the time the novel was written. • Paper and pen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students answer questions about how Angelou describes herself and Bailey. • Describe what this passage reveals about the lives of the people. • Describe customs in Stamps, and what does it show. • Talk about how the storyteller refers to the Segregation in Stamps.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Lesson Six

Lesson topic: Momma

Overall Objective: Students will discover and define new vocabulary, and infer meaning from context.

Skill Objective (s) Explore Momma's character and discuss about religious values.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students read Chapter Four paying close attention to the main character of the Chapter.• Students keep track on new vocabulary list and find the words in the text.• Students develop questions related to Momma's personality.• Discuss about Mommas behavior and religious feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Four.• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Four.• Pictures.• Paper and pen.• Students' previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find definitions of new terms used in the Chapter and act out the characters.• Find the correct sequence of the paragraph.• Choose several quotes from Chapter Four and record their reactions and emotional connections in their notebooks.• Explain the kind of grandmother students have and compare to the one in the novel.



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CHAPTER FIVE

Lesson Seven

Lesson topic: My New family

Overall Objective: Students will determine and understand how the author's perspective or point of view affects text.

Skill Objective (s) Understand the emotions of the characters.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students read Chapter Five to capture author's emotions related to the presents they receive for Christmas.• Examine to how Maya describes the physical aspect of her mother, Grandmother Baxter, Mr. Freeman, and her father Bailey.• Students keep track on new vocabulary list.• Talk about moving suddenly from one place to another and meet new family for the first time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Five.• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Five.• Paper and pen.• Students' previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the passages and fill out the task sheets describing Maya's new family, including behavior and physical appearance.• Students read aloud the questions while other students give answers to the questions orally.• Asses whether or not questions are answered accurately.



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CHAPTER SIX

Lesson Eight

Lesson topic: Mr. Freeman

Overall Objective: Students will understand that characters undergo transformation due to the events in their lives.

Skill Objective (s) Understand relationship of characters

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students read the excerpts and discuss Maya's reaction to the big city, and why Maya and Bailey begin to grow apart.• The teacher split the class into two groups and makes a discussion chart on the board.• On the left side of the board write the students' names group one, and on the other side write the students' names group two.• The teacher use the discussion chart by marking a mark each time the student contributes to the discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Six.• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Six.• Board markers.• Students' previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Odd words out activity. Students underline the irrelevant words in the paragraph.• Use the discussion chart to evaluate each student's participation.• Use Maya's name to write an acrostic poem describing her feelings



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CHAPTER SEVEN

Lesson Nine

Lesson topic: Return to Stamps

Overall Objective: Students will explore sensations and feelings.

Skill Objective (s) making nouns from verbs or adjectives.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students read Chapter Seven paying attention to what Maya says about coming back to Stamps.• Class discussion about what the people in the town wanted to know about St. Louis? Why?• Discuss about whether or not students have had the same experience.• Tell students that we can often form nouns from verbs or adjectives by adding a suffix	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Seven.• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Seven.• Board markers.• Students' previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the first three paragraphs and find the nouns form of the verbs and the adjectives.• Check answers and underline the suffix of the noun form in each case.• Answer Task Sheet 10• Students give examples of their own creativity and write them down.



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CHAPTER EIGHT

Lesson Ten

Lesson topic: Two Women

Overall Objective: Students will learn the importance of a role model in their lives.

Skill Objective (s) Understand the meaning behind a proverb.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs. Flowers plays a very significant role in Maya’s life. Students deepen the meaning “Words mean more than what is set down on paper”, and give their opinion. Watch the video and discuss about the importance of the written and spoken language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Eight. Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List. Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Eight. Video “being intolerant of ignorance” by Maya Angelou. Students’ previous knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students give details about the most important lessons Mrs. Flowers teaches Maya and their implication on her life. Students keep track about Mrs. Flower’s advice and write a short sketch describing an important encounter with a teacher or another adult who has influenced their lives.



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CHAPTER NINE

Lesson Eleven

Lesson topic: Friends

Overall Objective: Remembering childhood at school and first friends.

Skill Objective (s) Understand characters' emotions and give orders or suggestions.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher starts by asking students what they remember about their first friends at school.• Read Chapter Nine and be aware of new vocabulary to give strong suggestions, and orders.• Compare students past experiences to what Maya and Louise share.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Nine.• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Nine.• Paper and pen.• Students' previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students share their childhood experiences and compare and contrast with the author experiences orally.• Read the short Valentine's Day letter from Tommy to Maya and write a similar letter to a friend.• Explain Bailey's reaction to a movie starring Kay Francis.• Complete Task Sheet Activity 12



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CHAPTER TEN

Lesson Twelve

Lesson topic: Graduation

Overall Objective: Students will describe how the emotions of the people change from the beginning of the novel.

Skill Objective (s) Summarize and identify cause and effect sequence.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher asks students to look at the word list definition, and guess meaning from context.• Look at the new words and put them into three groups.• Read a part of the Chapter and put the headings for each paragraph.• Imagine a graduation ceremony from high school and discuss about what students see, hear, and feel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Ten.• Teacher's Description/Definition Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Ten.• Paper and pen.• Students' previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students find and give definitions of new vocabulary.• Students can put words into three categories.• Students can match the paragraphs with the headings.• Discuss about how people get ready before a graduation ceremony.



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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Lesson Thirteen

Lesson topic: California

Overall Objective: Students recognize important events in the US history.

Skill Objective (s) Keep track of references to historical time periods.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give students a brief summary about World War II and its effect on the world.• Encourage students to keep track of references to historical time period about Japanese population of San Francisco that disappeared and were replaced by newly arriving southern Blacks.• Ask students to read Chapter Eleven and be aware of the visible changes the population suffered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Ten• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Eleven• Internet.• Pictures.• Students' previous knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will read and summarize the events the author depicts on the novel.• Talk about World War II and its effect on Japanese and Black people living in San Francisco.• Respond to the changes that San Francisco city presents to the author and explain reasons.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Lesson Fourteen

Lesson topic: Education

Overall Objective: Students will examine and discuss about one of their earliest memories

Skill Objective (s). Describe earliest memories and concentrate on teacher’s behavior and feelings.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students read Chapter Twelve about the author’s experience at high school and decide upon a creative way to present reflections on their school memoirs. • Call students attention to how Maya defines a good teacher, and invite them to give some characterizations of their teachers. • Talk about why people move from formal language to informal colloquial speech. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Eleven • Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List. • Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Twelve • Photoshop gallery • Students’ previous knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present reflections on school memoirs orally, using a picture collage work. • Reflect on what the author says about the teacher, and answer questions. • Discuss about Maya’s education related to the changes in pronunciation in every day speech and contrast with students’ experience.



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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Lesson Fifteen

Lesson topic: A Vacation

Overall Objective: Students will consider and think about the impact a trip can have on their life.

Skill Objective (s). Recognize a topic in a paragraph.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read and discuss the following: Have you ever had a bad experience during a trip? What did you do? What happened?• Recognize the topics that are mentioned in the text about a trip to Mexico and write the heading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Eleven• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Thirteen• Students' previous knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students discuss their experiences in groups and then share their comments with the class.• Read the text and match the meaning to the topics that are mentioned.



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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Lesson Sixteen

Lesson topic: San Francisco

Overall Objective: Students will be aware and gain a sense of admiration about Maya's mother advice.

Skill Objective (s). Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look at bits of wisdom from Maya's mother sayings from the book and give reasons for the answers.• Discuss about Maya's mother reaction to her new job aspirations.• Read the textbook and find information about Maya's admiration to her mother and her reaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Chapter Eleven• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Chapter Fourteen• Students' previous knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give reasons for answers about Maya's mother sayings.• Answer questions related to unusual jobs.• Reflect on how has society changed from the time of Maya's childhood until now.



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FINAL LESSON

Lesson Seventeen

Lesson topic: “Cause and Effect Chain” and “Character Web/Chart.”

Overall Objective: Students will gain a sense of empathy by connecting information and creating a character web/chart.

Skill Objective (s). Students will summarize information and describe main characters in the novel.

ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin by leading the students through a discussion of the first major move in Maya’s life and the event that led it.• Illustrate these events on the board as caused and effect.• Students match the cause and effect events using strip cards.• Assess students as a final homework to complete a character Web/chart for each character listed in Task Sheet Eighteen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> Penguin Readers. Book• Teacher Key Vocabulary Word List.• Task Sheet with the activities for Final Lesson.• Card paper.• Crayons, color pencils, markers.• Pictures, images• Power Point /collage.• Interne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect the effect to the cause by forming a connecting loop.• Check accuracy by looking if the strips are all connected correctly.• Complete Final Task by creating a character web/chart for each character listed below.• Use complete sentences to explain each character using physical or emotional descriptions.

AUTORA:

Rosa Crespo Arizaga



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TASK SHEET 1

Analyzing Autobiography

Name: _____

Complete the worksheet to tell what you know about the genre of autobiographical literature. You may want to ask others (parents, friends, etc.) about biographies and autobiographies that they have read.

1. Define 'biography' and 'autobiography' (if you can't remember the difference, obtain a dictionary definition and put it into your own words).
2. Make a list of examples of autobiographies that you have read...
3. What makes autobiographies enjoyable/interesting? Explain three interesting anecdotes you could use in your own autobiography.
4. What feelings can/do autobiographies evoke?



TASK SHEET 2

Author background and Title

1. Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson on _____ in _____.
She was raised in _____, _____.
2. Her brother Bailey nicknamed her _____ or _____.
3. Angelou is author, _____, _____, _____ and _____.
4. She read her poem, "On the pulse of the Morning" at the _____ of President Clinton.
5. She published her autobiography, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, in _____. This work chronicles her life from age ____ to age _____.
6. She has written subsequent _____ works and numerous poems.
7. In addition to her poetry, she wrote an original screenplay, and wrote and produced a ten part _____ on African traditions in American life.
8. The title of the book was taken from the poem "_____"
9. Angelou continues to write and lecture today. She once said, "I write for the _____ and for any ear which can hear it."



TASK SHEET 2 .1

Teacher Guide: Author Background and Title

1. Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson on **April 28, 1928** in **St. Louis, Missouri**. She was raised in **Stamps, Arkansas**.
2. Her brother Bailey nicknamed her “**Maya**” or ‘**Mine**’
3. Angelou is an author, **poet, playwright, singer, and stage performer** and **civil right activist**.
4. She read her poem, “On the pulse of the Morning” at the **inauguration** of President Clinton.
5. She published her autobiography, I Know Why the Cage d Bird Sings, in **1969**. This work chronicles her life from age **three** to age **sixteen**.
6. She has written subsequent **five autobiographical** works and numerous poems.
7. In addition to her poetry, she wrote an original screenplay, and wrote and produced a ten part **television series** on African traditions in American life.
8. The title of the book was taken from the poem “**Sympathy**”
9. Angelou continues to write and lecture today. She once said, “I write for the **Black voice** and for any ear which can hear it.”



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10. For all these things and for the tender strength of her voice and vision, Maya Angelou is among the most respected and admired women in the world!



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TASK SHEET 3

“Sympathy”

1. Read the poem and discuss for predictions.

Maya Angelou's autobiography borrows the first line of this poem by poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar.

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 his 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!



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CHAPTER ONE

“Growing Up Black”

TASK SHEET 4

1. Mark true (T) or false (F) to the following statements
 - a. The dress Maya wore at Ester’s morning was bright purple ----
 - b. It was made by her brother ----
 - c. The dress seemed to be made from a white woman ----
 - d. The dress hide her legs ----

2. “What you looking at me for? I didn’t come to stay...” What is the most important meaning that the author tries to convey in the opening scene?
Circle the correct answer
 - a. She feels abandoned by her family
 - b. she feels ugly
 - c. She feels she belongs to another place
 - d. She feels abandoned, ugly, and not belonging to anywhere.

3. Maya fantasizes that one day she will wake up out of her “black ugly dream” This shows that she is probably
 - a. Five or six years old at the time of the opening scene.
 - b. Maya does not demonstrate her prologue in a specific time
 - c. She suggests that she continues experiencing the emotions of this episode over and over again throughout her life.



CHAPTER ONE

“Growing Up Black”

TASK SHEET 4.1 Teacher Guide

1. Mark true (T) or false (F) to the following statements

- a. The dress Maya wore at Ester’s morning was bright purple F
- b. It was made by her brother F
- c. The dress seemed to be made from a white woman T
- d. The dress hide her legs F

2. “What you looking at me for? I didn’t come to stay...” What are the most important connotations that the author tries to convey in the opening scene?

Circle the correct answer

- a. She feels abandoned by her family
- b. she feels ugly
- c. She feels she belongs to another place
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3. Maya fantasizes that one day she will wake up out of her “black ugly dream” This shows that she is probably

- a. Five or six years old at the time of the opening scene.
- b. Maya does not demonstrate her prologue in a specific time
- c. She suggests that she continues experiencing the emotions of his episode over and over again throughout her life.



CHAPTER TWO

The Store

TASK SHEET 5

1. Identify the use of similes in the text and give the examples.
2. Make a list of the words that describe Uncle Willie.
3. Chose the words from the box and then fill in the blanks to complete the sentences.

thread corn coal oil light bulbs shoestrings balloons flower seed

1 We needed -----for lamps because we didn't have electricity.

2 Momma made her aprons with -----

3 Throwing ----- to the chickens was my evening chore.

4 People in the town needed to buy some ----- for their shoes.

5 Our garden is plenty of flowers now because we planted lots of -----
-----.

6 White people in Stamps buy ----- to light their houses.

7 Children love ----- for their birthday party.



CHAPTER TWO

The Store

TASK SHEET 5.1 Teacher Guide

1. Identify the use of similes in the text and give the examples.

*“The town reacted to us **as** it residents had reacted to all things new before our arrival”.*

*“...and after we were seen to be harmless it closed in around us, **as** a real mother welcomes a stranger’s child, warmly, but not affectionately”.*

2. Make a list of the words that describe Uncle Willie.
Crippled, proud, sensitive, loyal, strong, tired, uncontrollable, and thick.
3. Chose the words from the box and then fill in the blanks to complete the sentences.

colored thread; corn; coal oil; light bulb; shoestrings; balloons; flower seeds

- 1 We needed **coal oil** to cook because we didn’t have electricity.
- 2 Momma made her apron with **colored thread**.
- 3 Throwing **corn** to the chickens was my evening chore.
- 4 People in the town needed to buy some **shoestrings** for their shoes.
- 5 Our garden is plenty of flowers now because we planted lots of **flower seeds**.
- 6 White people in Stamps bought **light bulbs** to light their houses.
- 7 Children love **balloons** for their birthday party.



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CHAPTER THREE

Life in Stamps

TASK SHEET 6

1. Which words use the writer to describe herself?
2. Which words use the writer to describe Bailey?
3. Who says: "Oh, Mrs. Coleman, how is your son? I saw him the other day, and he looked sick enough to die" and why?
4. Who is described by the following statements:
 - a. The greatest person n my world"
 - b. "An independent Black man"
 - c. "His attitude was meant to sow his authority and power."
 - d. "He was the pride of the Henderson Johnson family."
5. Why do you think Maya didn't believe that white people were real?
 - a. Because whites used to wear fancy clothes
 - b. Because their feet were too big.
 - c. Because their skin were too soft.
 - d. Because they didn't walk on their flat feet.
 - e. Because they walked on their heels like horses.
6. What idea do you have when you read "In Stamps the custom was to can everything that could possibly be preserved"
7. Why Momma disfavor white writers?



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CHAPTER THREE

Life in Stamps

TASK SHEET 6.1

Teacher Guide

1. Which words use the writer to describe herself?
Big, elbowy, rough, brown, tight kinky curl hair.

2. Which words use the writer to describe Bailey?
Small, graceful, smooth, black curls.

3. Who says: "Oh, Mrs. Coleman, how is your son? I saw him the other day, and he looked sick enough to die" and why? (Bailey)

4. Who is described by the following statements:
 - e. The greatest person n my world" (Bailey)
 - f. "An independent Black man" (Mr. Mc Elroy)
 - g. "His attitude was meant to sow his authority and power." (Momma)
 - h. "He was the pride of the Henderson Johnson family." (Bailey)

5. Why do you think Maya didn't believe that white people were real?
Circle the best answer. More than one answer is possible.
 - d. *Because they didn't walk on their flat feet.*
 - e. *They walked on their heels like horses.*

6. What idea do you have when you read "In Stamps the custom was to can everything that could possibly be preserved"

They were suffering from poverty



CHAPTER FOUR

Momma

TASK SHEET 7

1. Rearrange the following sentences to make a paragraph.
 - a. I saw only her power and strength.
 - b. People spoke of Momma as a good-looking woman, and some, who remembered her youth, said she used to be very pretty.
 - c. Her voice was soft only because she chose to keep it so.
 - d. She was taller than any woman in my personal world, and her hands were so large they could reach around my head from ear to ear.
 - e. In Church when she was asked to lead the singing the sound would pour over the listeners and fill the air.

2. Why was unusual for Momma to be addressed as “Mrs. Henderson”?

.....
.....

3. What is “powhitetrash” and how did Momma deal with them?

.....
.....
.....



CHAPTER FOUR

Momma

Teacher Guide

TASK SHEET 7.1

1. Rearrange the following sentences to make a paragraph.
 - a. “People spoke of Momma as a good-looking woman, and some, who remembered her youth, said she used to be very pretty.”
 - b. “I saw only her power and strength”.
 - c. “She was taller than any woman in my personal world, and her hands were so large they could reach around my head from ear to ear”.
 - d. “Her voice was soft only because she chose to keep it so”.
 - e. “In church, when she was asked to lead the singing, the sound pour over the listeners and fill the air”.

2. Why was unusual for Momma to be addressed as “Mrs. Henderson”?

To be addressed as ‘Mrs.’ is an act of respect for a colored person. Maya tells about a court incidence in which the judge accidentally referred to Momma as ‘Mrs.’ to show the importance of this person of both in Maya’s eyes and in the eyes of the Black community of Stamps.

1. What is “powhitetrash” and how did Momma deal with them?



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Answers will vary: *'powhitetrash'* refers to poor/uneducated white people. Momma anticipates their behavior, refused to acknowledge or be involved with their behavior and retained her dignity.

CHAPTER FIVE

My New Family

TASK SHEET 8

- What questions did Maya ask herself after receiving the Christmas presents? Unscramble the following questions.
 - away/send/us/why/they/did
 - did/we/so/wrong/do/what
 - at/three/an four/sent/we/by train/were/Stamps/to/why
- Match the personality and behavior with the name of the character.

a. "A storm in its perfect power"	d. Maya's father
b. "His bigness shocked me ... he was almost fat."	c. Mr. Freeman
c. Her work was bordered by work, duty, religion...	b. Mother
d. "He moved gracefully, like a big brown bear..."	a. Momma
- Find the following words in the puzzle: *cleanliness, apron, distrust, orphan, speechless, crook, gambling, faded, fearful, path.*

c	f	a	d	e	d	w	t	r	a	y
s	l	f	g	n	o	z	e	x	s	s
p	f	e	a	r	f	u	l	m	s	t
e	g	a	a	w	t	c	r	o	o	k



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<i>a</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>w</i>
<i>h</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>l</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>a</i>	<i>r</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>s</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>T</i>
<i>s</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>S</i>

CHAPTER SIX - TASK SHEET 9

Mr. Freeman

- Underline the wrong information, and rewrite the paragraph using the correct words from the textbook.

“When spring came to St. Louis, I took out my first driving license, and since Bailey and I seemed to be growing apart, I spent most of my Saturdays at the hospital emergency room. The young nurses who were mistaken for servants became my best friends and more real to me than our house, our mother, our school, or Mr. Freeman”.

- Complete the story extract with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

decide	use	stay	understand	return	reach	change
--------	-----	------	------------	--------	-------	--------

“I had..... that St. Louis was foreign country. I would never get to the sounds of water going down the toilets, or the packaged foods or doorbells, or the noise of cars



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and trains and buses. In my mind I only in St. Louis for a few weeks. As quickly as I that I had not.....my home, I to the storybook world of Robin Hood, where all reality was unreal and even that every day. I had the same attitude that I had used in Stamps: “I didn’t come to stay.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Return to Stamps

TASK SHEET 10

Look at this common way of making nouns from verbs and adjectives

-ation	-ion	-ness
Imagine-imagination	protect-protection	kind-kindness
-ment	-ence	-ity
Enjoy-enjoyment	different-difference	possible-possibility

1. Complete the sentences using nouns made up from verbs and adjectives.
 quietness calmness activity contentment unfairness
 unwillingness indication imagination addition
 - a. The of Stamps was exactly what I wanted.
 - b. St. Louis, with its noise and its trucks and buses.
 - c. Theof its residents encouraged me to relax.
 - d. They showed me based on the belief that nothing more was coming to them, although a great deal more was due.



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- e. Bailey answered every question, and from a corner of his lively told a story that I was sure was as unreal to him as it was to me.
- f. Our journey to magical places was a colorful to the town.
- g. People, except Momma and Uncle Willie, accepted my unwillingness to talk.
- h. An that I missed the good times we had had in the big city.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Two Women

TASK SHEET 11

1. Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1 Who is Bertha Flowers?

.....
.....

2 What advice or guidance does she offer Maya?

.....
.....

3 What effect does Mrs. Flores have on Maya?

.....
.....

4 In what aspect is Mrs. Flowers a role model?

.....
.....

5 Was it an important encounter with Maya and why?

.....
.....



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2. Write a paragraph describing an important encounter with a teacher or another adult who has influenced your life. What change has this adult brought about in you.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Teacher Guide

TASK SHEET 11

Answer the following questions:

1 Who is Bertha Flowers?

Bertha Flowers is a Black aristocratic woman in Stamps who takes Maya under her protection as a mentor and adviser. She tells Maya to be intolerant of ignorance, but understanding of illiteracy, and asks Maya to use her voice (recite readings to her)

2 What advice or guidance does she offer Maya? (Possible answers)

She encourages Maya to listen carefully to country people's sayings. She says that in those sayings was wisdom collected through the years.

She also says "Language is man's way of communication with other people and it is language alone which separate him from the lower animals."



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3 What effect does Mrs. Flores have on Maya?

All that Mrs. Flowers said Maya was new to her, and she needed time to think about it. However, she started to memorize the part about the human voice giving meaning to words. It seemed to her so true and poetic. Besides that, she felt happy because Mrs. Flowers had chosen her to give her attention to.

4 In what aspect is Mrs. Flowers a role model?

Students give personal answers.

5 Was it an important encounter with Maya and why?

Students give personal answers

6 Write a paragraph describing an important encounter with a teacher or other adult who has influenced their lives. What change this adult has brought about in you.

CHAPTER NINE

Friends

TASK SHEET 12

1. Match the imperatives with the correct word (s).

Walk down

home.

Wait a minute

and try it on.

Go get your sweater and

I'm almost ready.

Bring me

I don't want to talk to you.

Leave me alone!

get your bath.

Come on and

it is very dangerous.



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Get your bath	a pound of sugar.
Get your sweater and	little lady.
Don't go out late	to meet him.
Let's go	give me mine.

2. Vocabulary:

Find these expressions on Chapter Nine and make sentences.

'get rid of'; 'tear up'; 'way out'; 'look like'; 'turn on'; 'let (someone) go'; 'lay on'; 'to be found of'; 'lean back'; 'far away'; 'make up'; 'look up'; 'sit down'; 'laugh at'; 'turn around'; 'look at'; 'fall out'; 'throw down'; 'bring back'; 'of course'; 'after a while'; 'at last'; 'after a while'.



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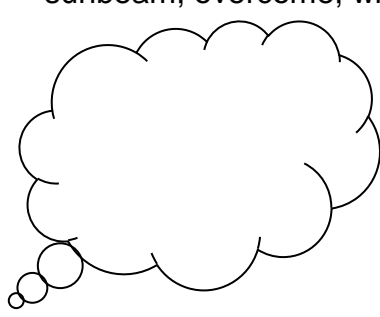
CHAPTER TEN

Graduation

TASK SHEET 13

1. Put the following words into three groups.

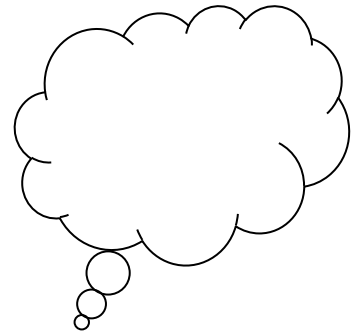
Afford; nickel; dime; crowd; anthem, improvement; point; echoes; encouragement; stage; underskirt; tremble; lengthened; thickened; sunbeam; overcome; wipe; unpleasant.



Nouns



Adjectives



Verbs

2. Match the paragraphs with the headings: a) presents. b) member of the proud graduation class. c) getting ready for the ceremony

a. -----

“Parents who could afford it had ordered new shoes and ready-made clothes for themselves. They also hired the women who did the best sewing to make graduation dresses and cut down secondhand pants for the important event”.

b. -----

“My work had earned me a top place in my class and I was going to be one of the first called in the graduating ceremonies. No absences, no late arrivals, and my academic work was among the best of the year”.

c. -----

“Uncle Willie and Momma had sent away for Mickey Mouse watch. Louis gave me four handkerchiefs. The minister’s wife, made me



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an underskirt to wear for graduation, and every customer gave me a nickel or even a dime”.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

California

TASK SHEET 14

1. Read Chapter eleven, and write five sentences about the visible changes people suffered in San Francisco at those times.

1-----
2-----
3-----
4-----
5-----

2. What changes San Francisco city brought to Maya’s life? Give five answers.

1-----
2-----
3-----
4-----
5-----

3. Think about your live in different time periods. Bring ideas to discuss in class.



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CHAPTER TWELVE

California

TASK SHEET 15

1. In Chapter Twelve, several changes are described. Explain why do people move from formal language to informal (or slang) speech?

Answers will vary.

2. How does Maya define a good teacher?

3. Choose the correct word.

a. Miss Kirwin was that rare educator who was in love with(information / order / the principal)

b. Miss Kirwin (welcomed / barked / laughed) each class with “Good day, ladies and gentlemen.”

c. Miss Kirwin encouraged us instead of (soothing / comforting / threatening).

d. Miss Kirwin never seemed to notice that I was Black and therefore (beautiful / ugly / different).

e. Miss Kirwing always remembered that I was Miss Johnson, who had good (legs / intelligence / smile).

f. Miss Kirwing acted as Maya must have had other (chores / jobs / duties / visits) to make.

4. Give some examples of your mother language when you change from formal language to informal colloquial speech.



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CHAPTER THIRTHEEN

A Vacation

TASK SHEET 16

1. Read the following paragraphs about Maya's trip to Mexico, and write the correct heading. (three are incorrect)

**Location behavior food language people in conflict
sights**

"Signs informed me that we were heading for Ensenada. On that journey along the twisted roads beside the steep mountain, I feared that I would never get back to America, civilization, English and wide streets again. We pulled up in the dirt yard of a *cantina*, where half- clothed children chased mean-looking chickens around". The noise of the car brought women to the door of the old building".

"It seemed hard to believe that he was a lonely person, searching in bottles of alcohol, under women's skirts, in church work and important job titles for his "personal place," lost before birth and never recovered. It was obvious to me then that he had never belonged in Stamps, and belonged even less to the slow moving, slow-thinking Johnson family".

"I was able to understand one question, "*¿Quién es?*" I answered without concern, "Mi padre."The guard began wakilng Dad. When he woke up, he asked, "*¿Qué pasa? ¿Qué quiere?*" Anyone



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else would have asked, “Where am I?” Obviously, this was a common Mexican experience.

“I wasn’t listening. These walls are so thin a def person could have heard what you said....That’s all.” I turned to go. “No, that’s not all.” She looked up. “Why don’t you go back to your mother? If you’ve got one.” “I’ve got one, and she’s much better than you, prettier, too, and intelligent and ...”



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

San Francisco

TASK SHEET 17

1. Strong classes: Look at these bits of wisdom from the book. Agree or disagree. Students can choose one saying to discuss.

- a. "Try every possibility before giving up."
- b. "Life is going to give you what you put in it."
- c. "Put your whole heart in everything you do, and pray, and then you can wait."
- d. "God helps those who help themselves."
- e. "I don't want to have to lie to a white woman because I wasn't woman enough to talk to her."

2. Weaker classes: Match the saying with its definitions.

- a. Try every possibility before giving up."
- b. Life is going to give you what you put in it."
- c. "Put your whole heart in everything you do, and pray, and then you can wait."
- d. "God helps those who help themselves."
- e. "I don't want to have to lie to a white woman because I wasn't woman enough to talk to her."

Definitions

1. You need to assist you before God can help you.
2. What you construct is what you will receive.
3. You must never stop doing something.
4. Work patiently and persistently, and then plead for an answer.
5. I can not be considered a woman if I lie.



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FINNAL LESSON

San Francisco

TASK SHEET 18

1. Create a cause and effect chain by making a blue strip for cause, and a red strip for effect on the major changes Maya had through the novel.
2. Complete a character Web/chart for each character.

Directions: Make a character Web/Chart or an organized word map for each character listed below. Use complete sentences to describe each character. Characteristics may be physical or emotional.

1. Maya: (10 characteristics)
2. Bailey: (5 characteristics)
3. “Momma” (5 characteristics)
4. Maya’s mother/Vivian Baxter: (5 characteristics)
5. Maya’s father /Bailey Sr.: (5 characteristics)
6. Dolores/Bailey Sr.’s girlfriend: (3 characteristics)
7. Louise Kendricks: (3 characteristics)
8. Bertha Flowers: (3 characteristics)
9. Miss Kirwing: (2 characteristics)

Evaluation:

Answers will vary for each character. Evaluate character webs based on the following criteria:

Did the students outline accurate information/qualities for each character?

Did the web shows an understanding of that person’s role in the book?

Based on the responses, the teacher can know if students have read, comprehended, and retained elements of the text.



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CONCLUSIONS

After I have finished my research work, I can state that exploring the impact of the environment and personal relationships on Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, is an excellent vehicle for students to discover how people overcome adversity, and an opportunity to experience literature as a record of human experience.

In addition, exposing students to analyze what Angelou says in the novel will help them to deepen their understanding of the genre of autobiography. This will lead them to recognize the use of symbolic language to express feelings and points of view, and what she intended to accomplish by her writings.

Moreover, reflecting upon what the author tries to convey will be an opportunity for students to develop thinking skills. Students can concentrate on their feelings and have discussion questions focused on interpretation, critical analysis, and personal opinions.

Furthermore, I took advantage of the literary work of Maya Angelou by using an appropriate methodology for planning meaningful activities based on the novel. This will help students to maximize their reading competences by expanding their language knowledge, and increasing their vocabulary.

Finally, this research work could also be useful for writing activities. The teacher can ask the students to think of a time in their lives that might make for an interesting story. Students can write a journal response about a time they were happy, sad, amazed, frightened, or proud. Students can concentrate on their feelings and mental pictures.

In conclusion, an appropriate methodology applied by the teacher such as thematic organization by lessons focused on a particular topic, or on a specific autobiography motivates students to activate prior



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knowledge, and develop positive attitudes toward the target language for a meaningful and communicative learning.

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ANNEXES

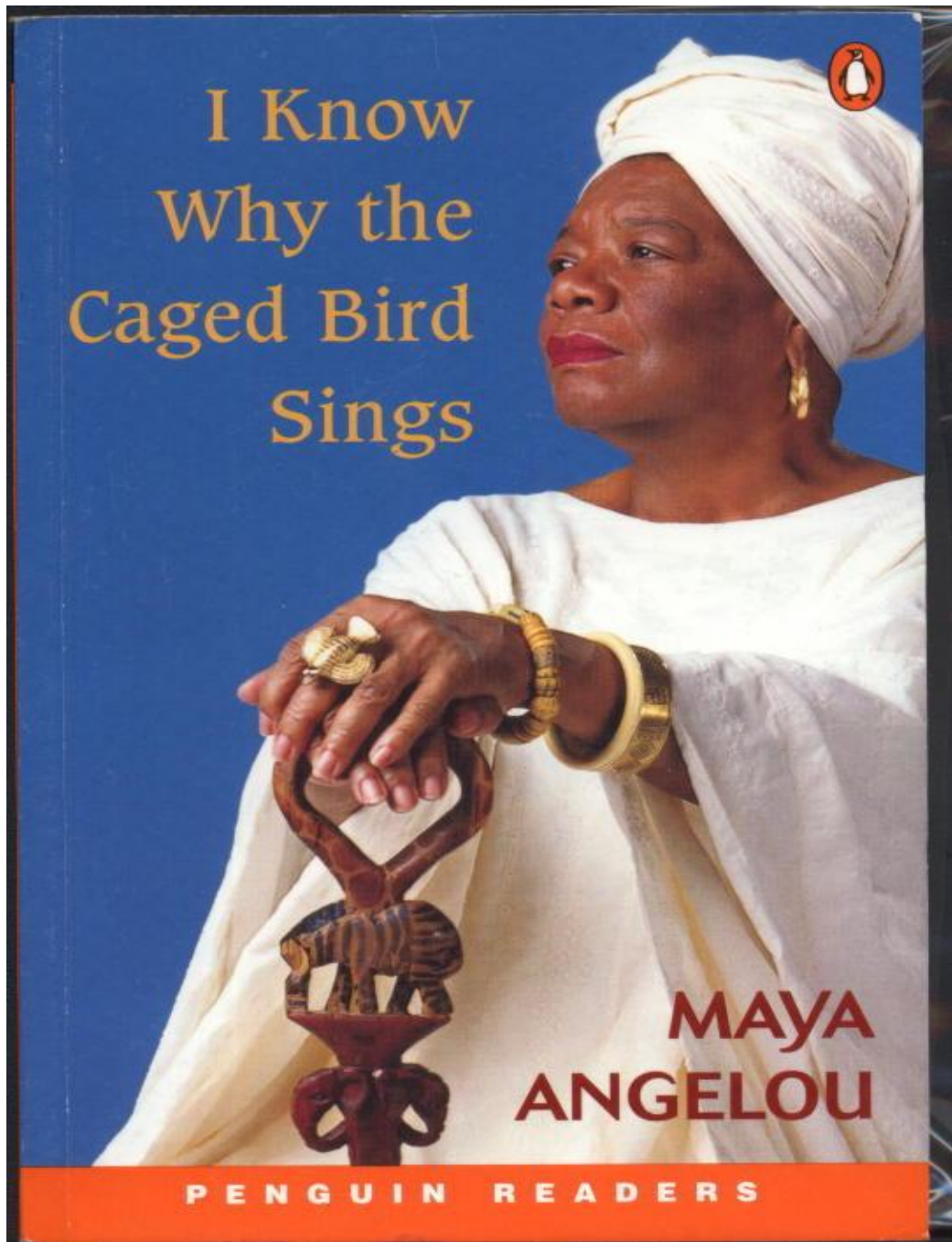


Figure 5. Cover photograph reproduced by (Pearson Education Limited)

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Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Vocabulary Definition List

The following vocabulary is taken from the Penguin Readers version: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*: Maya Angelou, and adapted by the author of this research project. It provides dictionary definitions for the terms students will be held accountable for defining and explaining in their task. This list can be used as a guideline for checking their understating definitions.

Chapter 1-3

Disastrous: terrible, calamitous.

Cotton pickers: Laborers who works in the cotton fields.

Kinky: curly, tight hair.

Crippled: One that is partially disabled or lame.

Unemployed: without a job.

Wrongness: injustice, unfairness.

Threats: intimidation, fear, pressure.

Awkwardly: uncomfortably, painfully.

Hatred: detestation, intense dislike.

Rottenness: wretched, very bad.

Dare: challenge, defy.

Stutter: speech impediment.

Nigger: an offensive word for a Negro, or Black person.

Fearful: scared, afraid.

Layer: coating, sheet.

Whitefolks: refers to common white people in an offensive way.

Chase off: drive away, frighten away.

Unshakable: resolute, constant.



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Unfair: unjust, inequitable.

The Store: the Johnson Store and home.

Cotton boll: cotton in its raw form.

Agrarian: farming community.

Harmless: not dangerous; safe

Chapters 4-6

Cleanliness: Hygiene; sanitation.

Politeness: good manners; courtesy.

Impudent: rude; insolent.

Wipe out: eliminate, eradicate.

Upward: uphill; up.

Distrust: disbelieve; doubt.

Stuck: caught; trapped; fixed.

Path: trail; course.

Faded: discolored; grey.

Ready to wear: ready-made.

Sinfully: scandalously; immorally.

Look after: take care of; watch over.

Apron: material used in the kitchen to protect clothes from dirtiness.

Ungrateful: unappreciative; showing no gratitude.

Tender-hearted: kind, gentle, compassionate.

Ride up: slide up; roll up; move up.

Tear apart: destroy; break.

Orphan: stray; lose your parenthood.

Hang over: threaten; overshadow; intimidate.

Fearful: afraid; scared.

Speechless: wordless; bowled over.



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Crook: criminal; offender.

Strike: hit; beat; punch.

Vastness: immensity; hugeness; enormity.

Gambling: betting; gaming; having a bet.

Gamblers: people who bets and have a bet.

Chapters 7-9

Measure: evaluate; calculate.

Shame: embarrassment.

Alike: similar.

Upset: distress; offend.

Bother: worry; trouble.

Impolite: bad-mannered; rude.

Wander: meander.

Wrong: incorrect; erroneous.

Mixing: addition; integration.

giggle; silly laugh.

Fireplace: fire side.

Groceries: provisions.

Sack: bag; pack.

Praise: admire; pay tribute to.

Drop: fall; go down.

Manners: etiquette; protocol.

Bite: sink your teeth into.

Edge: border; perimeter.

Training: preparation.

Handkerchief: tissue.

Skill: ability; talent.



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Task: job; chore.

Setting: location, scenery.

Childlessness: bareness; sterility.

Quiet: calm; silence.

Call out: shout out; exclaim.

Empty: unfilled; bare.

Crowded: full; packed.

Scream: shout; yell.

Clumsy: inept; awkward.

Shopper: customer; consumer.

Hurried: rushed; quick.

Pity: shame; misfortune.

Claim: declare; state.

Frighten: scare; terrify.

Scream: shout; yell.

Grab: take hold of; grasp.

Warning: caution; advice.

Mood: disposition; temper; humor.

Crossing: journey; trip.

Lean back: incline backside.

Wealth: riches; prosperity.

Skinned: sore; sensitive; painful.

Grin: smile; beam.

Tear Up: destroy; cancel.

Glance: momentary look; quick look.



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Chapters 10-12

Trembled: tremble

Afford: have enough money to pay for.

Secondhand: used; recycle.

Hire: employ.

Unpleasant: horrible; disagreeable.

Lengthened: prolonged; extended.

Thickened: condensed; solidified.

Nickel: metal.

Dime: ten cents.

Underskirt: petticoat.

Encouragement: support.

Gift: souvenir; present.

Leather: skin; pelt.

Sunbeam: ray of sunlight.

Overcome: conquer, defeat.

Stage: theater; scenery.

Grant: contributions; donation.

Proud: important; arrogant.

Ugliness: unattractiveness.

Trained: skilled; qualified.

Anthem: national hymn; sacred song.

Echo: resonance; reverberation.

Cope with: manage with; deal with.

Useless: futile; inadequate; scarce.

Bothered: worried; concerned.

Wrap: enfold; cover; enclose.

Ancient: very old; antique.



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Humorless: solemn; severe.

Puzzle: mystery; enigma.

Inequality: disparity; variation.

Sadness: depression; grief; sorrow.

Luggage: baggage.

Settle: stay; resolve.

Arrangements: preparation; planning; provision.

Warmth: affection; tenderness.

Godlike: divine; transcendent; heavenly; holy.

Whisper: murmur; sigh.

Strengthen: fortify; make stronger; reinforce.

Chapters 12-15

Face: countenance; stand for.

Fear: terror.

Mean: indicate; represent.

Prejudiced: intolerant; bigoted.

Fearlessness: courage; bravery.

Grown: developed; mature.

Threatening: intimidating.

Great: hug; enormous.

Faceless: nameless; anonymous.

Successfully: productively.

Display: show; exhibit.

Behavior: actions; performance.

Rarity: scarcity; infrequency.

Deny: refute; reject.

Conned: cheated; convicted.

Dismissed: allowed to go; released.



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Emptied: unfilled; vacant.

Disbelieving: not persuaded; incredulous.

Outskirts: border; outer edge; periphery.

Pat: touch; slap.

Heading: title; caption.

Twist: wind; coil; curl.

Chase: pursue; run after.

Recognize: know; be familiar with.

Aloneness: being alone.

Release: free; let go.

Defeated: beaten; overcome.

Deaf: unable to hear.

Strike: hit; beat.

Daughter: descendant; offspring.

Painless: easy; effortless.

Risk: danger; jeopardy.

Ceased: stopped; finished.

Acquired: obtained; gotten.

Maturity: adulthood.

Replaced: restored; returned.

Give Up: renounce; quit.

Complain: protest; criticize.

issue: topic; subject; matter.



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Description List

The following description/definition List is taken from *I Know Why the Caged*

Bird Sings original version by Maya Angelou.

1. cotton gin

Early in the century, Momma (we soon stopped calling her Grandmother) sold lunches to the sawmen in the lumberyard (east Stamps) and the seedmen at the **cotton gin** (west Stamps).

2. Easter Day

She whispered, "I just come to tell you, it's **Easter Day.**" I repeated, jamming the words together, as low as possible.

3. segregate

I don't remember much of the trip, but after we reached the **segregated** southern part of the journey, things must have looked up.

4. giggle: silly laugh

The children's section of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was wiggling and **giggling** over my well-known forgetfulness.

5. persimmon

I stumbled and started to say something, or maybe to scream, but a green **persimmon**, or it could have been a lemon, caught me between the legs and squeezed.

6. light bulb

Customers could find food staples, a good variety of colored thread, mash for hogs, corn for chickens, coal oil for lamps, light bulbs for the wealthy, shoestrings, hair dressing, balloons, and flower seeds.

7. store

We lived with our grandmother and uncle in the rear of the **Store** (it was always spoken of with a capital 'S' because it was an important place for Blacks in Stamps), which she had owned some twenty-five years.

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8. wiggle

The children's section of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was wiggling and **giggling** over my well-known forgetfulness.

9. paranoia

In later years I was to confront the stereotyped picture of gay song-singing cotton pickers with such inordinate rage that I was told even by fellow Blacks that my **paranoia** was embarrassing.

10. watermelon

I tried to hold, to squeeze it back, to keep it from speeding, but when I reached the church porch I knew I'd have to let it go, or it would probably run right back up to my head and my poor head would burst like a dropped **watermelon**, and all the brains and spit and tongue and eyes would roll all over the place.

11. stereotype

In later years I was to confront the **stereotyped** picture of gay song-singing cotton pickers with such inordinate rage that I was told even by fellow Blacks that my paranoia was embarrassing.

12. displacement

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.

13. snout

Then they would understand why I had never picked up a Southern accent, or spoke the common slang, and why I had to be forced to eat pigs' tails and **snouts**.

14. react

The town **reacted** to us as its inhabitants had reacted to all things new before our coming.

15. pickup



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The odors of onions and oranges and kerosene had been mixing all night and wouldn't be disturbed until the wooded slat was removed from the door and the early morning air forced its way in with the bodies of people who had walked miles to reach the **pickup** place.

16. dusty

Chapter 1 When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the **dusty** little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed--"To Whom It May Concern"--that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach, California, en route to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.

17. Eastern

But **Easter's** early morning sun had shown the dress to be a plain ugly cut-down from a white woman's once-was-purple throwaway.

18. liberate

I laughed anyway, partially for the sweet release; still, the greater joy came not only from being **liberated** from the silly church but from the knowledge that I wouldn't die from a busted head.

19. inmaterial

Whether I could remember the rest of the poem or not was **immaterial**.

20. Episcopal Church

The children's section of the Colored Methodist **Episcopal Church** was wiggling and giggling over my well-known forgetfulness.

21. ruffle

As I'd watched Momma put **ruffles** on the hem and cute little tucks around the waist, I knew that once I put it on I'd look like a movie star.

22. affluent

Years later I discovered that the United States had been crossed thousands of times by frightened Black children traveling alone to their newly **affluent** parents in Northern cities, or back to grandmothers in



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Southern towns when the urban North reneged on its economic promises.

23. sprinkle

Just thinking about it made me go around with angel's dust **sprinkled** over my face for days.

24. stumble

I **stumbled** and started to say something, or maybe to scream, but a green persimmon, or it could have been a lemon, caught me between the legs and squeezed.

25. rustle

The dress I wore was lavender taffeta, and each time I breathed it **rustled**, and now that I was sucking in air to breathe out shame it sounded like crepe paper on the back of hearses.

26. slang

Then they would understand why I had never picked up a Southern accent, or spoke the common **slang**, and why I had to be forced to eat pigs' tails and snouts.

27. commissary

Their wages wouldn't even get them out of debt to my grandmother, not to mention the staggering bill that waited on them at the white **commissary** downtown.

28. ceaseless

On Saturdays, barbers sat their customers in the shade on the porch of the Store, and troubadours on their **ceaseless** crawling through the

29. liberated

I laughed anyway, partially for the sweet release; still, the greater joy came not only from being **liberated** from the silly church but from the knowledge that I wouldn't die from a busted head.



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30. staple

Customers could find food **staples**, a good variety of colored thread, mash for hogs, corn for chickens, coal oil for lamps, light bulbs for the wealthy, shoestrings, hair dressing, balloons, and flower seeds.

31. Negro

Because I was really white and because a cruel fairy stepmother, who was understandably jealous of my beauty, had turned me into a too-big **Negro** girl, with nappy black hair, broad feet and a space between her teeth that would hold a number-two pencil.

32. sting

Then before I reached the door, the **sting** was burning down my legs and into my Sunday socks.

33. Methodist

The children's section of the Colored **Methodist** Episcopal Church was wiggling and giggling over my well-known forgetfulness.

34. urban

Years later I discovered that the United States had been crossed thousands of times by frightened Black children traveling alone to their newly affluent parents in Northern cities, or back to grandmothers in Southern towns when the **urban** North reneged on its economic promises.

35. wake

Wouldn't they be surprised when one day I **woke** out of my black ugly dream, and my real hair, which was long and blond, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn't let me straighten?

36. replace

The sounds of the new morning had been **replaced** with grumbles about cheating houses, weighted scales, snakes, skimpy cotton and dusty rows.

37. register



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The sound of the empty cotton sacks dragging over the floor and the murmurs of waking people were sliced by the cash **register** as we rang up the five-cent sales.

38. empty

The sound of the **empty** cotton sacks dragging over the floor and the murmurs of waking people were sliced by the cash register as we rang up the five-cent sales.

39. lean

The minister's wife **leaned** toward me, her long yellow face full of sorry.

40. confront

In later years I was to **confront** the stereotyped picture of gay song-singing cotton pickers with such inordinate rage that I was told even by fellow Blacks that my paranoia was embarrassing.

41. caution

It regarded us a while without curiosity but with **caution**, and after we were seen to be harmless (and children) it closed in around us, as a real mother embraces a stranger's child.

42. embrace

It regarded us a while without curiosity but with caution, and after we were seen to be harmless (and children) it closed in around us, as a real mother **embraces** a stranger's child.

43. whisper

She **whispered**, "I just come to tell you, it's Easter Day." I repeated, jamming the words together, "Ijustcometotellyouit'sEasterDay," as low as possible.

44. wealthy



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Customers could find food staples, a good variety of colored thread, mash for hogs, corn for chickens, coal oil for lamps, light bulbs for the **wealthy**, shoestrings, hair dressing, balloons, and flower seeds.

45.yard

So I ran down into the **yard** and let it go.

46.formal

The **formal** name of the Store was the Wm. Johnson General Merchandise Store.

47.instruct

Chapter 1 When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which **instructed** "To Whom It May Concern" that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach, California, en route to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.

48.release

I laughed anyway, partially for the sweet **release**; still, the greater joy came not only from being liberated from the silly church but from the knowledge that I wouldn't die from a busted head.

49.wages

Their **wages** wouldn't even get them out of debt to my grandmother, not to mention the staggering bill that waited on them at the white commissary downtown.

50.welfare

A porter had been charged with our **welfare** he got off the train the next day in Arizona--and our tickets were pinned to my brother's inside coat pocket.

51.champion

The **champion** picker of the day before was the hero of the dawn.

52.normal



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If the morning sounds and smells were touched with the supernatural, the late afternoon had all the features of the **normal** Arkansas life.

53.melt

The giggles hung in the air like **melting** clouds that were waiting to rain on me.

54.boast

In those tender mornings the Store was full of laughing, joking, **boasting** and bragging.

55.wagon

I knew exactly how long it would be before the big **wagons** would pull into the front yard and load on the cotton pickers at daybreak to carry them to the remains of slavery's plantations.

56.remove

The odors of onions and oranges and kerosene had been mixing all night and wouldn't be disturbed until the wooded slat was **removed** from the door and the early morning air forced its way in with the bodies of people who had walked miles to reach the pickup place.

57.arrive

Chapter 1 When I was three and Bailey four, we had **arrived** in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed--"To Whom It May Concern"--that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson Jr., from Long Beach, California, en route to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.

58.sustain

Without the money or credit necessary to **sustain** a family for three months.

59.route

Chapter 1 When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed--"To Whom It May Concern"--that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson



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Jr., from Long Beach, California, en **route** to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson.

60. repair

Some of the workers would leave their sacks at the Store to be picked up the following morning, but a few had to take them home for **repairs**.

61. visible

Anything not **visible** had only to be ordered.

62. resist

But I had seen the fingers cut by the mean little cotton bolls, and I had witnessed the backs and shoulders and arms and legs **resisting** any further demands.

63. scale

The sounds of the new morning had been replaced with grumbles about cheating houses, weighted **scales**, snakes, skimpy cotton and dusty rows.

64. singing

In later years I was to confront the stereotyped picture of gay song-**singing** cotton pickers with such inordinate rage that I was told even by fellow Blacks that my paranoia was embarrassing.

65. dawn

The champion picker of the day before was the hero of the **dawn**.

66. ability

Her crisp meat pies and cool lemonade, when joined to her miraculous **ability** to be in two places at the same time, assured her business success.

67. tender



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In those **tender** mornings the Store was full of laughing, joking, boasting and bragging.

68. removed

The odors of onions and oranges and kerosene had been mixing all night and wouldn't be disturbed until the wooded slat was **removed** from the door and the early morning air forced its way in with the bodies of people who had walked miles to reach the pickup place.

69. aware

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.

70. poem

Whether I could remember the rest of the **poem** or not was immaterial.

71. section

The children's **section** of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was giggling and giggling over my well-known forgetfulness.

72. familiar

Until we became **familiar** enough to belong to the Store and it to us, we were locked up in a Fun House of Things where the attendant had gone home for life.

73. reveal

In cotton-picking time the late afternoons **revealed** the harshness of Black Southern life, which in the early morning had been softened by nature's blessing of grogginess, forgetfulness and the soft lamplight.

74. alarm

During the picking season my grandmother would get out of bed at four o'clock (she never used an **alarm** clock) and creak down to her knees and chant in a sleep-filled voice, "Our Father, thank you for letting me see this New Day. Thank you that you didn't allow the bed I lay on last night to be my cooling board, nor my blanket my winding sheet.



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75. burst

I tried to hold, to squeeze it back, to keep it from speeding, but when I reached the church porch I knew I'd have to let it go, or it would probably run right back up to my head and my poor head would **burst** like a dropped watermelon, and all the brains and spit and tongue and eyes would roll all over the place.

76. economic

Years later I discovered that the United States had been crossed thousands of times by frightened Black children traveling alone to their newly affluent parents in Northern cities, or back to grandmothers in Southern towns when the urban North reneged on its **economic** promises.

77. credit

Without the money or **credit** necessary to sustain a family for three months.

78. center

Over the years it became the lay **center** of activities in town.

79. repeated

She whispered, "I just come to tell you, it's Easter Day." I **repeated**, jamming the words together, "Ijustcometotellyouit'sEasterDay," as low as possible.

80. area

Then she had the Store built in the heart of the Negro **area**.

81. sewing machine

Hanging softly over the black Singer **sewing machine**, it looked like magic, and when people saw me wearing it they were going to run up to me and say, "Marguerite [sometimes it was 'dear Marguerite'], forgive us, please, we didn't know who you were," and I would answer generously, "No, you couldn't have known.



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82. brain

I tried to hold, to squeeze it back, to keep it from speeding, but when I reached the church porch I knew I'd have to let it go, or it would probably run right back up to my head and my poor head would burst like a dropped watermelon, and all the **brains** and spit and tongue and eyes would roll all over the place.

83. narrow

Guide my feet this day along the straight and **narrow**, and help me to put a bridle on my tongue.

84. broad

Because I was really white and because a cruel fairy stepmother, who was understandably jealous of my beauty, had turned me into a too-big

Negro girl, with nappy black hair, **broad** feet and a space between her teeth that would hold a number-two pencil.

85. feature

If the morning sounds and smells were touched with the supernatural, the late afternoon had all the **features** of the normal Arkansas life.

86. surprise

Wouldn't they be **surprised** when one day I woke out of my black ugly dream, and my real hair, which was long and blond, would take the place of the kinky mass that Momma wouldn't let me straighten?

87. journey

I don't remember much of the trip, but after we reached the segregated southern part of the **journey**, things must have looked up.

88. capital



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We lived with our grandmother and uncle in the rear of the Store (it was always spoken of with a **capital S**), which she had owned some twenty-five years.

89. straight

Guide my feet this day along the **straight** and narrow, and help me to put a bridle on my tongue.

90. issue

Before she had quite arisen, she called our names and **issued** orders, and pushed her large feet into homemade slippers and across the bare washed wooden floor to light the coal-oil lamp.

(Angelou, Maya) *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*



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Key Facts

Full title: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Author: Maya Angelou

Type of work: Autobiographical novel

Genre: Autobiography

Language: English

Time and place written: New York City, late 1960s

Date of first publication: 1969

Publisher: Random House

Point of view: Maya Angelou speaks in the first person as she recounts her childhood. She writes both from a child's point of view and from her perspective as an adult.

Tone: Personal, comical, woeful, and philosophical

Tense: Past

Setting (time): 1930s–1950s

Setting (place): Stamps, Arkansas; St. Louis, Missouri; Oakland, California; San Francisco, California.

Protagonist: Maya Angelou

Major conflict: Coming-of-age as a southern black girl, confronting racism, sexism, violence, and loneliness.



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Rising action: Maya's parents divorce; Maya and Bailey are sent to Stamps; Maya and Bailey move in with their mother in St. Louis; Maya is raped; Maya and Bailey return to Stamps; Bailey witnesses a victim of lynching; Maya and Bailey move to San Francisco to live with Vivian; Maya spends the summer with her father.

Climax: Maya runs away from her father, displaying her first true act of self-reliance and independence after a lifelong struggle with feelings of inferiority and displacement; here, she displaces herself intentionally, leading to important lessons she learns about humanity while in the junkyard community

Falling action: Maya lives for a month in the junkyard with a group of homeless teenagers; she becomes San Francisco's first black streetcar conductor; she becomes pregnant; she graduates high school; she gives birth to a son and gains confidence

Themes: entrapment, abandonment, displacement, racism, resistance.

Symbols: The Caged Bird, The Store; Maya's Easter dress

Foreshadowing: The opening scene in the church foreshadows the struggles Maya will have to overcome in her life; when she cannot recite the poem and flees the church while crying and peeing. (Bartow, Anna K.)



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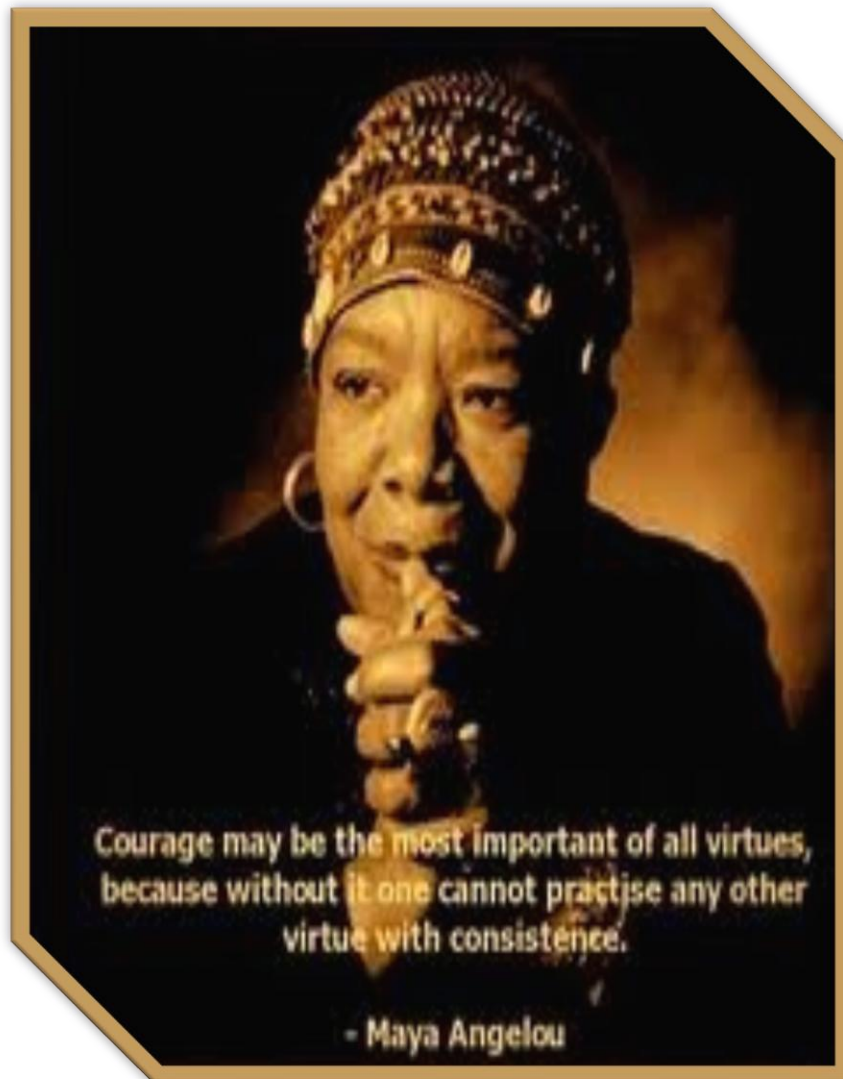


Figure 5. Maya Angelou Photo Gallery: (Academic of Achievement)