

YEAR 9

Independent learning to be completed during school closure

English

During a two week period you would ordinarily have:

6 English lessons

Lesson 1 – - Researching Poets

Conduct some research and make notes on the following poets:

- John Agard
- Maya Angelou
- Langston Hughes
- Benjamin Zephaniah

Lesson 2 – Explore Poetry

- Read the attached poems. They are all by Black poets. You may have to read them through a few times.
- Annotate them as you read, looking up words you don't understand.
- Choose the one poem that stands out to you and write an informal reflection explaining your choice.

Lesson 3 – Boxing Up

- Still working with your favourite poem, annotate it further, this time making sure to label any methods the poet has used and explain the effect of the method.
- Box up the poem.
- Look back at the research you did into the poets in lesson one. Is there anything you can add to your annotations based on this information?

Lesson 4 – Question cards

- Look over the attached question cards. Choose the one that you think best fits and answer at least 2 questions on that card about the poem you've been working with for the past few lessons.
- The question cards refer to 'stories' but you can still use them for poems. They will still work! Think of the speaker of the poem as the main character or narrator.

Lesson 5 – Written Reflection

- Using all your notes and responses from the previous lessons, take this hour to write a more formal response to the poem, explaining what it's about, why it's important, and what you've learned by reading it.

Lesson 6 – Presentation

- If it is possible, please present your reflection to someone in your household. If this isn't possible, don't worry about it, just present it to yourself in the mirror!

If you require further information please email:

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I, Too

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

Mother to Son

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Dreams

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Caged Bird

BY MAYA ANGELOU

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard

on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The Race Industry

By Benjamin Zephaniah

The coconuts have got the jobs.
The race industry is a growth industry.
We despairing, they careering.
We want more peace they want more police.
The Uncle Toms are getting paid.
The race industry is a growth industry.
We say sisters and brothers don't fear.
They will do anything for the Mayor.
The coconuts have got the jobs.
The race industry is a growth industry.
They're looking for victims and poets to rent.
They represent me without my consent.
The Uncle Toms are getting paid.
The race industry is a growth industry.
In suits they dither in fear of anarchy.
They take our sufferings and earn a salary.
Steal our souls and make their documentaries.
Inform daily on our community.
Without Black suffering they'd have no jobs.
Without our dead they'd have no office.
Without our tears they'd have no drink.
If they stopped sucking we could get justice.
The coconuts are getting paid.
Men, women and Brixton are being betrayed.

Listen Mr Oxford Don¹

By John Agard

Me not no Oxford don
me a simple immigrant
from Clapham Common
I didn't graduate
I immigrate

But listen Mr Oxford don
I'm a man on de run
and a man on de run
is a dangerous one

I ent have no gun
I ent have no knife
but mugging de Queen's English
is the story of my life

I dont need no axe
to split up yu syntax
I dont need no hammer
to mash up yu grammar

I warning you Mr Oxford don
I'm a wanted man
and a wanted man
is a dangerous one

Dem accuse me of assault
on de Oxford dictionary
imagine a concise peaceful man like me
dem want me serve time

for inciting rhyme to riot
but I rekking it quiet
down here in Clapham Common

I'm not a violent man Mr Oxford don
I only armed wit mih human breath
but human breath
is a dangerous weapon

So mek dem send one big word after me
I ent serving no jail sentence
I slashing suffix in self defence
I bashing future wit present tense
and if necessary

I making de Queen's English accessory to my offence

¹ An Oxford don is a lecturer (teacher) at Oxford University.