

dream in color 

Teacher Resources –
Glossary, Credits and
Recommended Reading



Dr. Maya Angelou



Dream in Color

Imagine a world where diversity is celebrated. A world where people of all complexions and cultures express themselves freely. If you imagine it, then you Dream In Color.

Target, in partnership with the Poetry Foundation, Furious Flower Poetry Center at James Madison University and Dr. Maya Angelou, invites you to celebrate Black History Month through the rich legacy of African-American poetry. Discover the work of poets past and present, whose voices move us all to continue to dream.

As part of our 2007 Black History Month celebration, Target is proud to provide a toolkit to inspire children of all ages to Dream In Color. Students will discover the works of important African-American poets, classroom activities designed to encourage them to develop their own poetic voices, discussion guides, bibliographies and links to engaging online poetry resources.

Dream In Color is just one of the ways that Target supports diversity and makes a real difference in the lives of children through the arts and education.

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Glossary

A

Acrostic

A poem in which the first letter in each line, when read vertically, together spell out a word or phrase.

Alliteration

The use of two or more words that begin with the same letter or sound, as in the line “swish of strings like silk” in Yusef Komunyakaa’s “Slam, Dunk, & Hook.”

Allusion

A reference to another work of literature, historical event or famous quotation, for example.

Assonance

The repetition or a pattern of similar vowel sounds, as in “He can’t, and that’s a fact” (from “Zuri at Bat” by Nikki Grimes).

Autobiography

The biography of a person narrated by him- or herself. An autobiographical poem is a poem that includes elements of the writer’s life.

B

Ballad

A poem that tells a story similar to a folk tale or legend and often has a repeated refrain.

Black Arts Movement

A period of heightened creativity that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement. Gwendolyn Brooks and Lucille Clifton both wrote during the Black Arts Movement.

Blank Verse

Poetry that is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter. In perfect iambic pentameter, each line has 10 syllables in a pattern of unstressed syllables followed by stressed ones. Most of Shakespeare’s plays are written in blank verse.

Blues Poetry

Poetry that uses musical devices similar to those found in blues music. The subject matter is often about hard times, and the lines often repeat or use devices such as call and response.

Boogie Woogie

A style of piano blues, also called the honky tonk, that became popular in the 1920s. Boogie woogie has a snappy rhythm. Some blues poetry contains elements of boogie woogie.

Bop or Bebop

A form of jazz from the early 1940s that is based on harmonic structure, fast tempo and improvisation.

C

Call and Response

A form of cultural expression based in West Africa and brought to the United States in which questions are posed and then answered. Call-and-response style can be found in many types of expression, including music, poetry and religious ceremonies.

Chorus

A section of poetry recited by a number of voices in concert; also the group doing the reciting.

Consonance

The repetition of similar consonant sounds, especially at the ends of words, as in lost and past or confess and dismiss.

Couplet

In a poem, a pair of lines that are the same length and usually rhyme and form a complete thought.

E

Enjambment

The running on of a thought from one verse, couplet or line into the next so that closely related words fall in different lines.



F

Form

Poetic structures that follow particular guidelines or rules. For example, the sonnet form usually has 14 lines of iambic pentameter.

Free Verse

Poetry composed of either rhymed or unrhymed lines that have no set meter or form.

H

Haiku

A Japanese poem composed of three unrhymed lines of five, seven and five syllables.

Harlem Renaissance

A period of intense literary and artistic output from 1910 to 1913 that was centered in Harlem, New York. Langston Hughes and Robert Hayden wrote during the Harlem Renaissance.

Hip-Hop

Stylized rhythmic music that makes use of assonance, consonance, alliteration and rhyme.

I

Iambic Pentameter

A rhythmic pattern of five unstressed and stressed syllables expressed as:
ta DAH ta DAH ta DAH ta DAH ta DAH.

An example of iambic pentameter is: What's up? Did you guys hear about the game?

Imagery

A vivid description in speech or writing that produces a mental sensation of the thing described.

M

Metaphor

A figure of speech in which two things are compared, usually by saying one thing is another. Some examples of metaphors: the world's a stage, he was a lion in battle, drowning in debt and a sea of troubles.

Middle Passage

The journey of the slave-trading ships between West Africa and the United States.

N

Nonsense Poem

A poem that uses words in nontraditional ways that make no sense. Nonsense poems may or may not rhyme.

O

Ode

A lyric poem usually marked by exalted or enthusiastic emotion, varying length of line, and complexity of stanza forms.

Onomatopoeia

Words that sound like their meaning or the use of words to imitate sounds. Examples of onomatopoeic words are buzz, hiss, zing, clippety-clop and tick-tock.

P

Personification

Giving a nonhuman object or concept human characteristics.

Poetic Form

The structure used by the poet to experiment with words and ideas within a certain set of rules; for example, a sonnet has 14 lines of iambic pentameter.

Point of View

The perspective or standpoint from which something is viewed or considered. The point of view in a poem is not necessarily that of the author.

Q

Quatrain

A stanza or poem of four lines. A single poem may have several quatrains.

R

Rap

A type of music in which rhyming lyrics are chanted to a musical accompaniment.

Refrain

A regularly recurring phrase, line or verse especially, at the end of each stanza.

Repetition

Repeated phrases, words or lines in a poem. Often used by a poet to achieve a desired emotion or effect in the poem.

Rhyme

Two or more lines of verse or poetry in which there is a repetition of corresponding sounds, usually at the end of lines.

Rhythm

The organization of sound patterns (cadence) the poet has created for pleasurable reading.

Riff (Riffs, Riffing)

In music, riffs are repeated chord progressions, often carried by the percussionist in the rhythm. Riffing is also when a musician takes a section of a preexisting musical piece and integrates it into a new piece. In the poetry curriculum, riffing is taking a section of one poem and integrating it into another.

S

Scat

A method of vocalizing used by jazz singers. The singers use nonsense words or sounds to imitate the sound of an instrument.

Simile

A figure of speech in which two things are compared using the word “like” or “as.” Langston Hughes uses simile in “Harlem”: “What happens to a dream deferred?/ Does it dry up/like a raisin in the sun?”

Slam Poetry

Poetry that is memorized and performed for an audience, often in competition. In slam, both the quality of the poem and the performance are important.

Slant Rhyme

A partial or imperfect rhyme, often using assonance or consonance only.

Sonnet

A fixed line poem that is 14 lines long. Sonnets typically express emotion.

Speaker

The imagined person or character “speaking” the lines of a poem. The speaker is not necessarily the author.

Spiritual

A religious song of a deeply emotional character that was developed among enslaved Blacks.

Stanza

A division of a poem consisting of a series of lines arranged together in a usually recurring pattern of meter and rhyme. Stanzas are divided visually on the page by spacing.

Symbolism

The use of a word, place, object or person to represent something beyond what it means on a literal level.

Synesthesia

The description of one kind of sense impression by using words that normally describe another.

T

Theme

The central idea that unifies the poem.

Tone

The attitude of the author toward the subject of the poems; also the style or manner of a piece of work, an inflection of the mood of the piece.

V

Voice

The tone and flavor of the poem. Voice can also refer to speech from a perspective different than your own.



Credits for Elementary, Middle School and High School Curricula

Elizabeth Alexander, "Butter." From *Body of Life*. Tia Chucha Press, Chicago. Copyright ©1996 by Elizabeth Alexander. Used by permission of the author.

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Lucille Clifton, "[let there be new flowering]". From *An Ordinary Woman: Poems by Lucille Clifton* by Lucille Clifton. Random House, New York. Copyright ©1974 by Lucille Clifton. Used by permission of the author.

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For More Poetry...

The following titles contain poetry by African-American or African poets.

- Davida Adedjouma, ed. *The Palm of My Heart: Poetry by African-American Children*. New York: Lee & Low Books. 1996. (All ages)
- Maya Angelou. *Now Sheba Sings the Song*. New York: Dutton. 1987. (Grades 9–12)
- James Berry, ed. *Around the World in Eighty Poems*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. 2002. (All ages)
- Ashley Bryan. *Ashley Bryan's ABC of African-American Poetry*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1997. (All ages)
- Lucille Clifton. *Everett Anderson's Goodbye*. New York: Henry Holt. 1988. (Grades K–3). Also in the Everett Anderson series: *Everett Anderson's Christmas Coming*, *Everett Anderson's Nine Month Long*, *Everett Anderson's Year*, *Everett Anderson's Friend*, *One of the Problems of Everett Anderson*, *Everett Anderson's 1-2-3*, *Some of the Days of Everett Anderson*.
- Catherine Clinton, ed. *I, Too, Sing America: Three Centuries of African-American Poetry*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 1998. (Grades 7–12)
- Tom Feelings, ed. *Soul Looks Back In Wonder*. New York: Penguin. 1993. (Grades 3–8)
- Nikki Grimes. *Danitra Brown Leaves Town*. New York: Amistad. 2002. (Grades 5–7)
- Nikki Grimes. *Jazmin's Notebook*. New York: Puffin. 1998. (Grades 3–6)
- Nikki Grimes. *A Pocketful of Poems*. New York: Clarion. 2001. (Grades 1–3)
- Carolivia Herron. *Nappy Hair*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1997. (Grades 4–6)
- Angela Johnson. *Running Back to Ludie*. New York: Orchard Books. 2001. (Grades 9–12)
- John Langstaff. *What a Morning! The Christmas Story in Black Spirituals*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1987. (All ages)
- E. Ethelbert Miller, ed. *In Search of Color Eveywhere*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang. 1994. (Grades 9–12)
- Walter Dean Myers. *Harlem*. New York: Scholastic. 1997. (Grades 4–6)
- Marilyn Nelson. *Carver: A Life in Poems*. New York: Handprint Books. 2001. (Grades 6–8)
- Elise Paschen. *Poetry Speaks to Children*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks. 2005. (Grades 1–7)
- Willie Perdomo. *Visiting Langston*. New York: Holt. 2002. (Grades 2–4)
- Belinda Rochelle. *Words with Wings: A Treasury of African-American Poetry and Art*. HarperCollins. 2000. (All ages)

