

TEACHER: All right, ladies and gentlemen. So here we go. We're going to hold off-- I asked you to complete the last two questions, I believe. Was it the last two or last three?

STUDENTS: Last three.

TEACHER: Last three. So what do lines 10 and 11 mean to the author? What's the author's message? And how is this text a reflection of the cultural attitudes and beliefs of the time period? We're going to hold off on that. I want to get into Langston Hughes' poem "Words Like Freedom," OK. We're going to do that together very much like we did Heritage. Once we do that and we discuss that poem, we'll get back to this one, and then we'll look to our writing. And we're going to answer that essential question, right?

STUDENT: What page is it?

TEACHER: This is on page 34. So in your interactive notebook, will you go ahead and copy the questions. So for "Words like Freedom" questions, my first question, the words freedom and liberty have very similar meanings. Based on your knowledge of this time period, describe why these two words are used differently in this poem. Second question, what is Hughes' message? After we read this poem, what is he trying to tell us? It's not going to be explicit. Poetry's not often explicit, so we have to decode. What is he trying to say? And then number three, how might Hughes' background help to influence his creation of this poem? Knowing what we know about Hughes, why does he write this poem? You should have a copy of the poem in front of you. Will you please take a minute, there's two poems on this page, I want you just to read "Words Like Freedom." Stop at the end of "Words Like Freedom." So will you take a minute, will you please read this poem to yourself silently.

Our first question is, the words freedom and liberty have very similar meanings, but obviously he's using it differently. Freedom in the first stanza is different from liberty in the second stanza. Why are they used differently in this poem? How? Will you please discuss with your table what you think.

STUDENT: It makes me say, it feels great to be free. You think America and you think, wow.
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

TEACHER: Liberty has a sad connotation to it?

STUDENT: Yes.

TEACHER: OK.

STUDENT: Freedom means you're free, you can do what you want to choose. And what you take. But liberty, I think it's more like more like justice. So it doesn't hinder the ability to do those things.

TEACHER: The ability to do those things, so it limits. It's limiting in some way, OK. Did everybody have a chance to discuss? OK, will you come to a stopping point in your conversation. We're going to annotate our text. This idea of freedom, what does freedom mean to you? Why do you use it differently? Because what does freedom mean to you? If you hear the word freedom, what does that mean? Wesley.

STUDENT: You have rights.

TEACHER: You have rights, OK. Natalie.

STUDENT: It's more like a happy word to use. Cheerful.

TEACHER: So happy, cheerful. So we're identifying emotion. What else? Ashley, what do you have?

STUDENT: It's used as, if you want to do something, no one is going to stop you from doing it.

TEACHER: OK, do what you want. Daisy, does your group have something? What did you guys discuss?

STUDENT: We said that freedom and liberty can be-- I don't know how to explain it.

TEACHER: It's OK, can your group help you? What do you guys think freedom means? If you hear the word freedom, what thoughts come to your mind, or images come to your mind? McCaskie.

STUDENT: Well, if you have a dream-- like Ashley said, no one is going to stop from doing it. You can do whatever you want.

TEACHER: So you would associate freedom in achieving a dream?

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: So we feel like the Statue of Liberty is our symbol for freedom, right. Who thinks that that's our symbol?

STUDENT: Immigrants.

TEACHER: Immigrants, right. OK, so then what about liberty? So Beats had mentioned that liberty, they feel, their group discussed, has a deeper meaning. What does liberty mean to you when you hear that word liberty? What do you think of? Ashley.

STUDENT: The Statue of Liberty, like when the immigrants came on the boat when they were going to New York. They saw the statue, and they said, oh, that's like a symbol of freedom for them.

TEACHER: Rebecca, what about your group? What did you guys discuss? If you guys talk about liberty, what does liberty mean you guys?

STUDENT: We said he used it in a sad way.

TEACHER: It was kind of sad?

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: OK, why sad? Why do you think sad?

STUDENT: Because in the next line it said, that almost made me cry. So we said it was sad.

TEACHER: OK, so you're linking that. Good. When they think of the word liberty, what comes to mind so we can support that word first? Grant.

STUDENT: What comes to mind is that the Constitution, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That when they were writing that, that wasn't necessarily linked to African Americans, as there slaves at the time. Or before, when--

TEACHER: We know that in the 1920s, during Langston Hughes' this time, there isn't any slavery, right. Emancipation Proclamation freed our slaves. Also, we have the right to vote, OK. But now, Grant is linking it to the Constitution, and in the Constitution specifically states liberty. That's what we wanted for all Americans, was our liberty. In this stanza, "There are words like Liberty that almost make me cry. If you had known what I know, you would know why," We fought for this right. Based on this poem, do you believe Langston Hughes thinks he has liberty?

STUDENTS: No.

TEACHER: No, maybe not. What is being withheld from Langston Hughes? Why does he feel like he does not have liberty, what our constitution was fighting for. Why does he not have liberty?

What's going on in this time period that Langston Hughes might feel, his people, they don't have.

STUDENT: Is it when they separate to the right?

TEACHER: Oh, what do you call that separation? Do you remember? Segregation. So do they truly have rights? Do they truly have that freedom?

STUDENT: No, because they're African American.

TEACHER: Alyssa, what do you think? What did you group discuss?

STUDENT: It's the separation the white people, so they didn't have all the rights that the white people had.

TEACHER: OK, so they were separated. What do we call separation? Zack?

STUDENT: Segregation.

TEACHER: Segregation.

STUDENT: And he feels that he's free from being a slave, but not free of segregation. So he doesn't have the liberty-- it's almost like the liberty between people isn't an equal amount. So liberty is almost his limitation in life.

TEACHER: So liberty being a limitation. So he has freedom, Langston Hughes said, hey, through the Emancipation Proclamation we have freedom. We're no longer slaves, however through this liberty piece, there's still segregation. We don't truly have equal rights. And our liberty is linked to our constitution. What was our constitution a representative of? Who developed that? Who protects that? Powers, do you know?

STUDENT: The Christian white men.

TEACHER: The Christian white men, and who-- I mean, the Christian white men, what positions do they hold?

STUDENT: The government.

TEACHER: It kind of reminded me of when Patrick Henry said, give me liberty or give me death.

TEACHER: Yes, yes. Give me liberty, give me that political freedom, possibly from-- who was he asking

political freedom from?

STUDENT: Britain.

TEACHER: Great Britain, OK. Or give me death.

STUDENT: Johnson.

TEACHER: So they have freedom but they don't have liberty. So they're free, but they're not equal to society.

TEACHER: OK, they're not equal in that general society-- Christian white men, good/ I'm asking, the words freedom and liberty have very similar meanings. Based on your knowledge of this time period, describe why they are used differently in this poem. To answer this, what are you first going to do?

STUDENT: Embed the question.

TEACHER: Thank you. Embed the question in your answer so that you know you're focusing your answer. We've already answered the first one, I believe this is going to be link right into that second one. So will you please just quickly discuss with your table, 30 seconds so you can organize your thoughts, and then we'll talk about it.

STUDENT: His message is, he has--

STUDENT: --and even though African Americans have freedom now that they aren't slaves, they're not equal to-- [INTERPOSING VOICES]

TEACHER: So, it sounds great. We were supposed to have freedom, but we don't, really. Good, that's the message.

STUDENT: It's pretty much the answer to the question, if you want.

STUDENT: Just because he has freedom doesn't mean that he has liberty.

TEACHER: Awesome, that the message. Ladies and gentlemen, does anybody have an answer they think is reasonable? Yes? What do we have? Jane, what do we have?

STUDENT: That just because he has freedom doesn't mean that he has liberty.

TEACHER: Just because he has freedom, he doesn't have liberty. Langston Hughes specifically, or who

else?

STUDENT: All African Americans.

TEACHER: Possibly, do you guys think that's a reasonable answer? Is that our message?

STUDENTS: Yes.

TEACHER: Sweet, will you write that down please? Now what we know about Langston Hughes whom I love love love love love now that we know about Langston Hughes background, how does that influence the creation of this poem? His message is, hey you said we have this, but we don't really have all of it. We don't have this piece. What about his background? Why did he write this poem? How did this help develop this poem knowing what we know about Langston Hughes? Discuss with your group quickly.

STUDENT: In New York.

TEACHER: He was successful in New York? What else was he successful in?

STUDENT: White college?

TEACHER: White colleges, yes. Educational system What else? What is successful at?

STUDENT: Poetry.

TEACHER: Writing, poetry. Has that success translated into benefiting African Americans thus far?

STUDENT: No.

TEACHER: Not thus far, right? Because is he saying that there's something missing here?

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: There' something missing here. So he wants it. He says, I might be good enough because I'm successful in writing in and at the educational system-- white American educational system-- but you're still denying me my liberty why?

STUDENT: But on the inside--

TEACHER: Yeah, my success isn't really doing anything for us, I guess, right. So number three. Do you guys have something that you guys heard in your discussion that was reasonable?

STUDENT: Yes.

TEACHER: Theos, help us. Powers?

STUDENT: What Victoria was saying was because how--

TEACHER: It's all on you.

STUDENT: --how he went to college in Harlem, right?

TEACHER: In Harlem, right. Colombia and Lincoln.

STUDENT: How white writers, or poets, or whatever influenced him. They would probably listen to what he has to say.

TEACHER: OK, so hopefully his success in writing this-- he has this message, hey, you're still withholding this stuff from me, but hopefully his success will open people's ears. They'll hear him.

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: Yeah?

STUDENT: Yes.

TEACHER: Yes, OK. Yes Powers, something to add?

STUDENT: With what Lucille says if it's from other writers, or he wants to get the message out that African Americans are still not happy with what's going on.

TEACHER: OK, or that African Americans still aren't happy because they still don't have what they were "promised," right? "Promised." Beat, something to add? Yes?

STUDENT: What'd you say?

TEACHER: It's OK, think about it. Macy's going to-- OK, all right, Macy.

STUDENT: The groups discussed that he's going to the US, freedom and stuff, and he's showing other African Americans that they can get along. They don't have to stay in their territory. Because, like in World War I, It's like a no man's land in the middle. You can't cross here, because it's not going to equal.

TEACHER: OK.

STUDENT: He's showing that it's going to be equal if we just get along.

TEACHER: Right? Go Macy! OK, so we're leaking into even World War I. Hey, it will be equal. We don't have this peace, but based on my success and my background, what I have to offer and bring to the table, I'm going to open up America's eyes. Is that what you're saying? Did I say it right? Good enough for you?

STUDENT: Yup.

TEACHER: OK. So here we go, Langston Hughes. We're going the "I, Too, Sing America." And we looked at lines five-- no, question 5, 10, and 11, correct? Here we go, what do you lines 10 and 11 mean to the author? What do lines 10 and 11 mean to the author? So you should also have your poem, I said. You have your questions and your poem, and if we go back to lines 10 and 11 in our poem, it says, and eat well and grow strong. That might be a little bit difficult, though, so let's come back to the top of that stanza. Line six says, I am the darker brother. They sent me to eat in the kitchen when company comes, but I laugh, and eat well, and grow strong. So we're focusing on and eat well, and grow strong. What do those lines mean to the author? To eat well and grow strong? McCaskie.

STUDENT: Well, I said that the author is gonna do everything he can-- In this poem, it seems like he doesn't have the right with all the others. He has to be sort of out of sight. And it's a real shame--

TEACHER: OK, so they're trying to hide him. They're ashamed of him. They kind of put him in the back. That's what we talked about the kitchen being kind of in the back of a house typically, but now he's going to do everything he can to "eat well and grow strong." What might that look like? Brandon is your hand up or are you--

STUDENT: No.

TEACHER: So curious. Zack?

STUDENT: When he says in line 11, I mean 10 and 11, I will eat well and grow strong, I believe that he is saying like what Chris said, how they send them to the back and when he laughs. I believe that he's not growing physically strong, but mentally strong.

TEACHER: So not physically strong, but mentally strong. OK, so we're not back there eating our spinach, drinking our milk. Mentally strong, possibly. Natalie.

STUDENT: Kind of like-- that was Zack?

TEACHER: That was Zack.

STUDENT: Kind of like, he was growing in knowledge.

TEACHER: Growing in knowledge.

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: Good, Powers?

STUDENT: That he's going to obey what you're saying, but slowly get better and get stronger. Better than them.

TEACHER: OK, I'll go in the back of the kitchen right now, I'll do what you're telling me right now, but while I'm back there, I'm going to take care of me. I'm going to eat well, I'm going to grow strong. And Zack said that's mentally strong, Natalie said that's gaining knowledge, OK. Go ahead Jessica. Rabbit? Come on.

STUDENT: I kind of thought like all that time that he spent in the kitchen, he was making a plan to show them that they're all equal and everything.

TEACHER: Sure. So he's making a plan. He's going to show them. How do we know he's going to show them? Go ahead.

STUDENT: Because it says, in lines 21 and 23, besides, they'll see how beautiful I am. Once I show them, ha ha, you're deceived.

TEACHER: You're going to be ashamed of yourself.

STUDENT: Yeah.

TEACHER: What's the author's message? What is Langston Hughes trying to tell us? Powers, what do you think he's trying to say?

STUDENT: I think he's trying to say that slavery ended because of the African Americans striking back.

TEACHER: OK, slavery ended because African Americans struck back. Victoria, what do you think?

STUDENT: I think the author's message is that African Americans are a part of America too, and that they think they shouldn't be treated differently from the white men.

TEACHER: OK, African Americans are part of America too, and they shouldn't be treated differently than other Americans, than white men. Why do you think that? Where in the text gives you that idea?

STUDENT: It says, I, too, sing America, and this helps us understand that he wants to be a part of this country.

TEACHER: Right, so he says, I, too, sing America, and it helps us understand that he wants to be a part of this country. McCaskie.

STUDENT: I said that the author's message is that white people are ashamed to be among African Americans because-- in line seven it says if we eat in the kitchen it becomes almost like-- Well, he says, you all are going to be ashamed too because he wants--

TEACHER: You're going to be ashamed of yourselves because I, too, am America. I'm American too, also. Good. Beats.

STUDENT: Going along with what Wesley said--

TEACHER: Adrian, I got you right after this.

STUDENT: He said they struck back. Maybe he's saying that since we did it once, we can do it again.

TEACHER: OK. So hey, we did this once. We're going to do it again. Adrian, something to add.

STUDENT: In this poem, he seems fairly confident that one day we'll be equal.

TEACHER: Langston Hughes seems very confident, fairly confident, one day they will have that equality. Soon as you're done with that question, I handed out your foldable for writing. Sure. Foldable? Sweet.

Here we go guys. So on page 32, you guys have your essential question. You also have it on the bottom of your "I, Too, Sing American." Your essential question needs to be answered with your claim, right. With your claim. Let's read this claim piece really quickly just to remember what we're talking about. When I want a claim, when we're addressing a claim, this is what

we're looking for. A claim tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about. It is a statement that answers a question. It answers one side of an argument. And remember, there is no I or because in a claim. You take that out. The because is the reasoning, right. And we're looking for textual evidence, so it's not about you-- your thoughts and feelings. We're looking for facts. We're looking for evidence, here. So if it helps you, you can write your essential question on the back of this, if it helps you. But what I'm looking for, on page 32 of your notebook, is how to do these poems reflect the cultural attitudes and beliefs of this time period?