

# Composing A Life: Autobiography & Maya Angelou

Grade Level or Special Area: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts

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Length of Unit: 8 Lessons, (approximately three weeks/18 days, one day = 50 minute class period)

## I. ABSTRACT

- A. In this unit students will deepen their understanding of the genre of autobiography and experience literature as a record of human experience through reading Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Students will also gain a deeper sense of self through writing their own autobiographies.

## II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
1. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
  2. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
  3. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6).
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
1. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
  2. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
  3. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
- C. Skill Objectives
1. Students will identify, interpret and analyze the use of figurative language, specifically similes and metaphors.
  2. Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.
  3. Students will recognize an author's point of view or purpose and separate fact from opinion.
  4. Students will learn, explore and define new vocabulary.
  5. Students will draft, revise, edit and proofread for a legible final copy.
  6. Students will develop and use stylistic elements such as voice, tone and style in their writing.
  7. Students will model and use vivid and precise words, imagery, and/or figurative language as appropriate to enhance their writing.

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
1. *Novel Units Teacher Guide: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Green
  2. *Your Life as Story: Discovering the "New Autobiography" and Writing Memoir as Literature*, Rainer
  3. Knowledge of 6 Traits (rubrics, language, and writing goals)
- B. For Students
1. Autobiography – *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grade 7, pg. 161
  2. Expository Writing – *Core Knowledge Sequence*, Grade 7, pg. 157

## IV. RESOURCES

- A. Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, for all students (All Lessons)
- B. Angelou, Maya. *Still I Rise*, teacher copy (Lesson One)

## V. LESSONS

### Lesson One: Introduction to Autobiography and Author Background (one 50 minute class period)

#### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
  - b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
  - c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (CSS 8. 6).
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will recognize an author’s point of view or purpose and separate fact from opinion.
  - b. Students will learn, explore and define new vocabulary.

#### B. *Materials*

1. Appendix A (copies for all students)
2. “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou (copy for teacher)
3. Appendix B (copies for all students)
4. Appendix B.1 (copy for teacher)
5. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (copies for all students and teacher)

#### C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Autobiography – the biography of a person narrated by himself
2. Biography – written history of a person’s life

#### D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Begin by telling students they will be reading an autobiographical work entitled *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. Pass out copies of Appendix A and have students complete this worksheet.
2. When students have finished, discuss the definitions and differences between autobiography and biography. Solicit responses from students about the types of autobiographies/biographies they have read (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, etc.) and the types of feelings that these types of works evoke. Collect Appendix A to review and assess student responses and background knowledge.
3. Introduce Maya Angelou by reading the poem “Still I Rise.” If possible, read poem and share the visuals from the picture book version that matches Diego Rivera paintings with Angelou’s words. After the first reading ask students to jot down their initial thoughts and impression about the woman behind this poem. Read the poem again and solicit student inferences about Angelou’s background (race, age, life experience, etc.)
4. Provide students with Appendix B and give a brief overview of Angelou’s life and background that addresses the blanks on their note sheet (see Appendix B.1 for teacher lecture notes).
5. Close the day by distributing books and allowing reading time for homework assignment of the introductory pages and chapter 1 in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

#### E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Collect Appendix A to review and assess student responses and background knowledge.

## **Lesson Two: Writing An Autobiography and Chapters 1-3 (one 50 minute class period)**

### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
  - b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
  - c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6).
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
  - b. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will identify, interpret and analyze the use of figurative language, specifically similes and metaphors.
  - b. Students will learn, explore and define new vocabulary.
  - c. Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.
  - d. Students will recognize an author's point of view or purpose and separate fact from opinion.

### B. *Materials*

1. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (copies for all students and teacher)
2. Appendix C (copies for all students)
3. Appendix D (transparency copy for teacher)
4. Overhead projector
5. Appendix E (copies for all students)
6. Appendix F (copies for all students)

### C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Figurative language – language expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another which may be regarded as analogous, (ex = metaphorical)
2. Simile – a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as, (ex = cheeks like roses)
3. Metaphor – a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them (ex = drowning in money)
4. First person narration – set of linguistic forms, (I, me, etc.) referring to the speaker or writer of the utterance in which they occur
5. See Appendix E and E.1

### D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Open by explaining journal assignment (Appendix C). Discuss each topic and use a transparency of Appendix D to share examples and model journals for each of the three topics. Also review and define figurative language terminology (metaphor and simile). Then pass out vocabulary word list (Appendix E) for each student to have as a reference for the words they will need to define and include in their group journals.
2. Designate reading groups for each journal category. Selection of reading groups can be done with teacher discretion based on ability, student interest in particular topic, random drawing of topics, etc. Journal/tracking topics for each group can remain the same throughout the unit or can be rotated after each reading of a

third of the book is completed for exposure/writing practice on each topic. Also, if the teacher desires smaller groups they may assign the same topic to more than one group (ex = three large groups with each journal topic covered once vs. six small groups with each topic assigned twice).

3. Give students time to meet with their journal groups and read/begin journals through chapter 3. Reading groups may read out loud, select a reader for the day or read silently. On days the instructor joins a group they may wish to guide the reading process. The method of reading for each group can depend on their ability, time-on-task, etc. and teacher may want to assign a specific format of reading based on the group.
4. Tell students you will collect their first set of journals (for chapters 1-3) at the beginning of the next class period. Join a group or float among all the groups to monitor progress.
5. Close the day by explaining autobiographical writing assignment (Appendix F). Tell students a rough draft of their autobiography (which may be in the form of an outline, web, timeline or written draft) depending on student/teacher preference is due at the end of the week.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Monitor reading/journaling progress for each group.

**Lesson Three: Voice In Autobiographical Writing & Chapters 4-8 (three 50 minute class periods)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
  - b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
  - c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6).
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
  - b. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
  - c. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will develop and use stylistic elements such as voice, tone and style in their writing.
  - b. Students will learn, explore and define new vocabulary.

B. *Materials*

1. Appendix G (copies for all students)
2. Appendix H (teacher copy)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Voice – in writing, a particular style of expressing yourself
2. See Appendix E & E.1

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Collect first set of journals for chapters 1-3.
2. Give students quiz on chapters 1-3 (Appendix G). (Short answer quizzes will be used throughout unit to measure individual reading comprehension and retention).

3. Discuss the concept of “voice” in writing and the important role voice plays in autobiographical writing in particular. Stress that an author who uses strong voice in their writing shows (not tells) the reader what they experience. Use Appendix H as a guide for a discussion/lecture on voice. Have students complete free-write voice exercise explained in Appendix H. Encourage students as they compose their first draft to think about experiences, emotions and events in their life that they could recount by using strong ‘voice’ to engage the reader.
  4. Allow time for students to read and journal for chapters 4-8 (teacher should join a group and rotate for each segment of chapters).
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Evaluation of quiz (Appendix G).
  2. Analysis of first set of journals (chapters 1-3), to observe the following: journal format (following directions, including all components, etc.); topic analysis (timeline/plot, figurative language and historical context). Refer back to Appendix C for additional information.
  3. Analysis of ‘voice’ free-writing exercise (see Appendix H) to observe whether students are grasping concept of *showing* and not *telling* in their writing.

**Lesson Four: Drafting Autobiographies & Chapters 15-21 (four 50 minute class periods)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
    - b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
    - c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6).
  2. Lesson Content:
    - a. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
    - b. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
    - c. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.
    - b. Students will draft, revise, edit and proofread for a legible final copy.
- B. *Materials*
1. Appendix I (copies for each student)
  2. Writing/drafting materials (including pencils, paper, dictionaries, a thesaurus, and computers if available)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. See Appendix E & E.1
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Collect journal folders to analyze responses for chapters 4-8.
  2. Administer quiz (Appendix I) for chapters 4-8.
  3. Explain that as a class chapters 9-14 will be skipped due to explicit and graphic content (these chapters document the molestation, rape, and rape trial during Maya’s stay with her mother in St. Louis). I give my students the option of reading the chapters if they do not want to miss a piece of the story, but let them know up front that the reading of these chapters is optional, should be done on

their own time, and that group/discussion, journals, or quizzes will not include or reflect any of the content from these chapters.

4. Allow time for students to read and journal for chapters 15-21 (teacher should join a group and rotate for each segment of chapters). This is a natural place for groups to rotate their journal topic/focus (figurative language, plot and timeline, historical context) if teacher is not requiring students to stick with the same journal topic throughout the book.
5. Once reading and journaling for this set of chapters (15-21) is completed, students need to work on their first rough drafts (which may take the form of outlines, timelines, or written drafts based on student/teacher discretion). Teacher should circulate and assist students in the drafting stage, helping them brainstorm, organize and formulate their thoughts and experiences on paper.
6. As homework/preparation for the next lesson, ask students to bring in a list of 5-10 words they “like” for whatever reason (sound, meaning, length, etc.) Encourage students to bring interesting words from the book as well as words of their own.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Evaluation of quizzes (Appendix I).
2. Analysis of second set of journals (ch. 4-8), to observe the following: journal format (following directions, including all components, etc.); topic analysis (timeline/plot, figurative language and historical context). Refer back to Appendix C for additional information.

**Lesson Five: Figurative Language and Word Choice in Writing, Chapters 22-26 (three 50 minute class periods)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
  - b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
  - c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6).
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
  - b. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
  - c. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will identify, interpret and analyze the use of figurative language, specifically similes and metaphors.
  - b. Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.
  - c. Students will learn, explore and define new vocabulary.
  - d. Students will model and use vivid and precise words, imagery, and/or figurative language as appropriate to enhance their writing.

B. *Materials*

1. Appendix J (copies for all students)
2. Writing materials
3. Chart paper
4. Markers

- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. See Appendix E & E.1
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Collect first draft/plans for autobiography writing assignment.
  2. Collect journals (for analysis of chapters of 15-21).
  3. Administer quiz (Appendix J) to all students.
  4. After quiz, begin figurative language/word choice mini lesson by asking students to take out their list of 'powerful/interesting words' assigned as homework from the previous lesson.
  5. Ask students to share some of their word choices and record them on chart paper. Words should not be defined or discussed at this point.
  6. In small groups (groups of 4 work well) have students place words into categories. Categories should differ from group-to-group and some words may appear in more than one category. (Category examples might include: sensory words, verbs, long words, interjections, feeling words, two syllable words, etc.)
  7. When groups have categorized words, have each group share/justify their categories and the reason they put certain words in certain places.
  8. Once all groups have shared their word list categories, as a class take the word lists one step further to create interesting, powerful, or playful similes and metaphors. (Ex = word list includes: hippopotamus/slippery. Simile = my mother's floor was as slippery as the back of a hippopotamus).
  9. Culminate activity by asking students in their second drafts to work on improving their word choice/figurative language usage to add life and description to their autobiographies. Explain to students that the reason the experiences in Angelou's autobiography are so vivid is largely due to her exceptional word choice and expert use of figurative language.
  10. Return edited first drafts/plans to students.
  11. Allow time for students to read and journal for chapters 22-26 (teacher should join a group and rotate for each segment of chapters). This is a natural place for groups to rotate their journal topic/focus (figurative language, plot and timeline, historical context) if teacher is not requiring students to stick with the same journal topic throughout the book.
  12. Once reading and journaling for this set of chapters (22-26) is completed, students need to work on their second drafts of their autobiographies, re-writing or drafting based on teacher edits and suggestions. All second drafts should be written or typed in essay form (no outlines, etc.). Remind students that second drafts are due at beginning of next lesson so they can receive peer/teacher edits in preparation for final drafting.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Evaluation of quizzes (Appendix J)
  2. Editing/analysis of autobiography first drafts
  3. Analysis of third set of journals (chapters 15-21), to observe the following: journal format (following directions, including all components, etc.); topic analysis (timeline/plot, figurative language and historical context). Refer back to Appendix C for additional information.

**Lesson Six: Writing & Editing Workshop (one-two 50 minute class periods)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).

2. Lesson Content
  - a. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will draft, revise, edit and proofread for a legible final copy.
  - b. Students will develop and use stylistic elements such as voice, tone and style in their writing.
  - c. Students will model and use vivid and precise words, imagery, and/or figurative language as appropriate to enhance their writing.
- B. *Materials*
  1. Appendix K (two copies per student)
  2. Writing materials
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  1. None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  1. Collect fourth set of journals (Chapters 22-26).
  2. Have students take out their second drafts (which should be written or typed in essay form). Distribute two copies of Appendix K (peer editing rubric) to each student.
  3. Have students partner up to edit each other's work. You may designate editing partners for each student or let them choose depending on the dynamics of the class and their comfort level with the editing process. Since their autobiographies may include personal or sensitive material you may want to provide alternate editing options for students who are uncomfortable having a peer edit or read their work (this could include self-editing, teacher edit, or parent/outside source edit). However, by the end of the process all students should have two completed rubrics for their work that they will attach to their drafts and final copy. If a group is very new to the editing process, the teacher may want to model editing a paper by using a class example and making a transparency of the rubric so that students have a framework/example as a reference.
  4. When students have had their paper edited by two sources (and have edited two pieces of writing themselves) students should progress to the final drafting stage.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  1. Check that all students have two completed editing rubrics for their second draft.
  2. Analysis of fourth set of journals (ch. 22-26) to observe the following: journal format (following directions, including all components, etc.); topic analysis (timeline/plot, figurative language and historical context). Refer back to Appendix C for additional information.

**Lesson Seven: Chapters 27-34 & Autobiography Synthesis (three 50 minute class periods)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
    - b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
    - c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6).
  2. Lesson Content

- a. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
- b. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
- c. Speaking and listening, pg. 181
- 3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.
  - b. Students will identify, interpret and analyze the use of figurative language, specifically similes and metaphors.
  - c. Students will recognize an author's point of view or purpose and separate fact from opinion.
  - d. Students will learn, explore and define new vocabulary.
  - e. Students will draft, revise, edit and proofread for a legible final copy.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. Appendix L (copies for all students)
  - 2. Writing materials
  - 3. Computer(s) or computer lab if available for final copy writing
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Begin with quiz (Appendix L) on chapters 22-26.
  - 2. Allow time for students to read and journal for the final set of chapters 27-34 (teacher should join a group and rotate for each segment of chapters). This is a natural place for groups to rotate their journal topic/focus (figurative language, plot and timeline, historical context) if teacher is not requiring students to stick with the same journal topic throughout the book.
  - 3. Explain that as a class chapters 35-36 will be skipped due to explicit and graphic content (these chapters document the sexual experimentation, introduction to lesbianism, and pregnancy and birth of Maya's son). I give my students the option of reading the chapters if they want to finish the book, but let them know up front that the reading of these chapters is optional, should be done on their own time, and that group/discussion, journals, and final exam will not include or reflect any of the content from these chapters.
  - 4. Once reading and journaling for this set of chapters (27-34) is completed, students need to work on their final copies of their autobiographies, re-writing/typing based on their peer editing rubrics. All final copies should be written or typed (based on teacher preference and computer accessibility). Remind students that final copies are due at beginning of next lesson (time of final exam) and that all final copies must include a folder containing final copy, first and second drafts, and two peer editing rubrics to be considered complete.
  - 5. Collect journals for evaluation
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  - 1. Evaluation of quiz (Appendix L).
  - 2. Analysis of final set of journals (ch. 27-34) to observe the following: journal format (following directions, including all components, etc.); topic analysis (timeline/plot, figurative language and historical context). Refer back to Appendix C for additional information.

**Lesson Eight: Finished Products – Final Exams and Final Copies (one 50 minute class period)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  - 1. Concept Objective(s)

- a. Students will develop an awareness of how to read and understand a variety of reading materials (adapted from Colorado State Standard/CSS 8.1).
- b. Students will apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing (CSS 8.4).
- c. Students will recognize literature as a record of human experience (adapted from CSS 8. 6)
- 2. Lesson Content
  - a. Autobiography: Selections from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou, pg. 184
  - b. Expository writing: write essays that describe, narrate, pg. 181
- 3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will summarize and synthesize information from the text.
  - b. Students will draft, revise, edit and proofread for a legible final copy.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. Appendix M (copies for all on-grade level students)
  - 2. Appendix N (copies for special ed, below grade level, or other modified needs students)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Collect final copy folders (including drafts, editing rubrics and final copies) of student's autobiographical writing assignment for final grading and evaluation.
  - 2. Administer final exam (Appendix M or Appendix N to all students).
  - 3. Note: Appendix M is an essay test designed for on-grade level and advanced students. Teachers may allow open book/journals for a designated time period or throughout test if students are required to use quotes/cite evidence from the book in their responses. Appendix N is a modified test designed for below-grade level students, or students with special needs.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
  - 1. Evaluate final copies of autobiographies.
  - 2. Evaluate final exams

## VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. Optional: Depending on the comfort level, size and time available to teach this unit, students may plan an presentation/sharing forum for their autobiographies. Taking their final copies, students can select an excerpt or piece to share with the class and design a visual aid (poster board of photographs, genealogy, timeline of their life, etc.) to accompany their presentation.

## VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Analyzing Autobiography Worksheet
- B. Appendix B: Student Worksheet, Background on Maya Angelou
- C. Appendix B.1: Teacher Worksheet, Background on Maya Angelou
- D. Appendix C: Journal Assignment
- E. Appendix D: Teacher Model/Examples for Journal Assignment
- F. Appendix E: Vocabulary Word List
- G. Appendix E.1: Teacher Key (Vocabulary Word List) Definitions
- H. Appendix F: Autobiography Writing Assignment
- I. Appendix G: Quiz on Chapters 1-3
- J. Appendix G.1: Answer Key (Quiz on Chapters 1-3)

- K. Appendix H: Notes on ‘Voice’ in Writing
- L. Appendix I: Quiz on Chapters 4-8
- M. Appendix I.1: Answer Key (Quiz on Chapters 4-8)
- N. Appendix J: Quiz on Chapters 15-21
- O. Appendix J.1: Answer Key (Quiz on Chapters 15-21)
- P. Appendix K: Autobiography Peer Editing Rubric
- Q. Appendix L: Quiz on Chapters 22-26
- R. Appendix L.1: Answer Key (Quiz on Chapters 22-26)
- S. Appendix M: Final Quiz and Book Synthesis
- T. Appendix M.1: Answer Key, Final Quiz & Book Synthesis
- U. Appendix N: Modified Final Quiz and Book Synthesis
- V. Appendix N.1: Answer Key, Modified Final Quiz and Book Synthesis

### VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Angelou, M. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York, NY: Random House, 1969. 0-553-38001-X.
- B. Angelou, M. *Still I Rise*. New York, NY: Random House, 2001. 0-375-50596-2.
- C. Angelou, M. *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou*. New York, NY: Random House, 1994. 0-679-42895-X.
- D. *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Charlottesville, VA: Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999. 1-890517-20-8.
- E. Green, P.A. *Novel Units Teacher Guide, Grades 9-12, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. San Antonio, TX: Novel Units, 2000. 1-56137-484-9.
- F. Rainer, T. *Your Life as Story: Discovering the “New Autobiography” and Writing Memoir as Literature*. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 1997. 0-87477-922-7.

## Appendix A

### Analyzing Autobiography

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete this worksheet to tell me 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. List examples of autobiographies that you have read...
3. What makes autobiographies enjoyable/interesting?
4. What feelings can/do autobiographies evoke?
5. In this unit you will write an autobiography about yourself...brainstorm and explain three interesting anecdotes you could use in your autobiography for this writing project. (Hint: think about embarrassing moments, painful memories, travel experiences, relationships, achievements, etc.)

## Appendix B

### Author Background: Maya Angelou

“All of my work is meant to say, ‘You may encounter many defeats but you must not be defeated.’ In fact, the encountering may be the very experience which creates the vitality and the power to endure.”

-- Maya Angelou, as quoted in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*.

1. Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson on \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. She was raised in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Her brother Bailey nicknamed her \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Ms. Angelou is an author, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. She read her poem, “On the Pulse of 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 \_\_\_\_\_ (about 1931-1945).
6. She has written subsequent \_\_\_\_\_ works and numerous poems, and is fluent in \_\_\_\_\_ languages including Spanish, Arabic and West African Fanti.
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. In 1998, she made her film \_\_\_\_\_ debut with Miramax’s feature film Down in the Delta.
9. Angelou continues to write and lecture today. She once said, “I write for the \_\_\_\_\_ and for any ear which can hear it.”
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!

**Appendix B.1**  
**Teacher Guide**  
**Author Background: Maya Angelou**

“All of my work is meant to say, ‘You may encounter many defeats but you must not be defeated.’ In fact, the encountering may be the very experience which creates the vitality and the power to endure.”

-- Maya Angelou, as quoted in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*.

**Note:** Blank information from student worksheet is noted in bold type.

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. Ms. Angelou is an author, **poet, playwright, singer, and stage/screen performer**.
4. She read her poem, “On the Pulse of Morning” at the **inauguration** of President Clinton.
5. She published her autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, in **1969**. This work chronicles her life from age **three** to age **sixteen** (about 1931-1945).
6. She has written subsequent **autobiographical** works and numerous poems, and is fluent in **six** languages including Spanish, Arabic and West African Fanti.
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. In 1998, she made her film **directorial** debut with Miramax’s feature film *Down in the Delta*.
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.”
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!

**Note: Adapted from biographical information in *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou, art by Diego Rivera.**

## Appendix C

### *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* Journal Assignment

**DIRECTIONS:** Throughout this unit, you will complete a series of journal entries, based on the topic designated by your reading group. As a group you will create one journal entry per chapter (each entry should be on a separate sheet of notebook paper) and each entry should contain the following elements:

- List the name of your group members, date, and chapter number at the top of the page.
- Cite the page number of the quote, paragraph, or passage you are analyzing (if appropriate).
- Define (in your own words after looking up terms in a dictionary or by using context clues) the words detailed on the vocabulary sheet for the chapter you are journaling about.
- Explain how the passage is a record of human experience (what piece of Maya's life is it explaining and why is it significant).
- Explain the specifics of your journal topic based on the category you are assigned:
  - **Timeline & Plot:**  
This group will summarize and synthesize the events of Maya's life by providing a timeline with key events, experiences, characters, etc. that enter and exit Maya's life chapter by chapter.
  - **Figurative Language:**  
This group will keep track of noteworthy, powerful (or unconvincing) ways in which Maya uses figurative language, paying specific attention to her use of similes, metaphors, and any other language that creates mental imagery (pictures in your mind). You should purposely choose and analyze passages that contain vivid imagery.
  - **Historical Context and Racism:**  
This group will track references to the historical time period (Great Depression, World Wars, economic conditions, geographic references, etc.) and to passages that demonstrate the cultural climate and race relations indicative of this time period (prejudice, ignorance, insensitivity, etc.)
- Additional remarks about group discussions (if necessary) that may help me make sense of your journal, findings and analysis as a group (especially on the days I do not observe or participate with your group).
- I will collect journals periodically to make sure you are up to date and that all group members are participating actively in the journaling and discussion process. I will participate with all groups on a rotating basis.
- At the time of collection, all journals should be in order, on separate sheets of paper in a folder labeled with all group members' names.
- **This assignment is about quality (not quantity) so use your class time wisely!**

## **Appendix D**

### **Teacher Model/Examples for Journal Assignment**

#### **TIMELINE & PLOT EXAMPLE:**

- Chapter 1 (enter chapter)
- This chapter provides background information to the reader, and introduces the reader to the narrator.
- Summary: When Marguerite (narrator) and Bailey (her brother) were three and four respectively, they were sent to live with their father's mother who ran a general store in the South.

#### **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE EXAMPLE:**

- Chapter 15, pg. 95 (in my copy) "She appealed to me because..."
- This passage is a record of human experience because it describes different types of people, and eventually the type of person Maya wants to be. It gives examples for the reasons why Maya respected and liked Bertha Flowers and the role she played in Maya's life.
- Imagery: "Like women in English novels who walked the moors," "Like the women who sat in front of roaring fireplaces, drinking tea..." "Women who walked the 'heath' and read morocco-bound books,"...etc. These phrases give me vivid images of the types of women Maya is talking about. I think the reason I see vivid images is that I read many Victorian novels, the Bronte sisters, etc. with these types of characters.

#### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT & RACISM EXAMPLE:**

- Chapter 1, pg. 9, "Some of the workers..."
- In this passage information is given to the reader about the economic conditions of the time and the typical customers that frequented Momma's general store. The reader is given a snapshot of Black Southern life during this time period (early 1930's). People rose early, retired late, and worked hard all through the day for little compensation.

Now you are ready to complete group journals on your own!

## Appendix E

### Vocabulary World List Selected Chapters: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

The following vocabulary words (broken out by chapter) need to be included in your group journals. Remember to put the definition into words that make sense to you!

**Ch. 1 Vocab:**

Calamitous  
Affluent  
Paranoia  
Propheesied

**Ch. 2 Vocab:**

Sacrificial  
Rancor  
Pacified  
Abacuses

**Ch. 3 Vocab:**

Obsession  
Condoned  
Nonchalance  
Heinous

**Chapter 4 Vocab:**

Disenchanted  
Anachronism  
Opulent  
Collards

**Ch. 5 Vocab:**

Impudent  
Aping  
Servile  
Indignity

**Ch. 6 Vocab:**

Hominy  
Filched  
Aversion  
Despise

**Ch. 7 Vocab:**

Subpoenaed  
Bailiff  
Gaffe  
Sobriquet

**Ch. 8 Vocab:**

Indulged  
Hamlet  
Cyclonic  
Engulfed

**Ch. 9 Vocab:**

Illusory  
Bombastic  
Assailed  
Vexed

**Ch. 10 Vocab:**

Quadroon  
Reprobation  
Flamboyant  
Appellation

**Ch. 11 Vocab:**

Provisions  
Lurid  
Quandary

**Ch. 13 Vocab**

Slaughterhouse  
Morose

**Ch. 14 Vocab:**

Diversion

**Ch. 15 Vocab:**

Leered  
Tribulations  
Abomination  
Infuse

**Ch. 16 Vocab:**

Ludicrous  
Embalmed  
Ecrú  
Tureen

**Ch. 17 Vocab:**

Exemplary  
Inscrutable

**Ch. 18 Vocab:**

Commensurate  
Blasphemous

**Ch. 19 Vocab:**

Clench  
Ambrosia  
Rakish

**Ch. 20 Vocab:**

Expeditious  
Epicure  
Ecumenical  
Genteel

**Ch. 21 Vocab:**

Profusely  
Ravening  
Limbo  
Sarcasm

**Ch. 22 Vocab:**

Patronage  
Placating  
Onerous

**Ch. 23 Vocab:**

Decipher  
Mollified  
Perfunctory  
Impertinence  
Palpable

## Appendix E.1

### Teacher Key (Vocabulary Word List) Definitions

The following list provides dictionary definitions for all of the terms students will be held accountable for defining and explaining in their journals. This list can be used as a guideline for checking their definitions.

#### Chapter 1:

- **Calamitous** – Causing or involving calamity; disastrous
- **Affluent** – Generously supplied with money, property, or possessions; prosperous or rich.
- **Paranoia** – Extreme, irrational distrust of others.
- **Prophesied** – To predict with certainty as if by divine inspiration.

#### Chapter 2:

- **Sacrificial** – Of or pertaining to sacrifice or sacrifices; consisting in sacrifice; performing sacrifice.
- **Rancor** – Bitter, long-lasting resentment; deep-seated ill will.
- **Pacified** – To ease the anger or agitation of.
- **Abacuses** – A manual computing device consisting of a frame holding parallel rods strung with movable counters.

#### Chapter 3:

- **Obsession** – A compulsive, often unreasonable idea or emotion.
- **Condoned** – To overlook, forgive, or disregard (an offense) without protest or censure.
- **Nonchalance** – The trait of remaining calm and seeming not to care; a casual lack of concern.
- **Heinous** – Grossly wicked or reprehensible; abominable.

#### Chapter 4:

- **Disenchanted** – To free from illusion or false belief; undeceive.
- **Anachronism** – The representation of someone as existing or something as happening in other than chronological, proper, or historical order.
- **Opulent** – Characterized by rich abundance; luxuriant.
- **Collards** – The leaves of kale, used as a vegetable.

#### Chapter 5:

- **Impudent** – Characterized by offensive boldness; insolent or impertinent.
- **Aping** – To mimic slavishly but often with an absurd result.
- **Servile** – Abjectly submissive; slavish.
- **Indignity** – A source of offense, as to a person's pride or sense of dignity; an affront.

#### Chapter 6:

- **Hominy** – Hulled and dried kernels of corn, prepared as food by boiling.
- **Filched** – To take (something, especially something of little value) in a furtive manner; snatch.
- **Aversion** – A fixed, intense dislike; repugnance.
- **Despise** – To regard with contempt or scorn.

#### Chapter 7:

- **Subpoenaed** – To serve or summon with a writ requiring appearance in court to give testimony.
- **Bailiff** – A court attendant entrusted with duties such as the maintenance of order in a courtroom during a trial.
- **Gaffe** – A clumsy social error; a faux pas.
- **Sobriquet** – An affectionate or humorous nickname; an assumed name.

(Continued)

## Appendix E.1 (Continued)

### Chapter 8:

- **Indulged** – To yield to the desires and whims of, especially to an excessive degree.
- **Hamlet** – A small village; a little cluster of houses in the country.
- **Cyclonic** – Of or relating to or characteristic of a violent tropical storm.
- **Engulfed** – To swallow up or overwhelm by or as if by overflowing and enclosing.

### Chapter 9:

- **Illusory** – Produced by, based on, or having the nature of an illusion; deceptive.
- **Bombastic** – Characterized by bombast; high-sounding; inflated.
- **Assailed** – To attack with or as if with violent blows; assault.
- **Vexed** – To annoy, as with petty importunities; bother.

### Chapter 10:

- **Quadroon** – A person having one-quarter Black ancestry.
- **Reprobation** – The act of reprobating; the state of being reprobated; strong disapproval or censure.
- **Flamboyant** – Given to ostentatious or audacious display; highly elaborate.
- **Appellation** – A name, title, or designation.

### Chapter 11:

- **Provisions** – The act of supplying or fitting out.
- **Lurid** – Causing shock or horror; gruesome.
- **Quandary** – A state of uncertainty or perplexity.

### Chapter 13:

- **Slaughterhouse** – A place where animals are butchered; a scene of massacre or carnage.
- **Morose** – Sullenly melancholy; gloomy.

### Chapter 14:

- **Diversion** – Something that distracts the mind and relaxes or entertains.

### Chapter 15:

- **Leered** – To look with a sidelong glance, indicative especially of sexual desire or sly and malicious intent.
- **Tribulations** – Great affliction, trial, or distress; suffering.
- **Abomination** – Abhorrence; disgust.
- **Infuse** – To fill or cause to be filled with something.

### Chapter 16:

- **Ludicrous** – Laughable or hilarious because of obvious absurdity or incongruity.
- **Embalmed** – To treat (a corpse) with preservatives in order to prevent decay.
- **Ecru** – A grayish to pale yellow or light grayish-yellowish brown.
- **Tureen** – A broad, deep, usually covered dish used for serving foods such as soups or stews.

### Chapter 17:

- **Exemplary** – Worthy of imitation; commendable.
- **Inscrutable** – Difficult to fathom or understand; impenetrable.

### Chapter 18:

- **Commensurate** – Of the same size, extent, or duration as another.
- **Blasphemous** – Impiously irreverent.

(Continued)

## Appendix E.1 (Continued)

### Chapter 19:

- **Clench** – To grasp, grip or close tightly.
- **Ambrosia** – Something with an especially delicious flavor or fragrance.
- **Rakish** – Having a trim, streamlined appearance.

### Chapter 20:

- **Expeditious** – Acting or done with speed and efficiency.
- **Epicure** – A person with refined taste, especially in food and wine.
- **Ecumenical** – Of or relating to the worldwide Christian church.
- **Genteel** – Refined in manner; well bred and polite.

### Chapter 21:

- **Profusely** – Plentiful; copious.
- **Ravening** – Greedily predacious; voracious or rapacious.
- **Limbo** – A region or condition of oblivion or neglect.
- **Sarcasm** – A cutting, often ironic remark intended to wound.

### Chapter 22:

- **Patronage** – The support or encouragement of a patron, as for an institution or cause.
- **Placating** – To allay the anger of, especially by making concessions; appease.
- **Onerous** – Troublesome or oppressive; burdensome.

### Chapter 23:

- **Decipher** – To read or interpret (ambiguous, obscure, or illegible matter).
- **Mollified** – To soften; to make tender; to reduce the hardness, harshness, or asperity of.
- **Perfunctory** – Done routinely and with little interest or care.
- **Impertinence** – The quality or condition of being impertinent, especially: a) Insolence, b) Irrelevance.
- **Palpable** – Capable of being handled, touched, or felt; tangible.

## Appendix F Autobiography Writing Assignment

Now that we have begun reading Maya Angelou’s autobiography it is time to do some autobiographical writing of your own! For this assignment you have a choice of two options for writing an autobiographical essay.

**Option A:** You may write a comprehensive, non-fiction autobiographical that documents the events and experiences of your life thus far. It should be truthful, include appropriate anecdotes (positive or negative) and incorporate figurative language and a strong sense of ‘voice.’

**Option B:** You may write a comprehensive essay from the perspective of having lived most of your life. This should be a mixture of non-fiction and fiction or a projection of what direction you think your life will take. This might include background on the career you will pursue, family life you will have, places you will travel, and things you will do. Because you have only lived a small portion of your life, the “reality” section may be brief. This option allows you to use your imagination and creative writing ability, but keep in mind that the heart of the essay should be realistic and reflect your core values and upbringing.

For either option, all standard conventions and writing rules apply, although you have the opportunity to play with a different writing style, compose from the first person perspective and utilize a great deal of voice. Think of nontraditional introductions and transitions to make your autobiography flow and read like fiction. You will have the opportunity to receive peer and teacher edits on this assignment.

| <b>Assignment Timeline</b>   | <b>Point Value</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Rough drafts due:</b> 1 week  | 10 points          |
| <b>Second drafts due:</b> 1- 2 weeks after rough drafts are returned           | 10 points          |
| <b>Peer/teacher edit:</b> Interim between 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft and final copy | 10 points          |
| <b>Final copies due:</b> 1 week after 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts are returned      | 30 points          |
| <b>Total Project:</b>  | <b>60 points</b>   |

*Note: When turning in your final copy, staple both drafts and peer/teacher editing rubric to your final copy for final evaluation. I need to see the whole package (where you started and where you ended up) when calculating your final copy grade.*

**Grading:** This writing assignment is worth a total of 60 points (30 points for the final copy, and ten points for each step in the process) and is a significant component to successfully completing this unit. Final copies will be graded using the 6 Trait Rubric.

## Appendix G

### Quiz 1: Chapters 1-3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions with COMPLETE sentences. Make sure you answer all parts of the question to receive full credit. Each answer is worth two points for a total of ten points. The bonus question can be used to replace another question on the test.

1. Who is telling the story? What type of novel is this?
2. How does the storyteller feel about the cotton picker's lot (station in life)?
3. Describe the character of Uncle Willie.
4. Why did Momma disfavor white writers?
5. How does the storyteller feel about pineapple? How can you tell?

BONUS: What did Marguerite think of Mr. Steward?

## Appendix G.1

### Answer Key, Quiz 1: Chapters 1-3

**Note:** Quizzes are adapted from *Novel Units Teacher Guide for I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Answers are written in complete sentence format and include the general information the student needs to receive full credit.

1. Who is telling the story? What type of novel is this?

*The author, Maya Angelou, is telling the story from the first person perspective. This type of novel is an autobiography.*

2. How does the storyteller feel about the cotton picker's lot (station in life)?

*The author feels both rage and sympathy for the cotton pickers. She thinks their life is unfair.*

3. Describe the character of Uncle Willie.

*Uncle Willie is a crippled adult male who assists Momma with the store and is helping to raise Maya and Bailey.*

4. Why did Momma disfavor white writers?

*(Answers may vary). She wanted the children to read, appreciate and remember Black writers, have pride in their own people, etc.*

5. How does the storyteller feel about pineapple? How can you tell?

*Maya loves pineapple. It is her favorite treat at Christmas and a commodity that she likes so much she has contemplated stealing or sneaking it at other times during the year.*

**BONUS:** Who is Mr. Steward and what did Marguerite think of him?

*Mr. Steward is the sheriff who warned Momma that there might be unrest because of whites being angered over a "black man messing with a white woman." Maya thinks he is self-important and condescending in the way he speaks and interacts with the Black community.*

## Appendix H

### Teacher Notes for lecture and discussion on: The Importance of Voice in Autobiographical Writing – SHOW DON'T TELL!

Ask the students if they generally hear strong voice in the following types of writing (traditional responses are in parenthesis next to each type of writing):

|                  |                |                     |                |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Diaries/journals | (strong voice) | Research papers     | (weak voice)   |
| Novels           | (strong voice) | News articles       | (weak voice)   |
| Business letters | (weak voice)   | Editorials/opinion  | (strong voice) |
| Children's books | (strong voice) | Cookbooks           | (weak voice)   |
| Resumes          | (weak voice)   | Autobiographies     | (strong voice) |
| Poetry           | (strong voice) | Instruction manuals | (weak voice)   |

Based on responses to above types of writing, ask students the following two questions:

- A. When is the use of strong voice appropriate/necessary?
- B. When is it useful to have a 'voiceless' piece?

Read this passage by Sandra Cisneros from *The House on Mango Street*, to the students, asking them to look for instances where the author uses her 'voice' to connect with the reader. You may choose additional passages to share with students as examples of strong/weak instances of voice.

*Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared. They think we're dangerous. They think we will attack them with shiny knives. They are stupid people who are lost and got here by mistake.*

*But we aren't afraid. We know the guy with the crooked eye is Davey the Baby's brother, and the tall one next to him in the straw brim, that's Rosa's Eddie V, and the big one that looks like a dumb grown man, he's Fat Boy, though he's not fat anymore nor a boy.*

*All brown all around, we are safe. But watch us drive into a neighborhood of another color and our knees go shakity-shake and our car windows get rolled up tight and our eyes look straight. Yeah. That is how it goes and goes.*

#### Exercise: Experimenting with Voice

Have students brainstorm a situation where they experienced anger or frustration with something or someone.

- A. Once students have a situation in mind, ask them to take out a sheet of paper and do a five-minute free write about that experience/situation, writing only in conversation (dialogue) format (all quotes, no description).
- B. Once the five minutes are up, have them flip over the sheet of paper and write about the SAME experience but using only descriptive writing (and no dialogue) to explain the circumstances that led to their frustration. Read the following questions aloud as a guide for their descriptive writing: What were you wearing? What body language did you use in the situation (body temperature, facial expressions, etc.)? What thoughts were running through your mind? How did you feel (think similes and metaphors)?

## Appendix I

### Quiz: Chapters 4-8

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions with COMPLETE sentences. Make sure you answer all parts of the question to receive full credit. Each answer is worth two points for a total of ten points. The bonus question can be used to replace another question on the test.

1. What is an anachronism? Who was the anachronism in Stamps?
2. What is “powhitetrash” and how did Momma deal with them?
3. How do Marguerite and Bailey feel about Rev. Howard Thomas and why?
4. Why was it unheard of or unusual for Momma to be addressed as “Mrs. Henderson”?
5. Why would Christmas presents provoke tears from Bailey and Marguerite?

**BONUS:** Write/draw a character web for one of the characters we have been introduced to thus far in the autobiography. To receive full credit your character web should include at least four distinct characteristics about the subject.

## Appendix I.1

### Answer Key, Quiz 2: Chapters 4-8

**Note:** Quizzes are adapted from *Novel Units Teacher Guide for I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Answers are written in complete sentence format and include the general information the student needs to receive full credit.

1. What is an anachronism? Who was the anachronism in Stamps?

*An anachronism is the representation of someone as existing or something as happening in other than chronological, proper, or historical order. In this case, Mr. McElroy (who lived next door to the store) is an anachronism because he was an independent Black man.*

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

*Answers will vary; ‘powhitetrash’ refers to poor/uneducated white people (in this case children). Momma anticipated their behavior, refused to acknowledge or be involved with their behavior and retained her dignity.*

3. How do Marguerite and Bailey feel about Rev. Howard Thomas and why?

*They despise/strongly dislike him because he offers lengthy table blessings to ensure he gets most/all of the food. (He also annoys the children by not remembering their names, and has an unpleasant appearance).*

4. Why was it unheard of or unusual for Momma to be addressed as “Mrs. Henderson”?

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

5. Why would Christmas presents provoke tears from Bailey and Marguerite?

*The reality of the gifts reminded them that their parents were alive, but had sent them away and were not a part of their lives.*

**BONUS:** Write/draw a character web for one of the characters we have been introduced to thus far in the autobiography. To receive full credit your character web should include at least four distinct characteristics about the subject.

*Answers will vary.*

*Example = Character: Bailey; students may describe Bailey has having black curly hair; being the pride of the family; possessing good looks/grace/charm; exhibiting outrageous behavior; loving and defending Maya; Maya’s only (and older) sibling.*

## Appendix J

### Quiz: Chapters 15-21

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions with COMPLETE sentences. Make sure you answer all parts of the question to receive full credit. Each answer is worth two points for a total of fourteen points. The bonus question can be used to replace another question on the test.

1. Who is Bertha Flowers? What advice or guidance does she offer Maya?
2. Explain the working environment Maya is subjected to at Mrs. Viola Cullinan's residence. What do they call her and how does Maya eventually react/achieve revenge?
3. Explain Bailey's reaction to a movie starring Kay Francis.
4. Why did dead-tired cotton pickers attend a revival after a long day's work? Explain
5. Why is watching the Joe Louis-Carnera fight a big deal to Maya's community in Chapter 19?
6. What do Maya and Louise Kendricks share?
7. Who is Joyce? What effect does she have on Bailey and Maya?

**BONUS:** Discuss your favorite scene/story in the book thus far. Add details and defend your opinion with examples in order to receive full credit.

## Appendix J.1

### Answer Key, Quiz 3: Chapters 15-21

**Note:** Quizzes are adapted from *Novel Units Teacher Guide for I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Answers are written in complete sentence format and include the general information the student needs to receive full credit.

1. Who is Bertha Flowers? What advice or guidance does she offer Maya?

*Bertha is a Black aristocratic woman in Stamps who takes Maya under her wing and mentors/advises her. She tells Maya to be intolerant of ignorance, but understanding of illiteracy, and asks Maya to use her voice (recite readings to her).*

2. Explain the working environment Maya is subjected to at Mrs. Viola Cullinan's residence. What do they call her and how does Maya eventually react/achieve revenge?

*Maya is talked down to and has to wait on Mrs. Cullinan and her white women friends. Her name is changed/shortened to "Mary" for the convenience of the whites. Maya rebels and gets even by breaking Mrs. Cullinan's favorite china and quitting the job.*

3. Explain Bailey's reaction to a movie starring Kay Francis.

*He becomes downcast and depressed by the film, because the actress Kay Francis looks like a white, identical version of his mother.*

4. Why did dead-tired cotton pickers attend a revival after a long day's work? Explain

*Although they were tired, they wanted to 'feed their souls' and the revival renewed their spirits and offered them the hope and optimism they were seeking regarding their place in heaven.*

5. Why is watching the Joe Louis-Carnera fight a big deal to Maya's community in Chapter 19?

*The fight reaffirms a Black man as the World Heavyweight Champion. In other words, the Black community feels empowered because of the victory of this strong, Black man.*

6. What do Maya and Louise Kendricks share?

*Louise Kendricks is Maya's first girlfriend. (They share a great friendship, giggles, Maya's first Valentine, etc.)*

7. Who is Joyce? What effect does she have on Bailey and Maya?

**(Continued)**

## Appendix J.1 (continued)

### Answer Key, Quiz 3: Chapters 15-21

*(Answer to #7)*

*Joyce is a poor orphan who lived briefly in Stamps with her widowed aunt. She is Bailey's first love that leaves him depressed. This in turn, angers Maya who hates seeing her brother under the control of this poor orphan.*

BONUS: Discuss your favorite scene/story in the book thus far. Add details and defend your opinion with examples in order to receive full credit.

*Answers will vary.*

## Appendix K Autobiography Peer Editing Rubric

Please read and edit your classmate’s essay using the rubric below to evaluate the following elements: mechanics (grammar, sentence structure, spelling, etc), organization, ideas/content, word choice, sentence fluency, and voice. Be thorough and constructive in your suggestions for improvement. The peer editing process (participation, rubric and end result) will be a factor taken into consideration when calculating your final grade for this writing assignment. *Note: Make sure the edits you make are valid and thorough, (for example, if you mark something “very good” you must be able to explain WHY).* You must have two completed rubrics from two different sources to complete the editing process and move on to final copy writing.

**Author’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Editor’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

|   | <b>Very Good<br/>(Minor Edits)<br/>5</b> | <b>Good<br/>(Some edits)<br/>3</b> | <b>Needs Work<br/>(Lots of edits)<br/>1</b> |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>MECHANICS</b><br>(Grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.)  |  |                                    |   |
| <b>ORGANIZATION</b><br>(Clear beginning, middle, end, transitions, focus, & logical sequence)   |  |                                    |   |
| <b>IDEAS/CONTENT</b><br>(Is it engaging? Does it hold the reader’s attention? Does it need more/less detail?)                                       |  |                                    |   |
| <b>WORD CHOICE</b><br>(Does the writer use interesting words and/or figurative language? Are the words the right fit for the piece?)                |  |                                    |   |
| <b>SENTENCE FLUENCY</b><br>(Check sentence structure for varied sentences with different lengths/beginnings, etc.? Do the sentences flow together?) |  |                                    |   |
| <b>VOICE</b><br>(Can you feel, relate to and understand the author’s experiences?)  |  |                                    |   |

## Appendix L

### Quiz: Chapters 22-26

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions with COMPLETE sentences. Make sure you answer all parts of the question to receive full credit. Each answer is worth two points for a total of ten points. The bonus question can be used to replace another question on the test.

1. In Chapter 22, Mr. George Taylor tells Maya and family a ghost story. Whose ghost spoke to him and what did it want?
2. Why does Maya so vividly remember Florida's funeral?
3. In Chapter 23 Maya graduates from 8<sup>th</sup> grade. How AND why does the mood change from the beginning of the chapter to the end?
4. How does Momma solve the problem of Maya's toothache? How is the issue of racism raised and dealt with in this chapter?
5. Why does Momma decide to take Maya and Bailey to their parents in California? Why would things in California be different than they are in Stamps, Arkansas?

**BONUS:**

In a three-column chart compare the characters of Momma, Vivian Baxter, and a contemporary mother figure you know.

## Appendix L.1

### Answer Key, Quiz 4: Chapters 22 –26

**Note:** Quizzes are adapted from *Novel Units Teacher Guide for I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Answers are written in complete sentence format and include the general information the student needs to receive full credit.

1. In Chapter 22, Mr. George Taylor tells Maya and family a ghost story. Whose ghost spoke to him and what did it want?

*The ghost of Mr. Taylor's recently deceased wife (Florida) spoke to him. She wanted children.*

2. Why does Maya so vividly remember Florida's funeral?

*It was her first funeral so it left a vivid impression in her mind. Also, Florida was fond of Maya and requested that Maya receive her gold brooch when she died.*

3. In Chapter 23 Maya graduates from 8<sup>th</sup> grade. How AND why does the mood change from the beginning of the chapter to the end?

*The mood changes from expectation and anticipation to profound disappointment. It changes because of the graduation address (by Edward Donleavy) that leaves Maya depressed by the lack of opportunities available to Black children.*

4. How does Momma solve the problem of Maya's toothache? How is the issue of racism raised and dealt with in this chapter?

*Momma drives Maya all the way to Texarkana to a Negro dentist when the local white dentist refuses to treat her. The white dentist refusing to treat a Black raises the issue of racism, despite the personal connection/relationship he has with Momma.*

5. Why does Momma decide to take Maya and Bailey to their parents in California? Why would things in California be different than they are in Stamps, Arkansas?

*Answers may vary. Momma decides this after Bailey sees a dead Negro body being discovered. California's racial climate and population was thought to be more tolerant than that of the South.*

**BONUS:**

In a three-column chart compare the characters of Momma, Vivian Baxter, and a contemporary mother figure you know.

*Answers will vary.*

## Appendix M

### Final Quiz: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (Chapters 27-34 and Book Synthesis)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions with COMPLETE sentences. Make sure you answer all parts of the question to receive full credit. This is the final quiz, therefore each answer should be well thought out and demonstrate critical thinking in order to receive full credit. **Because this quiz will serve as the final exam, each question is worth five points for a total of fifty points.** The bonus question can be used to replace another question on the test. If you need additional space you may attach a sheet of notebook paper to this test.

1. In Chapter 27, several changes are described that take place in San Francisco as WWII starts. Explain the changes that take place, especially with regard to ethnicity (Blacks, Asians, etc).
2. How does Maya define a good teacher?
3. Define Black Ethics as explained in Chapter 29. (Hint: think about how societal rules and/or education could be perceived differently depending on your race).
4. Why do people move from formal language to informal colloquial (or slang) speech? Give an example or instance of this happening (from life or the book).
5. What is the nature of the relationship between Maya and Dolores (Bailey Sr.'s girlfriend)? How does the relationship resolve itself?

(Continued)

### Appendix M (continued)

6. What is Maya's next home after she leaves Bailey Sr.'s friends? What kind of society do the junkyard kids create? What does Maya say she's learned from her month in the yard?
  
7. Look at these bits of wisdom from the book. Agree or disagree on each, and give your reasons for your answer:
  - a. "Growing up was not the painless process one would have thought it to be."
  - b. "...there comes a time when a man must cut the apron strings and face life on his own."
  
8. How does Maya's mother react to her streetcar aspirations? How do you think a parent today (or your own parent) would react?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. How does Maya summarize the plight of young Black females (Chapter 34)? Do you think this view was true in 1943?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Referring to the question above (#9) how has U.S. society changed (or not changed) from the time of Maya's childhood until now? Discuss racial issues as well as the similarities and differences in growing up (now and then) in America.

BONUS: Discuss the most vivid image (story, character, etc.) that you will take with you from reading this book. Draw a connection between the image you choose and either a) another book you've read; b) your life or c) a 'worldly' connection (pop culture, society, etc.)

## Appendix M.1

### Answer Key, Final Quiz and Book Synthesis

**Note:** Quizzes are adapted from *Novel Units Teacher Guide for I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Answers are written in complete sentence format and include the general information the student needs to receive full credit.

1. In Chapter 27, several changes are described that take place in San Francisco as WWII starts. Explain the changes that take place, especially with regard to ethnicity (Blacks, Asians, etc).

*The Japanese were relocated to camps inland and Southern Blacks were recruited to work in war factories. Rather than recognize the similarities of their treatment, the Blacks quickly took to the new stores, homes, and relative wealth. White soldiers and families moved in and there was an “air of collective displacement” (pt. 179).*

2. How does Maya define a good teacher?

*Answers will vary. A teacher who loves information, treats young people with dignity and respect, a teacher who can teach without a textbook, someone who stimulates their students to thirst for information, reading material, etc. “Stimulating instead of intimidating,” (pg. 217).*

3. Define Black Ethics as explained in Chapter 29. (Hint: think about how societal rules and/or education could be perceived differently depending on your race).

*Answers will vary. For those living on the fringe of the majority society (white, men, Christian or whatever the defined ‘majority’ is), showing some limited outward success is a virtue. In other words, small gains of individual minorities are viewed as gains by the collective whole. Also, minority groups receive two educations – a ‘book education’ (formal school) and a street education (reality/survival skills).*

4. Why do people move from formal language to informal colloquial (or slang) speech? Give an example or instance of this happening (from life or the book).

*Answers will vary. Usually, language change occurs because people want to accommodate or ‘fit in’ with those they are speaking to, or they want acceptance into a certain group. Ex = using formal language (proper English) with a parent or teacher and slang with a group of peers.*

5. What is the nature of the relationship between Maya and Dolores (Bailey Sr.’s girlfriend)? How does the relationship resolve itself?

*They dislike each other. When Bailey Sr. leaves after an argument, Maya’s attempts to offer Dolores sympathy result in a fight and Maya ends up with a bleeding cut, Maya is taken elsewhere and she eventually decides to leave.*

**(Continued)**

## Appendix M (continued)

6. What is Maya's next home after she leaves Bailey Sr.'s friends? What kind of society do the junkyard kids create? What does Maya say she's learned from her month in the yard?

*Maya lives with a group of young people in a junkyard. They create a society of communal support, self-preserving rules, and Maya gains self-confidence in this group where she is accepted for herself. She learns to drive, to curse, and to dance.*

7. Look at these bits of wisdom from the book. Agree or disagree on each, and give your reasons for your answer:

- a. "Growing up was not the painless process one would have thought it to be."
- b. "...there comes a time when a man must cut the apron strings and face life on his own."

*Answers will vary, accept appropriate responses.*

8. How does Maya's mother react to her streetcar aspirations? How do you think a parent today (or your own parent) would react?

*Answers will vary. Maya's mother is supportive, but she allows Maya to deal with the problems and injustices she encounters herself.*

9. How does Maya summarize the plight of young Black females (Chapter 34)? Do you think this view was true in 1943?

*Answers will vary, accept appropriate responses. Maya feels that while Black women become strong, their strength is a direct result of being caught in the crossfire of prejudice (based on color, gender, and powerlessness).*

10. Referring to the question above (#9) how has U.S. society changed (or not changed) from the time of Maya's childhood until now? Discuss racial issues as well as the similarities and differences in growing up (now and then) in America.

*Answers will vary.*

BONUS: Discuss the most vivid image (story, character, etc.) that you will take with you from reading this book. Draw a connection between the image you choose and either a) another book you've read; b) your life or c) a 'worldly' connection (pop culture, society, etc.)

*Answers will vary.*

## Appendix N

### Modified Final Quiz: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (Chapters 27-34 and Book Synthesis)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Make a character web/chart for each character listed below. Use complete sentences to describe each character. Characteristics may be physical or emotional, or you may explain specific plot scenes/experiences that described or involved a certain character. Each character web is worth five points for a total of fifty points. If you need additional space you may attach a sheet of notebook paper.

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: (5 characteristics)
7. Louise Kendricks: (5 characteristics)
8. Bertha Flowers: 5 characteristics
9. Character of your choice
10. Character of your choice

## Appendix N.1

### Answer Key, Modified Final Quiz and Book Synthesis

**DIRECTIONS:** Make a character web/chart for each character listed below. Use complete sentences to describe each character. Characteristics may be physical or emotional, or you may explain specific plot scenes/experiences that described or involved a certain character. Each character web is worth five points for a total of fifty points. If you need additional space you may attach a sheet of notebook paper.

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: (5 characteristics)
7. Louise Kendricks: (5 characteristics)
8. Bertha Flowers: 5 characteristics
9. Character of your choice
10. Character of your choice

**Grading/Evaluation notes:**

*Answers will vary for each character. Evaluate character webs based on the following criteria: did the student outline accurate information/qualities for each character? Did the web show an understanding of that person’s role in the book? Based on the responses, can you tell the student read, comprehended, and retained elements of the text?*