

Essential Question: To what extent are we all witnesses to history and messengers to humanity?

Learning Goal: We are learning how to analyze a poem's literary devices and connection to personal and societal history in order to interpret its meaning and connect to a similar text.

Activities:

1. Read the poem "Sympathy" by Laurence Dunbar. In our group chat explain why you think Sympathy is an effective title.
2. Discuss what the cage in the poem represents? Dunbar was an elevator operator does this change your thinking?

That is such an upsetting poem. I believe that the cage represents two things in this poem. I believe that it literally means a bird cage or being trapped in a confined area. I also think that it means emotionally trapped. This poem almost sounds like a plea for help.

Yes, Dunbar being an elevator operator makes perfect sense! He, like a bird, is trapped in a confined area for many hours, unable to move about and experience the fresh air and sunshine when he is on the clock. Unfortunately, this is how the cage bird spends his whole life.

3. Read a Maya Angelou's "I know Why a Caged Bird Sings"
4. Complete the attached graphic organizer.

Assessment

5. In a blog post:
 - a. Tell us more about the free bird. What was their take on the situation?
 - b. What phrases are continually repeated throughout the poem? Why did Angelou make that decision? What is so significant about those lines?
 - c. What message was Angelou trying to get across to her readers?
 - d. Compare the two poems what do they say about the human condition?

Sympathy

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!

When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;

When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing

Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;

And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,

When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,

But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

Caged Bird
BY MAYA ANGELOU

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

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

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

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

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

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

Free Bird	Caged Bird
<p>Actions/verbs</p> <p>Leaps Floats downstream Dips his wings Dares to claim Thinks of another breeze Names the sky his own</p>	<p>Action/verbs</p> <p>Stalks down Opens his throat to sing Sings with a fearful trill Longed for Sings of freedom Stands on the grave of dreams Shouts</p>
<p>Phrases that describe lifestyle</p>	<p>Phrases that describe lifestyle</p>
<p>“A free bird leaps/on the back of the wind”</p> <p>“dips his wing/in the orange sun rays”</p> <p>“he names the sky his own”</p>	<p>“stalks/down his narrow cage”</p> <p>“The caged bird sings /with a fearful trill/of things unknown”</p> <p>“stands on the grave of dreams”</p>
<p>Literary Device and how they impact mood, tone , or meaning</p>	<p>Literary Device and how they impact mood, tone , or meaning</p>
<p>Imagery- The images that goes along with the free bird and bright and beautiful. Angelou uses words like “the orange sun rays” and “the trade winds soft through the sighing trees”. This makes me think of a calm, warm, summer sunset. The free bird has a natural life, a happy life.</p> <p>Metaphors-”dips his wing/in the orange sun rays/and dares to claim the sky” what a beautiful metaphor this is. This is telling the reader that the free bird is flying free, claiming the sky as his own. He is happy and able to fly wherever he’d like, and these lines make this clear to the reader.</p> <p>Throughout the whole poem, the free bird has a rather calming and peaceful tone that follows him.</p>	<p>Imagery- The images that go with the cage bird are dark and depressing. Words like “stalks down his narrow cage” and “his wings are clipped and his feet are tied”. These make the reader ache for the caged bird. The are truly terrible and provide us with a sad picture in our minds. The caged bird has an unnatural life. A life that it is not right for it, thus making him beat and depressed, longing for freedom.</p> <p>Metaphors- “But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams /his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream” This dark metaphor is telling the reader that the bird is trapped, unable to accomplish what he wants. His dreams of being happy and free are dead, hence using the words</p>

“stands on the grave of dreams.” He is living in a “nightmare” as Angelou writes.

Throughout the poem, the caged bird has a very tragic, anxious, and fearful tone that follows him.