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***I Know Why the  
Caged Bird Sings***

BY MAYA ANGELOU



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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction

### Identity

**Objective:** Understanding Ms. Angelou's view of herself

### Activity

In a flashback, Ms. Angelou remembers an embarrassing incident in church as a child. She fantasizes that she is a beautiful, blond haired, blue-eyed, white child wearing a fancy dress. She feels that being beautiful and white would make everything right in her world. This is in stark contrast to how she sees herself: a “too-big negro girl, with nappy black hair, broad feet and a space between her teeth that would hold a number-two pencil.” (Pg. 3)

Using an 11 x 14 inch poster board, create a portrait of yourself. The portrait should depict you as you see yourself, not as you think others see you. Write a paragraph explaining your picture, and how these images have affected you. You may use any materials available to you including: pencils, pens, crayon, markers, paint, food, computer-generated images, fabric, and magazines—whatever you can find that creates the image you want. You should also include symbols that represent your interests. For example, if you play tennis, include a tennis racket in your portrait.

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 3****Motif****Objective:** Exploring the motif of racism**Activity**

Ms. Angelou talks about what she would say to St. Peter on Judgment Day if asked to give a testimonial to the sheriff's "kindness." Ms. Angelou feels the sheriff is just as much racist as the Klan. Both are symbols of hatred and racism.

What does the sheriff do or say to make Ms. Angelou feel this way? As a class, discuss the ways the sheriff shows he is racist. Then discuss his act of kindness.

Imagine you are St. Peter on judgment day. Debate whether or not the sheriff should be allowed into Heaven. Take a vote at the end of the debate to determine his fate.

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 6****Comparison****Objective:** Understanding the role of religion in the life of a Southern Fundamentalist**Activity**

Religion in the South at that time was the backbone of people's lives. Ms. Angelou relates an amusing anecdote about a church service gone out of control. Southern Fundamentalist churches are known for their high-energy services.

Compare the fervor of the church service Ms. Angelou described with a service of another religion. What are the similarities? What are the differences? Is one religion more devout than another? Choose a religion you would like to use as a comparison. You must be either very familiar with the religion you choose, or research it through sources such as family members, friends, clergy, the library, the Internet, or actually attending a service.



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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 13

### Writing a Newspaper Article

**Objective:** Identifying dramatic moments and relating them in the manner of a newspaper

#### Activity

Mr. Freeman's trial and mysterious death draw a morbid fascination to the trial from the people of St. Louis. It was an event that would have drawn headlines from the local newspapers.

Write a front-page newspaper article on the events of the trial and Mr. Freeman's death.

Write the story in the factual, detached, unbiased style commonly used by newspaper reporters. The article must contain the following elements:

- A bold headline that sums up the content of the article.
- The first paragraph should contain the basic facts: who, what, where, why, when, and how.
- The subsequent paragraphs should logically and honestly add detail and substance to the story for readers who want more information.
- The last paragraph should indicate how this event was resolved.
- Include at least one quote from a character in the novel.