

Making Sense of Poetry

EQ: What ideas about EQUALITY do Harlem Renaissance artists communicate?

Theme for English B

by Langston Hughes (1949)

The instructor said,

*Go home and write
a page tonight.*

*And let that page come out of you--
Then, it will be true.*

I wonder if it's that simple?

I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.
I went to school there, then Durham, then here
to this college on the hill above Harlem.

I am the only colored student in my class.
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:
hear you, hear me--we two--you, me, talk on this page.

(I hear New York, too.) Me--who?
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,
or records--Bessie, bop, or Bach.

I guess being colored doesn't make me not like
the same things other folks like who are other races.
So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.
But it will be

a part of you, instructor.
You are white--
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.
That's American.

Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.
But we are, that's true!

As I learn from you,
I guess you learn from me--
although you're older--and white--
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

POINT OF VIEW: TOPIC & TONE

1. **POINT OF VIEW:** Underline phrases that describe the **speaker and the audience** he is addressing.
2. The **topic** is the subject of the poem; the **theme** is the poet's message about the topic. **CIRCLE words** that identify the topic of the poem.
3. What is the topic of the poem? What **TONE** does the speaker convey through the **IMAGERY** associated with the topic?

The **topic** of the poem is _____.

Words that describe the **TONE** or speaker's attitude include:

_____.

STRUCTURE & THEME

4. There are three main **stanzas** in the poem. What lines best convey the **MAIN IDEA** and **purpose** of each stanza?

ll. 6-15 _____

ll. 16-27 _____

ll. 28-40 _____

THEME & PURPOSE: EQUALITY

5. What ideas about **EQUALITY** are conveyed through this poem about the relationship between a student and professor? How does the poem serve to as a **CALL TO ACTION**?

How do author's use stylistic devices such as imagery, figurative language, rhythm and rhyme to communicate tone and theme?

Identifying the topic	The poem titled “ _____ _____ _____ ” by _____	<input type="radio"/> examines <input type="radio"/> addresses <input type="radio"/> introduces <input type="radio"/> supports	<input type="checkbox"/> the idea of... <input type="checkbox"/> the relationship between... <input type="checkbox"/> the importance of.. <input type="checkbox"/> the reasons for...	_____ _____ _____ _____
Introducing the content	The writer uses / relies / cites ...	<input type="radio"/> imagery <input type="radio"/> metaphor <input type="radio"/> simile <input type="radio"/> rhythm <input type="radio"/> rhyme	<input type="checkbox"/> to explain... <input type="checkbox"/> to discuss... <input type="checkbox"/> to describe... <input type="checkbox"/> to support... <input type="checkbox"/> to illustrate...	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Identify Speaker & Tone	Its <i>speaker/ narrator/ persona</i> uses a _____ tone which	<input type="checkbox"/> illustrates ... <input type="checkbox"/> indicates ... <input type="checkbox"/> explains ... <input type="checkbox"/> discusses ... <input type="checkbox"/> describes...		_____ _____ _____ _____
Including key details	_____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="radio"/> is a key detail <input type="radio"/> is a powerful example <input type="radio"/> is essential information	<input type="checkbox"/> that illustrates ... <input type="checkbox"/> that explains ... <input type="checkbox"/> that proves <input type="checkbox"/> because ...	_____ _____ _____ _____
Conclusion	The examples / details / imagery / figures of speech found in the <i>poem</i>	<input type="radio"/> support <input type="radio"/> confirm <input type="radio"/> clarify <input type="radio"/> reinforce <input type="radio"/> emphasize	<input type="checkbox"/> the value of ... <input type="checkbox"/> the need for... <input type="checkbox"/> the link between... <input type="checkbox"/> the causes of...	_____ _____ _____ _____

