

STILL I RISE BY MAYA ANGELOU
ANNOTATION GUIDE

1. Poems are often best interpreted by first reading them aloud. Pair up with a partner. Take turns reading the poem aloud while your partner listens. What emotions do you hear in your partner's interpretation? Did you read the poem in a similar manner or differently?

2. Annotate the poem with your partner using the following questions:
 - Who do you think the speaker/narrator of the poem is? Is it a person? A cultural group? Identify words or phrases that help you identify the speaker/narrator.
 - How does the speaker/narrator seem to feel about herself (or itself)? Draw a face that represents that emotion (e.g., a smiley face, sad face or angry face) next to a word phrase that exhibits it. Have you ever felt that way about yourself? If so, share with your partner what makes you feel that way.
 - To whom do you think the poem is directed? Highlight words and phrases that support your answers and share them with your partner.
 - What message is the writer trying to give to the person or group to which she is writing? Have you ever had to give a similar message to someone? If so, when?
 - What do you believe the poem's overall theme is? Examples include hopelessness, strength, resiliency, spirit and anger. Write the theme you have identified at the top of the poem. Then draw an arrow to a word or phrase from the poem that supports that theme.
 - Do you see this poem in a historical context? If so, explain that context to your partner.
 - Finally, consider and share with your partner how your own knowledge, experiences and cultural identity influence the way you have chosen to interpret the poem. Have you interpreted it differently than your partner?