



8th Grade English: Reading: Module 2: Lesson 6: Section 4

Understanding Poetry

Maya Angelou as Poet and You as Poet, Too!

Maya Angelou uses imagery, metaphor, and simile to express an important quality about herself. She emphasizes this quality by repeating the words “but still” and “I’ll rise.” You may recall that a simile is a device closely related to a metaphor, but the difference is that a simile compares two things using “like” or “as,” such as this example: “My love is **like** a red, red rose.”

Instructions: Read each stanza carefully to find evidence that leads you to making an inference. When you are finished, mouse over the “Sample Response” button for a possible response. The first one has been completed for you.



Source: Harvest Moon Rising, Ennor, Flickr

Excerpts from **Still I Rise** by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Inference	Evidence
The speaker says that some people who are angry may choose to remember her in ways that are not true, but the speaker will overcome the lies.	“You may write me down in history With your bitter, twisted lies, . . . But like the dust, I’ll rise.” (“Like dust” is a simile)



Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Inference	Evidence

Sample Response

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Inference	Evidence

Sample Response



Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Inference	Evidence

Sample Response

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

Inference	Evidence

Sample Response



You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Inference	Evidence

Sample Response

Instructions: Now, after studying the entire poem, make an inference about what the poem means and why Angelou titled it as she did. Write your statement in the box below and then mouse over the “Sample Response” button to a possible response.

Sample Response



Instructions: One of Angelou's most interesting similes relates to oil wells. Think about anything related to machines, math, or science. At the same time, think of a serious and deep feeling. Like Angelou, try to connect the two. Here are some possibilities to get you started.

- What feeling do you have that is like an oil well?

- What feeling do you have that is like electricity?

- What feeling do you have that is like a magnet?

- What feeling do you have that is like a rocket launching?



Instructions: What is especially powerful about poetry is the way that it brings images and ideas together unexpectedly. Choose any topic you like and try your hand at writing a poem of your own, using as many of the features you have studied as possible. Below, you can write some notes or ideas in the right column before you create your finished product.



Source: Apollo 6 launch, Pil56, Wikimedia

Topic	Notes
<p>Figurative language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory imagery (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) • Metaphor • Simile • Personification • Alliteration • Onomatopoeia 	
<p>Inference: What would you like your reader to get from your poem?</p>	

Write your original poem here.