

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

English Language Arts, 10th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The first of five autobiographical works, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* focuses on the recollections and adult understanding of Maya Angelou. Growing up female and black in America in the 1930s and 1940s, she is sent at a young age to live with her grandmother in Arkansas, where she learns a great deal from this exceptional woman and the tightly knit black community there. These very lessons carry her through the hardships she endures later in life, including a tragic occurrence while visiting her mother in St. Louis and her formative years spent in California.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Environment and Identity**
 - Essential Question: "How do adversity and environment influence an individual's behavior and identity?"
- **Unit 2: Impacting Others**
 - Essential Question: "How does an individual shape his or her environment? How does one influence others?"
- **Unit 3: Seeking Knowledge**
 - Essential Question: "How and where do I find knowledge outside of my own experience? How do I incorporate this knowledge into future inquiry?"
- **Unit 4: Conscientious Objections**
 - Essential Question: "To what extent do multiple viewpoints influence our perception of societal issues? To what extent do those issues become our responsibility?"

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. W.10.3
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. W.10.9
- Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature. RL.10.6
- Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them. RI.10.3

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. RI.10.4
- Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose. RI.10.6
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.10.11
- Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums, determining which details are emphasized in each account. RI.10.7
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RI.10.11