

Name:

Day One

Langston Hughes: Jazz Poet

Part 1: Silent read

→ Who was Langston Hughes? Read silently.

When many people are asked about their favorite poet, they instantly say Langston Hughes. His well-loved poems include “Dreams,” “Mother to Son,” and “I, Too, Sing America.” What makes his writing stand out? His poems use everyday talk to speak to the world about hope and dreams. Langston also took the feeling of popular music and brought that energy to poetry.

Growing up in the 1900’s, Langston first began to write for his grade school friends and classmates. At just 19, he published his first poem in the NAACP magazine, *The Crisis*. Langston’s father was impressed and agreed to pay for Langston to attend college at Columbia University.

Although Langston enjoyed living in New York, the Ivy League college wasn’t right for him. As a Black student, he often faced racism. He also wanted to see more of life than a college classroom. Working on boats to pay his way, Langston traveled all over West Africa and Europe. He found jobs as a waiter and dishwasher in clubs just so he could hear the jazz music he loved.

What was fresh and different about Langston’s poetry? He became one of the innovators of jazz poetry. Jazz poems broke the old rules of rhythm in poetry. Jazz poems used short stanzas and repeated lines, just like popular music. Langston listened to jazz and blues music and wrote poetry with the same sounds. His poems also spoke out about racism and bigotry.



Day One

// one minute

Langston Hughes: Jazz Poet

Part 2: First timed read

WPM _____

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62

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95
108
110

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143
157
174
180

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211
225
240
242

Part 3: Comprehension and discussion

Why do people love Langston Hughes’s poems?

Why did he drop out of college?

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Part 4: Phrase-cued reading

- Read the passage **out loud** in phrases to your partner.
- Pause at each / mark for a phrase.
- Also pause at each // mark that shows the end of a sentence.

When many people are asked about their favorite poet, / they instantly say Langston Hughes. // His well-loved poems include “Dreams,” / “Mother to Son,” / and “I, Too, Sing America.” // What makes his writing stand out? // His poems use everyday talk to speak to the world / about hope and dreams. // Langston also took the feeling of popular music / and brought that energy to poetry. //

Growing up in the 1900’s, / Langston first began to write for his grade school friends / and classmates. // At just 19, / he published his first poem in the NAACP magazine, / *The Crisis*. // Langston’s father was impressed / and agreed to pay for Langston to attend college / at Columbia University. //

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I read the passage in phrases out loud to my partner.