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.
Mini-Lesson

**Topic: Langston Hughes (1902-1967)**

Langston Hughes was an American poet born in Joplin, Missouri. He wrote about black life during the twenties through the sixties and often included themes such as jazz, injustice, and culture. Hughes was very influential during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. At 18, he wrote The Negro Speaks of Rivers while on a train to Mexico. He was on his way to live with his father. Hughes was inspired after crossing the Mississippi River and realized it played a role in slavery. Other poems by Langston Hughes include:

**I, too, sing America**

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.

Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

**Dream Variations**

To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
   Dark like me—
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening . . .
A tall, slim tree . . .
Night coming tenderly
   Black like me.
Mini-Lesson

Topic: Free Verse & Enjambment

**Free Verse:** poems that have no consistent rhyme pattern or meter; usually follows the typical pattern of speech

**Guided Use:**
Find two poems that are written in free verse. Write the titles and authors below.

1. Title: __________________________________________
   Author: ________________________________________
2. Title: __________________________________________
   Author: ________________________________________

**Enjambment:** the continuation of a sentence or clause over a line-break

**Guided Use:**
Find two poems use enjambments as part of their form.

1. Title: __________________________________________
   Author: ________________________________________
2. Title: __________________________________________
   Author: ________________________________________
Theme for English B by Langston Hughes Questions

1. Write a summary of the poem (1-2 sentences).

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

2. Give two examples of enjambments use in this poem.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

3. Describe the tone of the poem. How do you know?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

4. What do the lines below mean?

   I guess you learn from me—
   although you’re older—and white—
   and somewhat more free.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
5. How might this poem be different if it were written today?

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

6. Describe the speaker.

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

7. How does the speaker show that he is just like other people, including the instructor?

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

8. In your opinion, is truth the same for everyone? Explain.

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________
Theme for English B by Langston Hughes KEY

Questions:

1. The speaker must write an essay about himself for his instructor. He questions his identity and if truth is the same for everyone.

2. Examples: lines 14 & 15; lines 29 & 30

3. The tone is somewhat ironic and sarcastic. Example: *So will my page be colored that I write?*

4. They are similar in some ways, but major differences separate them like age and race, and when it comes down to it the instructor has more rights because he is a white man.

5. Example: he probably wouldn’t want a pipe for Christmas, he probably wouldn’t use the word *colored*

6. The speaker is a black student who is concerned about education. He lives in Harlem during the Civil Rights Movement so is very aware of race tension and racism, especially because he is from the South. He is self-reflective and does not have a lot of money.

7. Examples: he describes the basic things in life like love, eating, and sleeping

8. Opinion
Theme for English B by Langston Hughes

Answer the following question in complete sentences:
* What things and experiences are part of your identity?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

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Make a Bubble Map below for “Theme for English B” with phrases from the poem that support the theme of identity and self.

I feel and see and hear
I like a pipe

Theme for English B
Theme for English B by Langston Hughes Writing

Write a poem in the style of Langston Hughes, however, write it as if it took place in modern society, rather than the Civil Rights Movement. Use vivid imagery.

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Explain the meaning of the poem.

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______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
What techniques did you use that are similar to Langston Hughes? How do these techniques impact the meaning?

____________________________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________________________

What is the mood and tone of the poem? How did you convey this mood and tone to the reader? (Use specific details.)

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

How could you alter the mood and tone if you rewrote the poem?
I’ve known rivers:
I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in
human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New
Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all
golden in the sunset.

I’ve known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
Compare the poems “Theme for English B” and “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes. In particular, compare and contrast how the speakers feel about their own identity and the identity of African Americans.
**Poetry Analysis**

**TAP-IT OUTLINE**

**T-Title:** What do you think the title means and why is it significant to the poem?

**A-Attitude:** What is the speaker and the poet’s attitude or mood? Who is the speaker?

**P-Paraphrase:** Translate the poem into your own words. Tell the reader what each line or stanza means.

**I-Imagery:** What kinds of imagery and poetic devices does the poet use? What is their figurative meaning? How do these poetic devices enhance the poem?

**T-Theme:** What is the overall theme or message the poet is trying to tell the reader?

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**Think as I Think**

By Stephen Crane

“Think as I think,” said a man,
“Or you are abominably wicked; You are a toad.”
And after I had thought of it, I said,
“I will, then, be a toad.”
**Poetry Analysis**

**EXAMPLE OUTLINE**

**T- Title:** “Think as I Think” is the first line of the poem, and also is about the message of the poem. The man wants the speaker to follow him and do what he does; think what he thinks.

**A- Attitude:** The man’s attitude is forceful and bossy. The speaker’s attitude is a combination of nonchalance and defiance. He doesn’t get mad; he just declines and thinks nothing of the man’s criticism of his choice to think for himself.

**P- Paraphrase:**

“Think as I think,” said a man,

This line is about the man telling the speaker that he must see things the same way as he does. The speaker must have the same opinions and thoughts as him.

“Or you are abominably wicked; You are a toad.”

If the speaker doesn’t have the same opinions as the man, he will be a horrible person.

And after I had thought of it, I said,

The speaker carefully thought this through before reacting. He didn’t just lash out at the man.

“I will, then, be a toad.”

The speaker decided that it is better to be hated or looked down upon than to give up his own free will. He won’t give up his ability to think for himself and make his own judgments.

**I- Imagery:**

When the man says, “You are a toad,” this is a metaphorical statement. Of course, the speaker is not actually an amphibian. The man means this as a put-down. He means that the speaker will be horrid and undesirable. The poet also uses rhyme and repetition in this poem by ending both the second and fourth lines with the word toad.

**T- Theme:**

The main message I think the poet is trying to convey to the reader is that it’s better to be yourself than care what others think about you. If you allow a person to direct who you are, you will lose yourself and your freedom to make your own choices.
Poetry Analysis

CHOOSE 3 POEMS FROM LANGSTON HUGHES AND COMPLETE AN ANALYSIS OUTLINE FOR EACH. YOU WILL CHOOSE YOUR BEST OUTLINE AND WRITE ONE ANALYSIS ESSAY.

YOUR ANALYSIS MUST BE ORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

T: TITLE (INTRODUCTION)
A: ATTITUDE
P: PARAPHRASE
I: IMAGERY
T: THEME (CONCLUSION)

- Proofread your analysis.
- Use appropriate and correct vocabulary.
- Choose poems that really speak to you.
- Read the poem many times, silently & aloud to get a deep understanding of it.
- Think about the relationship between the poems on each page.
- Look up the author—this usually gives you some clues as to the theme or attitude of the poem.
- Use a dictionary and thesaurus to help you find just the right words.
- Make your writing flow: Avoid run-on or choppy sentences. Don’t use any questions in your essay. They weaken your position.
Sample Essay: Think As I Think

I’ve always been the black sheep in the family. I stick out like a sore thumb. I never fit in. The poem “Think As I Think”, by Stephen Crane, perfectly fits my outlook on life. The title is also the first line in the poem and the first line of dialogue between the two men. It indicates that the man wants the poem’s speaker to do as he does.

There is a contrast between the two attitudes of the speaker and the man. The man’s attitude is forceful and bossy. However, the overall attitude of the poem is that of the speaker: a combination of nonchalance and defiance. He doesn’t get irate; he politely declines. The speaker thinks nothing of the man’s criticism of his choice to think for himself.

The first line of the poem is about the man asserting his directive. He is forcing the speaker to have the same thoughts and opinions as his own. In the second line, “Or you are abominably wicked; you are a toad”, the man is asserting that if the speaker doesn’t follow him he will be a horrible person. “And after I had thought of it, I said,” shows the reader that the speaker deliberately took the time to carefully mull over this man’s insults. He didn’t just lash out at the man in anger without thinking. The final line of the poem summarizes the speaker’s overall attitude, “I will, then, be a toad.” It is clear that the speaker decided it is better to be hated or looked down upon than to give up his own free will. The lost of his ability to think for himself and make his own judgments is more important than how others view him.

The poet uses repetition to reinforce the vulgar implications made by the man. Both the second and fourth lines end with the word toad. When the man says, “You are a toad,” this is a metaphorical statement. Of course, the man will not actually become an amphibian. The man means this as a put-down to mean that the speaker will be horrid and unappealing.

Middle school is not the only time in our lives that we are faced with peer pressure. This poem perfectly demonstrates that even in adulthood there are people who will try and bully you or influence you to make certain decisions. The main message the poet is trying to convey to the reader is that it’s better to be yourself than care what others think of you. If you allow another person to direct who you are, you lose yourself and your freedom. This poem is just like my parents trying to teach its child to say no to peer pressure, but it’s not as long winded!
POETRY ANALYSIS RUBRIC

(15—5 POINTS X 3) COMPLETED TAPIT OUTLINES

T-TITLE: 3-5 sentences, explains the meaning of the title, correctly punctuates title, includes poet’s name

ATTITUDE: 3-5 sentences, gives the speaker and explains the mood

PARAPHRASE: 3-5 sentences, paraphrases key parts of the poem

IMAGERY: 3-5 sentences, identifies and explains figurative language

THEME: 3-5 sentences, identifies a theme, explains and expands on it

TOTAL: ________/40 points  Grade: ____________