

iCONN Learning Activity African American Poet

Level: Middle School

Task: Research a female African American poet from the 20th century to learn how their life experience is reflected in their work. Students will 1) write a poem on the subject of one of the selected poet that reflects their own life experience related to the topic and 2) develop an accompanying narrative that describes factors that contribute to the difference in perspective.

Research Question: How do my social and cultural life experiences influence my perspective on a subject?

Content Area(s): Language Arts, Learning Resources and Information Technology, Social Studies

Content Standards:

Language Arts:

4. Students will use the language arts to explore and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Learning Resources and Information Technology:

3. Students will demonstrate a command of information skills and strategies to locate and use effectively print, nonprint and/or electronic resources to solve problems, conduct research and pursue personal interests.
4. Students will apply evaluative criteria to the selection, interpretation, analysis, reorganization and synthesis of information from a variety of sources and formats.
5. Students will use appropriate technologies to create written, visual, oral and multimedia products to communicate ideas, information or conclusions to others.

Social Studies:

1. Students will develop historical thinking skills, including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time; contextualizing, comprehending and analyzing historical literature; researching historical sources; understanding the concept of historical causation; understanding competing narratives and interpretation; and constructing narratives and interpretation.

iCONN Database: *Discovering Collection* and *Wilson Biographies Plus*

Search Strategy (*Discovering Collection*)

1. Click on *Discovering Collection*
2. Click on *Literature Search*
3. Use the pull down menus to select Gender, Nationality, Ethnicity, Birth Year and Genre for the search: *Female, American, African American, after 1900, Poetry*
4. Click on *Search*
5. Choose an author and biography from the citation list and click on the highlighted author name to read the biography
6. Click on *Search for any documents that maybe available on this person* to view other types of information about the selected author (criticism/plot summaries, poem text, etc.)
7. Click on the highlighted document title to view the document

Search Strategy (*Wilson Biographies Plus*)

1. Click on *Wilson Biographies Plus*
2. Click on *Search Plus*
3. Type **20 in cn** in the first search box and use the drop down menu to select *words anywhere*
4. Use the drop down menus to select Gender, Ethnic Background and Profession/Genre for the search: *Female, African American, Poets*
5. Click on *Search Now* and choose an author from the citation list
6. Click on the highlighted author name to read the biography
7. Click on *MORE INFORMATION* at the top of the biography (not always available) for additional information such as full-text articles, article citations and abstracts and book reviews.

8. Click on highlighted resource listed to view additional material.

Adaptations for Differentiated Learning:

iCONN Database: *InfoTrac Junior Edition*

Search Strategy

1. Click on *InfoTrac Junior Edition*
2. Click on *Subject search* and type the name of a particular African American female poet using “and” with the first and last name (e.g. *Maya and Angelou*) in the search box
3. Click on *Find* and then click on the highlighted *View* to select an encyclopedia, newspaper or periodical articles
4. Click on “check out” to read texts

iCONN Database: *Kids InfoBits*

Search Strategy

1. Click on *Kids InfoBits*
2. Type either *African Poet* or the name of a particular African American female poet such as *Maya Angelou* in the search box and click on Search.
3. Select one of the subject groups listed and click on *View*.
4. Click on any one of the labeled tabs (Reference, Magazines, etc.) to get a list of documents in that category.
5. Click on highlighted document title in the citation list to read an article.

iCONN Database: *What Do I Read Next?*

Search Strategy

1. Click on *What Do I Read Next?*
2. At the top of the page, check off levels and categories that you want to exclude from your search. Click on the bullet labeled *adults* after *Find books for* to limit your search to material for young adults and children
3. Type the name of a person in the search box (e.g. *Maya Angelou*)
4. Click on box labeled *Name contains* and then click on *Search*
5. Click on highlighted title for an overview of the work
6. Click on the highlighted author’s name for biographical information and a list of other works by the author