

# What to do today

*IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.*

## 1. Read a profile

- Read [Maya Angelou – Author Profile](#)
- Which three facts about Maya Angelou do you think are most important? Write these in one sentence each. Why do you think this?

## 2. Watch three video performances of the poem

- Watch these three video performances of the poem:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pAxGbTwFm4>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg9rS4rVjl>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZzOxWAxde0>
- Make some *Notes* about these performances. What did you notice and like? Was there anything that you disliked?

## 3. Practise performing the poem

- Practise reading the poem out loud.
- Work on the first verse. Decide which words to emphasise and what expression you will use. Practise until you can speak really confidently.
- Challenge yourself to read the other verses just as well.

*Well done! Read the poem to someone. What do they like about your performance?*

## Try the Fun-Time Extras

- Make a recording of your performance and share it with someone else.
- Use this website to find out more about Maya Angelou and make a poster about her like. [https://kids.kiddle.co/Maya\\_Angelou](https://kids.kiddle.co/Maya_Angelou)

## ***Maya Angelou – Author Profile***



Maya Angelou was born in Missouri in the southern USA in 1928. She was the descendant of generations of people who had been imprisoned as slaves.

She experienced many difficulties in her family when she was growing up and was very often treated unfairly.

She worked at all sorts of jobs once she had left school, including as a cook, as a dancer and singer, as a journalist and as a campaigner for civil rights. She also directed films and acted in the theatre!

From very early on she had loved reading, memorising poetry and writing, and published her first book in the 1960s. She was famous for her memoirs and autobiographical pieces, the first of which was called *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*.

## ***Caged Bird***

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another  
breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the  
sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn  
bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave  
of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare  
scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are  
tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou,  
*The Complete Collected Poems of Maya  
Angelou*  
Virago, 1995

## Notes

		+	-
1.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pAxGbTwFm4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pAxGbTwFm4</a>		
2.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg9rS4rVjl">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg9rS4rVjl</a>		
3.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZzOxWAXde0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZzOxWAXde0</a>		