

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Writing Assignment

Overview: For this assignment you will complete five different pieces. You will get to select your writing from a variety of options. Be sure to follow the directions so that your final writing collection has each of the required parts. All of your writing pieces should be typed. Be sure to consider the extensive revision that was required for a successful score on the last essay. You will want to take that knowledge into the process of perfecting these pieces before turning them in.

Part One: Personal response to the following five questions:

1. Would you recommend *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*? Explain your position using a specific explanation.
2. What experience would you identify as being the most important in Maya's life? Select one scene from the book, and explain why it is significant for Maya.
3. How is the genre of memoir different from autobiography? Do you think memoir is an important or worthwhile genre?
4. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is based in a variety of important historical events in the USA. Identify one of those historical events, and how that event shaped both Maya and the United States. You may want to use a source to answer this question.
5. How does *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* relate to the short texts we read at the beginning of the year? Identify at least one of the short texts, and make a connection between that text and *Caged Bird*.

Part Two: Select **ONE** of the following two options.

Options A: For this option you will write a standard, persuasive 13 sentence essay. You can write on a topic that personally interests you, but the topic must use *I Know Why the Caged Bird* as the central piece of evidence. Some example topics include:

- How does equality function as a central theme in *Caged Bird*?
- What is the significance of the title *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*?
- Who is the most important person in Maya's growth toward being a strong and independent woman?
- Should *Caged Bird* be banned from schools because of the sexual content?
- Is sharing experiences about abuse important or worthwhile?
- At the end of the novel, is Maya still "caged"?

Option B: For this option, you will write a short creative writing piece where you re-tell a scene from the novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* from the perspective of a different character (not Maya). This means you will write creatively using the first person perspective from a character of your choice. It is important that you closely examine the scene in the book before you start writing. You should consider your word choice and your use of literary devices such as metaphor, personification and sensory detail. You will also want to select a very short and specific scene, so your writing can also be short and specific. Your scene should be two pages or less.

Part Three: Select **THREE** of the following options.

Options C: Poem – write a poem either reflecting a theme, character or scene from the text.

Option D: Imagery Art – For this option you will select an image from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and artistically depict it through drawing, collage, painting or whatever artistic medium you like. Your art should incorporate the passage from the text that inspired it.

Option E: Mind Map – Create a mind map that explores Maya Angelou’s young life. You should identify major experiences, themes and people that shaped her.

Option F: Literary List – *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is a poetic memoir. For this option you will create a list of 10 outstanding examples of literary devices that you select from the memoir. Your list must include at least one example of a metaphor, one simile, one example of personification, one example of sensory language that uses smell and one example of sensory language that uses taste.

Option G: Character Art: For this option you will select a character from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and artistically depict the person through drawing, collage, painting or whatever artistic medium you like. Your art should incorporate at least one passage from the text that inspired it.

Option H: Research: For this option you should research Maya Angelou’s life AFTER the novel ends. We know about the beginning of her life, but what happened next. Write one to three paragraphs explaining a few important events in her life. Be sure not to plagiarize! It would be very tempting to find this information on the internet; however, you may only use sources from EBSCO.

Option I: Create a recipe for one of the characters in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Be sure to consider word choice and character traits as you compile the “ingredients” for a character.

Grading Criteria:

Since the content of this project will be unique for each student, there will be three different rubrics used for assessment. For Part One, all students will be expected to use content that is supported by the novel. This means your answers might include direct quotes and examples from the novel. For Part Two, students who select the creative piece will be expected to use interesting and creative detail while the students writing the essay will need a strong thesis that is defended by the novel. All collections will be graded using these general assessment points, but you will receive a specific rubrics before the final due date that addresses your specific choices.

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Content – The content for each piece should reflect clear understanding of the novel.

Word Choice – word choice should be appropriate for each different genre. While an essay might have formal language, a creative writing piece might try to capture some of the characteristics of a character through word choice.

Writing Conventions – this includes spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Organization

Creativity

Voice