**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=Adg9rS4rVjI>

<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>

***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**

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| **1.** | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pAxGbTwFm4> |  |  |
| **2.** | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg9rS4rVjI> |  |  |
| **3.** | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZzOxWAxde0> |  |  |