

**Grades 7-8 Lesson Plan**  
**Live with Purpose**  
**Ambitions and Aspirations**



**“Still I Rise”**  
**by: Maya Angelou**



# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

<p><b>OBJECTIVES:</b> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</p>	<p><b>STRATEGIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drawing/Coloring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think/Pair/Share</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Questions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large Group</li> </ul> <p>*This poem requires a level of maturity on the part of your students. Please use accordingly.</p>
<b>MATERIALS:</b>	Computer/laptop; internet (with access to YouTube); Smart Board; copies of K-W-L Maya Angelou; copy of Biography Brief; copies of Figurative Language & Literary Devices Guide; copies of “Still I Rise” poem; copies of Poem Analysis Worksheet; copies of Figurative Language Word Search Puzzle
<b>Engage:</b> Hook the students	Handout the Maya Angelou K-W-L Worksheet. Allow students time to fill in the first and second section of the K-W-L worksheet. Read the biographical brief of Maya Angelou aloud.
<b>Explore:</b> Students make sense of a concept through observations.	Hand out “Still I Rise” poem. Read the poem aloud. Play the YouTube video of Maya Angelou reciting her poem “Still I Rise”. <a href="https://youtu.be/qviM_GnJbOM?si=w4Rnl-X173G8glG">https://youtu.be/qviM_GnJbOM?si=w4Rnl-X173G8glG</a> Hand out the Figurative Language & Literary Devices Guide. Allow students to use the Guide as they complete the Poem Analysis. Re-read the poem aloud. Hand out the Poem Analysis Worksheet. Allow students time to complete the assignment. Hand out the Figurative Language Word Search Puzzle. Allow students time to complete the assignment. Allow students time to complete the 3 <sup>rd</sup> part of the K-W-L.
<b>Explain:</b> Teacher introduces formal vocabulary and language to students.	ambition    trod        meeting    bear aspirations    beset        welling    oppress haughtiness    sassiness    swelling    suppress
<b>Elaborate:</b> Students apply what they have learned.	Students will determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama. Students will determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
<b>Evaluate:</b> assessment.	Teachers will select which activities to use as formal/informal assessments.
<b>Enrichment/Service-Learning Project</b>	<a href="#">Warm Feet for Warriors</a> Provide comfort for brave soles. Believe it or not, one of the items that is most requested from Service Members and Veterans is socks! Just think how nice a brand-new pair of socks feel when you slip your feet in...Soldiers’ Angels wants to help keep our Service Members and Veterans’ toes feeling toasty, and you can help! Donate socks individually or start a sock collection drive & send us <b>new</b> socks in all colors and sizes in their original packaging. Print project completion certificates <a href="#">here</a> .

# Wreaths Across America Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

**Maya Angelou K-W-L** Name \_\_\_\_\_

What I KNOW:	What I WANT to KNOW:	What I LEARNED:

**Maya Angelou K-W-L** Name \_\_\_\_\_

What I KNOW:	What I WANT to KNOW:	What I LEARNED:

Maya Angelou Biographical Sketch

# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

### Biography Brief Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou is one of the most influential voices of our time. However, she had a turbulent childhood. After her parents' divorce, she was sent to live with her grandmother in racially divided Stamps, Arkansas, where she experienced the brutality of racial discrimination.

She also absorbed the unshakable faith and values of traditional African-American family, community and culture. After being sent back to live with her mother, she was raped at the age of eight by her mother's friend. She confided the abuse to her brother, leading to the rapist's arrest. Upon getting out of jail, the rapist was killed, many believe by Maya's uncles.

She believed her voice killed him since she told her brother of the crime. Subsequently she went mute for nearly six years. She was then sent back to live with her grandmother where a teacher helped her regain her voice, her confidence, and her pride.

She went on to become an author, actress, journalist, civil rights worker, and teacher, using her voice for positive change.

# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

### Figurative Language & Literary Devices Guide

<p><b>Alliteration</b> is repetition of the same sound at the beginning of words. Example: Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.</p>	<p><b>Allusions</b> reference something famous that readers likely know about. They can refer to written works, songs, famous people, historical events, mythological figures, or even television shows. Example: He was the Romeo to her Juliet. (Refers to Romeo and Juliet)</p>	<p><b>Assonance</b> the repetition of the sound of a vowel. Example: The light of the fire is a sight.</p>
<p><b>Hyperbole</b> exaggerates something to make a point. Hyperbole in literature adds color and depth to a character and to an argument. Example: He snores like a freight train.</p>	<p><b>Idioms</b> are figures of speech that don't make any sense on their own, but they make perfect sense to native English speakers. When an idiom is overused or very common, it's also known as a cliché. Example: I heard the news straight from the horse's mouth.</p>	<p><b>Metaphors</b> make comparisons between two things that share one attribute. They state that one thing is another thing. But like all figurative language, metaphors aren't literal. You need to think about each thing to figure out how they are alike. Metaphors can be found in poems and poetic language, but they also appear in everyday speech. Example: My house is a three-ring circus.</p>
<p>In <b>metonymy</b> (met-ON-oh-me) a word becomes linked with a larger concept to the point where it can stand for that concept. Example: Please lend me your ear.</p>	<p><b>Onomatopoeia</b> words that sound like what they mean. Examples: buzz, hiss</p>	<p><b>Personification</b> giving human-like attributes to an in-human thing. Example: The wind howled outside of my window during the storm.</p>
<p>A <b>simile</b> compares two things using the words like or as. Unlike metaphors, they explicitly state the quality they're comparing between two things. Example: He is like a bull in a china shop.</p>	<p><b>Symbolism</b> occurs when a word has its own meaning but represents something entirely different. Example: A dark cloud settled over the house after Dad moved away.</p>	<p>A <b>synecdoche</b> (sin-ECK-doh-key) uses part of a noun to represent the whole thing. It can also use the whole noun to represent part of a noun. Example: My mom is the brains of the family.</p>

**Wreaths Across America**  
**Lesson Plan**

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

“Still I Rise”  
BY MAYA ANGELOU

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the  
tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and  
fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously  
clear

I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors  
gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the  
slave.

I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

**Wreaths Across America  
Lesson Plan**

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Poem Analysis Worksheet**

Poem Title \_\_\_\_\_ Author \_\_\_\_\_

Poetic Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Rhyme Scheme:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**1. Imagery-What senses does the author appeal to in the poem?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Give an example of the author's use of imagery.**

---

**3. Give 2 examples of the author's use of similes and a brief explanation of each.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

2. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

**4. Give two examples of the author's use of metaphors and a brief explanation of each.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

# Wreaths Across America Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Give two examples of the author's use of alliteration and a brief explanation of each.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Give two examples of the author's use of assonance and a brief explanation of each.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. What is the irony in the author's statement "You may trod me in the very dirt, but still, like dust, I'll rise."**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. How does the author allude to slavery?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Wreaths Across America  
Lesson Plan**

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

9. What is "History's shame" an example of?

10. What literary device is the author using by exaggerating herself as representing the hopes and dreams of all of her slave ancestors, and all black people, especially black women?

11. What is the theme of "Still I Rise"?

12. Pick one of the following, and describe its symbolism:

- a. Oil wells in the second stanza of the poem
- b. Gold mines in the fifth stanza of the poem
- c. Diamonds in the seventh stanza of the poem.

13. Summarize the poem "Still I Rise"

Answer Key

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

### Poem Analysis

Poem Title Still I Rise Author Maya Angelou

Poetic Form: Lyric Poem

**Rhyme Scheme:** The poem has nine stanzas with uneven line sets. The first seven stanzas are quatrains with four lines and an ABCB rhyme scheme, while the eighth stanza has six lines and an ABABCC rhyme scheme, and the ninth stanza has nine lines and an ABABCCBBB rhyme scheme. The final two stanzas break from this structure by inserting the phrase "I rise" as separate lines, which creates an AABB rhyme scheme.

**1. Imagery-What senses does the author appeal to in the poem?**

The imagery in "Still I Rise" is visual.

**2. Give an example of the author's use of imagery.**

- a. oil wells pumping in her living room
- b. sad and slumped-over people
- c. dark oceans
- d. bright sunrises.

**3. Give 2 examples of the author's use of similes and a brief explanation of each.**

- a. "But still, like air, I'll rise" (simile)—No matter what the speaker's oppressors do to harm her, she will rise above the challenges, just as air rises.
- b. "But still, like dust, I'll rise" (simile)—As in the air simile, the speaker will rise above the pain her oppressors try to inflict, just as dust rises in the air.
- c. "I walk like I've got oil wells" (simile)—The speaker is so confident in her demeanor that she walks with a swagger that suggests the wealth of a person who has struck oil.
- d. "Just like moons and like suns" (simile)—The speaker compares the certainty of her courage and persistent determination to the certainty and repetitive patterns of the lunar and solar cycles.
- e. "I laugh like I've got gold mines" (simile)—The speaker laughs with the confidence of someone who is wealthy, as if gold has been discovered in her own backyard. She may not be wealthy in a financial sense, but she possesses a great wealth of spirit and hope.
- f. "Shoulders falling down like teardrops" (simile)—The speaker refers to being sad to the point that one's shoulders droop down or collapse, just as tears fall

**4. Give two examples of the author's use of metaphors and a brief explanation of each.**

- a. "You may trod me in the very dirt" (metaphor)—The speaker states that even if her oppressor tries to trample on her as one might trample an object or living creature in the dirt, she will still rise. The speaker is not literally squashed by the oppressor, but the oppressor nonetheless tries to trample on her spirit.
- b. "You may shoot me with your words" (metaphor)—The speaker refers to the violence of shooting with a gun, but she uses the metaphor to illustrate instead the pain of her oppressor's hateful language. She will not be pierced by the harshness of his words.
- c. "You may cut me with your eyes" (metaphor)—The speaker refers to violence again, this time using the example of cutting, as with a knife. However, she refers to the oppressor's cruel looks as so painful and hurtful that his regard is sharp and cutting, like a knife.

# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

d. "You may kill me with your hatefulness" (metaphor)--The oppressor's hatefulness could literally kill her, but in this line the speaker speaks of death metaphorically. The oppressor's hate toward her might kill her spirit, but she will still rise above the pain.

e. "I'm a black ocean" (metaphor)—The speaker refers to herself as a powerful force of nature. She is as strong and as majestic as the ocean, and the term "black" denotes her race. She is a powerful black woman.

f. "I am the dream and the hope of the slave" (metaphor)—The speaker embodies the hopes and dreams of her slave ancestors. She wants to achieve all that they were unable to do.

g. "Did you want to see me broken" (metaphor)—The speaker refers to a broken spirit.

### 5. Give two examples of the author's use of alliteration and a brief explanation of each.

a. "Dance like I've got diamonds" (alliteration)—The words beginning with the consonant "d" are examples of alliteration. The line rolls off the tongue when spoken aloud, suggesting the joy and ease of the speaker dancing.

b. "Does my sassiness upset you" (alliteration)—The consonant "s" is repeated here, making the line very taunting.

c. "Does my sexiness upset you" (alliteration)--The consonant "s" is repeated here, making the line very taunting.

d. "Huts of history's shame" (alliteration)—The consonant "h" makes the line heavy in sound, like the meaning of the phrase.

### 6. Give two examples of the author's use of assonance and a brief explanation of each.

a. "Bitter, twisted lies" (assonance)—The "i" vowel is repeated here, making the impact of the word "lies" even more powerful.

b. "Welling and swelling" (assonance)—The letter "e" sound and the rhyme of the two words creates a powerful image of the speaker rising like an ocean's tides.

### 7. What is the irony in the author's statement "You may tread me in the very dirt, but still, like dust, I'll rise."

In trying to oppress her, the oppressors are actually giving her the strength and will to survive. Treading her into the dirt is intended to stop her from moving forward. But it has the opposite effect, merely strengthening her resolve and making her rise higher than ever. The refrain "I rise" shows her continued resistance.

### 8. How does the author allude to slavery?

The poet alludes to slavery and the slave trade at the end of the poem. The "huts of history's shame" likely refer to where slaves were housed, and the poet mentions slavery explicitly just once near the poem's conclusion.

### 9. What is "History's shame" an example of?

Personification-it personifies history and gives it the attribute of feeling an emotion like shame.

### 10. What literary device is the author using by exaggerating herself as representing the hopes and dreams of all of her slave ancestors, and all black people, especially black women?

The author is using hyperbole.

11. What is the theme of "Still I Rise"? The theme of "Still I Rise" celebrates the ambition, strength, resilience, and courage of Black women, and encourages them to stand up and rise above the oppression and discrimination.

### 12. Pick one of the following, and describe its symbolism:

a. Oil wells in the second stanza of the poem

# Wreaths Across America

## Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

The author describes her confident manner of walking as what one might expect from someone who has “oil wells” pumping in her home. The speaker is suggesting that she is rich and powerful—not in a monetary sense, but rather in spirit. Her wealth of courage and determination make her untouchable and give her control over her life, just as a rich person with oil wells presumably has enough money to live as he or she pleases.

### **b. Gold mines in the fifth stanza of the poem**

In the fifth stanza, the speaker makes the poem’s second reference to a symbol of wealth. This time, she describes her proud attitude, which may even be interpreted as arrogance. Once again, she is so full of pride and confidence that her carefree laugh suggests that she has gold mines in her own backyard. Like the oil wells, the gold mines represent not just wealth, but perpetual wealth—the oil keeps pouring out of the wells, and the gold keeps coming out of the mines. She does not have a fixed amount of wealth (courage, determination)—it is limitless. Like a gold mine or oil well, she is the actual source.

**c. Diamonds in the seventh stanza of the poem.** In the seventh stanza the speaker makes the poem’s last reference to a symbol of wealth. In this provocative stanza, she describes her liberated spirit. Again, diamonds represent wealth, power, and beauty. It is a cliché that women love diamonds, and the jewel is often considered a sign of royalty.

### **13. Summarize the poem “Still I Rise”**

Answers will vary. But should include the authors ambitions and resilience to fulfill her dreams and hopes for freedom and happiness.

# Wreaths Across America Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Figurative Language Word Search

O	Q	A	L	L	U	S	I	O	N	A	Z	W
N	S	X	E	D	C	A	S	S	O	N	C	E
O	R	F	V	T	G	B	Y	Y	H	N	U	J
M	E	T	A	P	H	O	R	M	M	I	K	O
A	O	L	H	Y	P	E	R	B	O	L	E	P
T	Q	S	I	M	I	L	E	O	W	E	R	T
O	Y	U	I	O	P	A	D	L	F	G	H	J
P	E	R	S	O	N	I	F	I	C	A	O	N
O	K	LZ	X	C	V	B	N	S	N	M	T	I
E	S	M	E	T	O	N	Y	M	Y	X	E	D
I	D	C	R	F	V	T	G	B	Y	H	N	I
A	L	L	I	T	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	O
U	J	M	I	K	L	O	P	Q	W	E	R	M
Y	U	S	Y	N	E	C	D	O	C	H	E	I

alliteration	hyperbole	assonance	onomatopoeia
simile	idiom	personification	metonymy
metaphor	allusion	symbolism	synecdoche

# Wreaths Across America Lesson Plan

Teacher:	Date:
Grades: 7-8	Lesson: Live with Purpose-Ambitions and Aspirations

## ANSWER KEY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Figurative Language Word Search

O	Q	A	L	L	U	S	I	O	N	A	Z	W
N	S	X	E	D	C	A	S	S	O	N	C	E
O	R	F	V	T	G	B	Y	Y	H	N	U	J
M	E	T	A	P	H	O	R	M	M	I	K	O
A	O	L	H	Y	P	E	R	B	O	L	E	P
T	Q	S	I	M	I	L	E	O	W	E	R	T
O	Y	U	I	O	P	A	D	L	F	G	H	J
P	E	R	S	O	N	I	F	I	C	A	O	N
O	K	LZ	X	C	V	B	N	S	N	M	T	I
E	S	M	E	T	O	N	Y	M	Y	X	E	D
I	D	C	R	F	V	T	G	B	Y	H	N	I
A	L	L	I	T	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	O
U	J	M	I	K	L	O	P	Q	W	E	R	M
Y	U	S	Y	N	E	C	D	O	C	H	E	I

alliteration	hyperbole	assonance	onomatopoeia
simile	idiom	personification	metonymy
metaphor	allusion	symbolism	synecdoche