**Understanding the Poem**

You have just read “And Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou. In order to understand a poem you need to look at the poetic devices Angelou uses to put across her opinion or thoughts.

**TASK 1**

Using your poetry key terms sheet re-read the poem and underline all the different poetic devices that you can find.

**TASK 2**

Now that you have identified some of the main devices that are used in the poem complete the following table. Sometimes the device name has been missed or the quotation. Continue adding rows to the table to

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Device** | **Quotation** | **Effect** |
| Rhetorical question | Does my sassiness upset you? | To make the reader aware that the persona is speaking to an implied audience, an audience whom she knows find her sexual appeal troubling due to their racial and gender prejudices. The rhetorical question is deliberately mocking the audience and is an act of defiance and subversion. |
| Rhyme |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Extension: Continue this table on the other side of this sheet. How many more can you find?

**“And Still I Rise” Vocabulary List**

**Sassiness** Sexy, sexual allure or attractiveness.

**Beset** To have, to have something put upon you (“beset by

gloom”) To be gloomy.

**Gloom** To feel upset or miserable and never see the positive

side of things.

**Bowed** To lower the head or body. To bow.

**Soulful** Having or expressing deep feeling.

**Haughtiness** To give an air of being superior to someone else.

**Welling** To swell.

Add any extra words which you do not understand in the space below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Word** | **Meaning** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Questions**

Now you have discussed the poem and understand the language and context, consider the following questions. Remember to give quotations from the poem in order to support your answers.

1. Who is rising in the poem? Think about who the persona actually is and the type of person she presents herself as. How is she different to the implied audience she is speaking to?
2. Why do you think the poet has written this poem?
3. What are the key themes of this poem? What evidence is there from the poem to support your point of view?
4. Look in detail at the third verse. What is the significance of these comparisons? What is the poet saying to you, the reader?
5. List four of the similes used in the poem and comment on how they add to the meaning of the poem.
6. Take a close look at the eighth verse. What is significant about the refrain? Comment on the effects of three of the images in this verse.
7. What is the tone of this poem? Does it remain constant or does it change and shift?
8. Choose your favourite verse and explain your choice. Write about the language used and the images created.