Name: _____ Date: _____

MAYA ANGELOU



Read the biographical passage about Maya Angelou and answer the questions.

Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014) was a towering figure in American literature and civil rights activism. Born Marguerite Annie Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri, Angelou's early years were fraught with the traumas of racial discrimination and personal violation. At the age of eight, she experienced a harrowing assault by her mother's boyfriend, a trauma that led her to become mute for five years, finding solace in books and literature.

Her memoir, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," vividly recounts the struggles of her childhood in the Jim Crow South, capturing the pervasive racism and her journey to reclaim her voice and identity. This seminal work laid bare the stark realities of racial injustice, while also conveying a message of hope and resilience.

Over her 50-year career, Angelou penned a multitude of works, including poetry, essays, and a series of autobiographies. Her writings, characterized by a lyrical prose style and powerful evocation of the Black experience in America, earned her numerous accolades, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Angelou's artistic versatility extended to acting, singing, and dancing, and she became a renowned speaker and professor, influencing countless individuals with her advocacy for equality and human rights. She worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X during the Civil Rights Movement and her writings continue to inspire advocates for equality and justice across the world.

Use the Village

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 What challenges did Maya Angelou face in her early life, and how did they influence her work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 What are some of the honors Maya Angelou received for her contributions to the arts and civil rights?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 Why is Maya Angelou considered an important figure in American literature and history?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Use the Village