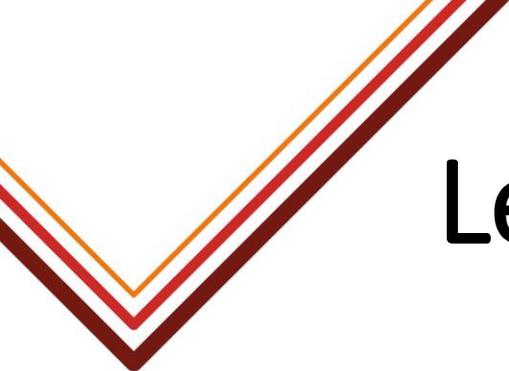




# Activism

Poppy Bienias



# Lesson 3: Activism Through Poetry

## Learning Intentions

*At the end of this lesson you will be able to...*

- Analyse different poems written about societal issues
- Discuss to what extent these poems are forms of activism
  - Create a spoken word poem to generate change

# Key Vocabulary

discrimination

stereotyping

racism

society

Activism

issue

Activist

prejudice

inequality

# Prior Learning

*What do we already know?*

What is an Activist  
and can you provide  
examples of activism  
from Britain's past?



# Extract from 'I Rise' By Maya Angelou

What message is Maya Angelou sharing with her reader?

How does she reinforce her message?

How does this extract make you feel?

Do you think this extract is a form of activism? Why?

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.



# Neighbours By Benjamin Zephaniah

I am the type you are supposed to fear  
Black and foreign  
Big and dreadlocks  
An uneducated grass eater.

I talk in tongues  
I chant at night  
I appear anywhere,  
I sleep with lions  
And when the moon gets me  
I am a Wailer.

Who do you think the 'I'  
is in this poem?

What do you think is  
meant by 'I talk in  
tongues?'





# Neighbours By Benjamin Zephaniah

I am moving in  
Next door to you  
So you can get to know me,  
You will see my shadow  
In the bathroom window,  
My aromas will occupy  
Your space,  
Our ball will be in your court.  
How will you feel?

Who do you think the  
'you' is in this stanza?

What is meant by 'my aromas  
will occupy your space?'

Is this poem a form of  
activism? Why/why not?

# George The Poet – Go Home

We are going to listen to a spoken word poem written by George the Poet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWX48dHQgXo>

What is George talking about in his poem?

Does he has his own opinion on this issue?

Would you consider this poem a form of activism? Why/why not?



# George The Poet – Go Home

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWX48dHQgXo>

"Go Home" harks back to a miserable memory of hatred towards an invisible enemy, and it's wrong of Government to use this phrase, it's wrong of Government to abuse it's place, because language is a gateway to an attitude- that's menacing, that's hostile, that is rude.



Look at these lyrics from George's poem.

In George's opinion, what is the problem with the language used by the government?

# Task



In your groups, you are going to write and perform a spoken word poetry on an issue in our community that you feel strongly about and something that you would like to change. We will perform our poems to the class at the end of the lesson.

*Talk to your group: Which issue do you want to write about in your poem as a way of generating change?*

Inequality

Prejudice

Pollution

Climate  
Change

Discrimination

Poverty

Stereotyping

# Writing our Spoken Word Poems

## Success Criteria:

Use repetition to emphasise theme

5 stanzas of 4 lines

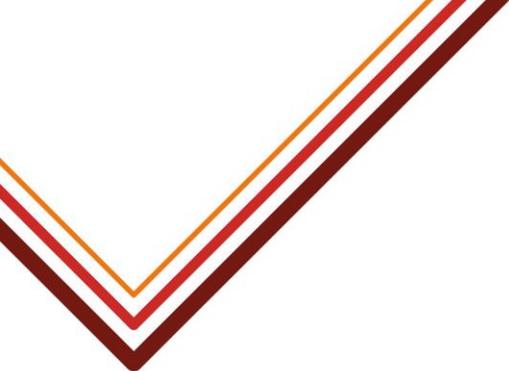
Does not need to rhyme (use [www.rhymezone.com](http://www.rhymezone.com) if you would like to use rhymes)

Use metaphors, similes and personification to create vivid imagery

Vary speed and volume to engage audience when performing

Use actions to engage audience





# Further Research

Maya Angelou was an American author, actress, screenwriter, dancer, poet and civil rights activist best known for her 1969 memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which made literary history as the first nonfiction bestseller by an African American woman. Angelou received several honors throughout her career, including two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, in 2005 and 2009.

Maya Angelou

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/maya-angelou>

George The Poet

<https://www.georgethepoet.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/nov/25/george-the-poet-rejected-mbe-pure-evil-british-empire>

Benjamin Zephaniah

<https://benjaminzephaniah.com/>

<https://www.bloodaxebooks.com/ecs/category/benjamin-zephaniah>