

iCONN Learning Activity African American Poet

Level: Middle School

Task: Research a female African American poet from the 20th century to learn how their life experience is reflected in their work. Students will 1) write a poem on the subject of one of the selected poet that reflects their own life experience related to the topic and 2) develop an accompanying narrative that describes factors that contribute to the difference in perspective.

Research Question: How do my social and cultural life experiences influence my perspective on a subject?

Content Area(s): Language Arts, Learning Resources and Information Technology, Social Studies

Content Standards:

Language Arts:

4. Students will use the language arts to explore and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Learning Resources and Information Technology:

3. Students will demonstrate a command of information skills and strategies to locate and use effectively print, nonprint and/or electronic resources to solve problems, conduct research and pursue personal interests.
4. Students will apply evaluative criteria to the selection, interpretation, analysis, reorganization and synthesis of information from a variety of sources and formats.
5. Students will use appropriate technologies to create written, visual, oral and multimedia products to communicate ideas, information or conclusions to others.

Social Studies:

1. Students will develop historical thinking skills, including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time; contextualizing, comprehending and analyzing historical literature; researching historical sources; understanding the concept of historical causation; understanding competing narratives and interpretation; and constructing narratives and interpretation.

iCONN Database: *Biography Resource Center*

Search Strategy

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on "Select iCONN resources"
3. Click on *Biography Resource Center*
4. Click on *Biographical Facts Search*
5. In the Occupation search field, enter *POET*
6. In the *Nationality* field, select *American*.
7. In the *Ethnicity* field, select *African American*
8. In the *Gender* pull-down menu, select *Female*
9. In the *Birth Year* pull-down menu, select *is after*; in the *Birth Year* search box, enter *1900*
10. Click on *Search*
11. Choose a poet from the list of results
12. You'll be taken to results for that poet
13. Click on the title of an article to view it

Adaptations for Differentiated Learning:

iCONN Database: *InfoTrac Junior Edition*

Search Strategy

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on "Select iCONN resources"
3. Click on *InfoTrac Junior Edition*

4. Click on *Subject search* and type the name of a particular African American female poet using “and” with the first and last name (e.g. *Maya and Angelou*) in the search box
5. Click on *Find* (or hit ENTER)
6. Click on the corresponding *View* to select encyclopedia, newspaper, or periodical articles
7. If only one article is available, you will be brought into it automatically; if there are more than one, you will be brought to a citation list – from the citation list, click on the article’s title or *Check Out* to read texts

iCONN Database: *Kids InfoBits*

Search Strategy

1. Go to <http://www.iconn.org/>
2. If the list of databases is not already showing, click on “Select iCONN resources”
3. Click on *Kids InfoBits*
4. Type either *African Poet* or the name of a particular African American female poet such as *Maya Angelou* in the search box and click on Search
5. If multiple subject groups are shown, select one of the subject groups listed and click on *View*
6. Click on any one of the labeled tabs (Reference, Magazines, etc.) to get a list of documents in that category
7. Click the document title in the citation list to read an article

iCONN Database: *What Do I Read Next?*

Search Strategy

1. Click on *What Do I Read Next?*
2. Choose *Author Search*
3. At the top of the page, check off categories that you want to include in your search results (uncheck the box next to *adults* to limit your search to books for *children* and *young adults*)
4. Type the name of a person in the search box (e.g. *Maya Angelou*); underneath search box, choose *Name contains*
5. Click on *Search*
6. Click on the title for an overview of the work
7. Click on the author’s name for biographical information and a list of other works by the author

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