Maya Angelou’s “Still I Rise”

Teacher Notes

In this lesson from Teaching Tolerance, students explore the theme of resiliency and poetic devices in Maya Angelou’s poem “Still I Rise”.

The lesson plan begins with a review of poetic devices, and follows with multiple readings of the poem. During the second reading, students highlight examples of imagery in the poem. They then work in groups to complete an imagery analysis sheet for one stanza, which they present to the class. During the third reading, students work with a partner to annotate the poem using guiding questions that focus on the speaker, message, and theme. The whole class then engages in an inner-outer discussion of four key questions. As a closing activity, students reflect on their own voice in a letter, poem, blog, song, or journal entry.

This lesson would work well in a poetry unit, in a thematic unit focusing on resiliency, or in a unit that focuses on the Civil Rights era.

The lesson plan, text, and analysis sheet are available at <http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/maya-angelou>.