**As I Grew Older** by Langston Hughes

**Summary**

As I Grew Older" by Langston Hughes is about the forgotten dream as the speaker grows up. The poem looks at the idea of achieving dreams, and how it's difficult to get them because he is black.

The poem begins with the speaker recalling a bright dream (“bright like a sun”) from his childhood, symbolizing hope and optimism.

However, as he grows older, a wall rises between him and his dream, representing obstacles like racism and discrimination. The wall casts a shadow, making the dream seem distant and unreachable. Later on, when the speaker is an adult, he decides to break through the wall with his hands, determined to overcome the barriers in his life and fulfill his dream. He wanted a life where he could pursue his dreams and goals without a “wall” getting in the way.

Themes highlighted in the poem are perseverance and the struggle for equality.

VOCABULARY

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Receptive** | **Productive** |
| * shatter * smash * shadow * no longer * between * above * in front of * innocent * obstacle * unreachable * determined * perseverance * pursue * tool | * dream * rise – rose * dark – darkness * bright * break through the wall * racism * discrimination against –discriminated * shadow * naïve * hopeful * optimistic - pessimistic * depressing - depressed * obstacle * overcome * equality - inequality * achieve * prejudice * justice – injustice * open possibilities * enable * symbol- symbolize * illustrate/ demonstrate/ show * Every door is/was closed to * mistaken belief * barrier |

**QUESTIONS**

1. Compare the poem to the movie “Hidden Figures” you watched. What events are similar? How do they affect both the poem and the plot in the movie?
2. What problem does the speaker in the poem face? How does he solve it? Is the way the speaker solves the problem similar to how the characters in the movie do it?
3. Explain how the poem you have learned is relevant to the time it was written.
4. Describe a problem you faced in the past and compare it to a problem a character faced. What are the similarities/differences in the way you and the character faced the problem?
5. Explain a character’s problem and then offer your character advice on how to solve his/her problem.
6. Explain a character behaviour pattern. Does it change throughout the poem? Why? Why not?
7. Who tells the story? Is this the best person to tell it? Why?