

## Warm-Up

## Allusion and Metaphor in “I, Too, Sing America”



## Lesson Question

How does an extended metaphor help the reader understand the poem’s message?



## Lesson Goals

Read “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes.

Understand the role of **poetry** in cultural and social changes.

Interpret an extended **metaphor**.

Analyze the use of allusion in poetry.



## Words to Know

Fill in this table as you work through the lesson. You may also use the glossary to help you.

equal	when two things are given the same <b>value</b>
allusion	a <b>reference</b> in a text to another well-known text, person, event, or thing
extended metaphor	a comparison between <b>unlike</b> things that is developed throughout a text
free verse	a form of poetry written without a <b>regular</b> rhyme or

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**All the Things America Means**

Think about what the word *America* means to you.

- A dream available to anyone
- A dream only available to some
- A place full of **free** people
- A place haunted by **racial** segregation
- A land full of **conflicts** between people
- A land full of **hardworking** citizens

## Instruction

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### The Harlem Renaissance

- Was a “rebirth” of African American **cultural** heritage
- Was a time when African American **artists** and **writers** expressed themselves and their work
- Was also known as the “New Negro Movement”
- Resulted from the “**Great Migration**” (1916–1970)
- Lasted through the 1920s and ended with the Great **Depression**

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### Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

- Was an **American** poet, social activist, and writer
- Wanted to show that African American people were **equal** and uniquely beautiful
- Portrayed African American **middle**-class life as full of struggle, happiness, and music
- Promoted a cultural **nationalism** for African Americans so that they could appreciate themselves and their **heritage**

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### Free Verse Poetry

**Free verse** is a type of poetic form or structure that some poets use.

Free verse poems:

- do not have a set **rhythmic** pattern, or meter.
- do not have a set rhyme scheme.
- do not have any set **structure**.
- do not have set line **lengths**.
- allow **freedom** for the poet to construct phrases and sentences.

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### Examining Free Verse and Formal Poetry

#### Free Verse

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

–“Fog,”  
Carl Sandburg

#### Not Free Verse

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of  
May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a  
date.

–“Sonnet 18,”  
William Shakespeare

The poem “Fog,” by Carl Sandburg, does not have a set rhyme or have a set meter scheme. The lines are of **similar** length, but this poem doesn't seem to follow any set of **rules**.

The excerpt from William Shakespeare's “Sonnet 18” is not in free verse. It has **definite** set meter and set **rhyme**.

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### Metaphors and Extended Metaphors

A metaphor is a **direct** comparison of unlike things. It does **not** use “like” or “as” to make the comparison.

- Example: She is the light of my life.

An **extended metaphor** is a metaphor that is **introduced** and then developed or extended over several **sentences** or throughout the text.

### Extended Metaphor in a Poem

In this excerpt from her poem “Hope,” Emily Dickinson uses an extended metaphor.

- She compares hope to a bird.
- She uses the metaphor across several lines.

*Underline the details that extend the metaphors in the poem.*

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune—without the words,  
And never stops at all.  
And sweetest in the gale is heard.

—“Hope,”  
Emily Dickinson

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### Allusion

An **allusion** is a **reference** in a text to another well-known text, **person**, event, or **thing**.

#### Allusion

John didn't like spending money. He was no Scrooge, but he never bought anything he didn't need.

#### Not an Allusion

John didn't like spending money. He didn't hoard his money, but he never bought anything he didn't need.

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### “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman

*Underline the voices that make up America in the passage.*

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand  
singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or  
at noon intermission or at sundown.

–“I Hear America Singing,”  
Walt Whitman

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### Comparing the Poems

*Underline the positive words that both speakers used in the poems.*

The delicious singing of the mother, or of  
the young wife at work, or of  
the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her  
and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night  
the party of young fellows,  
robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong  
melodious songs.

–“I Hear America Singing,”  
Walt Whitman

Nobody’ll dare  
Say to me,  
“Eat in the kitchen,”  
Then.  
Besides,  
They’ll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

–“I, Too, Sing America,”  
Langston Hughes



# Summary

## Allusion and Metaphor in “I, Too, Sing America”



### Lesson Question

How does an extended metaphor help the reader understand the poem’s message?



### Answer

An extended metaphor helps the reader understand the poem’s message by making a series of comparisons that emphasize big ideas in the poem.

*Use this space to write any questions or thoughts about this lesson.*