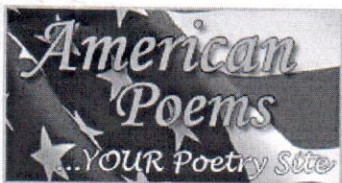


## Theme for English B

AUTHOR	Hughes, Langston
GENRE	Poetry
OVERVIEW	Langston Hughes was one of the foremost writers of the 1920s Harlem Renaissance, a movement which, in the words of Du Bose Heyward, "dignif[ied] Harlem with a genuine art life." Hughes' subject for his writing and his source for truth and profundity was the lives of ordinary black people. This angered the burgeoning black intelligentsia, who wanted to present white readers with a polished cultured view of blacks. Nevertheless, Hughes succeeded in voicing the truths, hopes, and concerns of life in Harlem; as its spokesman he created poetry that has endured through many decades of racial strife. "Theme for English B" depicts a black student who is trying to find his own identity--as well as unity with those in the college classroom around him--in terms of characteristics, both external and internal. What is the narrator's reason for choosing the characteristics he does? What barriers or ties does this create, and how do these choices work for or against the idea of "America" that the narrator and his white instructor share?
FULL TEXT*	<a href="http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/Langston-Hughes/2398/">http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/Langston-Hughes/2398/</a>  <small>*CCR cannot guarantee the accuracy or continued availability of this online text. Please notify us if you encounter any problems.</small>
TYPE	Reading - Short Enough to Read Aloud.
THEMES	<a href="#">Connection and Relationship</a> <a href="#">Diversity and Difference</a> <a href="#">Heritage and Tradition</a> <a href="#">Identity and Community</a> <a href="#">Justice and Equality</a> <a href="#">Knowledge and Uncertainty</a> <a href="#">Power and Privilege</a> <a href="#">Race, Ethnicity and Culture</a> <a href="#">Teaching and Learning</a>
BIG QUESTIONS	<a href="#">What makes it possible for us to connect to others? What gets in the way? How do we connect with those who are different from us? How do we learn to have dialogue across difference? What does it look like? Is difference a problem, an opportunity, a challenge or a gift? How have my past and heritage shaped me? How do we define who we are? What is the value of uncertainty? How do we know or identify privilege? How does race affect our relations to others? What does good teaching look like?</a>
PUBLICATION	Civically Engaged Reader

### SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what sense will the page that comes out of the teacher's assignment be "true"?
2. What conditions does the instructor give to ensure that it will be true, and why those conditions?
3. What is the purpose of the assignment?
4. Why does the narrator respond to the assignment by thinking of differences?
5. What kinds of differences matter most to the narrator?
6. What separates the narrator from his fellow classmates and his instructor?
7. What is the America that the narrator and his instructor share?
8. What kind of relationship is the narrator looking to have with the instructor?
9. Does an instructor need to know about a student to be able to teach him or her? What should be known?
10. How do differences affect our connections to others?
11. In relating to others, how do we deal with race?



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### Langston Hughes - Theme For English B

The instructor said,

*Go home and write  
a page tonight.  
And let that page come out of you—  
Then, it will be true.*

I wonder if it's that simple?  
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.  
I went to school there, then Durham, then here  
to this college on the hill above Harlem.  
I am the only colored student in my class.  
The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,  
through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,  
Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,  
the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator  
up to my room, sit down, and write this page:

It's not easy to know what is true for you or me  
at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I'm what  
I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you:  
hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, talk on this page.  
(I hear New York, too.) Me—who?  
Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.  
I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.  
I like a pipe for a Christmas present,  
or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.  
I guess being colored doesn't make me *not* like  
the same things other folks like who are other races.  
So will my page be colored that I write?

Being me, it will not be white.  
But it will be  
a part of you, instructor.  
You are white—  
yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.  
That's American.  
Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.  
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.  
But we are, that's true!  
As I learn from you,  
I guess you learn from me—  
although you're older—and white—  
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

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**Poem:** Theme For English B  
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**Hughes Info**

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(29 poems)  
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**Poet:** Langston Hughes  
**Poem:** Theme For English B

Comment 224 of 224, added on March 4th, 2017 at 6:21 PM.  
**ZCpheBaLVTKPb**

37Lz3V wanted to say that I ave truly enjoyed browsing your blog posts.

**mike tyson** from **Belgium**

Comment 223 of 224, added on March 4th, 2017 at 7:00 AM.  
**czydLoggBLwuCEHTQ**

94hFbS Really appreciate you sharing this article.Thanks Again. Want more.

**come here** from **Chile**

Comment 222 of 224, added on February 1st, 2017 at 1:57 AM.