

# Read. Think. Explain.

In trying to understand a poem, it's important to read through it carefully and thoughtfully by focusing on the words the author chose *and* by thinking about what the images in the poem represent. In this activity, you'll answer a series of questions about Calef Brown's "Tongue Tester" in order to grasp the poem's full meaning.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the poem to back up your ideas.

1. What words would you use to describe this poem?

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2. What does the first word, "stealthy," mean? What does "highly strung" mean?

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3. Why do you think the author wrote this poem?

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4. What are some other tongue twisters you can think of? What makes them difficult to say 10 times fast?

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# Rhyme Time

Tongue twisters, like the beginning of Calef Brown's poem "Tongue Tester," often make rhymes with unlikely words. In this activity, you will play around with some unusual words yourself to make a fun rhyming poem.

**Directions:** Write rhymes to the words below, and then use them in your own tongue-testing poem.

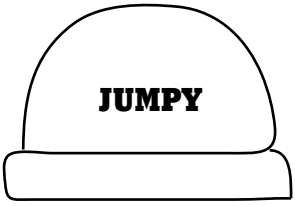
**Section 1:** Write as many rhyming words as you can for each word in the knit cap.



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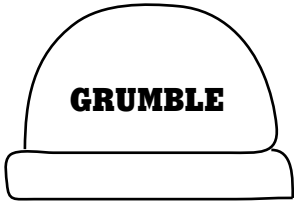
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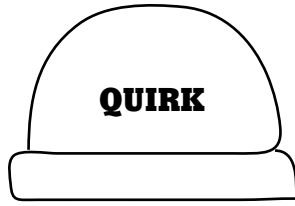
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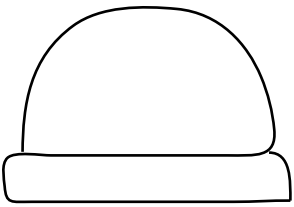


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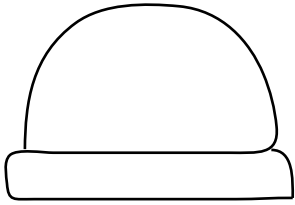
**Section 2:** On the caps below, choose your own tricky words and write rhymes for them.



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## Critical Thinking

On a separate sheet of paper, use some of the words and rhymes you chose above to write a fun tongue-testing poem. Then try saying it 10 times fast!

# Read. Think. Explain.

In trying to understand a poem, it's important to read through it carefully and thoughtfully by focusing on the words the author chose *and* by thinking about what the images in the poem represent. In this activity, you'll answer a series of questions about Lauryn Hill's "Everything Is Everything" in order to grasp the poem's full meaning.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the poem to back up your ideas.

1. What is the main idea expressed in this poem?

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2. Where do the rhymes occur in this poem? Is there a strict rhyme pattern?  
What effect do the rhymes create?

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3. Why do you think the author wrote this poem?

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4. How could the idea of this poem apply to the struggle for civil rights?

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# Poetry Analysis: Line by Line

A poem—and each line in it—can be interpreted in many different ways. That’s what makes reading and discussing poetry so worthwhile! In this activity, you will think about how each line in Lauryn Hill’s poem relates to African-Americans’ struggle for freedom and equality. Then, you’ll answer critical thinking questions, connecting “Everything Is Everything” to your own life.

**Directions:** Fill in the columns below. We did the first one for you.

What Lauryn Wrote	What I Think It Means	How It Relates to The Struggle for Freedom & Equality
<p>1. Sometimes it seems We'll touch that dream But things come slow or not at all</p>	<p>It's hard to accomplish your dreams. Sometimes, change takes a long time. Other times, nothing changes at all.</p>	<p>African-Americans fought for many years for freedom and equal rights. Although they had hope, sometimes it seemed like nothing would ever change.</p>
<p>2. And the ones on top, won't make it stop So convinced that they might fall</p>		
<p>3. Let's love ourselves then we can't fail To make a better situation</p>		
<p>4. Tomorrow, our seeds will grow All we need is dedication</p>		
<p>5. After winter, must come spring Change, it comes eventually</p>		

*Continued*

## Critical Thinking

**1. Describe a time in your life when it seemed like you might "touch a dream."**

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**2. Was there something that prevented you from accomplishing your goal?  
How did that make you feel?**

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**3. Was there someone who helped you "make a better situation" out of it or did you find a way to overcome the obstacle on your own?**

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**4. Did change "come eventually" for you? What did you learn about yourself as a result of the situation?**

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**5. What does the phrase "Everything is everything; What is meant to be, will be" mean to you? Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**

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# Read. Think. Explain.

In this activity, you'll answer a series of questions about "Freedom or Death" that will help you think more deeply about the struggle for equality during the Civil War. You'll also think about a remarkable and brave young man, Robert Smalls, who was born into slavery but risked his life to win freedom for his family and 12 other slaves.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the article to back up your ideas. Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room.

1. What are some examples of how cruel slavery was?

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2. What can you conclude about Robert Smalls from his daring takeover of the *Planter*?

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3. What motivated Robert Smalls to plan his escape?

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4. If you were Robert Smalls, do you think you would have tried to escape? Why or why not?

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5. What were some of Robert Smalls's achievements after he escaped from slavery? If he were alive today, what do you think his life would be like?

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# Robert Smalls' Words

Larry found lots of great vocabulary words in the February/March issue of *Storyworks*. Use the words listed below to solve his puzzle.

**Directions:** Using the words in the bank below, find the synonym of each numbered word or phrase, and write it in the blanks next to it. One letter from each word will fall into the dotted oval. Use those letters to complete the sentence at the bottom of the page.

**assumed    astonishment    confiscated    dodging    entrusting**  
**intolerable    huddled    pursue    shrill    treason**

1. supposed something was true	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
2. having a high, sharp sound							
3. crowded together	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
4. avoiding							
5. follow something							
6. took something away	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
7. crime of betraying your country							
8. impossible to accept							
9. leaving in the care of	_	_	_	_	_	_	_
10. great surprise	_	_	_	_	_	_	_

**After the Civil War, Robert Smalls became a successful businessman and a**

**ANSWER:**    \_ \_ .    \_ \_ .    \_ .

5.    9.                    6.    8.    10.    4.    2.    3.    9.    9.    1.    7.    10.

# Write a Summary

A summary of an article or story shouldn't be funny or extremely detailed.

It should be brief and include just the basic facts the reader needs to know. In this activity, we are going to help you write a summary of the life of Robert Smalls from "Freedom or Death."

First, you will read 12 sentences about his life.

Then, you will decide which seven are the most important; these belong in your summary.

Afterward, you will write a summary based on the information you've chosen.

**Directions:** Read through the sentences below. Underline the sentences that are most important to the story. There are SEVEN important sentences.

**1. Choose the SEVEN statements below that are most important to the story.**

Robert Smalls was born into slavery, owned by the McKees.

Hannah Jones worked as a maid in a hotel.

Robert Smalls' mother insisted that he should never run away because their owners treated them with kindness.

Robert led the slave crew in hijacking the *Planter*, collecting his family and giving the ship to the Northern Army.

Robert Smalls paid Mr. McKee \$15 a month from his earnings in Charleston.

Smalls married a woman named Hannah Jones, and they raised three children whom he wanted freed from slavery.

The Civil War began in 1861, because of a disagreement over the rights of Southern states to continue slavery.

Robert Smalls was 23 when he decided to escape.

Robert worked on a boat called the *Planter*, which was drafted into service in the Southern Army.

At age 15, Robert Smalls moved to Charleston to work in the city, hired out by his owners.

Captain Relyea wore a distinctive wide-brimmed hat.

Robert became a successful businessman after the war, and was elected to the U.S. Congress.

**2. Using the seven important events you've underlined, write a short summary of the life of Robert Smalls.**





# Read. Think. Explain.

An active reader is always looking for deeper meaning in a story. In this activity, you'll answer questions about the characters (and a rooster!), and you'll give your opinion as to why the author, Watt Key, made some of the choices he did while writing "Leghorn."

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the story to back up your ideas. Use a separate piece of paper if you need more room.

1. How does Wally feel about Leghorn when his family first gets chickens? Why? What causes his feelings to change?

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2. Why do you think Wally likes to think of Leghorn as his prisoner?

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3. What is the climax, or most exciting part of the story, which changes the outcome?

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4. Why does Leghorn become John Paul Jones, Jeremiah Denton, and other characters for Wally?

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5. Why does Wally conclude that Leghorn should be proud of himself?

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# Why Did the Chicken Learn The Words?

In Watt Key's hilarious story, the new rooster, Leghorn, scares Wally and they become enemies. Don't let new words terrorize you! In this activity, you will use a dictionary and your very own brain to match the words below to their definitions.

**Directions:** Match the words on the left to the definitions on the right. Then choose four of the words and write a sentence using each.

<b>begrudgingly</b>	with ease or indifference
<b>defiance</b>	represent in human or animal form
<b>embody</b>	picking at something with a beak
<b>ingenuity</b>	unwillingly
<b>nonchalantly</b>	not giving up trying to achieve something
<b>pecking</b>	creative intelligence
<b>perseverance</b>	grabbed something with a sweeping motion
<b>swiped</b>	standing up to someone

**Sentence 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

# How Wally Changes

**In this activity, you will consider how Wally's character changes from the beginning to the end of the story "Leghorn."**

**Directions:** Fill in the chart below as you think about how Wally's ideas and attitudes change throughout the story. Then take note of how your attitude about Leghorn changes as well.

	Beginning	End
<p><b>1. What Wally Thinks About Himself</b></p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>2. What Wally Thinks About Leghorn</b></p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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**How Wally Changes** page 2

<b>3. What You Think about Wally</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>End</b>
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**Section 2**

1. Why did Wally’s feelings about Leghorn change by the end of the story? What about Leghorn made Wally change his opinion?

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2. What do you think Leghorn thought of Wally? Why?

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3. Did your opinion of Wally change throughout the story? Why?

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**Critical Thinking**  
PERSUASIVE WRITING

Write a letter to Wally telling him you did not approve of how he treated Leghorn.  
Use examples from the story to support your opinion.

# Secrets From Great Writers!

## THIS MONTH'S SECRET: SIMILES

Similes are a way of describing something by comparing it to something else, using the words "like" or "as." In his hilarious story about a rascally rooster named Leghorn, author Watt Key uses similes to make his descriptions jump off the page and come to life. In this activity, you will practice using them.

**Directions:** Read each statement and answer the corresponding questions.

1. "... he snapped like a steel trap and jabbed his beak at you."

What does this simile mean?

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What does it tell you about Leghorn?

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Write a simile of your own that expresses the same idea.

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2. Sometimes I worried that he was even becoming stronger—like a prisoner who lifts weights and conditions his mind to survival.

What does this simile mean?

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What does it tell you about Leghorn's behavior?

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Write a simile of your own that expresses the same idea.

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*Continued*

**3. I remained outside for several minutes, hands resting on the latch, imagining Leghorn crouched like a runner waiting for the gunshot.**

What does this simile mean?

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What does it say about how Wally feels around Leghorn?

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Write a simile of your own that expresses the same idea.

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**4. He began to crow all day long like an insane person that yells at inappropriate moments.**

What does this simile mean?

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How does it show Leghorn's change in behavior? Why is this important?

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Write a simile of your own that expresses the same idea.

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**5. When I went to Disney World and rode The Pirates of the Caribbean, every pirate was just another swashbuckling Leghorn.**

Is this a simile or a metaphor? How can you tell?

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What does it say about Wally's change of heart with regard to Leghorn? Why do you think this is?

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# Read. Think. Explain.

In trying to understand an article, it's important to read through it carefully and thoughtfully, focusing on the words the author chose *and* thinking about the article's big ideas. In this activity, you'll answer a series of questions about America's First Children from history and about the Obama girls to understand how these kids are alike and how they are different.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the article to back up your ideas.

1. What can make being a First Child a lonely experience?

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2. What are some examples of ways First Children have entertained themselves in the past?

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3. What are the Obamas doing to try to ensure that Sasha and Malia have a normal childhood in the White House?

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4. What do you think you would enjoy most and least about being a President's child?

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5. Do you think it's fair for the Obama girls to be "the most watched kids in America," or do you think they should have more privacy? Explain your answer.

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# Five & Five

In this activity, you will compare and contrast some of America's First Children from history with President Obama's daughters, Malia and Sasha, using this month's "Yesterday & Today" feature.

**Directions:** In the left box, write five facts about some of America's First Children from the past, from the "Yesterday & Today" article. In the box on the right, write five facts about the Obama girls.

<b>Facts</b>	
<b>America's First Children</b>	<b>The Obama girls</b>
1. _____ _____	1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____	2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____	3. _____ _____
4. _____ _____	4. _____ _____
5. _____ _____	5. _____ _____

## Critical Thinking

Use your list to write a well-organized paragraph in which you compare and contrast First Children from the past with President Barack Obama's daughters, Malia and Sasha. (Use a separate piece of paper.)

# Read. Think. Explain.

An active reader is always looking for big ideas and deeper meaning in a play by paying attention to things like dialogue, character development, setting, and the sequence in which events happen.

In this activity, you'll answer questions about these elements in the play adaptation of *The Maze of Bones*, the first book in The 39 Clues series.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using information and details from the play to back up your ideas.

1. What do you learn about the Cahill family during the first scene?  
What does it make you wonder about?

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2. What can you figure out about Dan's and Amy's relationship with Grace?  
How do Dan and Amy differ from other members of their family?

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3. What decision must the family gathered at the reading of the will make?  
If you were at the reading of the will, what would you do? Why?

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4. What does Amy conclude at first about looking for the treasure?  
What do you think makes her change her mind?

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5. Do you think Amy and Dan made the right decision to enter the contest? Why or why not?

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# Vocabulary Quest

Amy Cahill remembers almost everything she reads—including a lot of great words! In this activity, you will use a dictionary and your brain to match the words below to their definitions.

**Directions:** Match the words on the left to the definitions on the right.  
Then choose four of the words and write a sentence using each one.

<b>assured</b>	edge of something
<b>brink</b>	what someone is capable of in the future
<b>influential</b>	a living thing that grew differently than expected
<b>mutant</b>	move through something slowly or with difficulty
<b>podium</b>	a platform someone stands behind to speak
<b>potential</b>	promised, guaranteed
<b>vital</b>	necessary or very important
<b>wade</b>	having power to change or affect something

**Sentence 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Sentence 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Sentence 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Sentence 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# What Makes a Story Suspenseful?

One way authors keep their plots exciting is by building suspense.

They do this by giving you clues that make you curious about what's going to happen next.

In this activity, you will look closely at the sentences in *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones* that keep you on the edge of your seat and make the play so thrilling to read.

**Directions:** Read *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones* again, paying close attention to each sentence or group of sentences listed below. Write down what you think makes them so suspenseful.

How do they move the plot along? Do the last one on your own.

1. "Dan, maybe you're right. Maybe we'll inherit something." (p. 26)

Why are these sentences suspenseful? \_\_\_\_\_

How does it move the plot along? \_\_\_\_\_

2. "My relatives, you stand on the brink of our greatest challenge." (p. 26)

Why is this sentence suspenseful? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it make you wonder? \_\_\_\_\_

3. "All of you are free to decline the challenge. If you do, you will receive what is under your chair." (p. 27)

Why are these sentences suspenseful? \_\_\_\_\_

What do they make you wonder? \_\_\_\_\_

4. "If you claim the clue instead, you will receive no money. Just a clue that might lead you to the most important treasure in the world and make you powerful beyond belief. You have five minutes to decide." (p. 27)

Why are these sentences suspenseful? \_\_\_\_\_

How do they move the plot along? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Suspenseful sentence from the play:

Why is this sentence suspenseful? \_\_\_\_\_

How does it move the plot along? \_\_\_\_\_

## Critical Thinking

On a separate piece of paper, write a well-organized paragraph describing a suspenseful event that happened in your life. Remember to use exciting and thought-provoking sentences like the ones you found in *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones*. Then trade paragraphs with a partner.

Hopefully, neither of you will be able to put the other paper down!

# Understanding Dan and Amy

In just a few pages, the author of *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones* gives the reader a clear idea about the characters of Dan and Amy. In this activity, you will think of words and phrases that describe Dan and Amy, and then find supporting examples from the play.

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks below.

**1.** List words and phrases to describe the characters of Dan on the left, and Amy on the right.

**DAN**

**AMY**

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**2.** Choose two descriptions from your list for each character and plug them into the sentences below. For each one, provide two supporting examples from the story.

I think Dan is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

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I think Amy is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

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I think Dan is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

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I think Amy is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

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