

Title: A Poem a Week! #2 for grade 7	Grade: 7th Grade
Content: English Language Arts	Duration: 5-10 minutes per day for five days (Monday—Friday)

Standards:

- **Speaking 7.4,6:** Use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation & adapt speech to context and task.
- **Reading/Literature 7.2,4:** Determine theme & meaning of words and phrases.
- **Reading/Literature 7.10:** When reading, use knowledge of language and its conventions to aid comprehension of literary texts.

Objective: Students will practice fluent oral reading, while analyzing a poem over a week’s time, specifically noting vocabulary, theme, and rhyme scheme.

Resources Needed:

- Poem Paper (*included at the end of this document*)

Introduction:

Poetry is often defined as being ***short in words but rich in meaning***.

I could write a 5-page story about the day my baby girl died, and I think I could make you feel something. But, do you know what? I could write a 5-lined poem about the same topic, and maybe make you feel even *more*. There’s something about poetry. It seems to go straight to the heart.

This week, we’ll be reading another poem by Langston Hughes. He writes as a mother giving advice to her son. You’ll notice Hughes uses a **dialect** to help us “hear” the mother’s voice. For example, instead of saying “kind of hard,” she says “kinder hard.” Enjoy!

Day 1:

- **Read the poem** aloud.
- What does the phrase “Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.” Write it in the box on the worksheet.
- **Annotate** (write notes/sketches) on the poem, figuring it out.

Day 2:

- **Read the poem** aloud.
- What is the **theme**, or message, of the poem?
- **Read the poem** aloud again, focusing on the **tone** of your voice.

Day 3:

- **Read the poem** aloud, trying to sound as authentic as possible. Feel it.
- **Paraphrase**, writing 2-3 sentences of a mother today telling her son a similar

message.

Day 4:

- **Read the poem** again, **reading fluently so the message** of the poem comes through and the rhyme scheme is evident.
- In the rectangle provided, design a bumper sticker based on the message, or theme.

Day 5:

- You should sound really good reading this poem by now, so, today you need to **perform** it! Read it to your grandma over the phone. Facetime a friend, a relative, a teacher. Read it to someone in your home. Practice your **speaking skills** by using **appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation**.

Adaptations: If you find the poem difficult to read, have someone (a friend, parent) read along with you. Do this a few times to help you feel more comfortable. You can also search on Youtube to find someone performing the poem and read along with him/her.

Finished Product: Poem sheet (see below) with annotations and responses.

Teachers, you may want students to keep each week's poem together. Do this with paper copies, or copy the form to Google documents!

Poem handout below.

Mother to Son

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

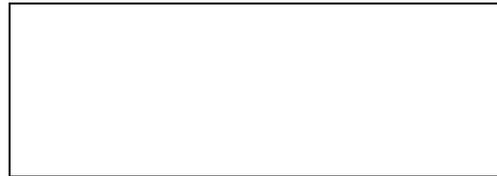
Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Day 1: What does the phrase “Life for me ain't been no crystal stair” mean?

Annotate: Write bits of your thoughts throughout the poem. Like what? Well, like what you think a line means, questions you have, what it makes you think of, how you relate, etc. You can even draw little pictures that might help you figure out the meaning.

Day 2: Theme: What's the message of the poem? (Write one complete sentence.)

Day 4: Use the poem's theme, or message, and sketch a bumper sticker here.



Day 3: Paraphrase: Write 2-3 sentences how a mother today would tell her son a similar message.

Day 5: Performance

- Occasional eye contact
- Appropriate volume
- Clear pronunciation
- Convey mood and message