

# Maya angelou free essay sample

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“ I love life” says Angelou, “ I love living life and love the art of living, so I try to live my life as a poetic adventure, in everything I do.” She also believes in having your own beliefs in order to accomplish your valued dreams. “ A belief that as long as people dream of freedom, there is hope of attaining their goal.” Maya Angelou to this day is known as one of the most successful poets, writer, and civil rights activist to have a major influence upon American Literature. Her experiences played a huge role through her writing, education, career, and her future fame. Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson on April 4, 1928, in St.

Louis, Missouri. Her parents are Bailey and Vivian Baxter Johnson. After her parents’ marriage ended, she and her brother, Bailey (who gave her the name “ Maya”), were sent to live with their grandmother. Her grandmother helped young Maya develop life skills like self-confidence. Sadly young Maya was traumatized when she was raped at the age of eight by her mother’s boyfriend,( Mr. Freeman) when she visited in St.

Louis. Soon after, she had to testify against Freeman. After court several of her uncles beat him to death. Believing that she had caused the man’s death by speaking his name, Angelou refused to speak for approximately five years. Angelou fell in love with poetry at a young age and was encouraged into talking again by her grade school teacher, Mrs.

Flowers, when the teacher taught her the only way to truly love poetry was to speak it. Reading poetry was how Angelou found her voice. Finding her voice was all Maya Angelou needed to set her determination on fire. Later in life Maya attended Mission High School and won a scholarship to study dance

and drama at San Francisco's Labor School, where she was exposed to life politics that animated her later political views. She then dropped out of school in her teens for just awhile to become San Francisco's first African American female cable car conductor. She later returned to high school, but became pregnant in her senior year and graduated a few weeks before giving birth to her son, Guy.

She left home at 16 and took on the difficult life of a single mother, supporting herself and her son by working as a server and cook, but she would never give up on her talents for music, dance, performance, and poetry. In 1952, she married a Greek sailor named Anastasias Angelopoulos. When she began her career as a nightclub singer, she took the professional name Maya Angelou, combining her childhood nickname with a form of her husband's name. Although the marriage did not last, her performing career blossomed . She toured Europe with a production of the opera Porgy and Bess in 1954 and 1955. She studied modern dance with Martha Graham, and recorded her first record album, Calypso Lady in 1957.

Maya Angelou was becoming a huge success in the Arts world, but her hands were itching to write again. She moved to New York, where she joined the Harlem Writers Guild and saved her distinct place among other growing writers and artists sharing the same interest over the civil rights movement. It soon came time to put all of her feelings to paper in her book I know why the caged bird sings. It was published in 1970. Caged Bird was nominated for a National Book Award in 1970 and remained on The New York Times paperback bestseller list for two years.

It has been used in educational settings from high schools to universities. It seemed that overnight she became a huge and popular success. Angelou became a national figure. In the following years, books of her autobiographical narrative won her a huge international audience. She was in demand as a teacher and lecturer and continued in her drama work. She wrote the screenplay and film *Georgia, Georgia* (1972).

Her screenplay, was the first by an African American woman ever to be filmed, it was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Angelou has been invited by successive Presidents of the United States to serve in various activities President Ford appointed her to the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and President Carter invited her to serve on the Presidential Commission for the International Year of the Woman. President Clinton requested that she compose a poem to read at his inauguration in 1993. Angelou's reading of her poem "On the Pulse of the Morning" was broadcast live around the world.

In 2000, Angelou was honored with the Presidential Medal of the Arts. Recently in 2011, President Barack Obama awarded her the nation's highest civilian honor, the presidential Medal of Freedom. maya angelou is an influence in the fact that she had so many personal obstacles , but still succeeded in her dreams. She is proof of you can either let your past slow you down or you can use it to get your dreams faster. maya will forever be remembered as one of the most influntial women in history.