

# We are cool

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



We Are Cool “ We Real Cool” refers to a 1959 poem composed by Gwendolyn Brooks, which was published in her book, *The Bean Eater*, in 1960 (Brooks 23). It comprises of only four verses of just two rhyming lines each. The poem summarizes the reality that most youths experienced when they opted to leave school. This paper will analyze Gwendolyn Brooks’ “ We Real Cool” poem from a cultural viewpoint.

Youths in the 50s involved themselves in a lot of illegal activities (Lindberg 311). This is because of their breakaway culture from the normal way of life to form the “ pop” culture. The narrator claims that the youth “ lurk late,” and illegal activity is normally carried out in the dark (Lindberg 311). In that culture, darkness influences people to become what they desire; the dark alters images, making an individual who seems risk-free in the daylight seem menacing during the dark. The boy states that they normally “ strike straight,” which can be deduced to imply that they are open to rape, robbery or murder properly so that they cannot be prosecuted for them (Smith 49). Robbery, rape and murder were issues that started to be considered as significant issues in the society, in the 50s (Cummings 29). They “ sing sin” meaning that they have many their misdeeds one would think that the misdeeds are elements of some kind of right-of-passage into adulthood (Smith 50). Finally, the last activity provided in the people is that youths “ thin gin,” which implies to weaken alcohol in order for them to make more money, and they perhaps do this at the pool hall (Smith 50).

The poem portrays the issues that youths in the 50s underwent, persuaded by the “ pop” culture, when they left school. This was an age when youths started to have thoughts of building their lives using other means than

education.

#### Works Cited

Brooks, Gwendolyn. " We Real Cool." The Norton Anthology of Poetry. Ed. Margaret Ferguson. New York: Norton, 2005. Print.

Cummings, Allison. " Public Subjects: Race and the Critical Reception of Gwendolyn Brooks, Erica Hunt, and Harryette Mullen." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 26. 2 (2005): 3- 36. Print.

Lindberg, Kathryne V. " Whose Canon? Gwendolyn Brooks: Founder at the Center of the Margins." *Gendered Modernisms: American Women Poets and Their Readers*. Ed. Margaret Dickie and Thomas Travisano. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996. Print.

Smith, Gary. " Brooks We Real Cool." *Explicator* 43. 2 (2001) 49-50. Print.