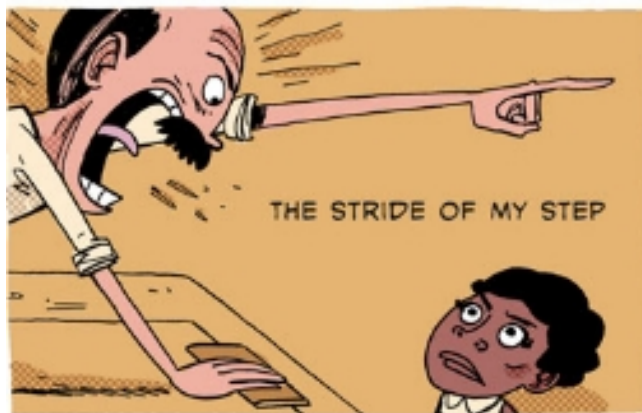


PHENOMENAL WOMAN

A POEM BY
**MAYA
ANGELOU**













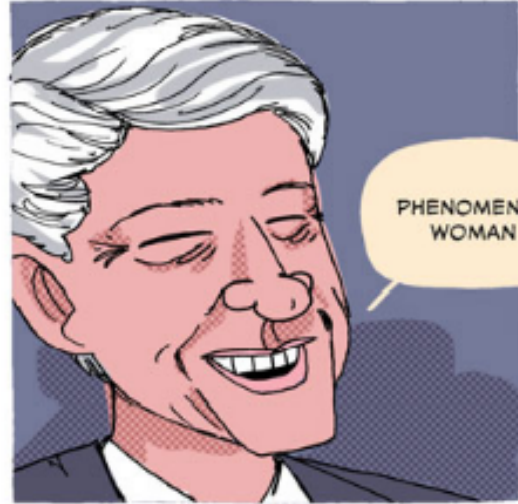


I'M A WOMAN

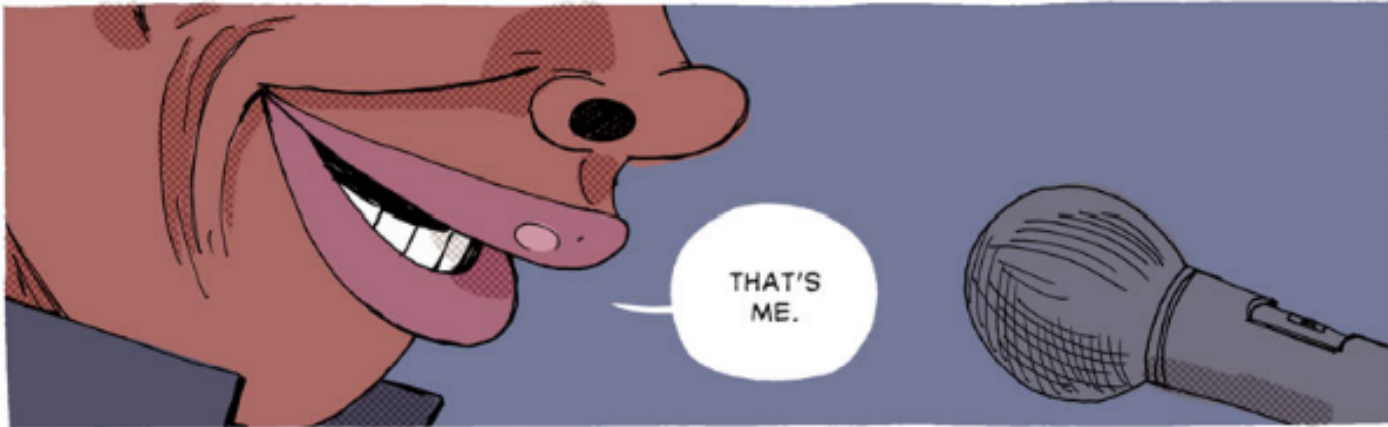
PHENOMENALLY.



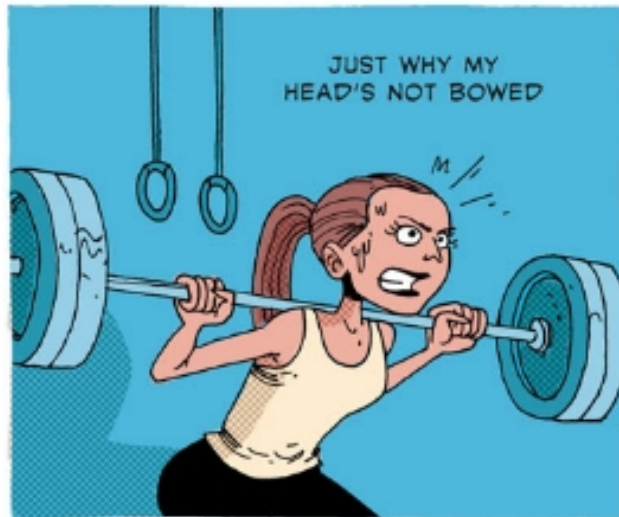
PHENOMENAL
WOMAN



THAT'S
ME.



NOW YOU Understand...





PHENOMENAL
WOMAN



Act n° 1: Let's observe the document

NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT

NATURE OF THE EXPRESSED TEXT

AUTHOR

PARTS OF THE TEXT: use the different colours as a help

Act n° 1: Let's observe the document

NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT	COMIC STRIP
NATURE OF THE EXPRESSED TEXT	POEM
AUTHOR	MAYA ANGELOU
PARTS OF THE TEXT: use the different colours as a help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The character is seen during her childhood . The used colour recalls the yellow colour of old photos which is called sepia- The young sexy lady who works as a dancer and who plays her part which consists in exciting men.- The business woman: more mature: with influence and success. She tries to explain her mystery but feels to be not understood The purple colour shows her respectability- At last, the final part gives example of all the other women whatever their field of action is.... THEY EXIST in their whole diversity

Act n° 2: Let's examine the first part of the poem

- Observing the drawings explain what is the context of the narrator's childhood

Act n° 2: Let's examine the first part of the poem

- Observing the drawings explains what the context of the narrator's childhood was
- Right from the beginning, we notice that she lives in an English speaking country, as it's written on the shop front.
- Moreover, a sign on the window expresses that she lives in a segregation country. We can suppose that's she aims at fighting segregation as she is an African American woman
- Nevertheless, she gets in and has a provocative behaviour. This rebellious act shows her independence and she adds a childish way to be disrespectful.
- In spite of her youth she already considers herself as a woman and the word "phenomenal" is quoted as a sign of pride.

Act n°2: second part: the beauty

- What means does she use to affirm her feminine identity seen through the eyes of men?

Act n°2: second part: the beauty

- She observes the men's reactions looking at her and then she tries to explain why they react this way. In fact, she depicts her body parts which are chosen as they characterize women's lumps. She relies on her womanhood to exist as a kind of revenge against the roughness of her life.
- Notice that she used the adverb "phenomenally" instead of the adjective "phenomenal" which increases the produced effect as it lengthens the word.

Lexical workshop

- There is a way to create adverbs from adjectives. It consists in adding “ly” as a suffix to an adjective ending by a ‘l’.
- For example: phenomenal → phenomenally
hopeful → hopefully
actual → actually
respectful → respectfully

Act n° 3: The maturity

- Explain what she became with the years
- Notice where the scene takes place

Act n° 3: The maturity

As time goes by, her life is still politically influenced. She keeps on with her public until reaching the supreme power as you see that she stands at the presidential console emitting a statement in front of a crowd.

- However, she is still asking why she appears so phenomenal and she is still describing her physical features.
- Observe that her clothes are stricter than the one she wore before. Anyway, they all symbolize her womanhood even if they show different styles to embody different kinds of women.

Act n° 4: Analyse what the comic strip shows

- Explain how the author speaks to the reader and what does she aim at?
- Finally, what kinds of women correspond to the definition of womanhood?

Act n° 4: Analyse what the comic shows

- The author speaks directly to the reader with the sentence "now you understand". It creates a kind of complicity with the reader.
- Every kinds of women correspond to the definition of womanhood as they are shown through different activities which are not potentially feminine because you can access all activities as far as you want to such as high jobs, sports or whatever. Woman are seen through all their ages and finally from all their different origins
- In fact, we can think that being a woman must not prevent you from becoming what you want as well as being African American.

Act n°5: Describe the last poster

Act n°5: Describe the last poster

- In the middle of the poster I notice the conclusion of the poem which is “that’s me”. Just under this statement there is the poet’s name and her dates of birth and death. All around this written centre, there are many women’s portraits. All of them are different and aim at representing all women regardless to their colour, age or appearance.

Act n°6: Recall all the link words of the former slides.

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- Nevertheless
- In spite of
- Moreover
- In fact
- Instead of
- However
- Anyway
- Finally
- Regardless

Act n°7: Translate the link words of the former slides.

- Nevertheless
- In spite of
- Moreover
- In fact
- Instead of
- However
- Anyway
- Finally
- Regardless

- Néanmoins
- En dépit de
- De plus
- En fait
- Au lieu de
- Toutefois
- De toutes façons
- Finalement
- Indépendamment

PHENOMENAL WOMAN

- Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
 - I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
 - But when I start to tell them,
 - They think I'm telling lies.
 - I say,
 - It's in the reach of my arms,
 - The span of my hips,
 - The stride of my step,
 - The curl of my lips.
 - I'm a woman
 - Phenomenally.
 - Phenomenal woman,
 - That's me.
-
- I walk into a room
 - Just as cool as you please,
 - And to a man,
 - The fellows stand or
 - Fall down on their knees.
 - Then they swarm around me,
 - A hive of honey bees.
 - I say,
 - It's the fire in my eyes,
 - And the flash of my teeth,
 - The swing in my waist,
 - And the joy in my feet.
 - I'm a woman
 - Phenomenally.
-
- Phenomenal woman,
 - That's me.

- Men themselves have wondered
 - What they see in me.
 - They try so much
 - But they can't touch
 - My inner mystery.
 - When I try to show them,
 - They say they still can't see.
 - I say,
 - It's in the arch of my back,
 - The sun of my smile,
 - The ride of my breasts,
 - The grace of my style.
 - I'm a woman
 - Phenomenally.
 - Phenomenal woman,
 - That's me.
-
- Now you understand
 - Just why my head's not bowed.
 - I don't shout or jump about
 - Or have to talk real loud.
 - When you see me passing,
 - It ought to make you proud.
 - I say,
 - It's in the click of my heels,
 - The bend of my hair,
 - the palm of my hand,
 - The need for my care.
 - 'Cause I'm a woman
 - Phenomenally.
 - Phenomenal woman,
 - That's me.

Act n°8: find the words belonging to the lexical field of the body

Act n°11: recall the body parts quoted in the poem and find them in the grid

HEAD
LIPS
EYES
KNEES
SMILE
ARMS
HAIR
HIPS
BREAST
FEET
BACK
TEETH

T	W	R	F	C	V	H	I	O	E	B	L	Z	S	O	W
E	U	U	E	D	A	A	U	Y	Y	A	I	Z	M	Z	Y
A	R	O	E	Z	M	W	D	A	E	C	P	K	I	C	U
F	A	O	T	I	W	G	C	N	S	K	S	U	L	S	E
Y	J	A	H	X	F	H	E	A	D	X	K	Z	E	A	V
F	O	E	U	H	C	A	G	Q	U	I	U	X	H	C	X
T	E	E	T	H	Y	U	A	R	E	Q	B	B	A	S	T
Y	W	E	S	W	U	V	R	H	T	Y	O	I	I	K	A
G	Y	N	T	G	Q	S	M	T	S	T	U	G	R	A	D
G	U	E	M	Z	G	U	S	O	T	I	H	O	E	E	A
J	Z	P	T	Y	X	Y	N	X	L	M	Y	I	F	E	C
J	O	Z	E	F	H	V	H	M	H	E	O	Z	Y	Y	O
M	M	F	Y	L	K	B	R	E	A	S	T	S	Y	E	A
Y	E	Z	J	G	I	D	I	X	S	K	N	E	E	S	A
O	N	R	D	I	T	U	S	B	T	W	V	I	E	Q	N
H	I	P	S	F	Z	D	H	S	N	E	P	D	X	I	Y

ANSWERS

T	W	R	F	C	V	H	I	O	E	B	L	Z	S	O	W
E	U	U	E	D	A	A	U	Y	Y	A	I	Z	M	Z	Y
A	R	O	E	Z	M	W	D	A	E	C	P	K	I	C	U
F	A	O	T	I	W	G	C	N	S	K	S	U	L	S	E
Y	J	A	H	X	F	H	E	A	D	X	K	Z	E	A	V
F	O	E	U	H	C	A	G	Q	U	I	U	X	H	C	X
T	E	E	T	H	Y	U	A	R	E	Q	B	B	A	S	T
Y	W	E	S	W	U	V	R	H	T	Y	O	I	I	K	A
G	Y	N	T	G	Q	S	M	T	S	T	U	G	R	A	D
G	U	E	M	Z	G	U	S	O	T	I	H	O	E	E	A
J	Z	P	T	Y	X	Y	N	X	L	M	Y	I	F	E	C
J	O	Z	E	F	H	V	H	M	H	E	O	Z	Y	Y	O
M	M	F	Y	L	K	B	R	E	A	S	T	S	Y	E	A
Y	E	Z	J	G	I	D	I	X	S	K	N	E	E	S	A
O	N	R	D	I	T	U	S	B	T	W	V	I	E	Q	N
H	I	P	S	F	Z	D	H	S	N	E	P	D	X	I	Y

Act n° 10: find some examples of these literary devices

- **Metaphor:** “Then they swarm around me
A hive of honey bees
- In the above line poet compares desiring men to bees flocking after the poet for her unique charm.
- 2. “It’s the fire in my eyes.”
- The poet here uses a very commonplace metaphor of fire that defines poet’s passion.
- 3. “The sun of my smile.”
- Here, Maya Angelou compared the warmth of her smile to that of the sun

Act n° 10: find some examples of these literary devices

- **Refrain:** “I am woman,
- Phenomenally.”
- This line gets repeated in all the stanzas of the poem which asserts n reasserts poet’s unflinching confidence about her phenomenal identity.
- A refrain is a line, a part of line or a group of lines which is repeated in the course of a poem, sometimes with little changes usually at the end of a stanza. The last four lines of the first three stanzas of the poem, “Phenomenal Woman” should be noted,-

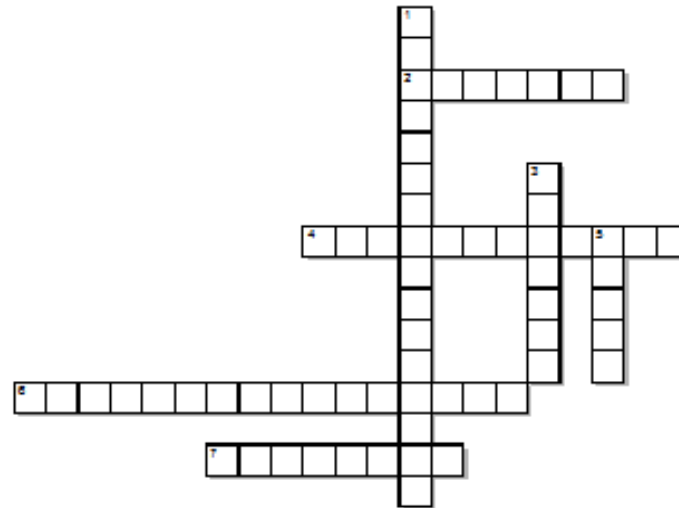
Act n° 10: find some examples of these literary devices

- **Personification:** “And the joy in my feet”
- In the above phrase, joy is compared with a person throwing himself at the feet of the poet.
- **Alliteration:** The repetition of the consonant sounds at the beginning of words is called alliteration. Examples of alliteration from the poem are,
 - “pretty woman wonder”
 - “they say they still can’t see”
 - “the sun of my smile”
- **Tone of the Poem:** The voice that runs through the poem is that of a confident woman who celebrates her body without any inhibition.

Act n° 10: find some examples of these literary devices

- **Imagery:** Two daunting images consolidate the upbeat mood of the poem. First one is men like bees flock after the poet who denounces all the beauty stereotypes and prefers to lead her life on her own way. Second image is men coming onto their knees in their desperate persuasion of a woman who downplays all social conventions and becomes quite an enigma to them.
- **Irony:** The poem has a deep ironical voice. American market constructs their own standard of beauty which only celebrates fair colour, sharp features and blue eyes. Here Maya Angelou makes a strong case for those who do not fall into this category. Herself being a representative of Afro-American origin, she lampoons the conceived notions of beauty and finds joy in her liberated self which defies any structure.

Act n° crossword: fill the grid with literary analysis words



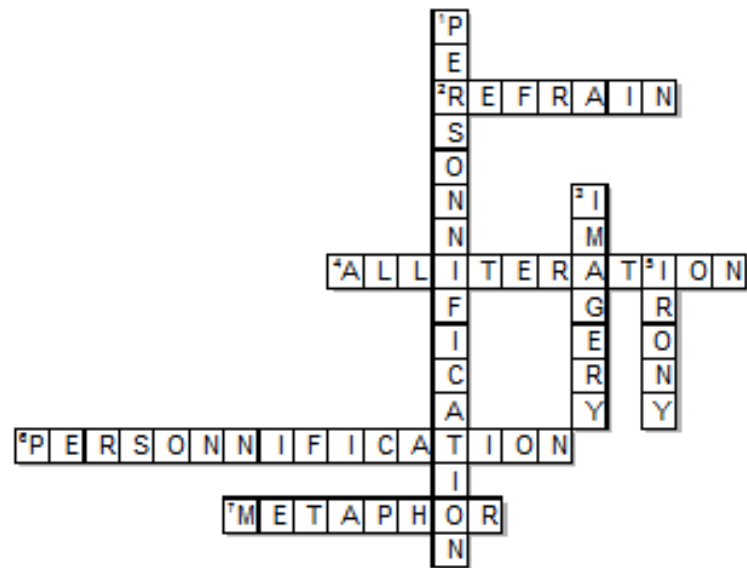
ACROSS

- 2 A SHORT, SIMPLE PART OF A SONG, WHICH IS REPEATED MANY TIMES.
- 4 USE IN SPEECH OR WRITING OF SEVERAL WORDS CLOSE TOGETHER WHICH ALL BEGIN WITH THE SAME LETTER OR SOUND.
- 6 The representation of an abstract quality or idea in the form of a person, creature, etc., as in art and literature
- 7 AN IMAGINATIVE WAY OF DESCRIBING SOMETHING BY REFERRING

DOWN

- 1 ATTRIBUTION OF HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS TO THINGS OR IDEAS
- 3 FIGURATIVE OR DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE IN A LITERARY WORK
- 5 INCONGRUITY BETWEEN WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE AND WHAT ACTUALLY IS, OR A SITUATION OR RESULT SHOWING SUCH INCONGRUITY.

answers



SIGNIFICATION

- The poem starts with biting response from a poet who is supremely self-confident. She does not care to fit into mould of beauty that popular culture constructs. Despite the absence of a scintillating figure, she draws attention from her male suitors. Surprised by her popularity, many women ask her the reason. In reply, the poet makes fun of all the beauty stereotypes and asserts the supremacy of her liberalized self. She does not have a qualm of doubt about her supremacy and never really bothers to change herself to draw more male attention. Her nonchalance, her rejection of stereotype, her supreme air of confidence become a mystery which her male suitors cannot demystify. This inability to decode the enigma makes them more vulnerable for the poet. The poet never does anything outrageous to draw attention and it is her subtlety of action, the exuding confidence, the assuring smile, the light movement of feet, the sharp smile make her a winner.

MAYA ANGELOU'S BIOGRAPHY

- Writer and civil rights activist Maya Angelou was born on April 4th, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. She shot to instant fame with the publication of her 1969 memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which made literary history as the first non-fiction best-seller by an African-American woman. In 1971, Angelou published the Pulitzer Prize-nominated poetry collection *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die*. She later wrote the poem "On the Pulse of Morning"—one of her most famous works—which she recited at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993. Angelou received several honours throughout her career, including two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (non-fiction) category, in 2005 and 2009. She died on May 28th, 2014.

FINAL TASK

- Create a presentation of the poem with the help of all the documents. You must write an introduction which presents the author, the theme of the poem and the following paragraphs.
- Then the development may concern each step of a woman life seen through her inner mystery.
- Finally a conclusion which aims at generalizing the example of her inner mystery to all the women.