

The Courage to Stand I DREAM A WORLD



Poet Langston Hughes wrote the poem “I Dream a World” in 1941 while living in Harlem, New York. A close friend and regular correspondent with Martin Luther King, Jr., Hughes inspired several speeches by King, most notably his “I Have a Dream” speech in 1963.

I Dream a World by Langston Hughes

A I dream a world where man
B No other man will scorn,
C Where love will bless the earth
B And peace its paths adorn

A I dream a world where all
B Will know sweet freedom's way,
C Where greed no longer saps the soul
B Nor avarice blights our day.

A A world I dream where black or white,
B Whatever race you be,
C Will share the bounties of the earth
B And every man is free,

A Where wretchedness will hang its head
B And joy, like a pearl,
C Attends the needs of all mankind –
B Of such I dream, my world!

WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS FOR THE WORLD?

Use the prompts below to think about the world as you would like it to be. Write down your thoughts. If you are comfortable, discuss your thoughts with a classmate. Then, turn your thoughts into a 16-line poem. If you want, try to use a similar structure as Langston Hughes: four stanzas of four lines each; an ABCB rhyming pattern; and iambic meter (rhythm).

- **What constitutes your world?** What do you think of when you think about *your* world? Who is in it? Where is it? What size is it? What are its qualities? How would you describe it?
- **What concerns do you have about your world?** What worries you? What frustrates you?
- **What are your values?** What qualities or ways of living are most important to you? How do you make decisions? Where do you look for guidance?
- **What changes do you want for your world?** Thinking about your world as it is, your concerns, and your values, how would you describe your ideal world? What changes are most needed to realize that ideal world?

