

# Pre-Reading


## Option 1: *Word Power Preview* (Vocabulary & Emotional Hook)

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Purpose:** Preview key emotionally-charged words that appear in the poem and generate quick reactions.

**Steps:**

1. Write or project these words:  
    **"rise", "bitter", "history", "sassiness", "dirt", "gold"**
2. Ask:
3. "Which of these words stand out to you? What comes to mind when you hear them?"
4. Have students jot one word and respond to it in writing or aloud with a partner.

 *Why this works:* Taps into students' own associations and emotions, lowering the barrier to abstract poetry.


## Option 2: *Voice & Attitude Sorting* (Tone Warm-Up)

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Purpose:** Prepare students to hear Maya Angelou's confident, defiant tone.

**Steps:**

1. Display these tone words:  
    **angry, proud, defeated, hopeful, defiant, joyful**
2. Ask:
3. "If someone said 'You may write me down in history / With your bitter, twisted lies,' what kind of tone would that have?"
4. Students vote with a show of hands or circle tone words on a card.

 *Why this works:* It preps students to analyze tone and helps them *expect* that the poem's speaker is resilient and bold.

## Option 3: *Resilience Brainstorm* (Theme Activation)

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Purpose:** Connect the theme to their lives before reading.

**Prompt:**

"What does it mean to be resilient?"

"Why do some people keep going even when others try to hold them down?"

You can write a working definition on the board:

**Resilience = bouncing back when life pushes you down.**

✅ *Why this works:* Frames the poem thematically and allows students to enter the text with a mindset of strength.

Would you like this pre-reading section added to your existing lesson plan document? Or would you prefer a mini slide or printable version of one of these activities?