

Lift Every Voice and Sing

James Weldon Johnson

How does the poem move from celebration to historical memory and then to commitment?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Poem - complete poem

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	Lift every voice and sing
END	True to our native land.
PASSAGE ID	sec-lift-01

THE MOVE

Trace how a poem organizes collective identity through a three-part progression

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The first stanza sounds upward and celebratory, the second forces the singers to remember suffering, and the third turns memory into a plea not to forget. The progression makes hope credible because it does not erase the difficult road that precedes it.

MARK

Label the three stanzas CELEBRATION, MEMORY, and COMMITMENT. Underline one image of hope in stanza 1, one image of suffering in stanza 2, and one warning against forgetting in stanza 3.

NOTICE

- What kind of future does the first stanza imagine?
- Why does the second stanza interrupt celebration with pain?
- What does the final stanza ask the community to remember or resist?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does the poem move from celebration to historical memory and then to commitment? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

The poem builds collective identity by joining hope to memory. Celebration opens the song, but the middle stanza insists that the community remember suffering; the closing prayer then turns that history into a commitment not to lose direction or forget what brought the group forward.

EVIDENCE

Use one detail from the first stanza and one from either the second or third to show the progression.

WATCH FOR

Do not describe the poem as uniformly triumphant. Its power comes from placing hope beside historical pain and the danger of forgetting.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 9 · LESSON 293

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WORK	Lift Every Voice and Sing
TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Poem - complete poem

PASSAGE ID	sec-lift-01
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Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

Lift every voice and sing

END

True to our native land.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK Label the three stanzas CELEBRATION, MEMORY, and COMMITMENT. Underline one image of hope in stanza 1, one image of suffering in stanza 2, and one warning against forgetting in stanza 3.
2. NOTICE What kind of future does the first stanza imagine? Why does the second stanza interrupt celebration with pain? What does the final stanza ask the community to remember or resist?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does the poem move from celebration to historical memory and then to commitment?
4. WRITE Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. CLOSE Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.