

**Poetic Devices in Langston Hughes, “Mother to Son”**

Your Name:	Langston Hughes, “Mother to Son”	
<b>Introducing Quotes</b> You can use any of the suggestions below to introduce <u>any</u> of the images in the middle column that makes sense	<b>Words or phrases you are quoting from the poem, use quotations marks “ ”</b> Choose images for each body paragraph	<b>What do these words/phrases suggest or mean?</b>
<p>The poet (or Langston Hughes) suggests that life...</p> <p>The poet (or Hughes) conveys the idea that....</p> <p>This phrase reveals...</p> <p>The mother advises her son to...</p> <p>The mother explains to her son.. For example, . . .</p> <p>She wants her son to know... To illustrate .....</p> <p>She is sure that...</p> <p>The mother uses images such as, “ ” to represent....</p> <p>The image of “ ” suggests that...</p> <p>The mother expresses or reveals...</p> <p>She teaches her son that...</p> <p>Her ideas of .....is illustrated by..</p> <p>The poet uses repetition to ...</p> <p>These images suggest...</p>	<p>Body paragraph #1 (images from lines 3-7 that represent the mother’s struggle)</p> <p>Body paragraph #2 (images from lines 8-13 that represent the mother’s hard work, drive and courage)</p> <p>Body paragraph #3 (images from lines 14-20 that express (1) the mother’s expectations for her son and (2) the reason why she felt that way)</p>	

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### Introduction – (first paragraph)

**First** sentence: (Write an overall statement or rhetorical question about life that relates to the theme of the poem.)

Example: Every mother wants her child to succeed.   **or**   Have you ever given up on trying, just because it seemed to hard?

**Second** (and, maybe, **third or more**) sentence: Langston Hughes, in his poem, “Mother to Son,” writes from the point of view of a mother who...(tell what happens in the poem)

**Thesis** statement: Hughes conveys his idea that (write the theme of the poem) through the use of dramatic monologue and extended metaphor.

### Body paragraph #1

To symbolize the hardships in her life, in lines 3-7, the mother uses the extended metaphor of a staircase. For example, she explains to her son... (Select the images and suggest what they mean)

### Body paragraph #2

Beginning in line 8, there is a shift in tone. The mother wants her son to know how she worked through her struggles. She indicates this by saying.... (discuss the words in the poem that reveal how hard she tries to succeed)

### Body paragraph #3

The mother is not satisfied with just telling her son her story. In lines 14 -17, she is determined to let her son know.... (select words/phrases that express what the mother demands of her son. Finish up by explaining why she is so insistent in lines 17-20)

### Body paragraph #4

Langston Hughes uses repetition to emphasize the continuing struggle to find the “light,” the “crystal stair.” (discuss which words are repeated and suggest why Hughes has chosen to do so)

### Conclusion

Here’s your chance to write your ideas about the theme. What do you believe about the message of this poem? Life may be hard, but what? What is the son’s choice? What is our choice when it comes to facing challenges and obstacles in life?

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“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes <http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poems/poem.html?id=177021>

(A Choral Reading)

1	Well, son, I'll tell you:	Student #1
2	Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.	Student #1
3	It's had tacks in it,	Group A (1/3 of the class)
4	And splinters,	Group B (1/3 of the class)
5	And boards torn up,	Group C (1/3 of the class)
6	And places with no carpet on the floor—	Girls
7	Bare.	ALL (then slight pause)
8	But all the time	Boys
9	I've been a-climbin' on,	Group A
10	And reachin' landin's,	Group B
11	And turnin' corners,	Group C
12	And sometimes goin' in the dark	Student #1
13	Where there ain't been no light.	Student #1
14	So, boy, don't you turn back.	Group A
15	Don't you set down on the steps.	Group B
16	'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.	Group C
17	Don't you fall now—	ALL
18	For I've still goin', honey,	Girls
19	I've still climbin',	Boys
20	And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.	Student #1