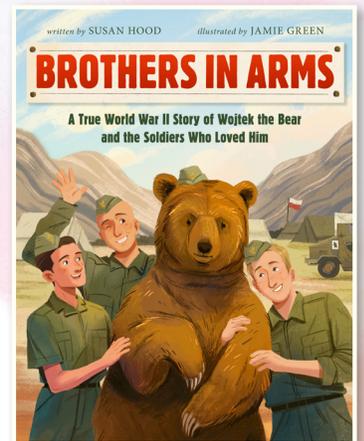
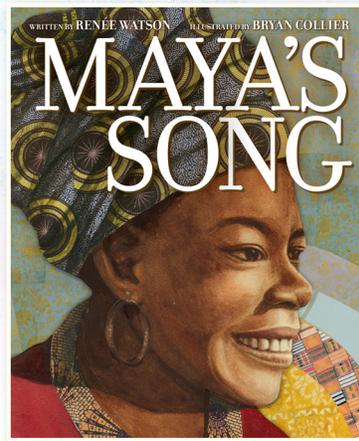
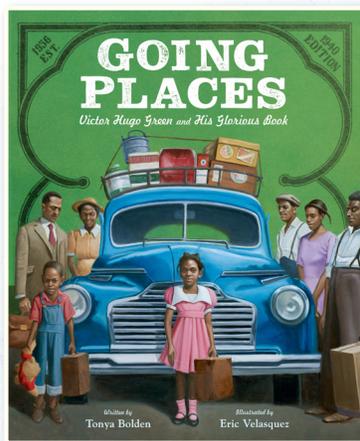
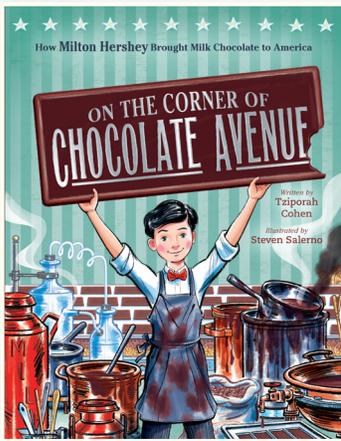


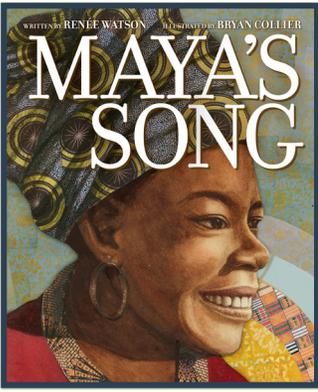
# Picture This: Lasting Legacies

## CLASSROOM KIT

Nonfiction literature encourages children to wonder, to ask questions, and to seek answers. It inspires children by expanding their world and introducing them to new people, places, and ideas.



INCLUDES DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, EXTENSION ACTIVITIES, AND CURRICULUM TIPS



# Maya's Song

By Renée Watson;  
Illustrated by Bryan Collier



## About the Book

The author tells the story of Maya Angelou's life through poetry, tracing her journey from birth, through childhood, adulthood, and finally to the lasting legacy she left behind. Collier's evocative artwork conveys the joys and hardships Maya faced as she struggled to find her voice and ultimately use it courageously to speak out about truth and justice to millions of people around the world.

## Discussion Questions

- In *April 4, 1928*, why does it say that Maya was "born in a nation divided"?
- Whose best friend did she become?
- Read *Too Grand for His Own Skin*. Why did Maya's father move the family to California?
- What was special about Maya's grandmother's store?
- Why were Sunday mornings important for Maya and her family?
- How did Maya learn to read? How did she learn math?
- Read *When Night Came* and discuss what happened with Maya's Uncle Willie.
- *Caged In* describes when Maya suffers a childhood trauma. How does she respond to what happened? Why?
- Read *How to Listen* and discuss how Maya changed during the years when she wasn't speaking. How long was she silent? In *What Momma Annie Said*, what does Maya's grandmother tell her?
- What inspires Maya to begin speaking again?
- Read *This Is My Story, This Is My Song*. How did Maya first earn a living?
- Why did Maya love living in Harlem?
- Why were James Baldwin and Martin Luther King Jr. so important to Maya?
- In 1962 Maya is living in Ghana but decides to move back to the United States. Why? How does she define "home"?
- What happened to Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr? How did this affect Maya? What did she begin to do?
- What was Maya the first woman to do at a presidential inauguration?

## Classroom Activities

**You're My Hero!** Maya was especially inspired by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. Ask the students whom they are inspired by and why. It might be someone famous or it might be someone they know, such as a relative or family friend. Have the students draw a badge of honor for this person and write why they view him or her as their hero. (You can give younger students a template to create the badge for their hero.)

**All About Me.** Read the final poem *Free Bird*. Discuss what an autobiography is and why Maya wrote them. Then have the students write their own autobiography. Who are the people that have helped to shape their lives? What are the most important events? How did these events impact them? Ask the students to include details as they write their autobiography. Students can bring in photographs of themselves at different ages to match their narrative.

**Poem Party.** Maya uses poetry to express her thoughts and feelings. Renée Watson, the author of this book, uses poetry to tell Maya's story. Discuss why poetry helps writers express their ideas. Then ask the students to write their own poem or collection of poems. Then plan a Poem Party for students to share their poems with each other and celebrate the writing they have done in this genre.

**All in the Family.** Maya's family was very important to her. Ask the students to choose an older family member who is important to them. Tell them they will be interviewing this relative about their life. The students can create a list of interview questions individually or the class can generate the list as a group. They might ask their relative what their first jobs were, where they grew up, how they met their spouse, and how their life has changed over the decades. After the students conduct their interviews and record their family member's responses, compile the information into a class book so the students can learn about each other's families.