

GRADES 6-8



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:**

Today you will explore the American Writers Museum to learn more about the history and process of writing. Please use the educational materials to help guide your visit. Your interactions with the exhibits will help you to answer the questions in this packet. We encourage you to take your time and to answer the questions thoughtfully.

- At the end of your visit, we will gather as a group to discuss your field trip experience.
- Please be prepared to share your answers in this packet.

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**CHILDREN'S LITERATURE GALLERY**

1. *Charlotte's Web*

- a. Select **three words** that describe your personality from the selection of word tiles.

Create a sentence for each of those words.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

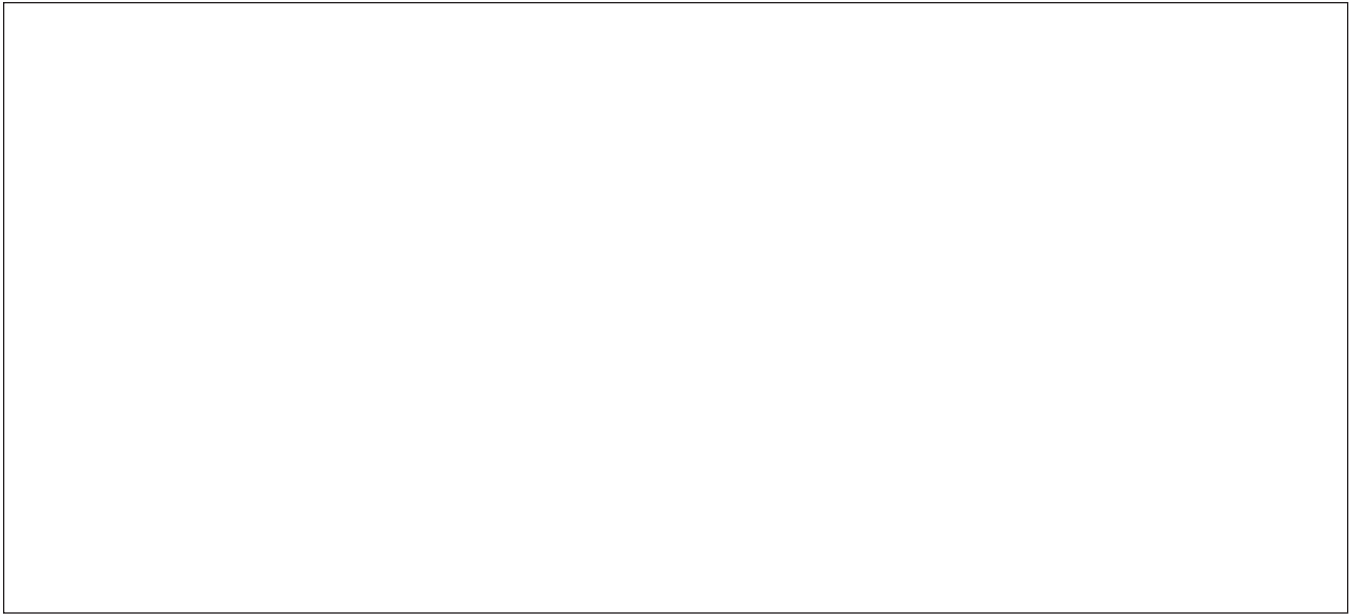
2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Listen to the poem *The Weary Blues* by Langston Hughes.

You can also read along from the *Dream Keeper* and other poems on pages 30-31.

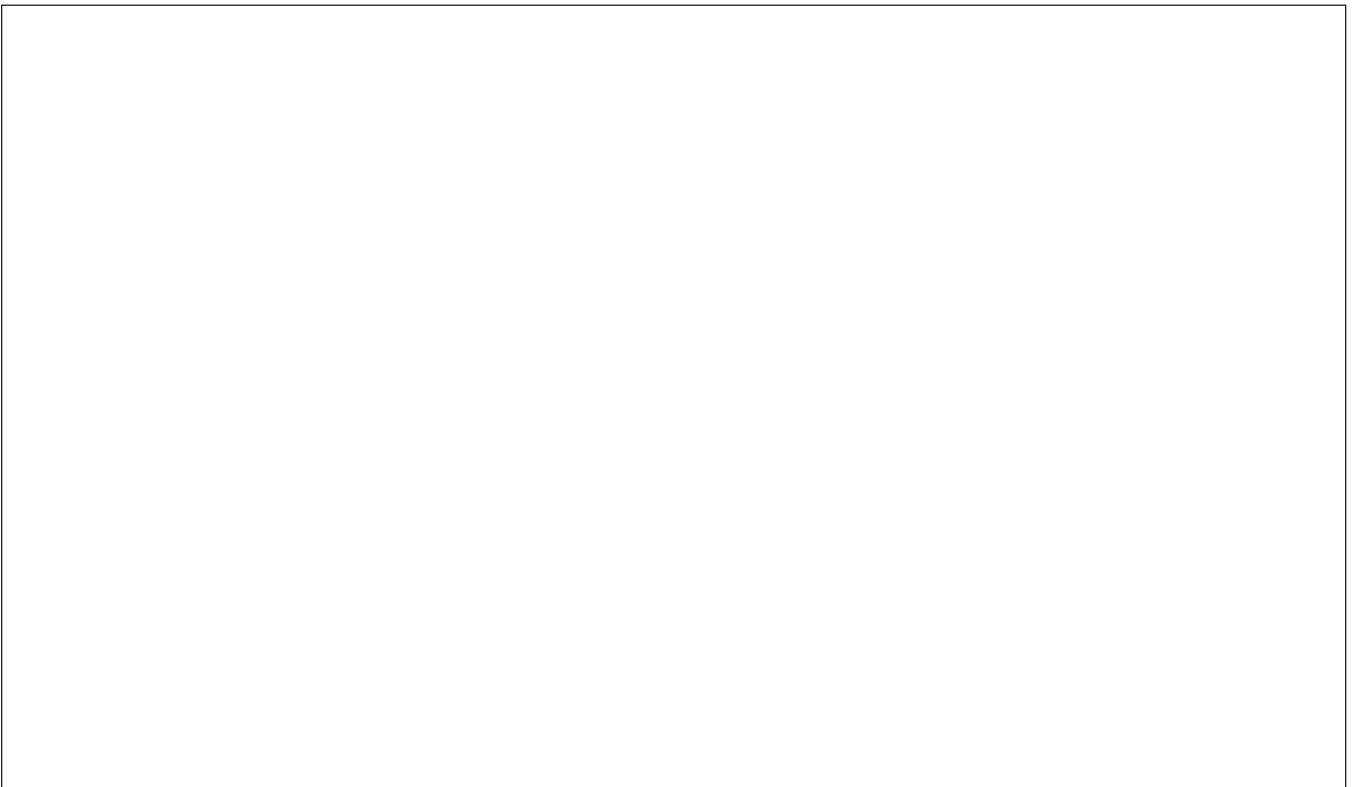
a. Why do you think the author repeats the line, *He did a lazy sway*?



3. *Squirrel Mural*

Draw your own squirrel doing an action based on your favorite children's book.

If you already see your favorite book depicted in the mural, how would you change it?



## AMERICAN VOICES

Below are six of the more than 300 writers highlighted in the museum. You can find more information on all the authors listed in this packet in our **American Voices** virtual exhibit.

**Please select THREE of the following authors and work on the questions for each of them.**

### **Era: Colonial Vision**

**Phillis Wheatley** - Phillis Wheatley became the first published African-American author at the age of 20. She so impressed George Washington with a poem that he asked to meet her. During her visit with the president, he treated Wheatley with a respect unusual for a slave owner.

If you had the opportunity to travel back in time to meet author Phillis Wheatley, what do you imagine talking to her would be like?

Create a conversation with the author Phillis Wheatley.

### **Era: The New Nation**

**William Apess** - In his work *An Indian's Looking Glass for White Man* (1883), he states "Now suppose these skins were put together, and each skin had its national crimes written upon it - which skin do you think would have the greatest?.. I should look at all the skins, and I know that when I cast my eye upon that white skin, and if I saw those crimes written upon it, I should enter my protest against it immediately, and cleave to that which is more honorable."

What do you understand by the author's words above? What is the author exactly trying to convey?

**Frederick Douglass** - Frederick Douglass was a relentless advocate for change and constantly challenged the status quo in American society through his writing and speeches. Everyone who seeks change faces obstacles they must overcome.

Taking inspiration from his life, answer the following: How do you challenge your status quo, and how have you been challenged?

### **Era: Many Voices**

**Maria Ruiz de Burton** - In her work *The Squatter and the Don*, she states "Let us cry for the spilt milk, and remember how, and where, and why, we spilt it. Much wisdom is learnt through tears, but none by forgetting our lessons."

What do you understand by the author's words above? What is the author exactly trying to convey?

### **Era: Modernism**

**Zora Neale Hurston** - In her work *How It Feels to Be Colored Me* (1928), Zora Neale Hurston wrote, "I am not tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eye. ...Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world—I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife."

What do you think the quote means? Do you agree or disagree?

**AMERICAN VOICES** *(continued)*

**Era: New Voices**

**Vine Deloria Jr.** - The American Indian Movement of the 1970s protested humanitarian atrocities and broken treaties by occupying places of trauma, such as Alcatraz Island and Wounded Knee. Indian writers like Vine Deloria Jr. promoted native identity, tribal sovereignty, and the citizens' rights while challenging stereotypes and the mainstream historical narrative.

Have you witnessed prejudice? Reflect on its impact on you.

**Author** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author** \_\_\_\_\_

## SURPRISE BOOKSHELF

Find all the different things in our **Surprise Bookshelf** located in the **Nation of Writers** gallery.

1. Find at least 2 smells:

Name of Author	Name of Book/Work	What kind of smell was it? Does this scent remind you of anything?

Describe a smell that you like. What memories do you have of that scent?

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2. Find at least 2 videos:

Name of Author	Name of Book/Work	What does the video talk about?

3. Find at least 2 Audios:

Name of Author	Name of Book/Work	What does the audio tell you?

4. Find at least 2 dioramas:

Name of Author	Name of Book/Work	How is the diorama connected to the work?

What kind of diorama would you create for the following work?

*(Please read the text for the following work and create a diorama based on the text.)*

- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 1960
- H.P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*, 1928

## The Word Waterfall exhibit

Looking at the Word Waterfall exhibit, answer the following: **What does it mean to be an American?**

## READERS HALL

### Comics Pack A Punch

Read pages 5-6 of *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.

According to Artie's Dad, what is a friend?

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### Access for All

The first public libraries did not emerge until the late 1800s. Now, there are nearly 120,000 in the United States. Other than lending out books, what other services do public libraries provide?

1. What year did the Boston Public Library open? \_\_\_\_\_

## MIND OF A WRITER GALLERY

### Featured Works

On our Featured Works table **LISTEN to 1 (one)** of the following excerpts and answer the question(s):

1. *A Wrinkle In Time* by Madeline L'Engle
  - a. According to the text and audio, is Meg a brave person?
2. *A Bird Came Down the Walk (Poem 328)* by Emily Dickinson
  - a. After listening to the poem, does the author have a positive or negative perspective of nature?
  - b. What evidence in the poem supports your thought?

### Build a Routine

Describe a routine that makes you feel your best. Describe the space you are in? What objects and fuel are necessary for you to do your best work?

Do you share similarities to any of the authors displayed in terms of routines?

### Make Meaning

**Cyberspace** *noun* Virtual reality; where the Internet resides

Sci-fi author William Gibson first used “cyberspace” in his short story, *Burning Chrome* (1982). The word’s popularity soared in the 1990s as use of the Internet became widespread.

Using what you have learned about writing so far, create a new word.  
What does it mean? Describe its definition.

## CHICAGO GALLERY

1. Lorraine Hansberry gave a speech about writing in 1964.

“Write if you will: but write about the world as it is and as you think it ought to be and must be-if there is to be a world...Work hard at it, care about it. Write about our people: tell their story. You have something glorious to draw on begging for attention. Don't pass it up.”

The exhibit quotes this speech. If you were to write, what topic would you choose to write about and why?

### Creating Art from the Everyday

Listen to the poem, *We Real Cool* by Gwendolyn Brooks.

We real cool. We  
Left school. We

Lurk late. We  
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We  
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We  
Die soon.

After listening to the poem, why do you think the author ends each line with 'We' except for the last line?