

Voices With Context

Use context and text patterns to prepare a meaningful recitation.

10.P.CP.2.e “Build background knowledge by reciting all or part of significant poems and speeches as appropriate by grade level. (I/C)”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle every detail about a work’s historical or social context. Underline each delivery choice connected to context or a text feature, so you can see how background knowledge guides recitation.

Preparing Words for an Audience

- ① Reciting a significant poem or speech can make history feel like a live conversation rather than a date on a timeline. Before a 1963 March on Washington audience, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered “I Have a Dream,” calling for civil and economic rights. Its repeated phrase, “I have a dream,” gives listeners a verbal landmark. A reciter who knows that the speech responded to segregation can let the phrase sound hopeful but urgent. Background knowledge also prevents a performance from becoming empty imitation. The speaker’s purpose, audience, and historical moment guide choices about pace, pauses, and emphasis.
- ② Langston Hughes’s 1951 poem “Harlem” opens with the question, “What happens to a dream deferred?” The question does not ask for a quick reply. It introduces the poem’s concern with hopes postponed by racial inequality. Hughes follows it with a series of vivid comparisons, including a raisin drying in the sun and a festering sore. A reciter can pause after the opening question, then give each comparison enough space for an audience to picture it. The rising tension near the poem’s final question, “Or does it explode?” calls for controlled intensity, not shouting. Knowing the poem’s social context gives the images added weight.
- ③ Recitation is not acting out every word. It is an interpretation supported by evidence. A reader might mark a slash for a brief pause, circle a repeated phrase, and underline a word that carries an idea. These marks help the voice reveal structure without adding drama the text does not earn. During practice, a reciter should speak loudly enough for listeners, pronounce names and unfamiliar words correctly, and keep eyes up often. The goal is to help an audience hear why a work mattered when it was first spoken or published, and why its ideas still matter.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 Imagine you are reciting King's repeated phrase. Which background detail should shape your tone, and what tone does the passage support?

- 2 How should you handle the opening question in "Harlem" and the comparisons that follow it?

- 3 What delivery choice fits "Or does it explode?", and how does the poem's social context support that choice?

- 4 What three annotation marks can you use when preparing a recitation, and what does each mark help you plan?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose a 35 to 60 word excerpt from a significant poem or speech and write its title, author, and one accurate fact about when or why it was created. Mark / for pauses, circle a repeated word or phrase or another clear pattern, and underline two words to emphasize. In exactly two sentences, explain how the context and your marks will guide your voice.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle every detail about a work's historical or social context. Underline each delivery choice connected to context or a text feature, so you can see how background knowledge guides recitation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Imagine you are reciting King's repeated phrase. Which background detail should shape your tone, and what tone does the passage support?	Know that the speech responded to segregation and called for civil and economic rights. Use a hopeful but urgent tone.
2	How should you handle the opening question in "Harlem" and the comparisons that follow it?	Pause after the opening question, then give each comparison enough space for the audience to picture it.
3	What delivery choice fits "Or does it explode?", and how does the poem's social context support that choice?	Use controlled intensity, not shouting, because the poem addresses hopes postponed by racial inequality.
4	What three annotation marks can you use when preparing a recitation, and what does each mark help you plan?	A slash plans a brief pause, a circle marks a repeated phrase, and an underline marks a word that carries an important idea.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln "Four score and seven years ago / our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." Lincoln delivered this address in 1863 at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, during the Civil War. I would pause at the slash and emphasize the underlined ideals, then return to the circled word nation to show the link between the country's founding and the war.

Accept reasonable recitation choices when students connect them to an accurate context fact and visible evidence in the selected excerpt. The excerpt should meet the word range and include the required pause, pattern, and emphasis marks.