

**Formative Reading Assessment 2014****My First Conk**

Malcolm X

Answer all four questions. You should not write any longer than one paragraph (max. 150 words) for each question. Make sure you include specific details from the story to support your responses.

1. What can we tell about Malcolm X as a young man?

Malcolm X was very excited about getting his first conk; when the drugstore man asked him about getting his first conk, he replied "Right!" proudly. He is a tough person, he said, "My scalp still flamed, but not as badly; I could bear it." This tells us that he was very brave even when his head was on fire.

*anything else?*

2. Four words have been bolded. Why did Malcolm X add quotation marks to these words?

I think he added quotation marks to those words because they all basically describe how he thinks that Caucasians think they are much better than African-Americans, and how racist he thinks they are to African-Americans. Malcolm X claims that straightening his hair is his "first really big step towards self-degradation". This really shows that he thinks Caucasians treat African-Americans as inferior.

*further examples?*

3. Who do you think is Malcolm X's intended audience? Why do you think this? What effect does he want to have on his readers?

a. I think Malcolm X's intended audience was African-Americans who want a conk - *because . . .*

b. I think this because part of the story explains the pain he went through to get the "amazing" results. Also, at the end, he explains his extreme admiration towards some famous African-American entertainers (or any African-American man) who didn't get their hair conked and kept it natural, he said "One of the reasons I've especially admired some of them, like Lionel Hampton and Sidney Poitier, among others, is that they have kept their natural hair and fought to the top. I admire any Negro man who has never had himself conked, or who has had the sense to get rid of it - as I finally did."

c. I believe the effect he wants to leave on his readers is that to just appreciate your natural self, and not to follow everyone else and go through the pain/torture just to fit it/not get bullied.

4. Think carefully about the title My First Conk. Explain its significance.

I think this title is significant because the title "My First Conk" really relates to the topic of the story. Even the first sentence has the word "conk" in it, "Shorty soon decided that my hair was finally long enough to be conked." This title really made me want to read the whole thing because, personally, I didn't know what "conk" meant, so I wanted to find out what it was by reading the story. On the other hand, if I did know what "conk" meant, I would want to know what it feels like and how people do it. I think the title "My First Conk" is an extremely significant title, because it gives the main