

**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 naïve as a young man. He would jump right into a situation without too much thought. An example of this was at the very beginning, "He had promised to school me in how to beat the barbershops' three- and four-dollar price by making up congolene, and then conking ourselves." Malcolm X could have said no. He could have spent a day or two to think about it. He could have asked someone for advice. Instead, he jumped right into it, not stopping to think if it would be dangerous.

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

I think Malcolm X added the quotation marks to the words because he wanted to emphasize how they were not true, yet many people felt like they were. Maybe he was being sarcastic. He says, "I had joined that multitude of Negro men and women in America who are brainwashed into believing that the black people are "inferior" -and white people "superior", that they will even violate and mutilate their God-created bodies to try to look "pretty" by white standards." This is important because he doesn't want black people to feel like they need to conk their hair. He wants black people to know that it is ridiculous for them to change their appearance just because they think that white people are "superior". He wants to inform black people that black people and white people are equal and should be treated so.

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?

I think Malcolm X's intended audience are the African-Americans who still conk their hair just because they want to look "white". Malcolm X says, "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." He means that it is important African-Americans don't feel "inferior" because of their race. He admires people who know or have known that they do not need to try to act like another race. People should be proud of their race.

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

I think that the title is important because he wants readers to feel like the story is just about a young man getting a new hairstyle, but as the reader keeps reading, they realize it is about more than that. The reader realizes that it is about every African-American who has conked his or her hair. The third paragraph shows Malcolm X talking to the drugstore man. "Going to lay on that first conk?" the drugstore man asked me. I proudly told him, grinning, "Right!" Malcolm X is trying to tell all of the readers that many blacks have