



BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English - Reader 2

BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English - Reader 2

SHANTEL IVITS

BCCAMPUS
VICTORIA, B.C., CANADA



BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 2 Copyright © 2015 by Shantel Ivits is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

© 2015 Shantel Ivits

The CC licence permits you to retain, reuse, copy, redistribute, and revise this book—in whole or in part—for free providing the author is attributed as follows:

BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 2 by Shantel Ivits is used under a CC BY 4.0 licence.

If you redistribute all or part of this book, you must include the following on the copyright page:

Download for free from the B.C. Open Collection.

This textbook can be referenced. In APA citation style, it should appear as follows:

Ivits, S. (2015). *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 2*. Victoria, B.C.: BCampus. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/>.

Cover image attribution:

Langston Hughes by Carl Van Vechten is in the public domain.

Visit BCcampus Open Education to learn about open education in British Columbia.

This book was produced with Pressbooks (<https://pressbooks.com>) and rendered with Prince.

Contents

Accessibility Statement	vi
About the Book	viii
Acknowledgments	ix
Notes to the Instructor	1
Langston Hughes: A Poet's Life	
Chapter 1	2
Chapter 2	4
Chapter 3	6
Chapter 4	8
Chapter 5	10
Chapter 6	13
Chapter 7	16
Chapter 8	18
Audio Book	21
Bibliography	23
About the Author	24
Versioning History	25
List of Links for Print Users	26

Accessibility Statement

BCcampus Open Education believes that education must be available to everyone; this means supporting the creation of free, open, and accessible educational resources. We are actively committed to increasing the accessibility and usability of the textbooks we produce.

Accessibility features of the web version of this resource

The web version of *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 2* includes the following features:

- It has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology:
 - all content can be navigated using a keyboard
 - links, headings, tables use proper markup
 - all images have text descriptions
- It includes an option to increase font size. (See tab on top right of screen titled, “Increase Font Size.”)

Other file formats available

In addition to the web version, this book is available in a number of file formats including PDF, EPUB (for eReaders), MOBI (for Kindles), and various editable files. Here is a link to where you can download this book in another file format. Look for the Download this book drop-down menu to select the file type you want.

Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

There are no known accessibility issues at this time.

Let us know if you are having problems accessing this book

If any of the above accessibility issues are stopping you from accessing the information in this textbook, please contact us to let us know and we will get it fixed. If you discover any other issues, please let us know of those as well.

Please include the following information:

- The location of the problem by providing a web address or page description
- A description of the problem
- The computer, software, browser, and any assistive technology you are using that can help us diagnose and solve

your issue

e.g., Windows 10, Google Chrome (Version 65.0.3325.181), NVDA screen reader

You can contact us through the following form: [Report an Error](#)

This statement was last updated on July 17, 2019.

About the Book

BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Reader 2 was created by Shantel Ivits. This creation is a part of the B.C. Open Textbook project.

The B.C. Open Textbook project began in 2012 with the goal of making post-secondary education in British Columbia more accessible by reducing student cost through the use of openly licensed textbooks. The B.C. Open Textbook project is administered by BCcampus and funded by the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education.

Open textbooks are open educational resources (OER); they are instructional resources created and shared in ways so that more people have access to them. This is a different model than traditionally copyrighted materials. OER are defined as teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others (Hewlett Foundation).

Our open textbooks are openly licensed using a Creative Commons license, and are offered in various e-book formats free of charge, or as printed books that are available at cost.

For more information about this project, please contact opentext@bccampus.ca.

If you are an instructor who is using this book for a course, please let us know.

Acknowledgments

These books were developed on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Huy tseep q'u! Chen kw'enmántumiyap! Kw'as hoy!

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work on this project alongside a dedicated team of basic education instructors from across British Columbia. This series was shepherded by Leanne Caillier-Smith (College of the Rockies) and benefited enormously from the insight and encouragement of Julia Dodge (University of the Fraser Valley), Chandra McCann (Okanagan College), Jan Weiten (Vancouver Community College), and Melinda Worfolk (College of New Caledonia). The above five mentioned are representatives of the BC Adult Literacy Articulation Committee and were the advisory committee members for this project. It has been a pleasure to scaffold my own learning among such brilliant and passionate educators.

Huge thanks to Lauri Aesoph of BCcampus for introducing me to the exciting open textbook movement and managing all aspects of the publication of these books — from layout and image selection to copyediting and print —so adeptly.

I am incredibly lucky to work with and have the support of the Basic Education Department at Vancouver Community College: Rita Acton, Cynthia Bluman, Andrew Candela, Lynn Horvat, Alayna Kruger, Jo Lemay, Edie Mackenzie, Rene Merkel, Tara Mollel, Leah Rasmussen, Linda Rider, Mary Thompson-Boyd, Jan Weiten, and our Dean, David Wells. I am also deeply grateful to the basic education students at Vancouver Community College for all that you teach me about dreams, resilience, and perseverance.

A special thank you to my partner, Marria, for always lending my words an eager ear, and for keeping the world around me turning even though my head was perpetually stuck in these books.

Notes to the Instructor

The poetry of Langston Hughes has an appeal that reaches from the carpets of kindergarten classrooms to the lecture halls of universities. There is elegance in its simplicity. That is why I chose to make the life and poetry of Langston Hughes the central focus of this book.

This reader contains eight chapters written specifically for adults. The chapters take a journey through Langston Hughes' family history and personal life. I have included excerpts from many of Hughes' poems. I encourage you to locate full versions of these poems in books or on the web. Some or all of this author's works are in the public domain. During this unit, I also recommend reading Hughes' excellent short story *Thank You, Ma'am* with your students.

This level 2 reader, one of a series of six readers, is roughly equivalent to Grades 1.5 to 3 in the K-12 system. It is designed to accompany the *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*. For an overview of the contents, please refer to the Scope & Sequence in Appendix 2.

The online version of the course pack contains audio recordings of each story in the reader. These recordings, combined with vocabulary and word pattern exercises, prepare the Level 2 student to read each chapter with greater independence.

Depending on a learner's readiness, you may wish to use the sentences in the Word Pattern sections as dictations.

I recommend using these books alongside a structured phonics program, such as the Wilson Reading System.

Font size and line spacing can be adjusted in the online view, and have been enhanced for the print and PDF versions for easier reading. In addition, an audio book is available to allow students to listen as they read. This reader has been reviewed by subject experts from colleges and universities.

I hope these pages help ignite in your students a lifelong love of poetry and prose.

-Shantel Ivits

Chapter 1

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=5#oembed-1>



Reading a poem

Many people think that poems are not for them. They may not have read a poem by a good poet. A good poet can make us feel less cut off from the world. A good poet can make us see the world with new eyes. A good poet can make us feel alive.

Many people think Langston Hughes was a very good poet. Langston was black. He grew up in a time when white people did not treat black people well. So he wrote poems about the need to make a better world. Many people still do not treat black people well. So we still need Langston's poems. His poems give us hope.

This is a book about the life and poems of Langston Hughes. You can find more of his poems in books or on the web.

See Chapter 1 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- slam poetry © Nopal Media is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) license

Chapter 2

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=23#oembed-1>



A slave woman

Langston Hughes is from the USA. Not long ago, black people in the USA were made to work for white people. They worked long days for no pay. They were slaves. This is part of a poem Langston wrote about being a slave.

I am the one who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave –
Children sold away from me, my husband sold, too.
No safety, no love, no respect was I due.

– from “The Negro Mother”

Langston was not a slave. But his great-grandmother was. Her name was Lucy Langston. The white man who owned her fell in love with her. So he set her free. He could not marry Lucy. The law said white people could not marry black people. But they did live together. They also had children together. One of the children was Charles Langston. He was the grandfather of our poet.

See Chapter 2 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- la negresse © Clay Williams is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) license

Chapter 3

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=29#oembed-1>



Race to freedom

Charles Langston wanted all black people to be free. So he helped slaves run away from their owners. Charles helped slaves get to Canada, where they would be free. He was put in jail for this. But in 1865, the USA made a law that said no one could own a slave ever again. Black people still could not go to school with white people. Black people still could not eat in restaurants with white people. Black people still could not vote. So Charles set up schools for black people. He also helped black people win the right to vote. Langston may have been thinking of Charles when he wrote these words:

I tire so of hearing people say,

Let things take their course.

Tomorrow is another day.

I do not need my freedom when I am dead.

I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.

– from “Democracy“

Charles Langston fell in love with a woman named Mary. They had a daughter named Carrie. Carrie was the mother of our poet.

See Chapter 3 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- Brooklyn_Museum_-_A_Ride_for_Liberty_-_The_Fugitive_Slaves_-_Eastman_Johnson_-_overall © Eastman Johnson is licensed under a Public Domain license

Chapter 4

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=44#oembed-1>



Langston Hughes

Carrie married a man named James Hughes. They had a son, Langston, in 1902. James was a lawyer. But he was not allowed to work as a lawyer because he was black. James was fed up with racism. So he left the USA. He left Carrie and Langston behind. Carrie had to move away to find work. She left Langston with his grandmother, Mary. They did not have much money. They still had to live with racism. But Mary told Langston many stories. She told him about his grandfather, Charles. These stories made Langston feel proud of who he was.

When Mary died, Langston missed her stories. His mother was always at work. He was on his own a lot. He turned to books. He turned to poems. One day, he began to write his own poems. He turned his sad feelings into beautiful words. The poem “Mother to Son” is about a mother telling her son to keep going in hard times.

Well, son, I'll tell you:

Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

It's had tacks in it,

And splinters,

And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor –
Bare.
– from “Mother to Son”

See Chapter 4 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- Langston_Hughes_1902 © unknown is licensed under a Public Domain license

Chapter 5

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=46#oembed-1>



Langston Hughes at university

Langston went to live with his dad when he was 17. His dad lived in Mexico. This was a sad time in his life. Langston and his dad did not get along. His dad did not want Langston to write poems. His dad had a lot of shame about being black. But Langston was proud. He wrote poems to tell other black people to feel proud, too. One example is a poem called “My People.”

The night is beautiful,

So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,

So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.

Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

– from “My People” in *The Crisis* (October 1923)



Langston Hughes in high school

After high school, Langston went to university to study science. His wish was to study English. But his dad would not let him. A lot of people at university treated him badly because he was black. So Langston dropped out after two years. Then he went to work. He was a cook. He washed clothes. He worked on a ship. He also worked as a busboy at a hotel. He cleaned tables and dishes. But he still dreamed of being a poet.

See Chapter 5 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- Langston_Hughes_Lincoln_University_1928 © Yale Collection of American Literature is licensed under a Public Domain license

- Hughes_high_school_1919_or_1920 © Yale Collection of American Literature is licensed under a Public Domain license

Chapter 6

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=48#oembed-1>



Art from Harlem

Harlem is a place in New York. Many black people in the USA moved to Harlem in the 1920s. A lot of art was being made by black artists in Harlem. They made books, poems, plays, paintings, and music. The art helped black people come together as one community.



Langston Hughes House

Langston had moved around all his life. But he made a home in Harlem. More and more people read his poems. His poems were printed in books and magazines. People began to pay him to write more poems. Soon he did not need to work other jobs. His job was to write. Langston used his poems to fight racism. You can see this in his poem called “I, Too.” It is about a slave or servant who cannot eat with the white people when company comes. Black people were kept apart from white people in most places outside the home, too.

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

– from “I, Too”

See Chapter 6 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- harlem renaissance © angela.n is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) license
- Langston-hughes-house-20e127 © Americasroof is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) license

Chapter 7

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=50#oembed-1>



Langston Hughes

Did Langston ever fall in love? It is hard to say. Many people who have read his books and poems say that he was gay. He wrote some love poems to a man. These poems were never put in books or magazines. He also wrote a story that may tell of his own life. It is the story of a father who is mad because his son is “queer” and acts like a girl. At that time, it was harder to be open about being gay. What would happen if Langston told people he was gay? Would people still pay him to write his poems? Would people still read his poems?

Langston may not have found love. But he won many prizes for his poems. He became a famous poet. He helped many young black writers. He helped them feel pride. He helped them not to worry about the racism of other people. He told them to hold on to their dreams. He wrote a poem about this called “Dreams.”

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

– from “Dreams”

See Chapter 7 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- langston young © freeparking 😊 is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) license

Chapter 8

Click play on the following audio player to listen along as you read this section.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://opentextbc.ca/abealfreader2/?p=52#oembed-1>



Langston Hughes

One day, Langston was told he had cancer. On May 22, 1967, Langston Hughes died. He was 65 years old. His ashes are

in Harlem. He is still remembered today for his beautiful poems. He is also remembered for helping black people see themselves as a beautiful community. With Langston Hughes' help, the term "African-American" is used with pride.



Langston Hughes

The land wants me to come back
To a handful of dust in autumn,
To a raindrop
In the palm of my hand
In spring.
– from “Dust Bowl”

See Chapter 8 in *BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2*.

Media Attributions

- Langston Hughes 1936 © Carl_Van_Vechten is licensed under a Public Domain license

- Langston Hughes © Delano/Library of Congress is licensed under a CC BY-SA (Attribution ShareAlike) license

Audio Book

In 2022, this book was made into an audio book. This audio book is available as an **audio-only version** or as a **video version**, which allows you to listen to the audio while you read the text in the video.

The audio versions are embedded at the beginning of each story in this book. In addition, all of the audio and video versions have been uploaded to a media-hosting platform where they can be accessed online: BC Reads: Reader 2 Audio Book

How to Download

While all of the files can be played online, you can also download them for offline use:

1. Open the playlist: BC Reads: Reader 2 Audio Book
2. Click the title of the video or audio that you want to download, which will open up a page with a media player.
3. Find the “Download” tab underneath the media player.
4. Click the download icon (see the below screenshot).



This will download either an .mp4 file (for videos) or an .mp3 file (for audio).

Sweetgrass Video

♥ 0 ▶ 0

From [Alaysha Daniel](#) July 19th, 2022

Details Attachments **Download** Share 🔍

Name	Size	Actions
Source	(38.09 Mb)	 

Bibliography

- Films for the Humanities and Sciences. (2001). *Langston Hughes: His Life & times*. Princeton, NJ: Films Media Group.
- Harlem Renaissance. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlem_Renaissance
- A centennial tribute to Langston Hughes. (n.d.) In *Howard University Library System*. Retrieved from <http://www.howard.edu/library/reference/guides/hughes/>
- Hughes, Langston. (1994). *The collected poems of Langston Hughes*. Ed. Arnold Rampersand. New York: Knopf.
- Hughes, Langston & Charles R. Smith. (2009). *My people*. New York: Athenium Books for Young Readers.
- Langston Hughes. (n.d.) In *Poetry Foundation*. Retrieved from <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/search/?q=langston+hughes>
- Langston Hughes. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langston_Hughes
- Charles Henry Langston. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Henry_Langston

About the Author



Shantel Ivits is an instructor in the Basic Education Department at Vancouver Community College, on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Shantel has designed curricula for the National Film Board of Canada, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, and many community-based projects.

Over the past decade, they have taught in literacy programs, university bridging programs, an ESL academy, and K-12 public schools.

They hold a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Trent University, as well as a Bachelor of Education and a Master of Arts in Educational Studies from the University of British Columbia.

Shantel identifies as a queer and trans person with white settler privilege. Their goal as an educator is to help people build their capacity to reach their goals and create more socially just communities.

Shantel also enjoys raising awareness that “they” can be used as a singular pronoun!

Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted by this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please fill out the [Report an Error](#) form.

Version	Date	Change	Details
1.00	November 9, 2015	Book published.	
1.01	June 12, 2019	Updated the book's theme.	The styles of this book have been updated, which may affect the page numbers of the PDF and print copy. Accessibility remediation:
2.00	July 17, 2019	Entire book revised for accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Image descriptions added.• Link text edited to be descriptive.• Added an Accessibility Statement
2.01	Aug 8, 2022	Added audio book.	An audio version was embedded at the beginning of each story. A back matter section titled "Audio Book" was added explaining how to access and download all of the audio book files.

List of Links for Print Users

- BC Reads: Adult Literacy Fundamental English – Course Pack 2: <https://opentextbc.ca/abealf2/>
- “Democracy”: <http://www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/langston-hughes/democracy/>
- “Dust Bowl”: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse/58/2#!/20582538>
- “Dreams”: <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/dreams>
- “I, too”: <http://pages.citebite.com/h4p5p0k9r5jsl>
- “Mother to Son”: <http://pages.citebite.com/s4c5l0w9j4vlf>
- “My People”: <http://allpoetry.com/poem/8495469-My-People-by-Langston-Hughes>
- “The Negro Mother”: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-negro-mother/>