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**Two Poems about America**

Read these two poems about America carefully – underline or takes notes as you wish. After you have read both poems, pick a few quotes from each as evidence, and answer the following for homework:

How and why do the perspectives of the two authors on America differ? Why is it important to consider both perspectives as you begin this class on American history?

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**God Bless The U.S.A.
By Lee Greenwood**

Iftomorrow all the things were gone
I'd worked for all my life,
And I had to start again
with just my children and my wife,
I'd thank my lucky stars
to be living here today,
'Cause the flag still stands for freedom
and they can't take that away.

I'm proud to be an American
where at least I know I'm free,
And I won't forget the men who died
who gave that right to me,
And I gladly stand up next to you
and defend her still today,
'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land
God Bless the U.S.A.

From the lakes of Minnesota
to the hills of Tennessee,
Across the plains of Texas
from sea to shining sea.
From Detroit down to Houston
And New York to L.A.,
There's pride in every American heart
and it's time we stand and say:

I'm proud to be an American
where at least I know I'm free,
And I won't forget the men who died
who gave that right to me,
And I gladly stand up next to you
and defend her still today,
'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land
God Bless the U.S.A.

***Let America Be America Again***

**By Langston Hughes**

Let America be America again.

Let it be the dream it used to be.

Let it be the pioneer on the plain

Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed

Let it be that great strong land of love

Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme

That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty

Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,

But opportunity is real, and life is free,

Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,

Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,

I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.

I am the red man driven from the land,

I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek--

And finding only the same old stupid plan

Of dog eat dog, of mighty crushing the weak.

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.

I am the worker sold to the machine.

I am the Negro, servant to you all.

I am the people, humble, hungry, mean--

Hungry still today despite the founders dream.

O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas

In search of what I meant to be my home--

For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,

And Poland's plain, and England's grassy meadows,

And torn from black Africa's beach I came

To build a "homeland of the free”. . . .

O, let America be America again--

The land that it never has been yet--

And yet must be--the land where every man is free.

The land that's mine--the poor man's, the Indian's, the Negro's, ME -- Who made America,

Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,

Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,

We must bring back our mighty dream again.

O, yes, I say it plain,

America never was America to me,

And yet I swear this oath—

We, the people, must redeem

And make America be herself again!