

Lesson Name : 1

Lesson Title : And We Shall be Steeped

Course Name : English 2 Part 2 [Honors]

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Essential Instruction

Read the poem ["And We Shall Be Steeped"](#) by Leopold S. Senghor, which will open in a new window.

It is a good idea to use your digital notebook to keep notes about new vocabulary and definitions that you may need to reference later.

When reading "And We Shall Be Steeped" by Leopold Senghor, be sure to read the introductory information provided to give you background knowledge that will help you understand the poem. Make some connections with what the introductory information says and what you already know.



Allusions in Poetry

Allusions are references or mention of historical figures, literary texts, or works of art to emphasize a point or make a comparison. As you read “And We Shall Be Steeped,” look for **allusions** to specific historical places and people. What is their significance? Why did the author choose to mention them?

After reading the introductory information and the poem, you should have noticed that Senghor is an advocate for, or a supporter and representative of, the African country of Senegal. He wants to appreciate and preserve the culture and heritage that is native to the country and wants Senegal to move into the future as a strong, independent nation. He **alludes** to *primordial masks* and *Princes of the Highlands*, as well as the *antiphonal* songs of the *Sudanese*. The references to the contributions of other cultures are also evident with furniture from *Guinea* and *Congo*.

Imagery

Imagery is an author’s use of sensory words to paint a picture in the mind of a reader. **Imagery** draws on the five senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Senghor uses powerful **imagery** in “And We Shall Be Steeped.” Pay close attention to the way he presents the past and the future in his poem. The images he

creates throughout show a strong connection with the country of Senegal and its people. What images do you see as you read the poem? How does the **imagery** in the poem make you feel?

Using **imagery** to evoke, or bring out, emotion is also something you should have noticed in the poem. To be *steeped* is to be cleansed with something. Senghor wants his fellow Senegalese people to be cleansed with the culture and heritage of Africa. This bold and unselfish wish evokes, or brings about, a sentimental emotion. The mention of tribal elements of the past, primordial masks, princes and antiphonal songs, also evoke a strong nostalgic emotion in the reader. The images created by the words *wild perfume*, *thick mats of silence*, *cushions of leisure*, and *wellsprings of peace* all evoke feelings of hope and rejuvenation. One powerful use of **imagery** is Senghor's reference to *red African soil*. Why might the soil be red if Senegal has just secured its independence from France? The mention of *red African soil* conjures up images of those who have died to secure the independence they now enjoy and will benefit from in the future.

Analyzing Poetic Form

Poetic form refers to the specific rules poems of the same type generally follow. For example, lyric poetry often uses repetition and alliteration, or repeated consonant sounds, and is usually set to music. One type of lyric poetry is the ballad. Like ballads, many of Senghor's poems were written with musical accompaniment. Although "And We Shall Be Steeped" shares the characteristic with ballads, it lacks meter and repeating rhyme scheme typical of ballads.

Understanding Free Verse

Free verse is a type of poetry that is written without using strict meter or rhyme. "And We Shall Be Steeped" is considered a **free verse** poem.

The **free verse** form of the poem allows the reader to become emotionally involved. Because it lacks a formal meter and rhyme, the poem seems genuine and heartfelt. It is almost as if Senghor wrote it as a free-flowing thought to the people of Senegal. If this were set to music, as many of his poems are, what would it sound like: an upbeat look at the days to come, a reverent look back at the past that is forever lost?

Word Banks and Multiple Meanings

Word banks help you to expand word knowledge and become a better reader. Creating a **word bank** is a great way to study vocabulary words. The more you see and encounter words, the more likely you are to remember their meanings. The more words you know, the better reader you will become. Create a **word bank** to store the vocabulary for this unit. This sample [sample word bank](#) will open in a new window.

We use words that have **multiple meanings** every day. All of the words listed below have more than one meaning.

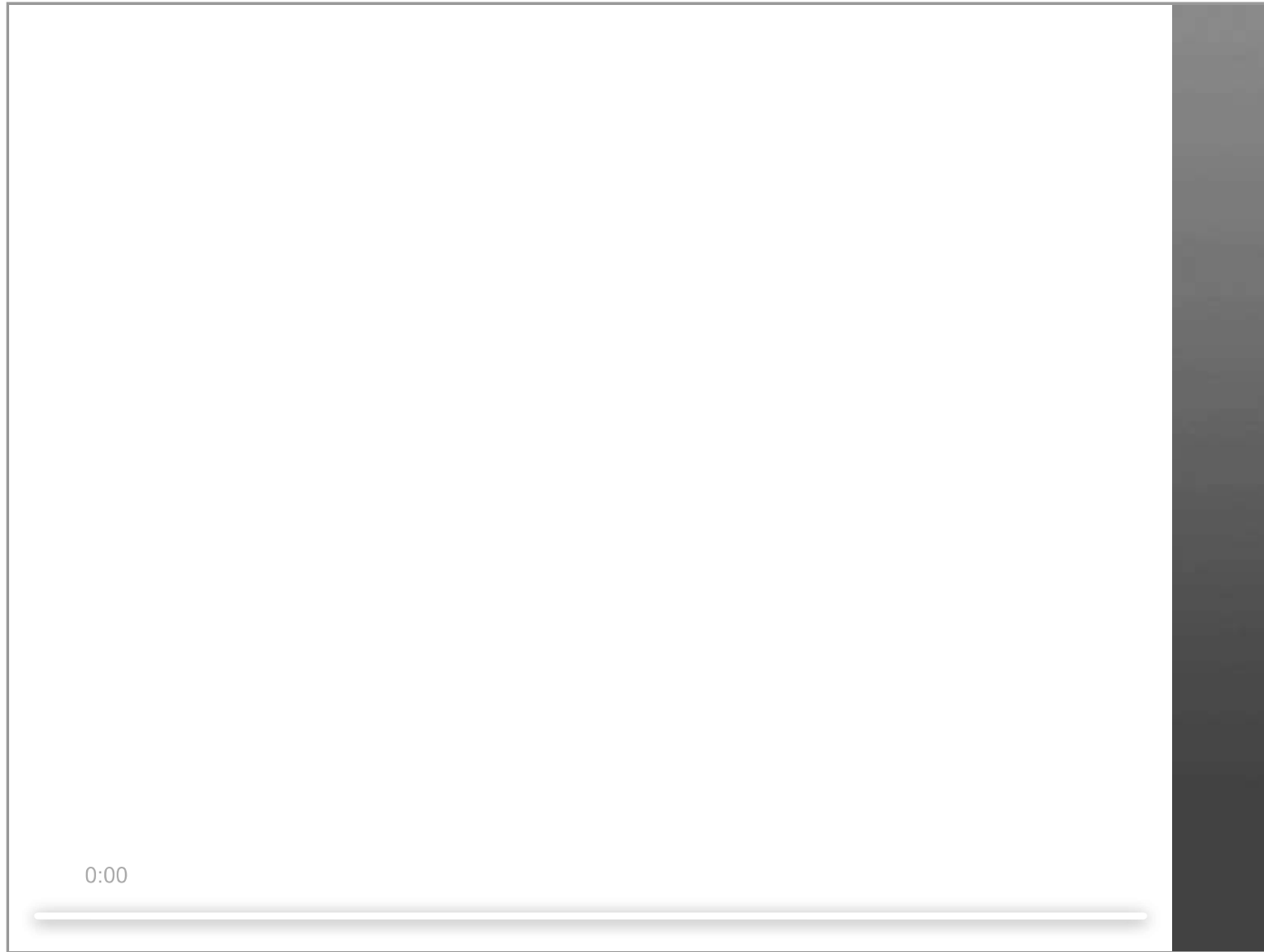
address base lean labor skirt

In order to determine a word's meaning, you need to look at the surrounding words or context clues. For example,

I was so tired I had to *lean* on the counter for a minute.

After dieting and exercising for one year, Jack became *lean* and fit.

To improve your vocabulary and reading skills, look for **multiple meanings** of words in what you read, write and speak, and hear.



[Open Video in New Tab](#)



Vocabulary

Understanding the words used in a poem can aid your understanding of the poem. Here are some words from Senghor's "And We Shall Be Steeped":

1. **steeped** – verb – surrounded with a quality or influence
2. **somber** – adj. – dark or dull in color or tone
3. **serene** – adj. – calm, peaceful, or tranquil
4. **primordial** – adj. – ancient
5. **hereditary** – adj. – derived from one's ancestors
6. **leisure** – adj. – designed or intended for recreational use
7. **wellspring** – noun – a source or supply of something
8. **antiphonal** – adj. – occurring or responding in turns; alternating
9. **obsessive** – adj. – excessive devotion or attachment to someone or something