



Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

ANALYZE THEME

Annotate: Mark the words or phrases in the poem that help develop the theme.

Interpret: What do these words and phrases suggest about the speaker's view of life in the Colonies?

PREPARE TO COMPARE

As you read, note how each of the following literary elements helps convey the theme of the poem and communicate information about the speaker's circumstances, thoughts, feelings, and character.

- rhyme and rhythm
- alliteration
- word choice
- voice

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
 Taught my benighted¹ soul to understand
 That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
 Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

¹ benighted: ignorant.



5 Some view our sable² race with scornful eye,
 “Their colour is a diabolic die.”³
 Remember, *Christians, Negroes*, black as *Cain*,
 May be refind, and join th’ angelic train.

² **sable**: dark brown or black.

³ **diabolic die**: an evil or devilish coloring agent (dye).

ANALYZE SOUND DEVICES AND VOICE

Annotate: In lines 7 and 8, mark the end rhymes and the phrases in which they appear.

Evaluate: What contrast does the rhyme help emphasize? Why is this contrast significant?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions about “On Being Brought from Africa to America” before moving on to the next selection.

- 1 A theme of “On Being Brought from Africa to America” is —
 - A freedom rests on the ability to read
 - B all people need understanding
 - C bigotry toward African Americans is morally wrong
 - D being brought to America from Africa was an act of oppression
- 2 Who is the speaker in the poem?
 - F An enslaved woman in America
 - G A free woman of color in America
 - H A Christian slave owner
 - J The friend of a Pagan slave
- 3 Which phrase reveals the speaker’s attitude about going to America?
 - A *’Twas mercy brought me*
 - B *redemption neither sought nor knew*
 - C *our sable race*
 - D *May be refin’d*
- 4 How would you characterize the voice in “On Being Brought from Africa to America”?
 - F Angry
 - G Grateful
 - H Disturbed
 - J Indifferent