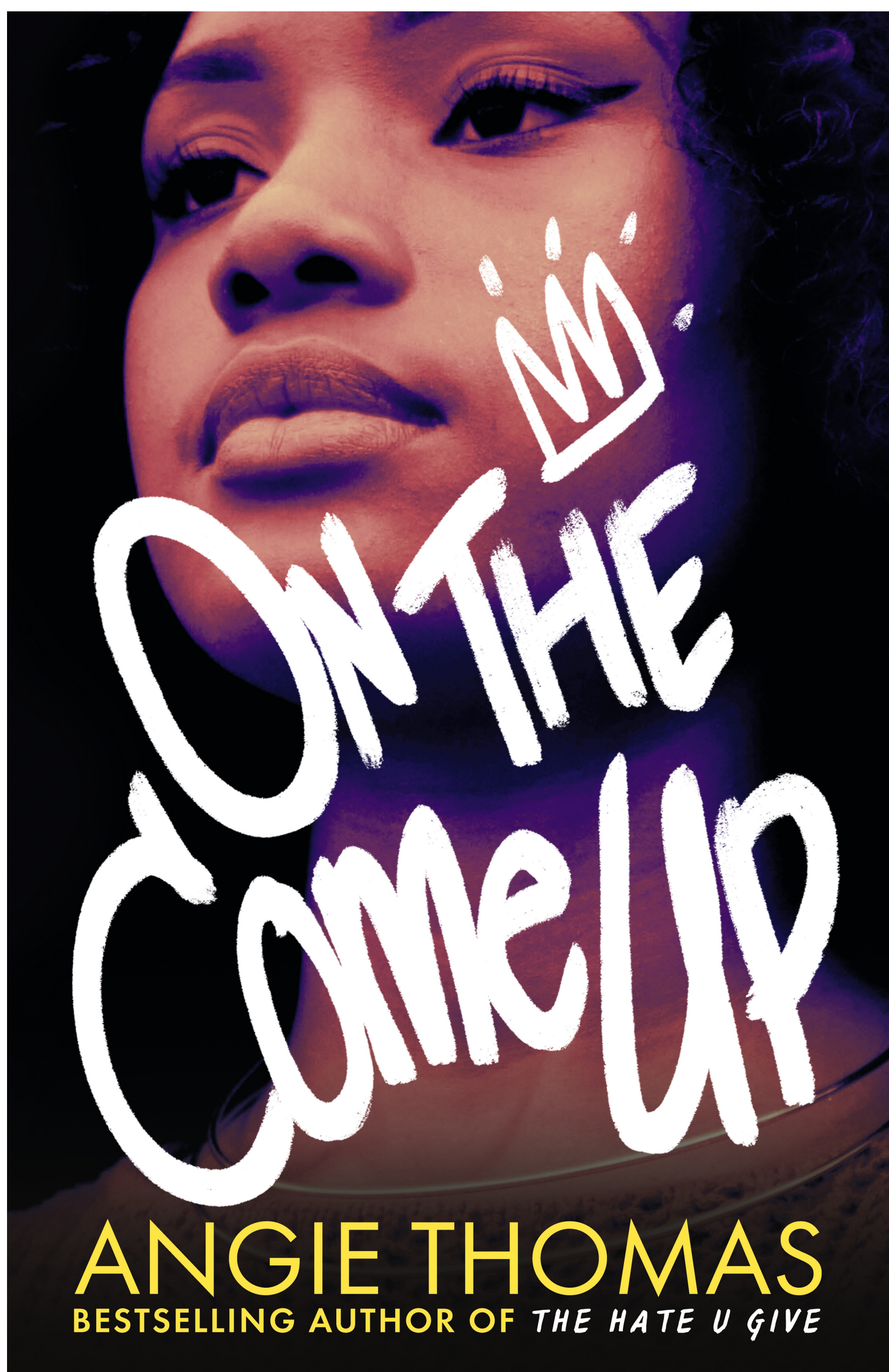
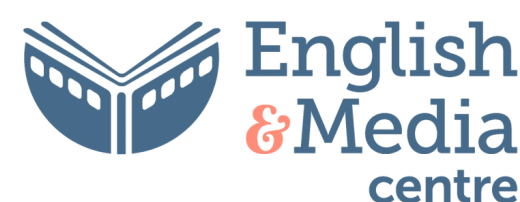


CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST 2020

SHADOWING RESOURCES



Inclusive Minds



CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020

TALKING POINTS

Title: **On the Come Up**

Author: **Angie Thomas**

Publisher: Walker Books

Age: 13+



Note to Group Leaders

This book contains some material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that group leaders read the book carefully before teaching it or recommending it to students and/or seek parental guidance. As with all Carnegie and Kate Greenaway shortlisted titles, we trust that shadowers and other young readers will be guided by their group leader, librarian, teacher or parent to help them select suitable, enjoyable and age appropriate material from the lists.

GARDEN HEIGHTS

- How would you describe Garden Heights, the community where *On the Come Up* is set?
- Garden Heights is also home to Starr from *The Hate U Give*. If you've read that earlier book, how are Bri's circumstances – her family, her home life, her school – different from Starr's?
- Two such different life circumstances in this neighbourhood – does that surprise you?
- Angie Thomas has already said that her third book will be set here, too. Is there an aspect of the place, of the lives of its inhabitants, you'd be particularly interested to see explored in the next book?

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Bri is surrounded by a family of very well-drawn characters, and her relationship with each one is both loving and complicated. How would you describe her relationship with
 - Her mother?
 - Her brother?
 - Her aunt?
 - Her grandparents?
- Which of these characters do you think really understand her?
- Bri's father is long dead now, but what sort of presence is he still in her life?
- How does Bri's relationship with her two close friends, Malik and Sonny, change as her life changes?

HIP-HOP

- Why is Bri so drawn to hip-hop? What does she hope to get from hip-hop success?
- We see Bri composing in her head, working through ideas and rhymes. How effective is that for a reader in understanding what goes into her brilliant craft?
- Hip-hop is a powerful vehicle for Bri to express herself, to make her voice heard – and indeed to escape from her world. But does it also help her to understand things, and herself?
- Given how important hip-hop has been culturally for so long, there are surprisingly few books in which it plays a major part – why might that be? And can you think of a few others that do use it to tell their stories?

FAME

- The rap that makes Bri famous is a direct challenge to a stereotype – that she must be some kind of dangerous thug – but how is it seen by the general public?
- Why does her father's manager think she ought to play up to the stereotype, instead of defying it?
- What are the consequences of Bri's fame? What is the price she is expected to pay? But what does she want her rapping to achieve?

SOME FURTHER QUESTIONS

- Bri lives in a world of extreme inequality, prejudice and systemic racism – it's a tough life. But against that backdrop, many readers have found the book surprisingly full of joy – what do you think?
- The book is rich with cultural references – if you, as a reader, are not yourself a young African American with a life like Bri's, how familiar were these references to you? What interesting-sounding things (music? food? TV shows?) did you learn about for the first time?
- The Hate U Give was made into a movie in 2018. How well do you think this new book would work as a movie?

AND FINALLY...

- Some books stay with you long after you've read them – they change the way you see the world. Was this one of those books, for you?
- Does it deserve to win the Carnegie Medal?

FURTHER THINKING

CILIP works in partnership with Amnesty International and Inclusive Minds to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights, inclusion and representation in children's literature. The discussion points below are intended to further stimulate reader's thinking on the themes explored in the shortlisted books.

CILIP Carnegie Medal 2020

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Discussing human rights in this story:

Equality; freedom from discrimination; right to safety; right to be treated with dignity; freedom of expression; freedom of thought, conscience and belief; right to a good life with enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare; right to an education.

- What role does education play in Bri's family?
- Is it possible 'to change the mind of the Emilys'? How can we change racist attitudes?
- What is the relationship between music and protest?



Discussing inclusion and representation in this story:

- How does an own voices author bring nuance to a story that could have been told differently by someone without their experience?
- How does the author make the message, that no matter who you are your voice matters, universal?
- Why does Bri say that she's 'got to be one of the guys' on her first studio recording?



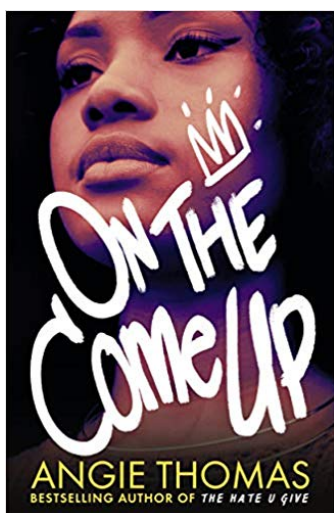
***On the Come Up* by Angie Thomas**

Before reading

Making predictions

- Working on your own, in a pair, or in a small group, complete the four prediction tasks, below.
- When you have completed the tasks, pool all your ideas about the novel. If possible, have a discussion with other readers.
- Keep a note of your ideas so that you can refer back to them as you read.

Front Covers



- Examine the two front covers.
- What do you think the book will be about? What type of book do you think it will be? (For example, does it belong to a particular genre?)
- What is the likely audience for the book?
- Does it remind you of any other books? Which cover most makes you want to pick the book up and start to read?

The title

The title of the novel you are going to read is *On the Come Up*.

- Consider what you think about the title. What meanings and connotations can you think of for the whole title?
- Note down your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect.

Structure

The novel is split into four parts:

Part 1: Old School

Part 2: Golden Age

Part 3: New School

Epilogue (An epilogue appears after the last chapter. It is often used to explain what happens to the characters much later, after the end of the events in the main story.)

- Think about the section titles and why you think the story might be structured in this way.
- Add to your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel.

A taster

- Read the extracts from the novel, below.
- How do they add to your ideas, questions and predictions about the novel, including what genre of story you might expect?

1

Rule number three – if there’s a beat, make sure your flow fits like a glove. Flow is the rhythm of the rhymes, and every word, every syllable, affects it. Even the way a word is pronounced can change the flow.

2

‘Aggressive’ is used to describe me a lot. It’s supposed to mean threatening, but I’ve never threatened anybody. I just say stuff that my teachers don’t like.

3

Sometimes I dream that I’m drowning. It’s always in a big, blue ocean that’s too deep for me to see the bottom. But I tell myself I’m not going to die no matter how much water gets in my lungs or how deep I sink, I am not going to die. Because I say so.

4

You can’t stop me on the come up
You can’t stop me on the come up
You can’t stop me on the come up
You can’t stop me, nope, nope.

During reading

We recommend working through the novel without pausing too often, then doing some more substantial work afterwards.

Keep a journal while reading, pausing to write down your reflections about each of the points below. Where possible, have a discussion with other readers before putting your thoughts down on paper.

In someone else's footsteps

Bri's brother, Trey, was very academic, and her father 'Lawless' was a famous rapper. How is Bri affected by following in their footsteps?

Trouble

Bri says "'Aggressive" is used to describe me a lot.' Do you think the main reason she gets into trouble is because she is misunderstood, the victim of prejudice, or because she behaves badly?

The throw down

When Bri is assaulted by a security guard, Jay tells her that people sometimes abuse their power, but that if she finds herself in that situation Bri should just 'do what they tell you to do'. Bri says her mum has given her similar advice before, to 'weaken myself and take whatever's thrown at me so I can survive that moment.' Discuss what you think about Jay's advice.

On the come up

'On the come up' gets a huge reaction. What are some of the reasons the song gets so much attention? What are the positives and negatives for Bri?

Jay's past

How has Jay been affected by her past as a drug addict? How do you think it affects the way she parents Trey and Bri? How has it affected Trey and Bri and their relationship as brother and sister?

Nicknames

Her full name is Brianna but she is known as: Bri, Bookie, Breezy, Li'l Bit, Li'l Law and Princess. Who uses which nickname for Bri? What does this show about her relationship with this character or characters and how they see her?

The hip hop life

How does Angie Thomas try to get behind some of the media stereotypes about hip hop? Do you find her portrayal of Garden Heights convincing? Why/why not?

Tough breaks

Bri has had, and continues to have, a lot of stress in her life. Think about some of the things she has to deal with, how they affect her and what helps her to cope.

Getting to know Curtis

How does Bri's attitude to Curtis change through the novel? What does he say and do to make her change her mind about him?

Growing up

In what ways has Bri grown up by the end of the novel?

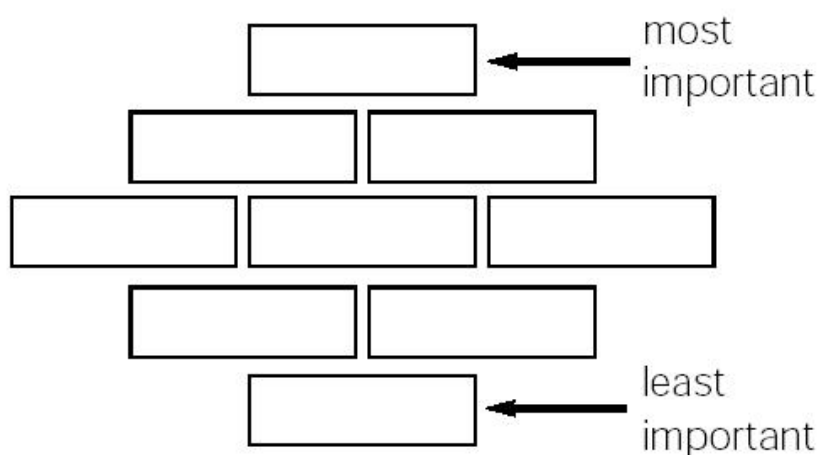
After reading

What is the novel about?

- Below are nine suggestions for what *On the Come Up* is about.
- Working on your own, in a pair, or small group, rearrange them into a 'Diamond 9' formation, as shown below.
- If possible, compare your arrangement with another pair or group and discuss any differences

<i>On the Come Up</i> is about ...		
... working out 'who you are' and refusing to compromise that	... freedom of speech	... how you can't save other people, only yourself
... fighting for your dreams, against the odds	... the effects of poverty	... gang culture
... the world of hip hop/rap battles	... prejudice: stereotypes; racism; sexism; class prejudice	... knowing who's really 'got your back' when things get tough

Diamond 9 pattern



Education over everything

'Education over everything' is Jay's mantra for her children.

- Do you agree in Bri's case?

Retaliation never ends

Bri tells Aunt Pooh about having her Dad's chain stolen and a gun pointed at her, knowing that Pooh will take action. Afterwards she wonders what she's started and says 'retaliation never ends around here. But lives do. Worst part? It's on me.'

- What do you think about Bri's decision to tell her Aunt about the incident? Is what happens next (including Aunt Pooh's arrest) 'on her'?

Slang

Much of the novel is written in slang.

- Read the statements below and think about which ones you agree or disagree with.
-
- A. The use of slang makes the novel feel more real and authentic.
 - B. I enjoyed learning some new slang from the novel.
 - C. The way everyone in Garden Heights uses the same slang shows what a tight-knit community it is. It seems as if everyone knows everyone.
 - D. Slang is an essential element of rap.
 - E. Speaking in ghetto slang is part of the stereotype Bri wants to fight so she should talk without using slang.
 - F. Angie Thomas uses language playfully, and the use of slang is part of this.
 - G. Angie Thomas uses too much slang – it makes the novel difficult to understand.
 - H. For Bri to survive it is essential that she can 'code switch' (change the way she speaks) between the language of Garden Heights and 'talking properly'.

Different advice

People close to Bri give her quite different advice about how to deal with the stereotyping and prejudice she experiences.

- Think about the different approaches suggested to her by Trey, Jay, Aunt Pooh, Supreme, Malik, Curtis and Shana.
 - Who do you think gives the best advice?
 - What is Bri's own approach at the beginning of the novel and how has she changed and matured by the end?

Power and powerlessness

After Aunt Pooh's arrest, Bri says, 'I'm powerless'.

- Think about what Bri learns in the novel about what gives her power and what limits or takes away her power?

Who am I?

A 'ratchet [wretched] hood rat' means someone who fits the ghetto stereotype, someone who is uneducated, had a poor upbringing and displays bad manners or behaviour. After Supreme congratulates Bri for 'playing the role' of ratchet hood rat in the interview with DJ Hype, she says, 'Problem is, I wasn't playing. That's what I've become'.

- Think about how far you agree with Bri's judgement of herself at this point in the novel.

Later, Jay says, 'Who are you? Work on figuring it out. I think it will give you more answers than you think.'

- How does Bri answer that question for herself towards the end of the novel?

Defending the novel

Imagine that your school has decided to ban *On the Come Up* from its school library because some parents have complained about the amount of swearing and references to drugs and gangs.

- Write a letter to the headteacher challenging their decision, explaining to them why this is a book that should be made available to your school's students.

Reading the reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of the book.

- Working on your own, in a pair, or small group, consider which reviewer comes closest to your own view of the book.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph to express your views about the novel. You can draw on the review extracts you have read if you wish.
- If possible, discuss your ideas with other readers.

A celebration of African American cultural achievement in music, TV and film, bursting with references that feel like a gift to readers who don't usually see their lives represented in this way.

Patrice Lawrence, author of 'Orange Boy' and 'Indigo Donut'

Impeccably plotted, with multiple storylines woven to a pulse-pounding conclusion, this is an astoundingly affecting novel that shines a light on the struggles of young black women, and celebrates freedom of speech and making noise about who you are, as seen through unforgettable Bri, a 100% authentic character whom readers will root for, cry for, yell out loud for, and grin for joy with.

LoveReading4Kids.com

In her intensely powerful, deeply-felt second novel, Thomas, a former rapper herself, demonstrates a ferocious, innovative gift; apparently without effort, she imbues words on a silent page with as much passionate, satirical life as if the reader is hearing Bri's tracks at first hand.

Times Literary Supplement

What I really liked about this was the richness of culture that continued from *The Hate U Give*. Garden Heights feels like a real place, and the characters are completely believable. In this novel, the cast of characters was more diverse, with more LGBTQ+ representation, which I appreciated... in theory (more on this later). Also, had this book been written by a different author, the hip-hop included could have been really jarring – not that I know anything whatsoever about hip-hop. However, Thomas has experience in this area and it worked perfectly. And yes, it is certainly appropriate for hip-hop novices like myself. Oh, and one last thing: as a geek myself I did smile a lot at the *Star Wars* references, though I can see how they'd be annoying (and I really need to see *Black Panther*! Now!).

Okay, now for the negatives... To be entirely honest, I felt the plot was a bit non-existent. It didn't seem to have much in terms of structure, and as I was reading I felt myself thinking 'ohh, this was written so this would happen, and then this could happen'.

Teenage reader on amazon.co.uk

It's not often that an author can make you put down a book out of frustration of the main character making stupid mistakes, but pick it up again because you have to see how they make it right. This book makes you laugh, cry, feel angry over the justice system and plain racism in society and love all the characters. I couldn't put it down even when I wanted to.

Sariah on amazon.co.uk

Reading this book has been an eye-opening experience for me. Mainly due to the fact that, for many people, this book is not fiction, but is heavily based on things that are happening in the States at the moment and could easily happen to them... Imagine having to go to school with the thought that the security at the door could easily stop you, throw you to the floor and claim that you are dealing drugs. It has been very scary reading, from a privileged point of view. I cannot even begin to imagine how this must feel to a person who actually has to deal with it on a daily basis.

lthil on www.goodreads.com

Angie Thomas' heartfelt and surprisingly humorous coming-of-age novel highlights the importance of family, friendship, and fighting for your dreams, making it a must-read for teens. Hip-hop fans will recognize the legendary artists mentioned throughout the book and will appreciate how Bri uses her passion and knowledge of the genre to challenge stereotypes with her poetic lyrics. Bri isn't afraid to speak her mind, and it's frustrating how many misinterpret her message or only see her as a 'hoodlum', but it reflects the double standards she faces as a young black woman in America. However, teens will ultimately be inspired by Bri's determination to tell her story on her own terms and understand that *On the Come Up* is a tale of courage, perseverance, and empowerment.

Amanda Nojadera, Common Sense Media

Bri has talent. She has the lyrics, the knowledge and the passion. When she raps 'Strapped like backpacks, I pull triggers. All the clips on my hips change my figure', she is challenging the hoodlum stereotype, but the public see it as a boast. Soon she has gained notoriety as the dangerous, angry black girl from the projects – a persona that, according to her father's old manager, could make her serious money.

The plot charts Bri's rise alongside the gradual realisation of the consequences of her fame: violence, friendships lost and the hopes of her local community who want her, like her father, to show them a way out. For me, though, the novel's strength lies in the way it explores the loves, fears and friendships of an African American community that is doing its best to survive under an increasingly hostile administration.

The Guardian

Cards for literary analysis

These cards have been designed for use with any short story or novel. You can select a particular card to work with or rely on your teacher to give you a particular area of focus. You could then work through the bullet points on your card or select a few that seem most interesting or relevant for a particular text.

Setting

- In which different settings does this story/novel takes place? What part does each setting play? Which setting is most significant and why?
- How important is setting to the story/novel as a whole? Does the setting have a particular impact on the story/novel, or could it be set almost anywhere?
- What difference would it make if this story/novel was set somewhere else? E.g. another country, a rural rather than urban setting, in space!
- How effective do you think the writer has been in creating a sense of place? Are there any particular examples of setting you think are particularly well written? If so, why?
- Is there anything particularly interesting or special about the way setting is used and presented? In what ways is it similar or different to stories/ novels that explore similar themes and ideas, or that are written in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about setting. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Characters

- Who is your favourite character, and why?
- Who do you think is the most important character, and why?
- Who are the other significant characters? What different roles do they have?
- What is special or unusual about the way one or more of the characters is presented?
- Which character would you most like to be friends with, and why? Which character might significant adults want you to be friends with, and why?
- Are characters paired or grouped in any particular ways? E.g. friends, rivals, etc. What ideas are raised by these pairs or groupings?
- Are the characters typical of ones found in this kind of story/novel? Are they distinctive and individual, or stereotypes? Explain your answer.
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about characters. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Form and structure

- What do you think is interesting about the way this story/novel begins?
- What were the key moments in this story/novel? How did they shape the story/novel as a whole?
- If you had to describe the path of this story/novel, what would it be? E.g. journey from childhood to adulthood, from grief to happiness etc.
- What did you notice about the end of this story/novel? Was it what you were expecting? Did it tie up loose ends, or leave some things unresolved?
- Does this story/novel belong to a particular genre? If so, how does it fit in with other stories that you know in the same genre?
- Does the story/novel use just one form or does it include more than one E.g. letters, diary entries, poems, newspaper reports
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about form and structure. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Themes and ideas

- What, to you, are the five most important themes and ideas in this story/novel? If you had to narrow your list down to one theme or idea, what would it be and why? In what ways is this theme presented? E.g. if the theme is love, what exactly does the story/novel have to say about love?
- Does this story/novel deal with big issues that affect the whole world, or small ones that affect individual lives? Give reasons for your answer.
- Does this story/novel contain any themes or ideas that have made you look at the world in new ways? If so, what are they, and how have they changed your views?
- Does this story/novel contain any themes and ideas that explore how people should act and behave? If so, what are they and do you agree with how they are presented?
- Are the themes and ideas presented in ways similar or different to other stories you have read, including stories of the same type, or in the same genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about themes and ideas. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Language

- Identify one or two of your favourite passages in the story/novel where language is used particularly well? Explain how it is used.
- How would you describe the language used in this story/novel overall? E.g. poetic, plain, chatty etc.
- Would you say the language in this story/novel is original or creative in any particular way? If so, how?
- Are there any patterns in the language used? If so, what are they, and what is their effect? Are there any other patterns, such as of imagery and symbolism?
- How is dialogue used in the story/novel? Do characters, for example, speak in particularly distinctive ways?
- Is the language similar to how it is used in similar kinds of stories/novels? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about language. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Narrative

- How does the writer try to capture and keep the reader's attention? How successful are they in doing this?
- Is the narrative told in order from beginning to end (a linear narrative), or does it move backwards and forwards in time? What is the effect of the order in which events are told?
- Can you think of any other ways the story/novel could be told? For example, by a different character, or in a different order? How would this affect your experience of reading?
- Would you say that this story/novel is told in a particular original or creative way? If so, how?
- Is this story/novel told in a way that is typical for its genre?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about narrative. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Point of view and voice

- Through whose eyes do we see the events of the story/novel? Do readers get just one point of view or several?
- What do you find interesting about the point or points of view presented?
- If the story/novel is told from different points of view, how does the writer do this?
- What would the story/novel be like if told from someone else's point of view? Whose point of view would you choose, and why?
- How would you describe the tone of voice used to tell the narrative? Does the narrative draw attention to itself by using a particular tone, or is the tone pushed to the background? What is the effect of the choice made by the writer?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about point of view and voice. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



Audience and overall personal response

- Who do you think this story/novel was written for, and why? Are there any other groups of people who you think should read it?
- What was your experience of reading this story/novel?
- What would you recommend about this story/novel to other people?
- Which parts of this story/novel did you most enjoy? Were there any parts that you didn't enjoy?
- Do you think this story/novel could be improved in some way? If so, how?
- What other stories (or films, TV, plays etc.) does this story/novel remind you of? In what ways?
- Who do you think should read this book and why?
- Find one or two bullet points from other cards that add to what you have discussed about personal response and audience. Explain the connections.
- Is there anything important that you've noticed that isn't raised on this card? What is it? Why do you think it's important?



These cards are from the *EMC Curriculum Plus Card Collection*. Each box includes eight decks of three different sets of cards – enough for pupils to work in groups of three or four.

The cards are for: Literacy Analysis; Poetry Analysis; Critical Literacy

For full details visit <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/emc-curriculum-plus-card-collection>