



Hair, culture and Identity

This classroom resource was produced by Jessica Tacon and Peter Thomas as part of NATE's service to English teachers. It is designed to prompt students to think, talk and write about their personal preferences and how they relate to social and cultural aspects of identity and appearance. It has been produced in collaboration with the Ideas Foundation and Pantene. Our thanks to Amanda at Creative Hex graphic design.



The issue of hair confidence

Power of Hair is a three year educational campaign created by Ideas Foundation in partnership with Pantene. The programme aims to promote understanding of personal and social aspects of hair and hairstyles as aspects of personal choice and cultural allegiance. A person's distinctive "look" can be a matter of personal preference but may also reflect cultural identity. It can also be a cause of cultural conflict when a particular hairstyle is unwelcome, inappropriate or a cause of hostility. Students sporting "fades", dreadlocks, Emos, "Meet me at McDonald's" styles or wearing a durag have sometimes been excluded from school, and there is increasing evidence of Afro discrimination and some of the micro-aggressions associated with poor understanding of ethnic diversity.

The programme focus will be on promoting hair confidence and raising awareness of hair discrimination through a programme of creative workshops exploring key issues of identity and community.

Ideas Foundation has commissioned creatives to look at the subject of identity and hair discrimination using creativity and employer engagement. Young people will work alongside industry professionals and leading poets, photographers, artists and other creatives to explore this emotive and topical issue through a workshop that has been designed to get young people thinking and developing their creative skills.

More information from www.ideasfoundation.org.uk



Great hair days create more great days

As the world's leading haircare brand, Pantene are honoured to serve millions of people every day – we transform their hair, how they feel about themselves, the beauty norms & culture they are surrounded by, and importantly the planet we all share & love.

Pantene believes in the power of hair to give more great hair days for everyone: all hair types, all hair conditions, all ages, all ethnicities, and all gender identities. In doing that we also take great pride in shaping culture to be more accepting and inclusive; challenging hair discrimination, questioning bias, and championing diverse beauty with the inclusion of the whole community.

Because cultural and social biases force many around the world to conform to rigid, non-inclusive hair codes, Pantene has made a long-term commitment to sparking social change to ensure transformative, self-expressive “great hair” experiences for all.

More information from www.pantene.co.uk





Clara Amfo

Award-winning radio broadcaster, podcaster and TV presenter, Clara Amfo is the Brand Ambassador for the Pantene Gold Collection. She will also be working on educational initiatives to celebrate to increase positive representation of Afro textured hair. This is a range, co-created by a team of black scientists, to cater specifically for Afro textured hair.

Clara says, 'I'm deeply honoured to work with Pantene Gold Series and the wider ambassador team to help empower people to love their Afro hair and drive awareness of its diversity and beauty. However much hair you have and however you choose to style it, the power of hair and a good hair day has an enormous impact on our identity, confidence, and self-esteem, regardless of age, race, class, sexuality or gender.'

[An introduction to Power of Hair, by Clara, can be found here:](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJTb4Faf2GI>



About Ideas Foundation

Ideas are the foundation of any creative endeavour. The Ideas Foundation is a charity that understands this and works with young people, regardless of their background to encourage them to explore and develop their own ideas, stimulate their innate creativity and give them a voice.

We do this in a variety of ways. We:

- encourage and welcome students' ideas, attitudes and feelings.
- expose students to a wider than usual range of occupations where their inventive minds might feel more at home.
- create workshops in which students can explore and develop ideas – working on live briefs with real audiences.
- encourage teachers to invite creative individual and collaborative thinking into the classroom.

More information from www.ideasfoundation.org.uk

POWER OF HAIR

Power of Hair Partnership



Welcome to NATE

Empowering English teachers to inspire young people

The National Association for the Teaching of English, established in 1963, is the professional association for English teachers that works regionally, nationally and internationally at all key stages. NATE is an educational charity, governed by a board of Trustees, led by a Director and supported by a team of volunteers, including working group members, regional representatives and English specialists across the world who support NATE's CPD, publications, research and development.

For membership enquiries, please contact Janet Gough,
NATE's membership manager at membership@nate.org.uk



PANTENE



PHOTO: TOM MARTIN

If your hair could speak...

Hair is an expression of identity. Think about how your hair represents you. Do you have a specific style? If your hair could speak what would be its message to the world? Write on a post it note what that message would be.

- Is there a connection between your hair and recognisable culture?
- Does your hair (texture, length or style) fit in with others in your household?
- How does your hair speak for YOU?
- What story would it tell?
- What would it tell you it had noticed about the world?
- What would it tell you it had noticed about you?
- What might that change look like? And what might that lead to?

Is there any connection between your hair and

- faith and belief
- ethnicity
- sexuality
- language
- culture
- politics
- celebrities



You, your hair and the world

Follow each of these sentence starters with your own words.

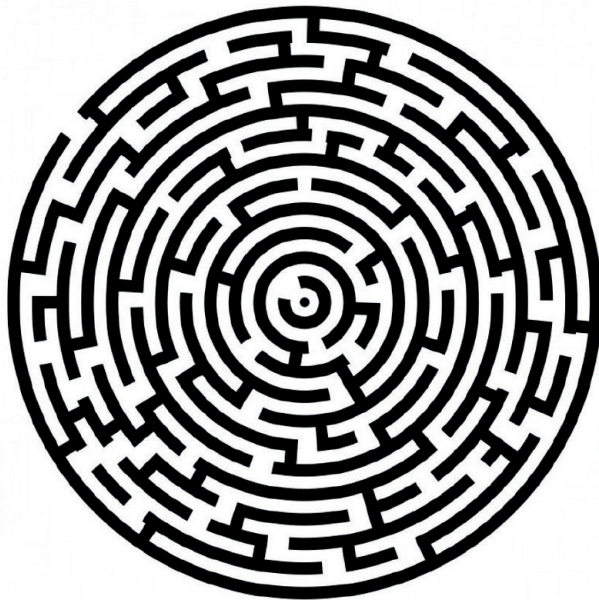
I live in a world which...

Inside I feel

But outside

I hide ...

Because





The place of hair in our world

Hair plays a key part in so many aspects of life. Writing and examining texts allows us to explore the place of hair throughout life including:

- i** Hair and gender
- i** Hair and bonding or community
- i** Hair and ritual
- i** Hair and stress
- i** Hair and bullying
- i** Hair and self-care

Pick one of the above areas and write a pair share.

- ?** Why did you choose this area? Why did you not choose the other areas?
- t** Write a paragraph about hair.

i Information **t** Task **?** Question



PHOTO: TOM MARTIN

A good hair day

We can sometimes allow our physical appearance to dictate our feelings. If our hair doesn't cooperate the way we want it to - it's a bad hair day.

Several years ago, Yale University decided to study the psychology of bad hair days – and found that our self-esteem was highly affected by them, with subjects reporting feeling less smart, less capable, more embarrassed and less sociable.

But what if every day was a good hair day?

Put these in order of importance in making a good hair day.

Fragrance

Colour

Texture

Length

Style



PHOTO: TOM MARTIN

How are hair and discrimination linked?

Let's look more closely at how hair and discrimination are linked:

- t** In pairs: highlight/annotate anything which seems relevant to discrimination.
- t** If you have access to a computer create a word cloud about the words/phrases we have picked out.

Most school uniform policies include reference to hair. Check out a school policy for your own school or another.

When googling "hair and school discipline" the results are full of criticism for what some believe are restrictive school hair policies. Make a list of any hair styles that some schools may have said are unacceptable.

i What is the Halo Code?

The Halo Code, similar to The Crown Act in the USA, is a campaign pledge, signed by schools and businesses, that promises members of the Black community that they have the "freedom and security to wear all afro-hairstyles without restriction or judgment".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/55249674>

? Create your own school hair policy

What would you include?



Reading numbers

Market research by Pantene has identified following statistics. What do these figures tell you? Can you find sources that will evidence these figures? Who else might be affected by hair discrimination? Can you find any statistics as proof?

- 22%** of people with afro hair have been sent home from school or work because of their hair.
- 93%** of Black people in the UK have faced microaggressions related to their hair, including people thinking its acceptable to just touch their hair without consent.
- 50%** of people with Afro textured hair agree they have changed their natural hair to meet social norms.
- 93%** of black people in the UK have faced an issue related to their hair.
- 52%** agree that hair discrimination has negatively affected their self-esteem or mental health.
- 7%** of people without afro hair could recognise common microaggressions.



Sample texts that focus on hair:

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros



What is the writer saying about hair?



Think, Pair, Share.

- Without looking at the text, recall any details about the hair of Papa, Carlos, Nenny and Kiki.
- Now do the same for Mama's hair.

Luster By Sandra Cisneros



What is the writer saying about hair?



Think, Pair, Share.

- What do you think is the background to this episode?
- What do you think the writer remembers about being thirteen?
- Why does the write finish with "She is too young"?

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

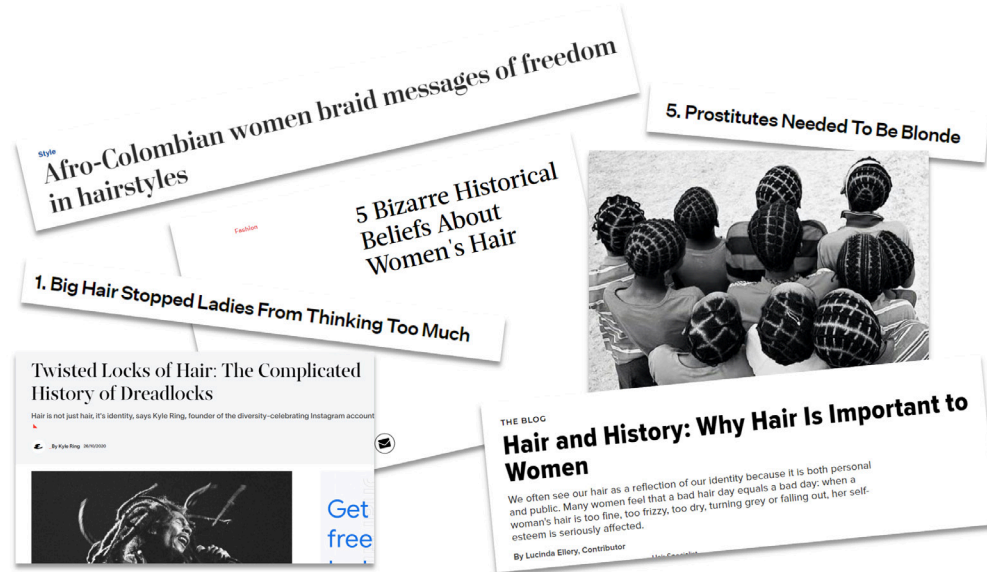


What is the writer saying about hair?



Think, Pair, Share.

- Why might Beatrice think a beard on a man is not attractive?
- Why does Leonato think that having a beard is a merit?
- Do you think Leonato has a beard?



Further reading

Supermodel Halima Aden: 'Why I quit':

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-55653029>

Afro-Colombian women braid messages of freedom in hairstyles:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/afro-colombian-women-braid-messages-of-freedom-in-hairstyles/2011/07/08/gIQA6X9W4H_story.html

Twisted Locks of Hair: The Complicated History of Dreadlocks:

<https://www.esquire.com/uk/style/grooming/a34465402/history-of-dreadlocks/>

Hair: the styling of society:

<https://chertseymuseum.org/hair>

'Gingerism': the last socially acceptable form of bullying?:

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/news/uk-news/955393/gingerism-last-socially-acceptable-form-of-bullying>

Schools ban popular 'Meet me at McDonald's' hair style.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/school-bans-six-extreme-hairstyles-12067878>



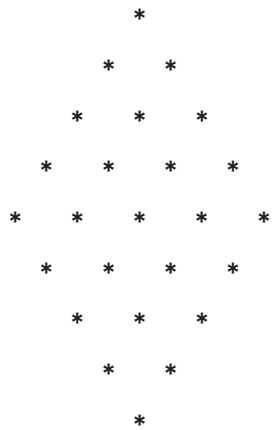
PHOTO: TOM MARTIN

Less is more!

By writing less, you can still aim for complexity, subtlety and originality in your thinking and writing. Using hair, identity, confidence or discrimination as a theme for your creativity, try one of the well-known models for short but powerful writing. The first is the syllable diamond.



Syllable Diamond



Syllable diamond - basic example

1 I
2 went to
3 Solway School
4 Friday Thirteenth
5 for Year Nine English
4 where we all wrote
3 Diamonds
2 "Less is
1 More".



Syllable diamond - superior example

To
be sad
is not as good as happy.
But being sad makes happy more
worth- while somehow.
Contrasts
glow

Diamond poems

Create your own diamond shaped poem inspired by hair and identity.

Use three full stops to turn your syllable diamond into a three sentence example. This will give structure to your ideas as Introduction, Development and Conclusion.



Cinquain - simple example

2
Today
4
I think I'll write
6
something to make you think
8
of how our English words can work
2
and play.

Cinquain - superior example

2
Cats know
4
What's good for them.
6
Indoors, a lap or bed.
8
What's it like in a moggy's head?
2
Purrfect!

A more ambitious short writing form is the verse form called a cinquain

A cinquain has a distinctive 5 line structure:

- 1st line: 2 syllables.
- 2nd line: 4 syllables.
- 3rd line: 6 syllables.
- 4th line: 8 syllables.
- 5th line: 2 syllables.

Try a simple cinquain.

Then try one with punctuation. Use three full stops to turn your syllable diamond into a three sentence example. This will give structure to your ideas as Introduction, Development and Conclusion.



Cinquain - superior example

2
I saw
4
My reflection
6
In the mirror today.
8
My mother's face gazed back at me.
2
Oh no...

Just three full stops make all the difference.

You can make your cinquain more subtle and complex if you give it a three sentence structure.

POWER OF HAIR



English: Hair and Identity

POWER OF HAIR STORY SHARERS: TACKLE HAIR DISCRIMINATION



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3 word slogan examples

Power of Hair

Every Little Helps

Just Do It

Never not working

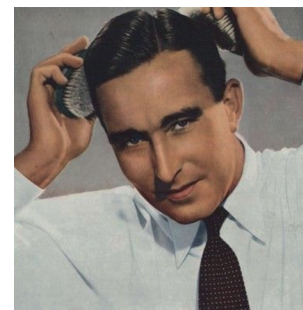
3 word slogans

Create 3 word slogans about hair confidence.

POWER OF HAIR



English: Hair and Identity



Hair and you

So far you have thought about and written about what your hair means to you. The next stage is to think about what hair means to others.

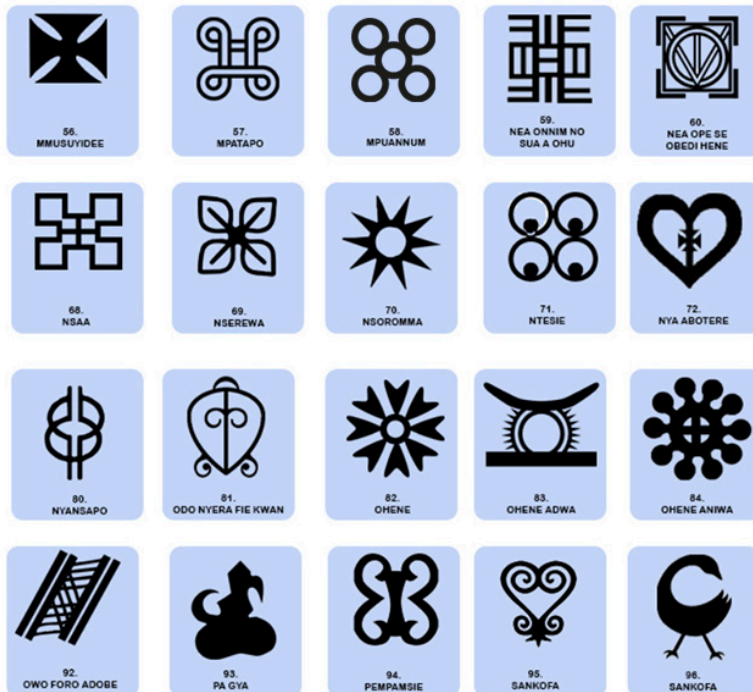
Look at the people opposite, what do you think their hair means to them?

Does the message of their hair tell you something about their social status, their occupation or their personal preferences?

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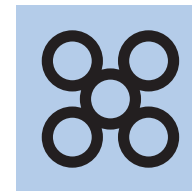
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What is my hair identity?

Hair styles are used as a decorative function but also convey distinct meanings such as beliefs, nationality and politics. Shapes and patterns define identities all around us and hair is no different.

Adinkra symbols have a decorative function but also represent objects that encapsulate evocative messages conveying traditional wisdom, aspects of life, or the environment. For example, Mpuannum (five tufts) traditionally worn by the Asante priestess and represents loyalty, faith and duty.



Parallels can be drawn from these symbols and some of the styles applied in braiding and cornrowing of black hair. Choose three which you think best express your personality.

If your hair could speak, what would be its message to the world?



The power of symbolism

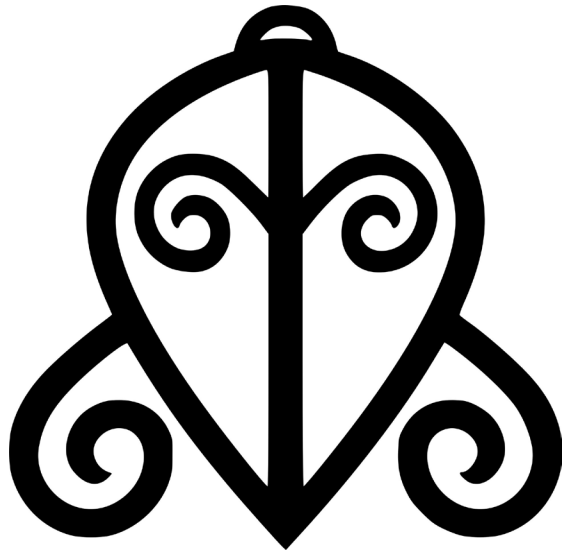
There are many symbols with distinct meanings, often linked with proverbs. Parallels can be drawn from these symbols and some of the styles applied in braiding and cornrowing of black hair.

This particular symbol is called Sankofa. The word Sankofa comes from the Akan people of Ghana. It is an Akan term that means, “to go back and get it.” One of the Adinkra symbols for Sankofa depicts a mythical bird flying forward with its head turned backward.

The idea being “do not be afraid to look into your past, learn from the good and the bad in order to have a better future”.

Adinkra symbols are not just beautiful designs: each symbol has a powerful proverb and life lesson behind it.

Which one of the Adinkra symbols would you choose as a logo for a hair care product. Why would you choose that one?



Define your hair identity

Design and draw a hairstyle inspired by the Adinkra symbols. Your hairstyle must be more than a fashion statement. It might include a map that speaks of your past, the present and the future. Think about all the various roads you have travelled in order to be where you are today.

Let's start by making a list to inspire you:

I have walked the road of determination
I have walked the road of patience
I have walked the road of forgiveness

Now think about the shapes and patterns that best describes your present:

Would it be a circular or a square shape?
Would it have many layers?
Would it have winding pathways ?
Where would these pathways end?

Once you have completed the present, create the shapes of your future. Think about the shapes and patterns you believe represent your ideal future.

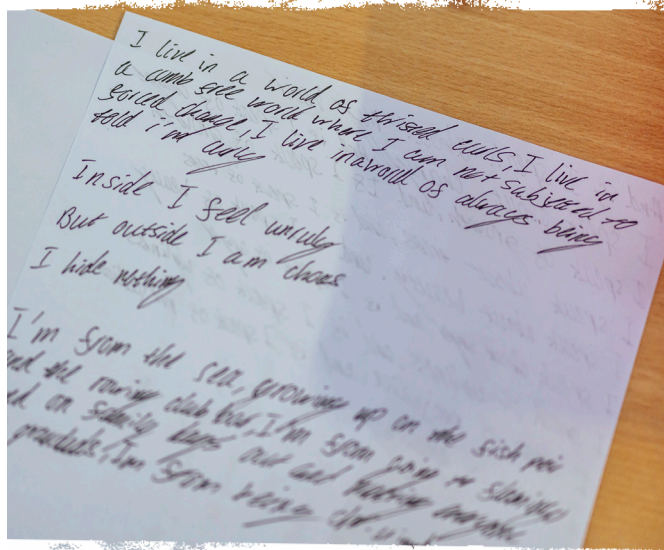


PHOTO: TOM MARTIN

Poem

Add your own words to each of the sentence starters below to create your own Hair verse.

When I think of my hair, I think of

My Hair is.....

It makes me.....

Although it sometimes.....

That's why.....



- When you add up how much each hair on your head grows over a year's time, you get 10 miles worth of hair!
- The average head contains over 100,000 hair follicles.
- Crash dieting can lead to temporary hair loss.
- A single strand of hair can support up to 6.5 pounds of weight.
- About 95% of the total skin area is covered in hair.
- We naturally lose 50-100 hairs a day.
- It would take about 3 years to grow your hair to shoulder length and 7 years to grow down to your waist.
- The major cause of dandruff is a fungus called *Malassezia Globosa*, which pushes dead skin cells to the surface quicker.
- Believe it or not, humans have the same amount of hair follicles per square inch as a chimpanzee!



Here's a hair quiz to see if you are a whiz!

1. Do you have a)500 b)50,000 c)5000000 hairs on your body?
2. The hair on your head can live up to 7years? T or F
3. Hair is found on every single part of your body? T or F
4. Which animal do humans have the same amount of her as?
5. Hair is made from KERATIN which is very strong but is it enough to lift an elephant? YES or NO

So what does your hair do? Can you give me a clue?

1. Head
2. Eyebrows
3. Eye lashes
4. Nose hairs
5. Arm/ Leg hairs

Dark, light, wavy or straight. Is it luck or is it fate?

- Melanin
- Follicle shape pictures (and get them to do arm movements)
- Skin colour
- Genes

How do we care for our lovely hair?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

GROSS ALERT!

To prevent greying some Romans wore a paste at night made from herbs and earthworms.

In Ancient Greece, women would fill in any space between their eye brows with dyed goat's hair attached with tree resin.

To dye their hair black, Romans baked pickled leeches into their hair.



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We hope you have enjoyed these resources. If you have suggestions on how we can improve them or have examples of student work that you would like to showcase, please email ideas@ideasfoundation.org.uk with Power of Hair in the header. Feel free to tweet student working using [#powerofhair](https://twitter.com/powerofhair).



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