



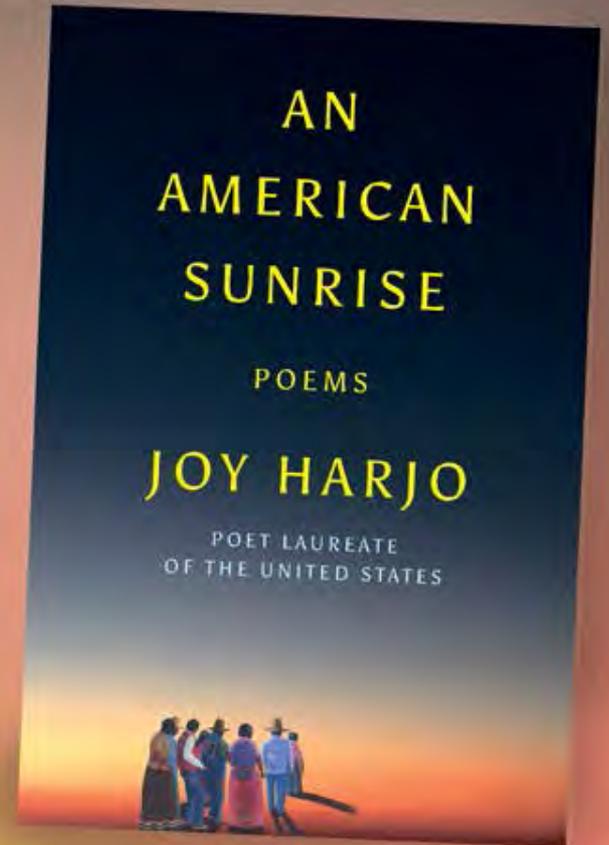
NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**  
arts.gov/neabigread  
**NEA BIG READ**

Managed by Arts Midwest

NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.

# NEA Big Read

## Together We Read



[HCPLC.org/NEABigRead](http://HCPLC.org/NEABigRead)





## Going beyond the text Experience and emotion

In the first poem in the book, “Break My Heart,” Harjo writes, “History will always find you, and wrap you / In its thousand arms.” Exploring the past plays a significant role in Harjo’s works. Through her poems, Harjo creates an intimate conversation with the reader. If you could talk about the most significant moments in your life to only one person, who would it be? Where would you begin? Start with a significant event or moment that changed your view of the world. Describe your experience through images or word pictures. Look in the *Tampa Bay Times* for images and words. Choose headlines, photos, captions, articles and advertisements and put them together to write a “found” poem expressing the moment or your feelings about the moment.

# The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read, a partnership with Arts Midwest, broadens people’s understanding of the world, communities and neighbors through the joy of sharing a good book. Showcasing a diverse range of contemporary titles that reflect many different voices and perspectives, the NEA Big Read aims to inspire conversation and discovery.

Studies show that reading for pleasure reduces stress, heightens empathy, improves students’ test scores, slows the onset of dementia and makes people more active and aware citizens. Book clubs and community reading programs extend these benefits by creating opportunities to explore together the issues that are relevant to people’s lives.

Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,700 NEA Big Read programs. This is the fourth time the Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative (HCPLC) will be a grant recipient. More than 5.7 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event and more than 40,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible.

## Together We Read

The Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative (HCPLC) invites you to join us for a five-week celebration of the NEA Big Read! Partners for this special project are the Friends of the Library of Tampa-Hillsborough County, Inc., Hillsborough County Parks & Recreation, Hillsborough Community College’s Dr. Lydia R. Daniel Honors Program, the James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art, Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education, and the Tampa Bay History Center. This year’s NEA Big Read title is *An American Sunrise* by U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo.

*An American Sunrise* is Harjo’s eighth collection of poems. Woven throughout are passages of prose written by Harjo, as well as excerpts, lyrics, and quotes from outside sources that help paint the complex backdrop to her poems and add a chorus of voices to the book. According to the NEA, “To open *An American Sunrise* is to be immersed in the power of nature, spirituality, memory, violence and the splintered history of America’s indigenous peoples.”

The HCPLC NEA Big Read will kick off on Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021 and culminate on Dec. 3, 2021. The schedule of events is on Pages 6 and 7. For more detailed event information, go to [HCPLC.org/NEABigRead](https://www.hcplc.org/NEABigRead).

Source: *National Endowment for the Arts; Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative*

## Did you know?

The arts generate more money to local and state economies than several major industries. According to data released by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the arts and cultural industries contributed \$919.7 billion to the U.S. economy in 2019 and employed 5.2 million people. In Florida alone, the arts accounted for \$38.3 billion and contributed 261,565 jobs.

## Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative (HCPLC)

With branches located throughout Hillsborough County, the public library promotes lifelong learning, an informed citizenry, individual intellectual freedom, enhanced quality of life and broadened horizons for all area residents. HCPLC maintains a network of neighborhood libraries with open access, a community focus, responsive service hours, welcoming environments, broad and relevant materials in a variety of formats and highly qualified employees. The cooperative includes Bruton Memorial Library (in Plant City), Temple Terrace Public Library, and all branch locations of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library. For more information, go to [HCPLC.org](https://www.hcplc.org). The public library is a member of the Tampa Bay Library Consortium.

“Until the passage of the Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, it was illegal for Native citizens to practice our cultures. This included the making and sharing of songs and stories. Songs and stories in one culture are poetry and prose in another. They are intrinsic to cultural sovereignty.”

– Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*

# An American Sunrise

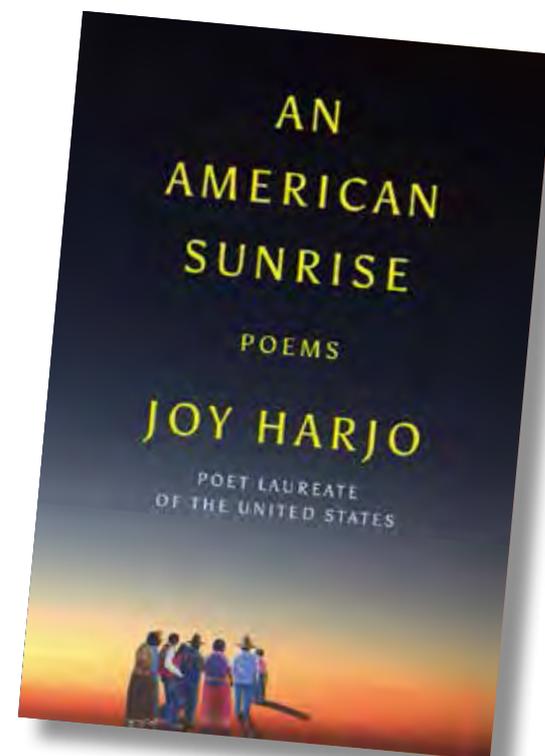
One of the most striking dynamics of Joy Harjo’s collection is how many different perspectives it achieves. Yet each one is unified in establishing her scope via her destined art form. One unifying image, true to the book’s title, is: sunrise. It begins the beautiful poem “Beyond” where she writes, “Beyond sunrise, there is a song we follow / Beyond clouds traveling with rain humped / On their backs” (Harjo 95).

In other poems, Harjo’s personal life is at the forefront. The poem “Directions to You” (22) is addressed to Harjo’s daughter, Rainy Dawn Ortiz. “Rabbit Invents the Saxophone” (75) is a creation story of the saxophone—an instrument played and beloved by Harjo and her grandmother.

Throughout the collection are poems that take on different forms. “Advice for Countries, Advanced, Developing and Falling” (79) is a call and response poem, where the speaker’s statements are followed by responses from an imagined audience.

The poems in *An American Sunrise* are at once praise and song and facts plainly spoken. According to the NEA, these poems “open many doors, into personal and historical heartache and survival, joy and tears, stolen land and the celebration of nature and loved ones.”

Source: *National Endowment for the Arts; Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative*



## Emotion and imagery

Former U.S. Poet Laureate and MasterClass instructor Billy Collins notes, “Poetry has been around for almost four thousand years. Like other forms of literature, poetry is written to share ideas, express emotions and create imagery. Poets choose words for their meaning and acoustics, arranging them to create a tempo known as the meter. Some poems incorporate rhyme schemes, with two or more lines that end in like-sounding words.” Poetry and songs are an essential part of art and culture as well as our communities.

## Read the book

Library copies of *An American Sunrise* are available to request and borrow in print, digitally in the Libby app, and as a streaming audiobook in Hoopla. Visit [HCPLC.org/Books](https://www.hcplc.org/Books) to borrow a copy. Copies of *An American Sunrise* also will be given away at the public library’s NEA Big Read kickoff on Nov. 6. Visit [HCPLC.org/NEABigRead](https://www.hcplc.org/NEABigRead) to learn more.

“It was impossible to make it through the tragedy / Without poetry. What are we without winds becoming words?”

– Joy Harjo,  
*An American Sunrise*



# The first Native American Poet Laureate

“We are in a dynamic story field, a field of dreaming. Move as if all things are possible.”

– Joy Harjo

Writer, musician, and three-term Poet Laureate of the United States Joy Harjo— her surname means “so brave you’re crazy”— was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is a member of the Mvskoke (also spelled Muscogee) Creek Nation. In Harjo’s early years, she would often hear her mother singing, or find her writing a song at the kitchen table. Of Cherokee, Irish, French, and German descent, her mother loved lyric poetry. She was like fire, Harjo says — always full of inspiration.

Harjo’s father, who worked as an airline mechanic, descended from Muscogee Creek tribal leadership. Among his ancestors was Monahwee (also known as Menawa), a Red Stick leader who fought Andrew Jackson’s forces in the 1814 Battle of Horseshoe Bend, opposing American expansion. When the Red Sticks were defeated, it set the stage for the removal of the Muscogee people from their homelands.

Like her innate connection to music, Harjo loved words, and loved drawing as a child — it was an experience she likened to dreaming on paper, and it was a passion she shared with her grandmother and her aunt, both of whom were talented visual artists. In first grade, she drew a picture of ghosts and colored them green, scandalizing the other students who asserted that ghosts could only be white. She would never forget the vehemence of their reaction. At 16, Harjo left to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico.

When she discovered poetry, Harjo said, it was a revelation that changed her life. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts from the University of New Mexico-Albuquerque, Harjo was accepted to the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, where she received a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing.

Among her influences are the poets June Jordan, Galway Kinnell, Audre Lorde, Judy Grahn, Charles Bukowski, Rubén Darío, Mahmoud Darwish and Pablo Neruda, as well as John Coltrane and Kaw-Muscogee jazz musician Jim Pepper. Stand-up comedy, too, has been an inspiration.

Harjo has published numerous award-winning books of poetry — including the 1983 classic *She Had Some Horses* — as well as children’s books and works of nonfiction, including her first memoir, *Crazy Brave*, which took her 14 years to write because she had to face her demons and find the strength to share the pain of her past in a public way. It received the PEN Center USA Literary Award for Creative Nonfiction and the American Book Award. Harjo has many other awards and also has released five albums of music and poetry and is an award-winning saxophonist and vocalist.

Source: National Endowment for the Arts; Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative



## Joy Harjo's history

- 1951** Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma

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- 1967** Enrolled in the Institute of American Indian Arts (New Mexico)

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- 1978** Received MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop

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- 1983** Published the now classic book of poetry, *She Had Some Horses*

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- 2000** Published children's book, *The Good Luck Cat*

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- 2003** Released music album *Letter From The End Of The Twentieth Century*

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- 2012** Published her first memoir, *Crazy Brave*

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- 2017** Awarded the Ruth Lilly Prize for Lifetime Achievement from the Poetry Foundation

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- 2019** Published the highly acclaimed book *An American Sunrise*

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- 2019** Named U.S. National Poet Laureate (now serving 3rd term)

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- 2021** Published newest work, *Poet Warrior: A Memoir*

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- 2021** Her poetry will be included on a plaque on *LUCY*, a NASA spacecraft launching in Fall 2021

Source: National Endowment for the Arts; Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative

“All night we dance the weave of joy and tears /  
All night we're lit with the sunrise of forever”  
– Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*

“We / Made plans to be professional—and did.  
And some of us could Sing / When we drove  
to the edge of the mountains, with a drum.  
We / Made sense of our beautiful crazed lives  
under the starry stars.”

– Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*

## On the horizon

New, in 2021, is *Poet Warrior: A Memoir*. Joy Harjo, the first Native American to serve as U.S. Poet Laureate, invites us to travel along the heartaches, losses and humble realizations of her “poet-warrior” road. Harjo listens to stories of ancestors and family, the poetry and music that she first encountered as a child, and the messengers of a changing earth — owls heralding grief, resilient desert plants and a smooth green snake curled up in surprise. Moving fluidly between prose, song and poetry, Harjo recounts a luminous journey of becoming, a spiritual map that will help us all find home. *Poet Warrior* sings with the jazz, blues, tenderness and bravery that we know as distinctly Joy Harjo.

## Joy Harjo's books

Harjo is a prolific author. Many of her titles are available in multiple formats for checkout at the public library. Find a curated list of her titles in the booklist “If You Liked... *An American Sunrise*” located on the website: [HCPLC.org/NEABigRead](http://HCPLC.org/NEABigRead)

### Going beyond the text

## Exploring rhetoric

Rhetoric is everywhere. Aristotle's three rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos and logos can be found in all types of writing: fiction and nonfiction, prose and poetry. Research the three rhetorical appeals and discuss them with your classmates and family. Look in the *Tampa Bay Times* for an example of each rhetorical appeal. You can use photos, advertisements, headlines or cartoons. Next, analyze one of Joy Harjo's poems from *An American Sunrise* or one of the poems posted on the Poetry Foundation website, [poetryfoundation.org/poets/joy-harjo](http://poetryfoundation.org/poets/joy-harjo). Use specific quotes from the poem to support your ideas. Share what you have learned with your class.

# NEA HCPLC Big Read Events

From the kickoff at the Tampa Bay History Center to the closing session with Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, the 2021 NEA Big Read has an excellent lineup of events and experiences for all ages.

For registration and up-to-date information, visit the public library's webpage [HCPLC.org/NEABigRead](https://www.hcplc.org/NEABigRead).

## NEA Big Read 2021 Kickoff

**Saturday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m. to noon**

**Location:** Tampa Bay History Center

*Recommended for all ages*

Join the library and community partners as we celebrate the power of poetry and the importance of cultural heritage to kick off the 2021 NEA Big Read for Joy Harjo's *An American Sunrise* (2019). This all-ages event will take place at the Tampa Bay History Center, 801 Water Street, Tampa. Free copies of the book and additional giveaways for youth are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are invited to listen to an address by Tampa's first Wordsmith, local writer and educator, Gianna Russo, and meet with local organizations.

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## Writing Poetry for Kids and Tweens

**Wednesday, Nov. 10, at 6:30 p.m.**

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for ages 7-12*

Explore and create your own poetry with award-winning author Jaimie Engle. An instructional session on epigraph poetry will be followed by the [optional] opportunity for students to make their poetic voices heard.

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## Cultural Cooking: Fry Bread

**Wednesday, Nov. 17, at 6:30 p.m.**

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for all ages*

Fry bread is both a culinary and cultural touchstone across many Native American nations. Join Chef Mira as she gives a cooking demo on how to make this delicious dish inspired by the recipe from Kevin Noble Maillard's picture book, *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*. Register and attend for a chance to win a free copy of this book.

## Going beyond the text

### Citizens as stakeholders

The mission of Friends of the Library is "to strengthen, support and advocate for superior free libraries in Tampa-Hillsborough County." The mission of the *Tampa Bay Times* is to serve our community. When there is a situation that requires community action, the newspaper reports on the problem and all the different individuals and groups that have an interest in the problem. People who are affected by a situation are often called "stakeholders."

- Read news stories about a problem or concern in your community.
- Identify the different stakeholders who are proposing different solutions to the problem.
- Collect the information and write it down on a piece of paper.
- Develop a solution of your own. What solution would you propose that is different from any of those proposed by the stakeholders?
- Interview family members and friends. Ask their opinions about the problem. Ask them for their solutions.
- Write a letter to the editor or a blog post discussing how the other solutions are different from yours.



## Tampa Bay History Center: Native American Exhibits Virtual Tour

Tuesday, Nov. 9, at 10 a.m.

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for all ages*

Join the library online as we get a glimpse at some of the history center's special spaces including Florida's First People, The Seminole and Miccosukee Story and Coacoochee's Story Theater. Video tour and brief presentation will be followed by question-and-answer session with a Tampa Bay History Center representative.

## Youth Out Loud Poetry Showcase

Wednesday, Dec. 1, at 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for all ages*

Celebrate the fruits of our creative labor with this online poetry performance. We will share selections from the November workshop and discuss poetry techniques and resources with Heard 'Em Say Executive Director Liz Prisley.

## One Book One Night

Friday, Nov. 19, at 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for all ages*

Join us at 6:30 p.m. as we read excerpts from Joy Harjo's first memoir "Crazy Brave." Register and attend this special event for a chance to win a free book.

## Youth Out Loud

Saturday, Nov. 20, at 1 p.m.

**Location:** Uptown Stage at University Mall |

*Recommended for ages 13-19*

Teens, make your voices heard in a poetry writing and performance workshop exploring nature, memories and lived experiences. You will get guidance and feedback in order to produce original poems using tools such as metaphor, personification and creative writing prompts. Led by the Heard 'Em Say Youth Arts Collective.

## Poetry on Demand

Monday, Nov. 22, at 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for all ages*

Poetry is art that is meant to be heard. Join library staff as we recite some of our favorite verses. Please share your favorite poem in the registration questions and we may add it to our performance!

## An Evening with Joy Harjo

Friday, Dec. 3, at 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** Online/Virtual | *Recommended for all ages*

Join U.S. Poet Laureate of the United States, Joy Harjo, as she discusses her acclaimed book of poetry *An American Sunrise* (2019) in this live, online event. In this powerful collection of poems, Harjo grapples with both her personal and collective Muscogee (Creek) Nation history as she returns to her family's land in Oklahoma. Register and attend this special event for a chance to win a free copy of her newest book *Poet Warrior: A Memoir*. Library copies of *An American Sunrise* are available to request and borrow in print, digitally in the Libby app and as a streaming audiobook in Hoopla.

"My mother had the iron pot given to her by her Cherokee mother, / whose mother gave it to her, given to her by the U.S. Government / on the Trail of Tears. / She grew flowers in it."

– Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*

# NEA Big Read book discussions

This November there will be several book discussions. These will be special opportunities to come together and celebrate *An American Sunrise* and other books connected to Native American Heritage and the impact of poetry. There will be book clubs for youth and adults. Both groups can make their voices heard and enjoy the perspectives of fellow readers. For these discussions and other events, there will be many chances to win free books. Some book discussions will take place online, and some are planned to be in person. For full scheduling options offered by the public library and by community partners such as the Tampa Bay History Center, visit [HCPLC.org/NEABigRead](http://HCPLC.org/NEABigRead).



## Native American art and culture in Florida

The Tampa Bay History Center is located on Tampa's Riverwalk and was founded in 1989. In the Florida's First People exhibit, native groups like the Tocobaga and Timucua lived along Florida's west coast for thousands of years prior to the arrival of European settlers. Learn about the tools and technologies used by Florida's first people. In Coacoochee's Story Theater, hear the story of the Second Seminole War – one of the longest military conflicts in American history – from two sides: Lieutenant John Sprague stationed in Tampa with the 8th Infantry, and Coacoochee or "Wild Cat," a young Seminole leader. Learn more at: [TampaBayHistoryCenter.org](http://TampaBayHistoryCenter.org)

The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg,

was founded in 2018. The Introductory gallery showcases majestic landscapes of the American West and some of the diverse peoples who have called these places home. Many works of art in the James collection tell visual stories of the peoples, landscapes, and history of the American West. The Native Life gallery features figurative scenes of community traditions and daily life from Plains, Southwest, Plateau, and Eastern Woodland tribes. Though the art was created in the last few decades by contemporary artists, their depictions tell stories of life from the late 1700s to early 1900s. The Native Artists gallery features art by 20th- and 21st-century Indigenous artists. Learn more at: [TheJamesMuseum.org](http://TheJamesMuseum.org)

Osceola, Seminole Chief of Florida. lithograph by George Catlin ca. 1838

## Enrichment and enchantment

A program of the National Endowment for the Arts, NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities and neighbors through the joy of sharing a good book. The NEA Big Read initiative is a community reading program designed around a single book.

A great book combines enrichment with enchantment. It awakens our imagination and enlarges our humanity. *An American Sunrise* does what all great books do: draws us in, widens our perspective and brings the world into focus. Joy Harjo does this with poignance and heart, and through her great love of poetry.

"I am a star falling from the night sky / I need you to catch me / I am a rainbow lifting from a dark cloud / I need you to see me"

– Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*



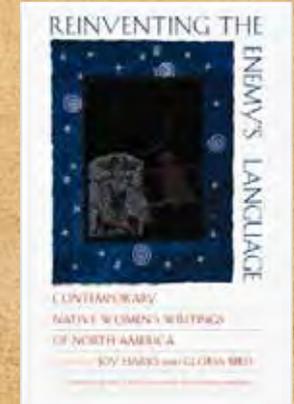
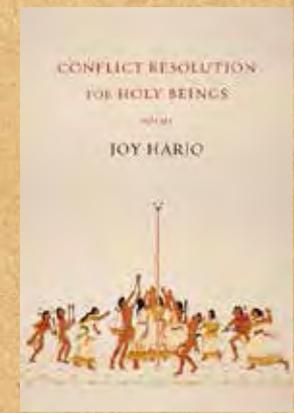
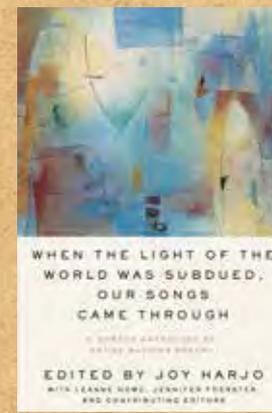
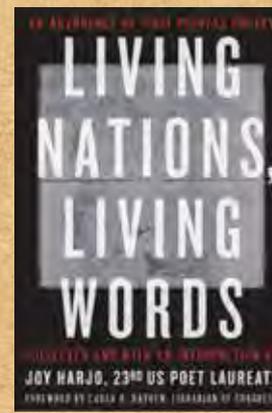
# Poetry: an ancient and modern tradition

“Each of us is descended from poetry ancestors. It’s the same for any art, any occupation. There is a lineage of style, knowledge and culture passed from generation to generation, one artist to another. Ultimately all poetry is related in the family tree of poetry...” – Joy Harjo, 2019

The editors at Encyclopædia Britannica define poetry as “a vast subject, as old as history.” The tradition of poetry can be traced back thousands of years to ancient Mesopotamia with the Epic of Gilgamesh. It has been a core form in religion, music, social and political movements, and as a ubiquitous symbol in the expression of love. The art of poetry may seem classical, historic and even academic to the modern reader. It is hard not to immediately associate the form with works from hundreds of years ago, such as Shakespeare’s beautiful 16th century. But the impact of poetry is alive and well in the 21st century. Just look at Amanda Gorman, who earlier this year took the internet by storm with her poem “The Hill We Climb.” Whether in school or in our own search for self-expression, writing verse can certainly find its way into our lives, especially in our youth. With her books, Joy Harjo reminds us: there is so much wonderful new poetry to read!

“Bless the heart of this land on its knees planting  
food beneath the eternal circle of breathing,  
swimming and walking this land / The heart is a  
poetry maker. There is one heart, said the poetry  
maker, one body and all poems make one poem  
and we do not use words to make war on this land”

– Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*



## Crack open a book

“If you’re one of countless people who don’t make a habit of reading regularly, you might be missing out: reading has a significant number of benefits,” writes Catherine Winter for lifehack.org. Reading books, newspapers and magazines provides many benefits including mental stimulation, stress reduction, vocabulary expansion, memory improvement, increased analytical thinking skills, improved focus and concentration, improved writing skills, entertainment and, of course, increased knowledge. Books can take you to new worlds, entertain you and teach you new things.

## Going beyond the text Analyzing conflicts

Journalist and poet Benjamin Voight writes, “Few poets, living or dead, have blazed as many literary trails as Joy Harjo.” Harjo’s poetry combines coming-of-age, history, mysticism and oral history. There are many types of conflicts presented in Harjo’s poems. Good writing, whether prose, poetry or song lyrics is often based on personal experience and conflict. Discuss conflicts you face—in your community or at home—with your class. Write in your notebook about a conflict that you have faced. On a separate page, write about a conflict presented in one of Harjo’s poems. Next, look for an article in the *Tampa Bay Times* that focuses on an issue or concern that affects people in your community. Read the article carefully. Think about the author’s purpose and the main idea of the writing. Explain what the main points of the article are in a summary. Be sure to include the following information: the main points, the author’s intent, the details that support the author’s intent and key words that indicate that intent. Share what you have written and learned about the conflict in the poem and the person in the newspaper article with your class. Discuss what the conflicts are and whether there are alternate ways the conflicts could be resolved or avoided.

## Going beyond the text

# Blackout poetry

When asked about his process for sculpting, Michelangelo Buonarroti once said, “The sculpture is already complete within the marble block, before I start my work. It is already there. I just have to chisel away the superfluous material.” In other words, once you remove the extra marble, you will see the art. This is the concept for black-out poetry. “Instead of starting with a blank page, poet Austin Kleon grabs the *New York Times* and a permanent marker and eliminates the words he doesn’t need,” according to NPR’s *Morning Edition*. Go to NewspaperBlackout.com to learn about the process of creating blackout poetry. Next, create your own poetry with the *Tampa Bay Times*. You can use the print paper or edit a PDF of the newspaper. Share your creation with your class and family. Email your creation to [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com), so it can be shared online.

## Going beyond the text

# Then and now

In *An American Sunrise*, many poems open a dialogue with Harjo’s ancestors and tribal history. In “The Fight” she writes, “I grow tired of the heartache / Of every small and large war / Passed down from generation / To generation.” The poem “How to Write a Poem in a Time of War” takes on the voice of ancestors and imagines them trying to write a poem while European immigrants “began building their houses all around us and demanding more. / ... started teaching our children their god’s story, / A story in which we’d always be slaves” (Harjo 48). The history of Indigenous people in the United States is well documented; however, it is often documented by non-Indigenous people. That is why the voices of Harjo and other Native Americans are so significant.

Author George Santayana says, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” What does this phrase mean? Discuss this idea with your class. Using articles, political cartoons and pictures from the *Tampa Bay Times* and [tampabay.com](http://tampabay.com), make a connection between “then” and “now.” Images and metaphors should express feelings and attitudes as well as behaviors and events. The overall effect should reflect your viewpoint on whether the present world has learned the lessons of history. You may focus on only one theme or on several issues that you find particularly relevant to your own life. Share what you have learned with your class.



## I Read

“I read to dream.

I read to live in other people’s lives.

I read about the joys, the world, dispenses to the fortunate, and listen for the echoes.

I read to live!”

– from the play *Passion*  
by Stephen Sondheim

# Benefits of reading

Catherine Winter, freelance reporter, editor and podcast producer, notes 10 significant benefits of reading.

**1** Reading is good exercise for your brain and can keep your brain active. Mental stimulation may slow the progression of Alzheimer's and dementia by keeping your brain active and engaged.

**2** Losing yourself in a good story is a great way to reduce stress. Winter writes, "A well-written novel can transport you to other realms, while an engaging article will distract you and keep you in the present moment, letting tensions drain away and allowing you to relax."

**3** Reading keeps you in the know. Everything you read provides knowledge.

**4** The more you read, the more expansive your vocabulary will become. As Winter notes, "Being articulate and well-spoken is of great help in any profession." Having a more expansive vocabulary also can improve your self-esteem and socialization skills.

**5** Reading can help improve your memory. Keeping track of characters, plot twists, time changes and character backgrounds is a great way to keep your brain active.

**6** Reading can improve your analytical and thinking skills. Paying attention to the details in a book is a great way to increase your analytical skills, especially with mystery novels or when critiquing a plot.

**7** Reading can improve your focus and concentration. When reading, all of your focus should be on the story, so you can immerse yourself in the experience.

**8** The best way to improve your writing skills is by reading. As Winter points out, "This goes hand-in-hand with the expansion of your vocabulary: Exposure to published, well-written work has a noted effect on one's own writing, as observing the cadence, fluidity and writing styles of other authors will invariably influence your own work."

**9** Reading can bring about tranquility, depending on the content of the books you choose.

**10** Last, but, not least, books can provide free entertainment. Though books can be purchased, they also can be borrowed for free from your local library. Your local library will never run out of reading materials.

*Source: Life Hack Blog*

*"And why do we keep renewing  
this ceremony of nests? / Each  
feathered generation flies away. /  
What does it mean, and why / the  
green growing green / turning red  
against yellow, / then gray, gray  
and green again?"*

*– Joy Harjo, An American Sunrise*



# NEA Big Read partners



**Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative**  
HCPLC.org/NEABigRead



**Friends of the Library of Tampa-Hillsborough County, Inc.**  
FOLtampa.org



**Hillsborough County Parks & Recreation**  
HillsboroughCounty.org/Parks



**DR. LYDIA R. DANIEL**  
HONORS PROGRAM

**Hillsborough Community College's Dr. Lydia R. Daniel Honors Program**  
hccfl.edu/Academics/Honors



**The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art**  
TheJamesMuseum.org



**Tampa Bay History Center**  
TampaBayHistoryCenter.org



**Tampa Bay Times NIE**  
tampabay.com/nie

“The songs of the guardians of silence are the most powerful —”  
— Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise*

## Attention, teachers

The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program (NIE) is a cooperative effort between schools and the Times Publishing Co. to encourage the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources — a “living textbook.” Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text, a type of nonfiction text.

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For a PDF of this publication and additional teaching materials for *An American Sunrise*, go [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie), click on the curriculum tab, and go to the Language Arts page. For more information about NIE, visit [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie), call 727-893-8138 or email [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com). Follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/TBTimesNIE](https://twitter.com/TBTimesNIE). Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/TBTNIE](https://facebook.com/TBTNIE).

Using the materials in this educational publication, along with the activities provided correlates to the following Florida Standards.

**Language Arts:** LAFS.912.L.1.1; LAFS.912.L.1.2; LAFS.912.L.2.3; LAFS.912.L.3.4; LAFS.912.L.3.5; LAFS.912.L.3.6; LAFS.912.RH.1.2; LAFS.912.RH.1.3; LAFS.912.RH.2.4; LAFS.912.RH.2.5; LAFS.912.RH.2.6; LAFS.912.RH.3.8; LAFS.912.RH.3.9; LAFS.912.RI.1.1; LAFS.912.RI.1.2; LAFS.912.RI.1.3; LAFS.912.RI.2.4; LAFS.912.RI.2.5; LAFS.912.RI.2.6; LAFS.912.SL.1.2; LAFS.912.SL.1.3; LAFS.912.SL.2.4; LAFS.912.SL.2.5; LAFS.912.SL.2.6; LAFS.912.W.1.1; LAFS.912.W.1.2; LAFS.912.W.1.3; LAFS.912.W.2.4; LAFS.912.W.2.5; LAFS.912.W.2.6; LAFS.912.W.3.7; LAFS.912.W.3.8; LAFS.912.W.3.9; LAFS.912.W.4.10 **BEST:** ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.R.1.1; ELA.912.R.1.2; ELA.912.R.1.3; ELA.912.R.1.4; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.3.1; ELA.912.R.3.2; ELA.912.R.3.4

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## Credits

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