

*By the Kansas State Historical Society*

## Famous Kansan



*Langston Hughes*  
1902-1967

Langston Hughes was lonely when he was a child. He did not have many friends because he moved often. Sometimes he lived with his mother in Topeka and sometimes with his grandmother in Lawrence. When he was alone, Hughes loved to read. He read books about adventure and about far away places. Hughes liked to explore the world by reading books. He especially liked libraries. There he felt safe. He did not feel lonely in the library or with books.

Langston Hughes was a writer. He loved to tell stories. Some of his stories were written as poetry. Hughes started writing poetry in high school. He did not think he was a very good poet. But people liked his poetry. Hughes wrote about what he saw. He wrote about what he heard, too. Some people think Hughes' poetry sounds like jazz music.

Langston Hughes was a writer during the time called the Harlem Renaissance. It was during that time that many African American writers and artists lived and worked in Harlem in New York City. They shared ideas and worked together. Some of Hughes' stories were based on his time growing up in Kansas. He also wrote about places that he had visited. Mostly Hughes wrote about how he saw the world and how he thought the world should be.



Langston Hughes hoped that one day all people would be equal. He dreamed that one day the color of a person's skin would have no meaning. Hughes wrote stories about his dreams. His writing spoke to people about his dreams. Hughes hoped that his words would inspire people. He hoped that people would change their ideas and beliefs if they were inspired by what he wrote. Langston Hughes used his words to inspire. His writing helped change the world.

*Kansas Gordon Parks took this photograph of Kansan Langston Hughes.*