

The Women of the Harlem Renaissance

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Overview

Throughout history the Negro woman has been the symbol of strength and resilience. Her hands have scrubbed another woman's floors; washed and pressed another woman's clothes; bathed, cuddled and nursed another women's children. These same hands have picked cotton alongside her mates, tenderly loved away the pain of her man's sore muscles and with mind boggling tenderness cradled her own offspring. At her lowest point her hands prepared her beloved for burial and still managed to lift those hands high in praise to her Creator. These same hands have helped her pen her dreams, thoughts, and emotions to the tune of essays, letters, poems and songs. These hands gave a new voice to the definition of womanhood that lets the world know that "I am Woman".

This curriculum, which is intended for 8th grade students, will explore what life was like for African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. The focus will be on the role of the Negro woman during this time period, as she became an important player during the New Negro Movement. Using the arts as an integral medium, the students will become familiar with an era that some might say was the most creative period known of our culture.

Rationale

The Harlem Renaissance was considered by some as the most active of artistic and intellectual movement by Negroes. This was the time period in which the New Negro rose up and gave power to his or her voice. Before we can discuss the emerging role of the women of the Harlem Renaissance, we have to look at the women of the South, who left the slavery sharecropping situations to take residence in the Mecca of the North called Harlem.

By the late 1800s the notion of freed families were beginning to emerge. They were largely illiterate and poor, but managed to share amongst themselves and their kin. In 1870 the average African American woman had six children and was destined to live a life working in the fields. At that time 80% of households had a male head, which was identically proportional to that of the white population. By the 1880's, sharecropping had replaced slavery and ensured poverty for most blacks. Sharecropping families had a few possessions largely because of poverty and was a necessity for relocation.

The first migration from the South by African Americans took them to Kansas, Colorado, California, Montana and Oklahoma. Blacks who moved to those areas aimed to locate to a place where they could develop their own land. The first Northern Migration took place in 1890-1900's where Blacks emerged in a number of cities, including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington. The Great Migration of 1915-1920 saw a million black people move from the rural South to the urban North. This migration moved blacks into positions in the factories, mills and foundries of the North and reshaped the politics, social structure and culture of the black community. This migration was precipitated by four factors: A labor surplus in the South, prompted both by poor crops and the forcing of sharecroppers off plantations; a combination of natural catastrophes, including floods, droughts and a boll weevil infestation that disrupted cotton production; and southern anti-black violence. Generally the males of the household left the family behind in the South to secure employment and housing, become established and then send for the family. This process could take months or years to attain. To often, the situation occurred when the male would come to the North, get a job and fail to send for the family. They would never be heard from again.

Higher wages and job security were the primary reasons for the migration. However this was short lived. One would think and many hoped that the arrival in a Northern city was a perfect utopia. Southerners would be free of the violence and the hatred that oppressed them in the South. Unfortunately the prejudice and the racism greeted the newcomers. The migrants soon discovered that the North was not the Promised Land. The growing numbers of blacks in the area generated violent reactions from whites who resented the idea of sharing jobs, housing and political power. The labor shortage promoted by World War I soon ended after November 1918, as industries converting to postwar productions began laying people off. The black man was the first to suffer. Where at one time the male worked in the factory and the female worked as domestics, housemaids, midwives, laundresses and nurses; the layoff left an imbalance in the black households. Once again, the black woman was left to carry the burden of the family.

Many families that migrated from the South found their feet planted in Harlem, commonly known as the Negro city of Refuge, The Mecca of the New Negro, or the cultural capital of the black world. Harlem was the first European settlement inhabited by the Dutch. It was formalized in 1658 as Nieuw Haarlem or New Harlem after the Dutch city of Harlem. In the 19th century, Harlem was a place of farms, and country estates. The mode of transportation between New York and Harlem was the steamboat on the East River. The journey took an hour and a half and was often delayed by the frozen river or by stagecoach. In 1880, the elevated railroads were extended to Harlem.

With the construction of the el trains, the urbanized development occurred rapidly. Town houses, apartments and tenements were constructed overnight. At the time, Harlem was white and Christian. By 1889, the construction was stagnated and the delay on building the subway led to a fall in real estate prices. This attracted Eastern European Jews to Harlem by large numbers, reaching a peak in 1917, with the Jewish population of 150,000. Blacks did not start arriving in large numbers until 1904. Real estate speculation and construction led to a glut of housing, which led to the crash of property values. This opened the door for blacks. The number of black residents increased rapidly in the early 20th century, and Central Harlem was essentially entirely black by 1920.

Blacks by large were familiar and accustomed with the injustices mitigated upon them by white people. But to face the injustice by people of the same color due to class stigmatized large groups of people. One's profession dictated one's class. The black elite who was small in number was considered the very wealthy. The middle class who were the doctors, lawyers, teachers, barbers, undertakers etc. where considered the professionals. This was the group that formed clubs, held socials and promoted the New Negro Movement. The working class consisted of the factory workers, domestics, service personnel, etc. This class system went even further to segregate; not only by color and professions, it segregated by gender.

The Harlem Renaissance is believed to have originated with the publication of Claude McKay's poem Harlem Dancer in 1917. It was a time of an amazing artistic production. The writing, music, and the dancing became a vehicle for change throughout the black community. The intellectuals, writers, artist, musicians and entertainers flowed in the Harlem area ready to share their newfound spirit with one another. This predominately male group, were originally referred to as the Talented Tenth by W.E. DuBois. Within this group of intellectuals, the voices and messages were so strong, powerful and controversial. With Alain Locke's publishing of *The New Negro*, many objected as to who could define what the new Negro looked and or acted like. This group under the leadership of DuBois, Alaine Locke and other male figures included women. Within the black community, these women were leaders and very influential in their own right. However according to Carole Marks, director of Black Studies at University of Delaware, the woman's role was distinctly different from those of their male counterparts. The acceptable role of the female in the Harlem Renaissance was that of salon hostess or entertainer. The woman writers and other "non-hostesses" were ignored as contributors to the movement. The notion that the black women were subservient to the black male had followed them from the South. Even in this time of awakening of black people, a women's place was still behind the male.

The Negro woman was not seen as an equal to the male. No matter how talented and beautiful as was, she was always viewed as a domestic, "Mammy" figure or a woman of ill reputation, a prostitute. In Elsie Johnson McDougald's essay "the Double Task: The Struggle of Negro Women for Sex and Race Emancipation," written in 1925, the Negro women realizes that the ideals of beauty, have been built up in the fine arts have

excluded her. She is pictured as the Aunt Jemima, showing her ability to serve without any grace or loveliness. She is often the object of laughter or ridicule.

As Alain Locke was defining the New Negro, he more or less defined the Negro as male. Ruth Whitehead in 1923 gives voice to the victimization of women. Whaley states that she is a victim of segregation and discrimination by just being a woman. She is considered property and childlike, one to be seen and not heard. She is an ornament of the home and playmate for the male. By the male standard, she is called inferior because she hasn't developed her skills and mind. In addition to all that plagued her as a woman, she compiles the problem by being a woman. However, Whaley gave her sisters hope, stating that in 1923 the New Negro woman was coming into her own in the areas of industry, education and politics. She challenged women to stride ahead but always remember that the door they kick in will be doubly thick because they are a woman and a Negro.

As stated earlier, the arts flourished during this period. The cultural awareness gave blacks a chance to voice what they saw as the elements of change in great portions. Josephine Baker, Katherine Dunham, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith were some women who used their talents on the stage to show the plight of the Negro and the awakening that was taken place. The greatest impact of the Harlem Renaissance came through the abundance of new literature by and about African Americans. The number of black female writers, poets, novelist and playwrights were phenomenal. However it still remained less than their male counterparts. Jesse Redmon Faust, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Bennett, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Dorothy West Anne Spencer, Elise Johnson McDougald to name a few blended their voices throughout the various literary mediums to raise the conscious awareness of people. These women and so many other great minds were as committed as their male associates such as DuBois, Locke, Toomer, Hughes and Fisher to make a difference in the black community. However their work was not taken as seriously. Faust worked closely with DuBois and often made recommendations on behalf of fellow male writers. However, she was not considered equal because of her gender. Zora Neal Hurston was a vital contributor to the energy of the Harlem Renaissance, however most of her writings appeared after the Renaissance was over. During the Renaissance, Hurston was often criticized by older writers of the time for what they felt were the crudeness and bawdiness of the stories and tales she told. The younger generation of writers often criticized her for what they felt was her tendency to gloss over what they believed were injustices dealt African Americans. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is considered to be a "feminist" novel long before the notion of "feminism" came into being. In this novel, a woman draws on her own inner strength to take control of her life and gain a sense of her own identity.

As a member of the Art and Music Academy, our goal is to integrate the arts into every facet of the curriculum. The majority of the students that are taught in our school, live in an economically depressed area. Of the five hundred and seventy, sixth to eighth graders in our school, 81.3% are eligible for the Federal Government Free or Reduced Lunch Program. The school is in partnership with a private management company. The racial/ethnic composition is 98.3% African American, 0.7 % Caucasian, 0.9% Latino and

0.2% are classified as “other”. Approximately 111 students receive special education services. Many of the students are transient, transferring in and out of Shaw. The average attendance is approximately 86%. We have a significant number of students who are in foster care or are with primary care givers other than biological parents.

So what does this information have to do with this curriculum unit? Everything! The Arts and Music Academy has successfully integrated the art across the curriculum. With the inclusion of dance, music, theater and visual arts, we have marked an improvement in behavior, fewer infractions and increased attendance. Students are eager to attend trips to the theater and some have participated in the local theater auditions. Our dance troupe has gained notoriety throughout the school district and the city. Our students are eager to perform or create.

With all that our Arts and Music Academy has accomplished, there is a great need to continue to expose our students to this time period defined as the Harlem Renaissance. I feel a greater need to empower our young ladies and enlightened our young men to the contributions of the women who paved the way in the areas of literature, music, dance and visual arts.

Objectives

The objectives of the unit include the following:

- To help students understand the background of a group of people and the motivation for change
- To encourage students to analyze and interpret works of art and poetry.
- To encourage students to construct meaning as they read text
- To have students make real life connections to the text.
- To have students identify the literary elements
- To help students become familiar with unfamiliar vocabulary
- To have students analyze literature and develop questions/opinions as they read.
- To have students make compare and contrast characters
- To have students use graphic organizers to strengthen comprehension and organize ideas
- To use the creative performing arts to convey information to an audience
- To have students create visual images.

Strategies

Our school has adopted using the Before-During-After (BDA) strategy across the curriculum. Each month two methods will be introduced and is to be used school wide. I will use several techniques in this unit.

1. Before Lesson/Reading

- Build up their own background knowledge about reading and the topic
- Set purposes for reading.

- Determine methods for reading, according to their purposes.

2. During Lesson/Reading.

- Gain their complete attention to the reading task
- Check their own understanding constantly
- Monitor their reading comprehension and do it so often that it becomes automatic
- Stop to use a fix-up strategy when they do not understand
- Use semantic, syntactic, and graph phonic cues to construct meanings of unfamiliar words
- Synthesize during reading
- Ask questions
- Talk to them during reading

3. After Lesson/Reading

- Decide if they have achieved their goals for reading
- Evaluate their understanding of what was read
- Summarize the major ideas
- Seek additional information from outside sources
- Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant ideas
- Paraphrase the text what they have learned.
- Reflect on and personalize the text
- Critically examine the text
- Integrate new understandings and prior knowledge.
- Use study strategies to retain new knowledge.

Lesson #1: Welcome to Harlem

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, students will be introduced to the Harlem Renaissance beginning with the Great Migration. Students will look at paintings by Jacob Lawrence to understand the experience of blacks who migrated from the South. Students will use the pictures by Jacob Lawrence to write poetry or short stories based on pictures. Students will take a closer look at Harlem past and present and identify notable landmarks. Students will create a brochure to highlight the landmarks. Students will research their neighborhood and construct a scale model depicting the area circa 1920.

Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how the migration to Harlem represented a new way of life for African American.
- Students will use the Art of Looking (analyzing the color/geometric shapes/shading/lighting) when analyzing the paintings of depicting the

Great Migration thru the eyes of Jacob Lawrence. Students will write short stories and poetry based on the paintings of Jacob Lawrence.

- Learn about the origin and significance of Harlem in African American history. Students will compare the Harlem of the 1920's to present day Harlem. Students will create a travel brochure highlighting the historic landmarks of Harlem.
- Students will work cooperatively to research the history of their neighborhood. Students will create a model city structure of the area surrounding Shaw Middle School circa 1920.

Supplies:

Markers/Crayons
Paint
Brushes
White Paper
Magazines (old/new publications to cut out images)
Glue
Scissors
Fabric scrapes
Other collage materials
Clay
Cardboard
Platforms
Various items to make city structures

Instructional Plan

Vocabulary: migration, abolish, segregate, voluntary, Jim Crow, sharecropping

Introduce the concept of migration by asking students to cooperatively brainstorm and create a definition for the word migration. Ask students questions such as:

Why do people migrate?

Why do they go where they go?

Is migration always voluntary?

Explain that slavery was abolished in the United States when the Civil War ended in 1865 but life was still very hard for blacks in the South. Many lived in poverty, they were not allowed to vote and they were threatened and many killed by angry whites. Many public places, such as restrooms and schools were segregated or separate for whites and blacks. Those challenges forced many blacks to leave the South in the early 1900's.

Over the next several decades more than one million blacks moved out of the South. This mass movement was known as the Great Migration.

Students will learn about the Great Migration through the paintings of Jacob Lawrence. The artist used his art to tell the stories of the African Americans who migrated to the North. The series of sixty paintings are entitled *The Migration of the Negro*.

Using the Internet, students will look at selected images from *The Migration of the Negro*. As the students look at the series of painting, we will discuss what each painting tells about the migration experience. How do these images portray the Great Migration? Students will be familiar with the Art of Looking and be able to identify the components of geometric shapes, broad or light strokes, shadowing, etc. Students will discuss the mood or emotion that each image conveys and identify any symbols within the paintings.

Here we might explain that many blacks that migrated to the North, settled in New York City in a neighborhood called Harlem. Harlem, which is known as the Promised Land became an important place in the history of Africa Americans. It would be helpful to use maps to show students where Harlem is located in relationship to the other boroughs of New York City. And also to provide a brief history of the inhabitants of Harlem and explain how African Americas came to settle in that area. Ask students to think about the effect that a group of migrants can have on one place? How might a group of migrants change the place where they have moved? How might the migrants themselves change in the new place?

Discuss the effects of so many African Americans moving into one area and whether they goals of success were met in the Land. What problems did they face as they tried to establish themselves (ex: job security, discrimination)

After viewing the images and having the discussions, the students will use what they've learned to answer the following questions:

- What are some of the reasons African Americans left the South?
- What did you learn about the actual journeys of these migrants?
- What mode of transportation did they use? What did they carry with them?
- What was it like for African American in Northern cities? What were the positive and negative experiences that African Americans faced in the Northern cities?

Activities

1. Students will choose an image from *The Migration of the Negro* series as inspiration to write short stories, poems or raps.
2. Using the Internet site, Drop Me Of In Harlem, the students will get a snapshot of the community of Harlem by reading the poem Harlem by Walter Dean Myers and view the illustrations by Christopher Myers.
 - a. Students will listen to the poem several times to get a clearer understanding of Myers depiction of Harlem. During the first listening, students will imagine being in the Harlem that Myers describes. What moods and feelings has Myers created?

- b. Students will listen to the poem again using the Listening Guide (see appendix). This time they will list references to the people and places in which they are unfamiliar with. Students will show their list to their peers and ask if they can identify some of the items on their list.
 - c. Students will visit the mini-site [A Place in Harlem](#), to get a sense of the important places that made up the neighborhood. Students will focus on the spirit of Harlem, the values and interest of its residents during the Renaissance. Locate the places that are mentioned in the poem by Myers. Identify the churches, businesses and residences. Locate the YMCA, Dunbar Apartments and 267 House. Who lived in these places and how did it inspire creativity? Locate Connie's Inn and the Cotton Club and read about them. These were places that were too expensive for lower- or middle- class blacks. Discuss with students: How would you feel if you lived in Harlem and were not allowed to go into these places?
 - d. Students will create a travel brochure highlighting the historic landmarks of Harlem
3. Our school was founded in the late 1920's and the neighborhood has changed demographically and physically throughout the years. Students will work cooperatively to research the neighborhood surrounding our school. The goal is to understand how the neighborhood has evolved over the years. Looking through city records and old photographs students will recreate the neighborhood through a scaled down model of the neighborhood. Students will identify the city services, retail establishments, restaurants etc, which existed eighty-five years ago. Students will also research the census records to determine the population ethnicity, family composition, religions, median incomes etc.

Pa. Standards: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening: 1.2, 1.4,1.3,1.5,1.6,1.8
 Social Studies 1, 2, 4
 Visual Arts: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Assessment

- Images of Migration Assessment (Rubric) – see Appendix
- Travel Brochure Assessment (Rubric)
- Group Project Assessment (Rubric)

Lesson 2: The Women of the Harlem Renaissance

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, students will be introduced to the Harlem Renaissance and some its influential women who gave voice to the New Negro Movement. Students will read short stories, essay excerpts, poems and lyrics to gain an insight on the how women were viewed during this time period. In addition, students will read a novel by Zora Neal Hurston to show how the main character found her sense of independence.

Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the Harlem Renaissance and its significance in American history.
- Examine the role of women through the essays, poems, short stories and lyrics of women of that era.
- Read the novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neal Hurston.
- Identify the following literary elements in the novel: conflict, symbolism, figurative language, imagery, motif, characterization, plot, and theme

Supplies

Construction paper

Markers/ Crayons

Images of paintings, photographs, sculptures, and other visuals representative of the Harlem Renaissance. These can come from a variety of sources including books, slides, and color printouts. Some examples of materials: pencils, paper, computers for publishing and research; art supplies,

Instructional Plan

Vocabulary: renaissance, sophisticate, cosmopolitan

Vocabulary words from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

resignation	summoned	sodden	revelation
bloated	remorseless	notion	languid
relish	confirmation	pugnacious	elude
pelting	beglavored	varicolored	lacerating
consolation	zest	amiss	sanctum
calyxes	conjectures	bellowed	palmetto
gaiters	boisterously	passle	metropolis
brazen	cowed	gallantry	temerity
ornery	proffered	prominence	ostentatiously
insinuations	scimitars	temporized	transfiguration
grotesques	chink	supplication	shanties
ferocity	fissures	gait	delirium
preempted	trifled	dishevelment	fetid

Prior to lesson, prepare a Harlem Renaissance Learning Center in which the following items are displayed.

- Artwork by Jacob Lawrence and Aaron Douglass
- Photographs by James VanDerZee
- Images of the people who helped shape the New Movement: WEB DuBois, Jesse Redmon Faust, Zora Neal Hurston, Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, Nella Larsen, Bill Bojangles, Ethel Waters, Florence Mills etc.
- The words to Langston Hughes poem, “Juke Box Love Song”

Display the quote by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, “*Harlem was not so much a place as it was a state of mind, a cultural metaphor for black America itself.*” Implement the KWL strategy. Have students write their impressions of what they think the Renaissance was like based on the pictures and poem. Explain that from the mid 1920’s to the early 1930’s, Harlem was a place where the most talented black artists (musicians, poets, novelists, dancers, painters sculptors, photographers, etc.) gathered to give artistic expression to the African American experience. For the artists of this period, creative expression was a means of liberation to express their desire for social and political equality.

Focus on the poem by Langston Hughes “Juke Box Love Song”. Explain that Langston Hughes created a style of poetry that used the rhythms of jazz and the storytelling techniques of blues to portray the black experience. Discuss the poem using the following prompts:

What words in the poem painted a picture of Harlem?

What are some of the sounds of Harlem?

Point out the expressive words, rhyme and repetitive sounds that Hughes used to convey the feeling of movement and of a dancing couple. What words does Hughes use to capture the feeling of dance and movement? What words does he use to convey the feeling of rhythm?

Referring to the quote by Dr. Gates, discuss the following:

What state of mind does the poem reflect?

How do you think Langston Hughes feel about Harlem?

What phrases help you figure this out?

How does this contrast with most African Americans’ experience in the Unites States prior to the Harlem Renaissance?

Explain to the students how even though the women were a strong of the Harlem Renaissance they were not considered equal to the males of the Movement. Discuss how Jesse Faust was a great writer, who worked as a reviewer for *The Crisis* and was the right hand person to WEB DuBois the founder of *The Crisis*, yet her opinions were not valued as being an equal amongst her male peers. Explain that a poet/writer Georgia Douglas Johnson was accepted because her poems and stories focused on family, love and romance. These were acceptable topics for the women. Read the following poems by Georgia Douglass Johnson: “The Heart of a Woman”, “Motherhood” and “I Want to Die While You Love Me.” Compare the poems to the following poems: “Baltimore” by Countee Cullen and “I Too Sing America” by Langston Hughes. Explain how the poems by Hughes and Cullen highlighted the social injustices. Discuss how these poems were perceived by a male dominated society and what influenced the topics that the different genders focused on.

Read the poem “The Harlem Dancer” by Claude McKay. Have students work in groups to create a mind map dissecting the poem. The purpose of reading is to create a profile of

this woman, describing her physically and emotionally. Have students look at pictures of what the media envisioned as the typical black women in the arts during that era looked like such as Aunt Jemima, and Josephine Baker. Ask students to make comparison between the two. Discuss why it was important for the media to present Negro woman using images of either a “Mammy” figure or a very promiscuous woman.

Briefly introduce students to Zora Neal Hurston. (Students will have the option to research her more in depth later.) Explain that Hurston uses female characters in her works that portray strong images (Example: *Sweat* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*) She wanted the world to see African American women as smart and independent. Introduce the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* asking the students to focus on how the main characters draws on her inner strength to take control of her life and gain a sense of her own identity. Due to the language and diction of the story, students will read the story along with the audiocassette version. As we read the novel, students will complete the following activities:

- Writing a Letter to a Character. In this activity, students will have an opportunity to understand more of Janie’s family history, in particular what it was like for her grandmother to be a slave. Students will visit a site that gives the narrative of the woman who really was a slave so that you can compare her experience with Janie’s grandmother. After reading in Chapter 2 Nanny’s account of one of her most dramatic experiences as a slave, you will write a letter to Janie explaining why you think Janie’s grandmother acted the way she did.
 1. Read the slave narrative of Mary Reynolds
 2. Using a Venn diagram compare and contrast the two women’s lives as slaves. Note briefly what aspects of their lives are similar and different in terms of
 - Their living arrangement
 - Their work situation
 - Their family relations
 - Their relationships with their slave masters
 - Any other areas you think important to compare or contrast

Using the information from the Venn diagram, write a letter to Janie explaining why you think her grandmother, who was once a slave, rushed Janie into marriage with Logan Killicks. In the letter students must included the following:

- Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion.
- Use specific devices to support assertions, such as appeal to logic/emotion, compare/contrast, etc.
- Clarify and defend positions using details from the novel
- Address Janie’s concerns, biases and/or expectations.

Assessment: Venn diagram (Comparison/ Contrast) Rubric

Persuasive Letter Rubric

- Keeping a Double Entry Journal – In this activity, students will keep a response journal to give their opinion about quotations in the novel.
 1. Choose between 14-20 quotes from throughout the novel and write them on the left side of the journal. On the right hand side of the journal reflect on the deeper meaning of what is being said. Write your thoughts about the quote and any questions you may have or the author concerning that quote.

Assessment: Journal Rubric – see appendix #

- Illustrating and Explaining Poetic Images – In this activity, students will create visual representations of the novel.
 1. Reread parts of the novel and note six images that represent significant events in Janie's journey.
 2. Draw each image as imaginative as you can. You don't have to be good in art to do these drawings. You may use abstract images or use symbols to bring out the ideas. You can use colored makers, pens and pencils.
 3. Think of each of these drawings as pieces of a quilt. Place them in order and attach them to a larger piece of paper so there is a border around them. Around the border write a narrative that captures the story the pictures tell.

Pa Standards: Reading Writing, Speaking and Listening: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7

Assessment: Poetic Images (Rubric)

Lesson #3 – Hot, Hot, Harlem

Lesson Overview: During this lesson, students will research women of the Harlem Renaissance and prepare performances that will exhibit their knowledge. Students will participate in a variety show of literary readings, musicals and dance performances, and an art exhibition.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

- Use research skills to learn about the women of the Harlem Renaissance. Work cooperatively to create a fact board about a woman of the Renaissance.
- Use oral presentation and performance skills (role-playing) to communicate and demonstrate to others what they're learned about the Harlem Renaissance. Presentations can be in the form of interviews, monologues, and poetry and dance performances.

- Students will perform and/or display their projects at a variety show entitled, “Hot, Hot, Harlem”

Instructional Materials

Pencils
 Paper
 Tape recorders/CD player
 Poster Board
 Colored marker
 Tempera paint
 Props and costumes for oral presentations
 Props and music for performing a dance

Instructional Plans

To prepare students for their planning of the variety show and exhibition, students will view the following videos: Harlem Renaissance, a documentary that traces the roots of music from the Harlem Renaissance, its social impact and its’ eventual acceptance, and Against the Odds: The Artist of the Harlem Renaissance.

Activities

Students will work cooperatively to complete the following:

1. Chose a woman of the Harlem Renaissance (from a predetermined list), research the woman and create a fact tri-fold board for the exhibition.

Women of the Harlem Renaissance

Regina M. Anderson	Georgia Douglass Johnson
Josephine Baker	Helene Johnson
Gwendolyn Bennett	Lois Mailou Jones
Marita Bonner	Nella Larsen
Gwendolyn Brooks	Florence Mills
Hallie Quinn Brown	Alice Dunbar Nelson
Anita Scott Coleman	Effie Lee Newsome
Mae V. Cowdery	Esther Popel
Clarissa Scott Delaney	Augusta Savage
Jessie Redmon Faust	Bessie Smith
Angelina Weld Grimke	Anne Spencer
Billie Holiday	A’Lelia Walker
Ariel Williams Holloway	Ethel Waters
Virginia Houston	Dorothy West
Zora Neal Hurston	

2. The same cooperative group will present an oral presentation to present their woman. The presentation can be in the form of role play, interviews, dialogues,

music and dance performances etc. The performances will take place in the classroom and then perfected for the variety show.

Pa. Standards: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening: 1.2, 1.4,1.3,1.5,1.6,1.8
Visual Arts 1

Assessment: Fact Board
Oral Presentation/Performance

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Knopf, Marcy, *The Sleeper Wakes: Harlem Renaissance Stories by Women*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1999. A collection of short stories by some of the most influential writers of the era

African American Literature: Voices in Literature, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Austin, New York, Orlando, Atlanta, San Francisco, 1998. A collection of short stories, poetry plays and a novel used in middle and high schools

Myers, Walter Dean, *Harlem*, Scholastic Inc., New York, Toronto, London, 1997, Walter Dean Myers poem depicting the sights and sounds of Harlem.

Patton, Venetria & Honey, Maureen, *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey and London, 2001, A collection of essays, poems, short stories and plays,

Hurston, Zora Neale, *There Eyes Were Watching God*, Harper Collins, New York, 1937
A story of a young woman determined to find her independence and control her life

Wall, Cheryl, *Women of the Harlem Renaissance*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1995, Cheryl Wall charts the journey of three influential women of the Harlem Renaissance.

Websites

<http://www.english.uga/~lboyd.ganter/migta60.html> (Site contains 60 images of Jacob Lawrence's The Great Migration Series)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlem> (site contains the history of Harlem)

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content.org/2248/> (site contains an audio version of Harlem, a listening guide for the poem and offers a virtual tour of Harlem)

Appendix-Contents Standards

Rubric: Each assessment will be graded using a personalized rubric for that task. Some rubrics will be developed with the students. Below is an example of a rubric designed for the Migration Series Poetry.

Poetry Rubric

Poetry	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Score
Ability to captivate the reader	Unfocused; author seems unsure of direction (1-2 pts.)	Some focus, but lacks continuity (3-4 pts.)	Well focused and interests reader throughout. (5-6 pts)	Captivates and involves reader deeply. (7-8 pts)	
Sensory Images	Difficult to visualize image or emotion (1-3 pts)	Some use of image, idea, or emotion (4-6 pts)	Clear use of sensory images to portray ideas or emotions (7-9 pts)	Vivid, detailed images and intensely felt emotion 10-12 pts)	
Use of Language	Imprecise or inappropriate choice of words (1-2 pts)	Expresses thoughts marginally (3-4 pts)	Appropriate choice of language (5-6 pts)	Uses rich and imaginative language (7-8 pts)	
Punctuation	Arbitrary punctuation (1-2 pts)	Some meaningful punctuation (3-4 pts)	Punctuation meaningful throughout (4-5 pts)	Punctuation enhances conveyance of thoughts and images (5-6 pts)	

Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

Learning to Read Independently.....	1.1
<i>Purpose for Reading</i>	<i>Comprehension and Interpretation</i>
<i>Word Recognition</i>	<i>Fluency</i>
<i>Vocabulary Development</i>	
Reading Critically in All Content Areas.....	1.2
<i>Detail</i>	<i>Inferences</i>
<i>Fact from Opinion</i>	<i>Comparison</i>
<i>Analysis and Evaluation</i>	
Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature.....	1.3
<i>Literary Elements</i>	<i>Literary Devices</i>
<i>Poetry</i>	<i>Drama</i>
Types of Writing.....	1.4
<i>Narrative</i>	
<i>Informational</i>	
Quality of Writing.....	1.5
<i>Focus</i>	<i>Style</i>
<i>Content</i>	<i>Conventions</i>
<i>Organization</i>	
Speaking and Listening.....	1.6
<i>Listening Skills</i>	<i>Speaking Skills</i>
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Presentation</i>
Characteristics and Function of the English Language	1.7
<i>Word Origins</i>	<i>Variations</i>
<i>Applications</i>	
Research.....	1.8
<i>Selection</i>	<i>Location of Information</i>
<i>Organization</i>	

Social Studies Standards:

- #1 Culture – Demonstrate an understanding of culture and how culture affects the individual and society.
- #2 Time, Continuity and Change –Analyze historical events, conditions, trends and issues to understand the way human beings view themselves, their institutions, and others, now and over time, to enable them to make informed choices and decisions.
- #3 People, Places and Environment – Apply geographic skills and knowledge to demonstrate an understanding of how geography affects people, places, movement, and environment.

- #4 Individuals, Groups and Institutions – Demonstrate an understanding of the role of individuals, groups and institutions and how their actions and interactions exert powerful influences on society
- # 5 Power, Authority, and Governance – Understand and communicate the ideas and mechanism developed to meet the needs of citizens, manage conflict, and connect individuals and groups in the process of change.

Theater Concepts, Skills & Knowledge

- #1 Create Scripts and Playwriting
- #2 Act by Developing Body and Voice
- #3 Use Business Skills to Design & Create School Productions
- #4 Analyze Diverse Historic & Cultural Texts
- #5 Influence of Theater History

Visual Arts Standards

- #1 Understand and apply art media, techniques and processes
- #2 Demonstrate knowledge of elements, principles and expressive features from diverse historical periods and cultures, especially African, Asian/Pacific, European, Latino and Native American cultures.
- #3 Recognize, select, and evaluate a variety of subject matter, symbols and ideas from diverse cultures and historical periods, especially African, Asian/Pacific, European, Latino and Native American cultures in making works of art.
- #5 Understand the visual arts and artifacts in relation to historical, social and cultural contexts, especially African Asian/Pacific, European, Latino and Native American cultures
- #6 Use the visual arts and artifacts as a way if understanding ourselves and our communities and similarities.

Why Harlem? Listening Guide

1. *"They took to the road in Waycross, Georgia..."*
The poem begins with a description of the journey African Americans took to Harlem. Listen for the ways people traveled.
2. *"They brought a call, a song, First heard in the villages of Ghana/Mali/Senegal..."*
Listen for ways the poem connects African Americans living in Harlem with their African heritage. Listen for words about sounds and music.
3. *"Yellow, tan, brown, black, red..."*
Listen for the descriptions of the loud colors of Harlem. Listen for the names of three famous African American athletes whose success keeps hopes alive.
4. *"We hope, we pray... "*
Listen for how this part of the poem reflects African Americans' faith.

5. *"A chorus of summer herbs..."*
Listen for descriptions of the hot Harlem summer, the food, and the people. Listen for descriptions of the children who live in Harlem, the kinds of games they play, their dreams, and what they listen for.
6. *"A weary blues that Langston knew, And Countee sung..."*
Listen for references to the Blues—the music that reflected sadness, hard times, and suffering. Listen for the names of artists (poets, writers, musicians) who lived and worked in Harlem. Listen for the "language of darkness" and places in Harlem that "lifted the darkness."
7. *"The uptown A, Rattles past 110th Street..."*
The main transportation into and out of Harlem was the subway. Listen for references to the A train. Listen too, for the different groups from Africa who now live together in Harlem.
8. *"Squares, blocks, bricks..."*
Listen for descriptions of the shapes of things and the sound of gospel music. Imagine the woman washing vegetables in the sink who sings to the music on the radio. Imagine the hot walk-up apartments and being teased about how well you play checkers.
9. *"In Harlem, sparrows sit on fire escapes outside of rent parties to learn the tunes..."*
Notice the repetition of the words, "In Harlem." Listen for the "serious business"—a poem.
10. *"A huddle of horns, and a tinkle of glass, a note..."*
Myers refers to a note that passes from generation to generation. Listen for the names of those who pass along the note. Is it a written note? Is it a musical note? Listen too, for words that describe the despair and how an artist lifts the sadness.
11. *"Place, Sound, Celebration, Memories of feeling..."*
Listen for words that tell you how Myers remembers Harlem. Listen for how the poem ends as it began with a description of a journey that reaches all the way to Africa. (The Niger is a river in Africa.)