

**The Power of Their Voices: Renaissance Black Americans**  
**A 7<sup>th</sup>-grade Communications Unit**

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## **Overview**

This unit is designed to replace, or to supplement, the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade Research/Informative Report unit currently being taught as Unit Three. It maintains the dual purpose of that unit: to introduce and reinforce research and informative writing skills, as students explore an epoch in history which will give them a foundation on which to explore the world of the Logan family in Mildred D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, the unit which follows.

The unit which follows maintains the focus presented in the current Unit Three, the guiding question for which is "How does setting influence the people of a region?"

The current "overarching questions" continue: How do places and events impact history? What strategies do researchers use to collect and present their information? What does an effective Report of Information look like?" The current description for Unit Three would continue to be appropriate:

During this unit, students will apply formal research and note-taking strategies to writing an informational essay. Key strategies include identifying main ideas and supporting details, questioning and summarizing texts, and taking notes from relevant sources. Students will present their final projects to classmates by delivering oral presentations. Students will examine grammar topics such as capitalization, punctuation, and proofreading and apply these

conventions to the writing, revising, and editing of their reports. Students will expand their vocabulary by learning words specifically associated with their subject matter and the time period in which they occurred, and by using those words effectively in their final projects.

While the current Unit Three focuses on the Great Depression, this unit turns students to an exploration of and reports on the people, events, and significance of the Harlem Renaissance. Students will discover and make use of an abundance of multi-media resources on this era. In the course of this exploration, they will write an informative report on a person of the Harlem Renaissance. Along with their essays, they each will choose an additional way in which to present their information inspired, it is hoped, by the creativity they have discovered in the era. This unit is designed to be taught in collaboration with Library/Media, Art and Music teachers where such collaboration is possible. It is designed, as well, to be taught in conjunction with Writers Workshop in those schools in which this is a separate class (currently the Accelerated Learning Academies), or with the writing elements integrated into the class for those schools in which this is the practice. Lessons are presented to fit double-period blocks (approximately 90-100 minutes) but could be adapted to different time frames. While the unit is designed for a four-week period, the number and length of lessons can be adapted to meet varying needs.

## **Rationale**

As my students reflected on Mildred D. Taylor's work when we were finishing our unit on *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, a particularly passionate and perceptive pubescent student asked, "Why do we have to keep reading about *racism*?" and then added, "It's so *depressing*!" Another student commented that in this book there never was a final climax; bad things just kept happening to the Logan family, and there never was a resolution to the racism and violence.

Once again, these young people have put their finger on a concern that has lingered, unnamed, in the back of my head as I have taught this novel over the last few years. I have always enjoyed the opportunities this fine work gives us for exploring literature and the lives and circumstances that it reflects. Still, I have noticed the discomfort among my students – black, white, and rich mixtures of "boths" and "others" – as we pay attention to differences among us that many would like just to forget. And something more:

In our novel the strongest, bravest, and most "together" people are the Logans, a rural black family of 1933 Mississippi. There are some decent and even brave white people in the novel as well (and some African Americans who are not as strong or as

intelligent as the Logans). The Logans prevail over some of the most blatant racism in their area. *And yet . . .*

It is the *and yet* that has lead me to pursue this unit. *And yet* in this novel black people are mostly victims. Their victories come as the victory of victims who prevail. There are powerful and inspiring lessons to learn from their successes, and from the not-so-successful stories of others around them. *And yet* the aftertaste of disempowerment, even of the most powerful among the black people in this area (the Logans who own their own land), remains.

African Americans have been and are far more than victims, descendants of the horrors of slavery, subjects of racism and special oppression, our most long-lasting foci of both racial and gender discrimination. It is precisely these facts of life, though, that have contributed to another fact far less known and celebrated: many of the great works of American literature are largely penned by participants in and descendants of those horrors. Many of the major contributions to what is known as American music – indeed, to all of the art of our country -- have been made by people from that same background. Our children – black, white, both, and other – need to know and celebrate the victories of these people, which this great and largely untaught body of literature and art reflects.

Today we celebrate the election, and the first months in office, of the first African American president of the United States. As powerful, historic, and inspiring as this victory is, it still is not directly one of a descendant of slavery. Our children need to know that those who endured, survived, and were born of descendants of slavery have been and are among the most accomplished writers of our country, of our world.

During this unit, students will study the work of the great African American writers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with a focus on the Harlem Renaissance. Students will explore the various art forms that flourished during this epoch, and choose an artist on whom to focus their research. They will learn of the conditions of life that inspired this work, that preceded and followed it, through the Great Depression of the 1930s. In exploring this history through the eyes of these writers, they will see African Americans not only as victims, but as leaders not only of their “own” people, but of us all – both back then, and now. They will read the words of writers far more at home with and masters of the beauty of language than most who write today. They will, I hope, be inspired to see themselves as masters of their own fates, even those fates which may seem at the moment to be insurmountably grim. And the way things are going in our world today, this knowledge may be even more necessary, useful, empowering – and, perhaps, life-saving – than ever before.

The finished product will differ for each student, and will partly depend on and reflect school structure and resources. Each student will take a look at work of the Harlem Renaissance as a whole, select a writer or artist whose work particularly appeals to the student, do an independent study of that person's life and work, and produce a multi-media report on both to classmates. The report will be structured so as to show how life influences art, and how the life of a people and a country and the world at a particular time impacts on the thinking and creativity of us all. In addition to the informative report each student will write, each will have some freedom to develop a presentation that reflects the creativity of the artist they explored. In K-8 schools, students can create a "living wax museum" in which they portray their selected people for walking tours of younger students. In schools including CAPA 6-12 where the arts are prominent, students can create displays and/or performances utilizing the ambiance and resources of their schools.

## **Objectives/Learning Goals**

Students will research the Harlem Renaissance, including its historical context, the social and political events that framed it, and the major artists of the period, and its impact on the times and art that followed it. In this process, this unit is designed to develop students' familiarity with and ability to use various instruments of historical research, along with informative writing and oral presentation of information. It encourages student exploration of various art forms as expression of ideas and feelings – as forms of communication parallel to yet different from informative prose. Students are given an opportunity to experiment with and share one or more art forms as means by which to illustrate and enhance their informational writing and oral reports.

Several interrelated goals are addressed in this unit:

1. Students will learn about a period of time during which African Americans were literary, cultural, artistic, and political leaders of the United States. They will have the opportunity to explore, and rejoice in, the flowering of ideas and their various forms of expression which came from a glorious time in our history.
2. Students will learn, practice and deepen research skills, including how to access, evaluate and synthesize information in various print and non-print forms.
3. Students use the writing process to produce an informational report which meets the standards for informational writing at their grade level.

4. Students develop their oral presentation skills as they prepare, deliver, and discuss oral reports on their research.

5. Students choose, prepare and present a multi-media enhancement of their information. In the process, they learn to value and respect their own, and their classmates' creative skills and ability to share them via poetry, fictional narrative, music, art, and/or creative movement/dance. They learn how various art and communication forms can enhance one another, even as they witness their teachers of these different "subjects" collaborate with one another, and with them, to develop an enriched product.

## **Strategies/Classroom Activities**

### Thematic, multi-disciplinary organization

This unit is designed to be taught by the Communications teacher working in close collaboration with teachers of Library/Media, Art, Music, Learning Support, and possibly also Physical Education. The more each of these teachers is able to adapt her/his classes to focus on the Harlem Renaissance, the stronger the experience will be for the students.

### Common definition of key terms

Especially if teachers are working collaboratively on this unit, it is important that they share understanding of key terms, and communicate these shared definitions to their students.

The Harlem Renaissance has been defined in various ways and of various lengths. For the purposes of this unit, the Harlem Renaissance will be understood to have been centered in the decade of the 1920s – the period following the bulk of the African American northern migration of and following World War II, and immediately preceding the 1929 Stock Market crash and the Great Depression.

This unit is based on an appreciation of the Harlem Renaissance as presented by Robert Schneider in the preface to his 2006 book, *African Americans in the Jazz Age*. (See "Sources" below.)

As new black communities in the urban North took shape, established institutions changed to meet the needs of the newcomers. The activities of

religious leaders, business owners, social workers, other professionals, and working people aimed at meeting the needs of these expanding black communities. Institutions like the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Baptist Church, the Urban League, and the African American branches of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association expanded their activities during the 1920s.

Yet, the old problems persisted. Civil rights activists continued the fight against lynching, segregation, disfranchisement, economic oppression, and discrimination in the criminal-justice system. They mobilized against the Ku Klux Klan, which had been established in 1915 and attracted a growing following after World War I. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) consolidated its all-black leadership in this period and grew rapidly to over three hundred branches with one hundred thousand members by the early 1920s. Although hope for a postwar breakthrough in civil rights soon faltered, civil rights activists worked to improve race relations throughout the decade.

The 1920s also witnessed a public manifestation of emerging pride and national identity among African Americans. The dynamic Marcus Garvey movement emphasized entrepreneurship, solidarity with Africa, and self-help until its sharp decline mid-decade. Black poets, writers, and artists expressed the full range of emotions let loose by black people as they created new communities. Black intellectuals contributed to American life, especially in history and sociology. Musicians found a wide audience among listeners and dancers, and the popularity of jazz and the blues helped to undermine racial hostility. In baseball, thousands of fans attended Negro League games. African American achievement subverted racist myths about black inferiority, made African Americans feel proud of their heritage, and increased their self-confidence. For the first time, black creative artists found an audience among whites and inspired some to learn about African American culture.

### Teacher Preparation A: Getting into the Swing of Things

Some familiarity with the time and the major figures of the Harlem Renaissance is helpful. I found Robert Schneider's *African Americans in the Jazz Age* to be a highly readable, helpful introduction and summary. Jim Haskins' *The Harlem Renaissance* gives an excellent overview of the period and its major figures, in a format which invites both skimming for information, and more in-depth study of particular individuals and ideas, and is a book that our more confident readers also could find useful. For teachers with the time and inclination, Toni Morrison's novel

*Jazz*, and the music of the key musicians of the period (see Appendix D) can take you into the mood and excitement of this amazing time and place.

Films listed in the “Resources” section at the end of this unit are quick ways to get a sense of the period. Collaboration with Related Arts teachers can lead to excellent suggestions for other places to go to get an overview of the period and its significant participants, issues and products. The items in the “Resources” marked with a \*\* -- both those listed for students, and those for teachers – also provide quick and valuable information, graphics, and sound.

### Teacher Preparation B: Outside Resources

This unit gives teachers an opportunity to link up with community resources in ways that can build rich, long-term relationships for one’s school, as well as for individual students. At this writing, I am exploring promising working relationships with, and possible field trips related to, the August Wilson Center for African-American Culture, the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild, and Gateway to the Arts. Pittsburgh has an abundance of cultural history and organizations to explore for connections, including museums and local theater and music which can be watched for important opportunities to enrich and inform participation in this study.

### Setting the stage

Our students have very little sense of history, and of how one period of time builds upon and leads to others. Initial lessons will need both to excite and inspire students, and to give them a sense of where this period fits in to other events with which they are more familiar.

Both visual and audio accoutrements can help set the stage. Decorating the classroom with prints of art from the period, or from Bearden and others influenced by the period, and playing recordings of period music as students walk into the classroom, can let them know right away that they are in for something different. The “Resources” section that concludes this writing includes a significant number of on-line places in which to find printable art, playable music, and music and art readily available from the Carnegie Library.

I suggest prominently displaying a variety of books on the period and its key players. Your school Library/Media teacher, and the librarian at your local Carnegie Library branch, are invaluable resources in putting together this material. In addition, any teacher with a Carnegie Library card can request resources on line, and pick them

up at local Library branches. The “Resources” list that follows here is meant to be a guide to finding materials, as the Carnegie Library has all of these available to lend.

In addition, building an active and interactive Word Wall is essential for this unit. As they read and do their research, students should be encouraged/assigned to add words to a wall that the teacher begins (see Appendix E for some possible starter words). During the course of this unit the teacher can find ways to encourage student use of the Word Wall, and to assess student vocabulary development.

### The lessons

Introductory lessons will vary based on the resources available to the teacher and students. In those schools where Music and/or Art and/or Library/Media teachers are working with the Communications teachers, the first week should include lessons in each affected class focusing on that class’s role in developing the students’ Culminating Project. That said, for all students the first week should include the following.

#### a. Introduction to the unit’s learning goals, culminating project

Through visuals (classroom charts), handouts, and emails to parents, students will be given and will discuss:

1. Learning goals for the unit (see page 5 above and Appendix A below)
2. The unit’s Culminating Project (see Appendix I below)
3. The rubric for the Informational Report ([Click here](#))

#### b. Presentation and discussion of the role of setting in fiction

Using Lori Handeland’s essay “Setting” (Appendix G) and a short piece of fiction of the teacher’s choice, students discuss, note, and teacher charts the role of setting in fiction. For the purposes of this unit, I suggest the teacher reproduce for the students and/or read to them the first two or more chapters of Patricia McKissack’s *A Song for Harlem*. Using Handeland’s and McKissack’s work together, the teacher can help students understand setting and whet their appetites to learn about the Harlem Renaissance.

### c. Timeline and essence of Harlem Renaissance

During this first week it is important for students to get a sense of what the Harlem Renaissance was, and where it fits into history. Reading together an article such as the one presented here in Appendix H can help set the general framework, and can serve as a backdrop on which to begin building a list of Vocabulary words (some Tier 2 words are presented in Appendix E below).

These initial articles will list some of the key people of the Harlem Renaissance. At this point it will be important to have books and other representations of the work of these individuals available to students. A selection of books in the classroom could be augmented by other visuals, along with some initial explorations to electronic resources and/or to the school or Carnegie libraries.

As part of this work, the teacher should lead students in constructing a timeline which will put the Harlem Renaissance in perspective. I suggest starting by putting the 1920s on the center of a poster or whiteboard and then working forward to the current year, and backward the same number of years (at this writing, that would be ninety years before 1920, or 1830) and then visually representing the relative number of years between major events on both sides of the Harlem Renaissance. I suggest beginning with the key dates of events students already know something about, and adding to the timeline as students learn more. (This would mean making that 1920s decade into an insert.) For some important dates, see the Timeline in Appendix F below.

### d. Beginning the research

In the area of research the resource difference among our schools, and among the homes from which our children come, comes to the fore. Each teacher will have to assess in advance how best to organize and facilitate research for this unit. In schools where students have ready access to computers and on-line resources, an early visit to some of the sites in the “Sources” section below can be most helpful.

In schools where students have regular Library classes, or where the Library/Media teacher is available to be a resource person for this unit, students will have the tremendous advantage of working with a professionally-trained educator who can help guide them in their initial explorations as well as in their more focused research.

Where the Communications teacher is on her/his own in guiding this research, and has limited access to electronic resources, the teacher will have to provide some

initial materials to get students going. It is my hope that the double-starred items in the “Resources” listed below will help make this work easier.

For students who know that they want to focus on a writer, or a musician, or a visual artist, the lists of key figures in Appendices B, C and D below may be useful in organizing their initial research.

For all students, the teacher will provide guidelines for accessing and assessing information, such as those in Appendix J below. In addition, teachers will present to students tools for taking and organizing notes. A sample is included in Appendix K below.

e. Writing the Informative Essay

All students would benefit from a presentation of the PPS slideshow on writing an Informative Report (at [http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/14311061314171993/lib/14311061314171993/Writing%20PowerPoint%20Presentations/informational essay step by step sample.ppt#272,1,Slide 1](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/14311061314171993/lib/14311061314171993/Writing%20PowerPoint%20Presentations/informational%20essay%20step%20by%20step%20sample.ppt#272,1,Slide%201))

If the school’s resources do not allow for this, it would be helpful for the teacher to view the slideshow and to consider using some of its tools in a presentation to the students.

If the school is not using WriteTools, and/or if it is using Writers Workshop as developed in the America’s Choice schools (at this writing, the Accelerated Learning Academies), the teacher will present the writing elements as is the practice there.

Teachers at non-Writers Workshop schools may find it helpful to look at the process outlined for this writing in the current ELA Grade 7, Unit 3 on pages 26-34 (at [http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/143110127103415203/lib/143110127103415203/ELA\\_Grade\\_7\\_Unit\\_3\\_Final.doc](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/143110127103415203/lib/143110127103415203/ELA_Grade_7_Unit_3_Final.doc) )

All teachers will use the PPS rubric for Informative Writing ([http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/14311061314171993/lib/14311061314171993/Portfolio%20Rubrics%206-12/informative\\_rubric.doc](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/14311061314171993/lib/14311061314171993/Portfolio%20Rubrics%206-12/informative_rubric.doc)). This rubric can be modified to meet the specific needs of each class. It should be presented to the students early in the writing process, and referenced in writing lessons so as to become a meaningful tool for the students.

However teachers organizing their Writing Process for this essay, these lessons will form the bulk of the students' work during the middle two weeks of this unit. As the students write, they will be able to develop focused needs for additional research.

f. Continuing the research

During the process of writing their reports, students will discover a need for and an interest in learning more about their subject people. This process will make additional trips to the computer lab and/or library productive and focused. If it is possible to organize field trips and/or guest presenters, the more the teacher can build on blossoming student interests, the more productive those will be.

g. Work on the "student choice" elements

Each student should begin working on the visual and oral aspects of her/his culminating project parallel with the report writing. Each of these projects can reinforce and give additional impetus and meaning to the other. Once again, how this is done will depend on school resources and what type of collaboration, if any, is possible with other teachers.

As presented in the "Culminating Project" outline, much of the work for this part of the student's finished project will be done at home. Teachers will need a way to help students assess how their work is developing and what they need. Appendix L presents one possible report form teachers could use with students to help them report on their progress and get homework credit for what they are doing.

It will be important for teachers to set limits at the start on the kinds of resources the school can provide to help students with their projects. For example, it may or may not be possible for students to borrow art supplies and/or recordable CDs to use in after-school programs that help with homework, or even at home.

h. Presenting the finished products

The teacher will have to decide whether the presentation of finished products will be limited to classmates in a particular class, to a gathering of all students at this grade level, or to a larger group. For example, in K-8 schools teachers may want to consider having the students present younger students a Living Wax Museum where the 7<sup>th</sup>-graders dress like and give short oral presentations about their focus person to younger students who "visit" their "museum."

Students should be held accountable for their listening skills as well as their presentations as their classmates present. The PPS Speaking/Performance Rubric is a useful tool which can be modified to meet particular needs, including listening skills: [http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/14311061314171993/lib/14311061314171993/Portfolio%20Rubrics%206-12/speech\\_rubric.doc](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/14311061314171993/lib/14311061314171993/Portfolio%20Rubrics%206-12/speech_rubric.doc).

### Homework

At this writing, our district is reviewing and restructuring our approach to homework. Teachers continue to develop their individual approaches to homework based on student need and experience. This unit provides opportunities for a flexible approach to homework, including assigning parts of the writing process, vocabulary development, and multi-media aspects of the final product.

### Differentiation and group work

Because of the range of materials students will be using for their research, and the choice students have as to their research subjects, as well as the individual culminating project each student may choose, differentiation is built in. Teacher assignments of groups, and work with individual students, should be based on ongoing assessment of student need and potential. This will keep the teacher busy, but, it is hoped, with students who have “bought in” to the work.

### Evaluating the students’ work

The culminating projects will be the major source of grades for this unit. Each comes with a rubric and/or a list of expected elements which the teacher can modify into grades as fits the particular classroom needs. In addition, as the teacher assigns aspects of this work as homework or in-class assignments (for example, adding words and/or definitions and/or sentences to the Word Wall) the teacher will have additional means of assessing how students are progressing, and grading their work.

### Evaluating this unit

It is hoped that this unit is a live organism that can be modified and developed as it is used. To this end, I ask that teachers’ contact me with feedback, if they are willing. I will be happy to respond to teachers’ concerns and questions, criticisms and suggestions. Please contact me at [kdawson1@pghboe.net](mailto:kdawson1@pghboe.net).

## Appendix A

### **Learning Objectives: Standards/Assessment Anchors** Grades 7-8

This unit is designed to meet the Pennsylvania Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Standards as defined for 7th-grade Core Communications Curriculum, Current Unit 3. These are:

- 1.2.8.A Read and understand essential content of informational texts.
- 1.3.8.B Analyze the use of setting by an author.
- 1.4.8.B Write multi-paragraph informational and narrative pieces.
- 1.6.8.C Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
- 1.6.8.F Use media for learning purposes.
- 1.8.8.A Select and refine a topic for research.
- 1.8.8.B Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.
- 1.8.8.C Organize, summarize and present the main ideas from research.

In addition, this Unit will address the following PSSA Eligible Content Alignment:

R7.A.2.3.2 Cite evidence from text to support generalizations.

R7.B.1.1.1. Interpret, compare, describe, analyze, and/or evaluate setting within fiction and non-fiction texts.

R7.B.1.2.1 Interpret, compare, describe, analyze, and/or evaluate connections between texts.

R7.B.3.1.1 Interpret, describe, and/or analyze the use of facts and opinions to make a point or construct an argument in nonfiction text.

Appendix B

**Poets and Writers**

Some Poets of the Harlem Renaissance

Gwendolyn Bennett

Arna Bontemps

Sterling Brown

Countee Cullen

Jessie Redmon Fauset

Langston Hughes

Georgia Douglas Johnson

Helene Johnson

James Weldon Johnson

Alain LeRoy Locke

Claude McKay

Some Other Writers of the Harlem Renaissance

W.E.B. DuBois

Marcus Garvey

Zora Neale Hurston

Nella Larsen

Richard Bruce Nugent

Jean Toomer

Wallace Thurman

Appendix C

**Some Artists of the Harlem Renaissance**

Richmond Barthé

Aaron Douglas

Palmer Hayden

Malvin Gray Johnson

Sargent Claude Johnson

William H. Johnson

Lois Mailou Jones

Archibald J. Motley, Jr.

Augusta Savage

James Van Der Zee

Hale Aspacio Woodruff

See also: Artists profoundly influenced by Harlem Renaissance

Charles H. Alston

Romare Bearden

Jacob Lawrence

Appendix D

**Some Musicians of the Harlem Renaissance**

Louis Armstrong

Josephine Baker

Eubie Black

Edward Kennedy Ellington

Dizzy Gillespie

Billie Holiday

Charlie Parker

Ma Rainey

Paul Robeson

Bessie Smith

Ethel Waters

See/hear also:

Branford Marsalis tribute to Romare Bearden

## Appendix E

### **Tier Two vocabulary words**

As they make their way through this unit, teachers and students together will create active lists of tier-two words to explore and to use. Among them the following almost certainly will present themselves:

Renaissance

art

philosophy

Garveyism

expatriate

migration

entrepreneurship

culture

Jazz

milestone

## Appendix F

### **A Timeline: Some Significant Events**

1863	Emancipation Proclamation declares most slaves free
1865	Civil War ends with surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee President Lincoln assassinated Thirteenth Amendment to U.S. Constitution outlaws slavery
Mid 1860s- 1890s	Reconstruction: new freedoms, new setbacks
1866	Ku Klux Klan formed in Pulaski, Tennessee
1868	Fourteenth Amendment provides full citizenship rights to black people
1870	Fifteenth Amendment gives vote to all men, including former slaves
1900	Booker T. Washington helps found National Negro Business League
1902 singer,	Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, considered the earliest professional black Tours Missouri where she first hears the blues
1903	W.E.B. Du Bois publishes Souls of Black Folk
1909	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League are founded
1915	“Great Migration” of blacks from South to North begins
1916 Association movement	Marcus M. Garvey moves the Universal Negro Improvement from Jamaica to New York and soon builds the largest mass in African American history
1917	United States enters World War I

- 1918 39 blacks, 11 whites killed in East St. Louis, IL race riots  
Black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux produces Birthright
- 1919 Claude McKay publishes his poem “If We Must Die”  
World War I ends  
25 blacks, 15 whites killed in Chicago race riot  
Jessie Fauset becomes literary editor of NAACP magazine Crisis
- 1920 Nineteenth Amendment ratified giving women right to vote  
National Negro Baseball League formed in Kansas City
- 1921 Singer Ethel Waters gives black-owned Pace Phonograph Company its  
first hit record, “Down Home Blues”
- 1922 Charles S. Johnson becomes editor of Opportunity (1922-28)
- 1923 National Urban League forms its magazine, Opportunity, and helps  
promote Harlem Renaissance
- Jazz musician Fletcher Henderson forms his New York band and helps  
launch “Big Band” movement
- in Musician Duke Ellington and his group open at the Lafayette Theater  
Harlem
- 1924 Zora Neale Hurston publishes first short stories (in Opportunity  
magazine)
- 1925 Publication of Alain Locke’s The New Negro signals for many the  
emergence of the Harlem Renaissance
- Weary Publication of Langston Hughes’s first collection of poems, The  
Blues
- 1926 Wallace Thurman and other Harlem Renaissance writers launch  
the magazine Fire!!
- 1928 Claude McKay’s Home to Harlem becomes the first novel by a  
Harlem writer to reach best-seller lists
- 1929 Stock Market crash signals start of the Great Depression of the 1930s

- 1942 United States enters World War II
- 1954 U.S. Supreme Court outlaws segregated public schools (Brown v. Board of Education)
- 1955 Montgomery bus boycott (Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- 1960 Black students in Greensboro, North Carolina sit in at segregated lunch counters beginning national student civil rights movement; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) begins
- 1963 National March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom; Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech
- 1964 Civil Rights Act outlaws discrimination in public accommodations and Employment  
Malcolm X forms Organization of African American Unity
- 1965 Congress passes Voting Rights Act  
Malcolm X assassinated
- 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated
- 2008 Barack Obama becomes first African American to be elected U.S. president

## Setting

By Lori Handeland

**Setting.** So what, you say. That's the least of my worries as a reader.

**No problem.**

**But have you ever considered that a setting can influence an entire novel and the readers' response to that novel? If the author gets it right-- describes the setting so brilliantly the reader can picture it without ever having been there--poof! Magic occurs. The reader is in the midst of the setting and therefore in the midst of the story. But if you get it wrong--oh, oh--the reader's suspension of disbelief is lost. How many times have you thrown aside a book in disgust because the writer obviously had never been to the place described, and you had?**

Consider the following points:

- 1. *The setting can bring unity to a story* with many sub-plots, viewpoints, or themes. A physical description of the familiar backdrop of setting will reassure the reader there is one constant in the book.**
- 2. *The setting can advance the plot*. By focusing on changes in the setting, the plot can move forward. For instance, a tornado blows down the heroine's house, forcing her to move in with her brother and his roommate--the man she's never stopped loving.**
- 3. *Setting can enhance tension* by darkening the mood of the story (it was a dark and stormy night), introducing a threatening element (oh no, the stairs to the basement have just collapsed), creating a mystery (is the house really haunted?), overturning previous character expectations (she wasn't the typical southern belle), or demanding immediate action on the part of a character (there's a mud slide on the way, we'd better get off this hill).**
- 4. *Setting can affect character*. Where we live shapes who we are. Different areas of the country have different dialects, viewpoints, and expectations. Different countries and time periods even more so. For an example, look at the western--whether the novel is set**

- in the present or the past, the characters are influenced by the western setting. The reader expects a certain type of character within that setting. Even if you go against type and create a character opposite of what is usually found there, the difference itself characterizes. Why is that person different than everyone else in a particular setting? There must be a reason, and that reason should be a prime focus in your characterization. The setting can affect a change upon a character. This is often illustrated in the works of Jack London--classics of the man against nature theme. The central character grows, changes, and evolves as he grapples with nature.
5. ***Setting can help shape your story idea.*** Many writers start with a setting they like and advance from there. For instance, an interest in Alaska would lead to research on that state. For a historical writer that research could lead to the most volatile period in recent history, the Gold Rush. From there, the writer can do more research and discover countless plots to set during that period.
  6. ***Setting can create atmosphere and mood.*** From the very outset of your novel, use the setting to clue the reader into the atmosphere for each scene. Gothic novels are very good at using setting to create a certain mood. Authors use a bright, cheery setting to set a happy mood, or to contrast the deep secrets within a tortured hero. The atmosphere created at the outset can be a unifying strand throughout the middle of a book and straight into the ending.

#### Further Reading:

- ***Setting*** by Jack Bickham-Writers Digest Books: The Elements of Fiction Writing Series

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## Appendix H

### **An Introductions to the Harlem Renaissance**

#### *Harlem Renaissance*

From Encarta

#### I. Introduction

Harlem Renaissance, an African American cultural movement of the 1920s and early 1930s that was centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Various known as the New Negro movement, the New Negro Renaissance, and the Negro Renaissance, the movement emerged toward the end of World War I in 1918, blossomed in the mid- to late 1920s, and then faded in the mid-1930s. The Harlem Renaissance marked the first time that mainstream publishers and critics took African American literature seriously and that African American literature and arts attracted significant attention from the nation at large. Although it was primarily a literary movement, it was closely related to developments in African American music, theater, art, and politics.

#### II. Beginnings

The Harlem Renaissance emerged amid social and intellectual upheaval in the African American community in the early 20th century. Several factors laid the groundwork for the movement. A black middle class had developed by the turn of the century, fostered by increased education and employment opportunities following the American Civil War (1861-1865). During a phenomenon known as the Great Migration, hundreds of thousands of black Americans moved from an economically depressed rural South to industrial cities of the North to take advantage of the employment opportunities created by World War I. As more and more educated and socially conscious blacks settled in New York's neighborhood of Harlem, it developed into the political and cultural center of black America. Equally important, during the 1910s a new political agenda advocating racial equality arose in the African American community, particularly in its growing middle class. Championing the agenda were black historian and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was founded in 1909 to advance the rights of blacks. This agenda was also reflected in the efforts

of Jamaican-born black nationalist Marcus Garvey, whose “Back to Africa” movement inspired racial pride among blacks in the United States.

African American literature and arts had begun a steady development just before the turn of the century. In the performing arts, black musical theater featured such accomplished artists as songwriter Bob Cole and composer J. Rosamond Johnson, brother of writer James Weldon Johnson. Jazz and blues music moved with black populations from the South and Midwest into the bars and cabarets of Harlem. In literature, the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar and the fiction of Charles W. Chesnutt in the late 1890s were among the earliest works of African Americans to receive national recognition. By the end of World War I the fiction of James Weldon Johnson and the poetry of Claude McKay anticipated the literature that would follow in the 1920s by describing the reality of black life in America and the struggle for racial identity.

In the early 1920s three works signaled the new creative energy in African American literature. McKay’s volume of poetry, *Harlem Shadows* (1922), became one of the first works by a black writer to be published by a mainstream, national publisher (Harcourt, Brace and Company). *Cane* (1923), by Jean Toomer, was an experimental novel that combined poetry and prose in documenting the life of American blacks in the rural South and urban North. Finally, *There Is Confusion* (1924), the first novel by writer and editor Jessie Fauset, depicted middle-class life among black Americans from a woman’s perspective.

With these early works as the foundation, three events between 1924 and 1926 launched the Harlem Renaissance. First, on March 21, 1924, Charles S. Johnson of the National Urban League hosted a dinner to recognize the new literary talent in the black community and to introduce the young writers to New York’s white literary establishment. (The National Urban League was founded in 1910 to help black Americans address the economic and social problems they encountered as they resettled in the urban North.) As a result of this dinner, *The Survey Graphic*, a magazine of social analysis and criticism that was interested in cultural pluralism, produced a Harlem issue in March 1925. Devoted to defining the aesthetic of black literature and art, the Harlem issue featured work by black writers and was edited by black philosopher and literary scholar Alain Leroy Locke. The second event was the publication of *Nigger Heaven* (1926) by white novelist Carl Van Vechten. The book was a spectacularly popular exposé of Harlem life. Although the book offended some members of the black community, its coverage of both the elite and the baser side of Harlem helped create a “Negro vogue” that drew thousands of sophisticated New Yorkers, black and white, to Harlem’s exotic and exciting nightlife and stimulated a national market for African American literature and music. Finally, in the autumn of

1926 a group of young black writers produced *Fire!!*, their own literary magazine. With *Fire!!* a new generation of young writers and artists, including Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, and Zora Neale Hurston, took ownership of the literary Renaissance.

### III. Characteristics

No common literary style or political ideology defined the Harlem Renaissance. What united participants was their sense of taking part in a common endeavor and their commitment to giving artistic expression to the African American experience. Some common themes existed, such as an interest in the roots of the 20th-century African American experience in Africa and the American South, and a strong sense of racial pride and desire for social and political equality. But the most characteristic aspect of the Harlem Renaissance was the diversity of its expression. From the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s, some 16 black writers published more than 50 volumes of poetry and fiction, while dozens of other African American artists made their mark in painting, music, and theater.

The diverse literary expression of the Harlem Renaissance ranged from Langston Hughes's weaving of the rhythms of African American music into his poems of ghetto life, as in *The Weary Blues* (1926), to Claude McKay's use of the sonnet form as the vehicle for his impassioned poems attacking racial violence, as in "If We Must Die" (1919). McKay also presented glimpses of the glamour and the grit of Harlem life in *Harlem Shadows*. Countee Cullen used both African and European images to explore the African roots of black American life. In the poem "Heritage" (1925), for example, Cullen discusses being both a Christian and an African, yet not belonging fully to either tradition. *Quicksand* (1928), by novelist Nella Larsen, offered a powerful psychological study of an African American woman's loss of identity, while Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) used folk life of the black rural south to create a brilliant study of race and gender in which a woman finds her true identity.

Diversity and experimentation also flourished in the performing arts and were reflected in the blues singing of Bessie Smith and in jazz music. Jazz ranged from the marriage of blues and ragtime by pianist Jelly Roll Morton to the instrumentation of bandleader Louis Armstrong and the orchestration of composer Duke Ellington. Artist Aaron Douglas adopted a deliberately "primitive" style and incorporated African images in his paintings and illustrations.

The Harlem Renaissance appealed to a mixed audience. The literature appealed to the African American middle class and to the white book-buying public.

Such magazines as *The Crisis*, a monthly journal of the NAACP, and *Opportunity*, an official publication of the Urban League, employed Harlem Renaissance writers on their editorial staff; published poetry and short stories by black writers; and promoted African American literature through articles, reviews, and annual literary prizes. As important as these literary outlets were, however, the Renaissance relied heavily on white publishing houses and white-owned magazines. In fact, a major accomplishment of the Renaissance was to push open the door to mainstream white periodicals and publishing houses, although the relationship between the Renaissance writers and white publishers and audiences created some controversy. While most African American critics strongly supported the relationship, Du Bois and others were sharply critical and accused Renaissance writers of reinforcing negative African American stereotypes. Langston Hughes spoke for most of the writers and artists when he wrote in his essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926) that black artists intended to express themselves freely, no matter what the black public or white public thought.

African American musicians and other performers also played to mixed audiences. Harlem’s cabarets attracted both Harlem residents and white New Yorkers seeking out Harlem nightlife. Harlem’s famous Cotton Club carried this to an extreme, by providing black entertainment for exclusively white audiences. Ultimately, the more successful black musicians and entertainers, who appealed to a mainstream audience, moved their performances downtown.

#### IV. Ending and Influence

A number of factors contributed to the decline of the Harlem Renaissance in the mid-1930s. The Great Depression of the 1930s increased the economic pressure on all sectors of life. Organizations such as the NAACP and Urban League, which had actively promoted the Renaissance in the 1920s, shifted their interests to economic and social issues in the 1930s. Many influential black writers and literary promoters, including Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Charles S. Johnson, and Du Bois, left New York City in the early 1930s. Finally, a riot in Harlem in 1935—set off in part by the growing economic hardship of the Depression and mounting tension between the black community and the white shop-owners in Harlem who profited from that community—shattered the notion of Harlem as the “Mecca” of the New Negro. In spite of these problems the Renaissance did not disappear overnight. Almost one-third of the books published during the Renaissance appeared after 1929. In the last analysis, the Harlem Renaissance ended when most of those associated with it left Harlem or stopped writing, while new young artists who appeared in the 1930s and 1940s never associated with the movement.

The Harlem Renaissance changed forever the dynamics of African American arts and literature in the United States. The writers that followed in the 1930s and 1940s found that publishers and the public were more open to African American literature than they had been at the beginning of the century. Furthermore, the existence of the body of African American literature from the Renaissance inspired writers such as Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright to pursue literary careers in the late 1930s and the 1940s. The outpouring of African American literature of the 1980s and 1990s by such writers as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison also had its roots in the writing of the Harlem Renaissance. The influence of the Harlem Renaissance was not confined to the United States. Writers McKay, Hughes, and Cullen, actor and musician Paul Robeson, dancer Josephine Baker, and others traveled to Europe and attained a popularity abroad that rivaled or surpassed what they achieved in the United States. South African writer Peter Abrahams cited his youthful discovery of the Harlem Renaissance anthology, *The New Negro* (1925), as the event that turned him toward a career as a writer. For thousands of blacks around the world, the Harlem Renaissance was proof that the white race did not hold a monopoly on literature and culture.

From Encarta online:

[http://encarta.msn.com/text\\_761566483\\_\\_\\_0/Harlem\\_Renaissance.html](http://encarta.msn.com/text_761566483___0/Harlem_Renaissance.html)

## REPORT OF INFORMATION (RESEARCH)

HANDOUT

### Culminating Assignment

Over the next three weeks, we will read, write, and talk about setting and how setting can impact the lives of people. We will read about a particular time and development in the history of our country called the Harlem Renaissance. Each student will select a particular person who played a role in the Harlem Renaissance to research, and will write an Informative Report on that person. We will examine how to write an effective research report, as well as the structure and techniques used to construct an informational essay.

Your culminating project for this unit will have two parts.

**Part 1.** An Informative Report on the person of your choice.

**Part 2.** Your choice of one of the following:

- a. **Poster/collage/sculpture:** Create a pictorial representation of what life was like during the Harlem Renaissance, in the style of the artist you studied
- b. **Music presentation:** Create and present a recording of music from the musician you have researched, with an oral presentation of information about that person.
- c. **Oral report on an author:** You will select poems or excerpts from the writings of the person you have researched and present them orally to the class, along with information on your writer.

### Part 1. A Research Report

50 points

Write a Research Report which informs the reader about the person you have researched, including important aspects of that person's life and his/her contributions to our culture. Be sure to use what you have learned about the structure of informative writing – specifically research reports—as you put your report together.

Once you've decided on your person, think through the possible order of your essay, what your topic/thesis statement will be, and what details you wish to include from your research. After you create this outline, you will share with partners and get feedback.

Next you'll write a draft and have it reviewed by a peer before you revise it. Then you'll have your draft edited by a peer and revise the draft again before handing it in.

Please use your notes from our conversations, the charts we have created in class, and your Reader's/Writer's Notebook to help you with your writing.

Complete the informational writing piece on your own using the Write Tools multi-paragraph (Click here) graphic organizer and the oral history using the PPS narrative rubric. Remember that both are possible portfolio pieces; and therefore, be sure to follow the writing process.

## **Part 2. Student's Choice**

50 points

You can choose one of the following as the second section of your culminating project. This part of your culminating project may be completed before or in conjunction with the research report. As this part of the piece will be done primarily at home, to help you decide which one you should do, consider the following: what you enjoy doing, what resources you have available, and what you can do well independently. Be sure to check the criteria charts below to guide your work.

- a. **If you are researching an artist:** Poster/collage/sculpture: Create a pictorial representation of what life was like during the Harlem Renaissance, in the style of the artist you studied
- b. **If you are researching a musician:** Music presentation: Create and present a recording of music from the musician you have researched, with an oral presentation of information about that person.
- c. **If you are researching a writer:** Oral report on an author: You will select poems or excerpts from the writings of the person you have researched and present them orally to the class, along with information on your writer.

### **Poster/Collage/Sculpture**

- Focuses on the significant contributions of your artist
- Done in the style of your artist
- Includes a written introduction with basic information about your artist
- Contains a title

### **Music presentation**

- Recorded selections from your artist ready to play on a CD or tape

- Includes an oral introduction from you with basic information about the musician

### **Oral report on an author**

- Written or typed excerpts from your author's work are given to the teacher to reproduce for the class before your presentation
- Oral presentation includes an introduction by you about your writer
- Oral presentation includes your reading of selections from your author

## **Appendix J**

### **Evaluating Sources**

When gathering sources for a research paper, it is important to consider whether or not the sources are reliable. This is especially true for sources found on the Internet, since anyone is free to publish on the Internet. Below are a few questions you'll want to consider when evaluating Internet sources:

#### **1. Authorship**

Who is the author?

Is the author qualified to write on the subject?

Determine this by

Examining the author's background, such as:

Author's Name

Author's Title or Position - investigate

Author's Organizational Affiliation

Author's Contact Information

#### **2. Accuracy**

Is the information complete and correct?

Is there a bibliography or list of the works the author cited for his/her information?

Determine this by

Checking for red flags, such as:  
Misspellings  
Outrageous or Unsupported “Facts”  
The Freedom for Readers to Change or Add to the Article  
Expert Information with no Cited Sources

### 3. Purpose

Why was this source created?  
Is the author trying to make money or sell a product?  
Is the source biased or fair in his/her presentation of information?  
Who is the intended audience?

Determine this by

Checking for red flags, such as:  
Generalizations  
Stereotypes  
Persuasive Language

## Appendix K

### Using Sources: Taking Notes

**Topic** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtopic** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **If a book:**

Place of publication \_\_\_\_\_

Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

Page number(s)

\_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix L**

**Report on the Status of My Project**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My focus person from the Harlem Renaissance is \_\_\_\_\_

He/she is a \_\_\_\_\_ writer \_\_\_\_\_ musician \_\_\_\_\_ painter \_\_\_\_\_  
sculptor

My presentation will be (choose one, fill out the information):

<p>_____ An oral presentation of some of the author's writings and life. These writings include:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ I have the information I need                      _____ I need more information</p>
--

**Or:**

<p>_____ A painting or sculpture in the style of my artist, with information about him/her</p> <p>_____ I have the information I need                      _____ I need more information</p>
--

**Or:**

\_\_\_\_\_ A recording of music from this musician, with information about him/her

\_\_\_\_\_ I have the information I need

\_\_\_\_\_ I need more information

***My next steps and how I plan to do them:***

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### **Resources**

**Note:** *The body of literature and resources on the Harlem Renaissance grows constantly. The material listed below is limited to resources used by the author of this unit, nearly all of which were borrowed from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.*

#### ***Anthologies, commentaries and background for teachers' use***

*Anderson, Jervis. This was Harlem: a cultural portrait, 1900-1950. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982. A rich (350-page plus notes and bibliography) portal to the years that led up to, included, and followed the Harlem Renaissance. Anderson was a staff writer for the New Yorker who describes Harlem, at its peak, as "the exciting metropolis to which almost all blacks once dreamed of coming – in search of refuge, opportunity, gaiety, a wider freedom, and a brighter future." Detailed index; notes lead reader to many sources.*

*Andrews, William L., and Frances Smith Foster, Trudier Harris. Oxford companion to African American literature. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Extensive, well-researched, well-written information on African American authors from the beginning through the time of publication.*

*Bearden, Romare. The art of Romare Bearden. Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2003. This 334-page, coffee-table-size includes reproductions of hundreds of Bearden's creations, many photographs of the artist, a comprehensive review of his life and work (by Ruth Fine, the Gallery's Curator of Special Projects in Modern Art), five essays on Bearden and his work, a chronological list of the works in the exhibition, and extensive notes and a bibliography invaluable for anyone wishing to*

*pursue a study of the artist, his work and his times. Indexed (making it easy to find, for example, his works with "Pittsburgh" in the title.)*

*Fairclough, Adam. Better day coming: blacks and equality, 1890-2000. New York: Viking, 2001. From Vernon Fords' Booklist review: Fairclough, a history professor in England, offers an excellent overview of the historical events that built the modern civil rights movement in the U.S., from the post-Reconstruction era to the present. He starts with the antilynching campaign of Ida B. Wells and then explores the often examined struggle for national leadership between the accommodationist Booker T. Washington and the integrationist W. E. B. DuBois." And more. First seven chapters deal with the period from the end of Reconstruction through "the radical thirties." Indexed; extensive bibliographic notes.*

*Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, ed. Words of fire: an anthology of African-American feminist thought. New York: The New Press, 1995. An exciting and unique compilation. For purposes of this unit, and emphasis on Chapter One ("Beginnings: in defense of our race and sex, 1831-1900") and Chapter Two ("Triumph and tribulation: defining black womanhood, 1920-1957").*

*\*\*Haskins, Jim. The Harlem Renaissance: not an event, but a process. Brookfield, CT: The Milbrook Press, 1996. One of the two best introductions to and summaries of the Harlem Renaissance that I have come across. Good background reading for anyone attempting to understand this period in its full scope and significance. Chapters: "The Harlem Renaissance: Not an Event but a Process; Harlem, the Making of the "Negro Capital of the World"; Music, Dance and Musical Theater; Poetry and Fiction; Painters and Sculptors; Harlem Renaissance – the End? The Source Notes and Bibliography are limited because of the relatively early date of publication, but still useful. Indexed.*

*Henkes, Robert. The art of Black American women: works of twenty-four artists of the twentieth century. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland & Company, Inc. 1993. In the essays on the 24 women whose work is reproduced and discussed in this book, the author has "attempted to discuss the nature of each artist's work rather than the artist herself, for it is the work that best reveals the integrity and vision of the artist." Among the featured artists Lois Mailou Jones (22 pages) stands out as the major representative of the Harlem Renaissance. The influence of the Renaissance runs through many stories, each of which ends with a section on "Career Highlights" with information from date of birth through education, awards, exhibitions, and a bibliography. Most of the many representations of the artists' work are black-and-white photos; thirteen color photos are included. Indexed.*

*Hurston, Zora Neale. Dust tracks on a road. Autobiography. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. Forward by Maya Angelou; Louis Henry Gates, series editor. Amazon.com description: First published in 1942 at the height of her popularity, Dust Tracks on a Road is Zora Neale Hurston's candid, funny, bold, and poignant autobiography, an imaginative and exuberant account of her rise from childhood*

*poverty in the rural South to a prominent place among the leading artists and intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance. As compelling as her acclaimed fiction, Hurston's very personal literary self-portrait offers a revealing, often audacious glimpse into the life—public and private—of an extraordinary artist, anthropologist, chronicler, and champion of the black experience in America. Full of the wit and wisdom of a proud, spirited woman who started off low and climbed high, Dust Tracks on a Road is a rare treasure from one of literature's most cherished voices.*

*Kirschke, Amy Helene. Aaron Douglas: art, race, and the Harlem Renaissance. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995. From the author's preface: "Aaron Douglas was the first African-American artist to explore modernism and to incorporate African art into his work. Douglas rose from humble origins to become an important leader in African-American art and the most significant visual artist of the Harlem Renaissance. . . Douglas saw the Renaissance as a unique cultural movement, a 'magic moment in history,' whose authenticity as an expression of African-American culture was never in question despite the involvement of white patrons." In telling Douglas's story, and discussing the evolution of his art, this author also discusses the contemporary discussions and debates around such issues as the role of white patrons of black artists, and "racial identity" as an issue for artists. This 166-page book is amply annotated and includes an extensive bibliography and index; black and white prints of 86 works of art, mostly Douglas's but some from other artists, make this book an excellent resource.*

*Kisselkoff, Jeff. You must remember this: an oral history of Manhattan from the 1890's to World War II . San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989. From Publishers Weekly: "In his first book, Manhattan journalist Kisseloff offers a torrent of verbatim recollections by long-time New Yorkers whose memories remain green, "as time goes by." The past emerges here not as history but as lived life in the vivid descriptions of immigrants and their descendants, who populated the widely varied sections of the metropolis. Hardly a melting pot, the city was divided into ethnic enclaves--Jewish, Chinese, Irish, German--each with an individual character. Mostly poor and uneducated, these new Americans were blessed with certain survival techniques, including a healthy sense of humor. There are also reminiscences by privileged citizens, notably the 1920s society flappers, and anecdotes about famous Manhattanites like Eugene O'Neill, Gene Tunney and Billie Holiday. Kisseloff provides graphic descriptions of neighborhoods, then and now, and the origins of such place names as Hell's Kitchen, Murray Hill, Greenwich Village et al. But the lusty, sad, startling, funny, bawdy--even cruel--stories are so immediate one becomes convinced anew that New York is, as the song has it, a wonderful town. Photos."*

*Lewis, David Levering. When Harlem was in vogue. New York: Penguin Books, 1997. From book jacket: "The decade and a half that followed World War I was a time of tremendous optimism in Harlem. It was a time when Langston Hughes, Eubie Blake, Marcus Garvey, Zora Neale Hurston, Paul Robeson, and countless others*

*made their indelible mark on the landscape of American culture." "David Levering Lewis makes us feel the excitement of the times as he recaptures the intoxicating hope that black Americans could now create important art - and so at last compel the nation to recognize their equality." In his original Preface he writes, "the Harlem Renaissance reveals itself to be an elitist response on the part of a tiny group of mostly second-generation, college-educated, and generally affluent Afro-Americans – a response, first, to the increasingly raw racism of the times, second, to the frightening Black Zionism of the Garveyites, and, finally, to the remote, but no less frightening, appeal of Marxism." Well indexed, documented.*

*Long, Richard A. and Eugenia W. Collier, eds. Afro-American writing: an anthology of prose and poetry. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985. For purposes of this unit, a focus on Part II (Civil War to World War I) and Part III (World War I to World War II). Excellent, inclusive anthology of key writers, with comments on each.*

*Morrison, Toni. Jazz. New York: Plume Books, 1992. With Toni Morrison's unique and stimulating insight, this novel tells "the story of Joe Trace, a door-to-door salesman in his 50s, his mentally unstable wife, and his 18-year-old lover. Set in Harlem in the 1920s, the story captures the rhythms of the city and the bittersweet mood of African American life at a moment in our history we assumed we understood." (notes from Carnegie Library website) Publishers Weekly summarizes: "tells the story of three intersecting tragic lives, and adroitly uses the motif of jazz to make palpable the feel and excitement of Harlem in the 1920s."*

*\*\*Schneider, Mark Robert. African Americans in the jazz age: a decade of struggle and promise. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. Perhaps the single most important book to read to get a sense of the setting that produced and was changed by the artists and political figures of this period. From Jill Watts, back cover: the book is "a compelling portrait of the complexities of African-American life and the fight for equal rights during the decade of the 1920s. The first complete synthesis of one of the most critical eras in African-American history." Contents: Introduction, what the world war wrought -- Black hopes, white fears, red summer -- Migrants north -- Changing institutions in changing times -- Civil rights -- Expressions of pride. Chronology, bibliography, index; 51 pages of interesting and useful documents.*

*Trotter, Joe William, Jr. The African American Experience. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. My favorite one-volume overview history of African Americans in the United States. Excellent resource for information on this and other topics; the best "chronology" I've found. Most of my "timeline" information comes from this book. Of particular interest for this unit: Chapter 16: "Rise of the 'New Negro'" (as well as the preceding Chapter 15, "The Great Migration" and the following Chapter 17, "The Old Deal Continues" on the Great*

*Depression. Intricately indexed, extraordinarily noted, exceptionally rich and useful bibliography.*

*Wideman, John Edgar, ed. My soul has grown deep: classics of early African-American literature. Philadelphia/London: Running Press, 2001. For purposes of this unit, a focus on extensive selections of work by Frederick Douglass, Nat Love, Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, W.E.B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson, and Paul Laurence Dunbar.*

*Wilson, August. Ma Rainey's Black Bottom. New York: Theatre Communications Group; St. Paul, MN : Distributed to the book trade by Consortium Book Sales and Distribution, 2007. Set in 1927 Chicago, consciously reflecting the influence of the contemporaneous Harlem Renaissance, both in subject matter and in literary style.*

*Wintz, Cary D., ed. Harlem speaks: a living history of the Harlem Renaissance. Naperville, Il: Sourcebooks; 2007. A history of the Harlem Renaissance, with biographies of six poets, five musicians, four visual and performing artists, and six political/social leaders. Includes a CD with voices of Hurston, Hughes, McKay, Wright, Ellington, Lawrence, Waters, Baker, and Smith, as well as a performance by Eubie Blake.*

*Wirth, Thomas. The gay rebel of the Harlem Renaissance: the selected works of Richard Bruce Nugent. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.*

### ***For students: biographies, collections, commentaries, creations***

*\*\*African-American Art: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Masterworks, III. New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1996. This guide to the 1996 exhibit is an invaluable introduction to and overview of the visual art of African American artists many of whom were involved in the Harlem Renaissance. Forty-one pages of full-color photos of paintings, drawings, sculpture and photographs include captioned quotes from the artists. Twenty-eight short biographies of the artists are included. The "Foreword" presents an invaluable overview of the place of the visual arts in the Harlem Renaissance, along with the challenges and responses faced by these artists. Among the featured artists are Charles Alston, Richmond Barthe, Romare Bearden, Beauford Delaney, Joseph Delany, Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence, Prentice Polk, Augusta Savage, Henry Ossawa Tanner, James Van Der Zee, and Hale Woodruff..*

*Battle, Thomas C. and Donna M. Wells, editors. Legacy: treasures of black history. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2006. Preface by John Hope Franklin. Publisher notes, "The more than 150 historic items showcased here include documents, letters, images, and artifacts, many never before published." Intriguingly presented photos and documents are fascinating, useful; of particular interest for this unit is Chapter 9: "The new Negro, 1920-1939" while the other chapters offer perspective as well. Indexed; bibliography.*

*Bryant, Philip S. Zora Neale Hurston. Chicago: Raintree, 2003. 64 pp. Glossary, timeline, photos.*

*Canarella, Deborah. Zora Neale Hurston, African American writer. Chanhassen, MN: Child's World, 2003. Photos (all sepia) and one painting take more space than text in this 40-page book. Large type, simple text, glossary make Hurston's life accessible to struggling readers.*

*Clinton, Catherine, editor. I, too, sing America: three centuries of African American poetry. Illustrated by Stephen Alcorn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998. Short biographies of poets precede short selections, from Lucy Terry through Alice Walker and Rita Dove, includes a dozen poets generally considered to be part of the Harlem Renaissance. Helps show these poets as a group, and as a part of a continuum that precedes and follows them.*

*Curry, Barbara K. and Brodie, James Michael. Sweet words so brave: the story of African American literature. Madison, WI: Zino Press Children's Books, 1996. A survey of the history of African American literature, from slave narratives to the present, told in the voice of a grandfather speaking to his granddaughter. Jerry Butler's bright illustrations, interspersed with photos and other graphics, make the book attractive and approachable by a wide variety of age and reading groups.*

*\*Feelings, Tom, ed. and illustrator: Soul looks back in wonder. New York: Puffin Books, 1993. Beautifully illustrated, will engross readers of all ages in the poetry. Artwork and poems by such writers as Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Askia Toure portray the creativity, strength, and beauty of their African American heritage.*  
*Freedman, Russell. The voice that challenged a nation: Marian Anderson and the struggle for equal rights. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2004. Anderson's life parallels the Harlem Renaissance, and this 116-page Newbery Honor Book captures the atmosphere of discrimination, determination and hope of the times. Lots of attention to Eleanor Roosevelt's work on Anderson's behalf; many photos (black & white), extensive index. Special plus for our students: reproduction of a flyer for a 1921 Anderson concert in Duquesne.*

*Felton, Harold W. James Weldon Johnson. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1971.*

*Fullen, M.K. Great black writers: biographies. Greensboro, N.C.: Open Hand Pub., 2002. Presents brief biographies of six modern African American authors: Ida Wells-Barnett, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Alex Haley, James Baldwin, and Lorraine Hansberry. Written for "children and adult new readers," this is an eminently readable book by an author who "is committed to telling the stories of people who often find themselves voiceless. She knows the only way to freedom is to teach the truth." Useful bibliography.*

*Gates, Henry Louis and Cornel West. The African American century: how black Americans have shaped our country. New York: The Free Press, 2000. Short biographical essays and photos organized into decades chapters. Of particular*

interest for this unit are the chapters for 1900-09, 1910-19, 1920-29, and 1930-39. Indexed; extensive "guide to future reading."

Gottfried, Fred. James Baldwin: a voice from Harlem. New York: F. Watts, 1997.

Greenberg, Jan. Romare Bearden: Collage of Memories. New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 2003. *The story of Bearden's life and work, written for children, amply illustrated with Bearden's work. Fifty-two pages in picture-book format, includes "Important Dates," bibliography, glossary, list of galleries showing Bearden's work.*

Halliburton, Warren J., ed. Historic speeches of African Americans. New York: F. Watts, 1993. *Speeches by various African American religious and political leaders from the days of slavery to the present, along with biographical information and historical background. Includes a chapter "Renewed Racial Strategies" with an introduction to and speeches by Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Marcus Garvey, and W.E.B. DuBois. Preceding and following chapters add perspective. Sixteen pages of photos, extensive information on sources; indexed. 192 pages.*

Halpern, Monica. Moving north: African Americans and the great migration, 1915-1930. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2006. *Many photos, a map, a chart, and boxed text make this 40-page book eminently approachable and useful even for reluctant readers. Short chapters: "Slaves No More: Life in the South 1865-1915," "Opportunities in the North," "We Are Leaving!" "A New Life," "The Harlem Renaissance," and "The Depression Hits." Includes glossary, index.*

Haskins, Jim. James Van DerZee: the picture-takin' man New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1979 A 252-page story of the Harlem photographer whose life and work spanned almost a century. *Dozens of his photographs capture much of famous and every-day Harlem people and places. Much of the narrative is based on interviews with Van DerZee. Indexed.*

\*\*Hill, Laban Carrick. Harlem stomp! A cultural history of the Harlem Renaissance. New York: Megan Tingley Books (Little, Brown and Co.), 2003. *Foreword by Nikki Giovanni calls the Harlem Renaissance "one of the most exciting periods in American History, if not in the history of the world." This book beautifully and fully captures that spirit and helps us share it with students. Picture-book/coffee-table size, 152 pages; some illustrations by Christopher Meyers along with many photos. The following list of chapters gives a sense of the scope of this important book: Song of Smoke: the smoldering Black Consciousness, 1900-1910; Moving Out, Fighting Back: the Great Migration, organizing for freedom, and World War I; Black Metropolis the rise of Harlem, 1900-1920; The Dam Breaking: Jean Toomer, Claude McKay, and opportunity in the Arts, 1921-1924; Fire!! an explosion of creativity; Dark Tower: a social breakthrough; Stompin' at the Savoy: music and dance of the renaissance; Heritage Unbound: Blacks and the American theater; Against All Odds: visual artists and their struggle for recognition; Rage in the Streets: the waning of the renaissance and the beginning of the Harlem riots. Includes bibliography; indexed.*

Hudson, Wade. *The pioneers: an introduction to African-American poets*. East Orange, NJ : Just Us Books, 2003. *Useful two-page biographies, well-selected poems, include a half-dozen from Harlem Renaissance. Thirteen additional poets briefly summarized at end.*

Hudson, Wade. *Powerful words: more than 200 years of extraordinary writing by African Americans*. New York: Scholastic. 2004. *A collection of speeches and writings by African Americans, with commentary about the time period in which each person lived, information about the speaker/writer, and public response to the words. Selections are short; book's impact is more for its overview than for depth of presentation. Eight-page timeline is useful.*

Hughes, Langston. *The Dream Keeper and other poems*. New York: Knopf, 1996.

Jaffe, Nina. *A voice for the people: the life and work of Harold Courlander*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997. *A biography of the folklorist and novelist who recorded the traditional songs and stories of the people of Haiti, the Hopi Indians, and black communities in the South, connecting the African-American traditions to the cultures of Africa. Not really about the Harlem Renaissance, but fascinating information about collecting folk music before and during the Great Depression. Extensive list of resources. Indexed.*

Jordan, Denise. *Artists in Profile: Harlem Renaissance artists*. Chicago: Heinemann Library. *An excellent resource for students looking for an overview of visual arts and artists of the Harlem Renaissance. Written for young researchers, short, information-packed, illustrated summaries of the life and work of eleven period artists, along with an essay "What was the Harlem Renaissance," and one entitled "The Next Generation," are included along with a Timeline, Glossary, list of Resources, suggestions for Further Reading, and an Index. 64 pages.*

Koopmans, Andy. *The Harlem Renaissance*. Farmington Hills, MI: Lucent Books, 2006. *School Library Journal review: This serviceable overview opens with an examination of the New Negro movement and other political events that stirred early-20th-century discussions of racial civil rights and continues with a look at the publications and authors who laid the groundwork for this notable explosion of African-American culture. Two central chapters focus on the Harlem Renaissance itself. Prominent figures, including Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Countee Cullen, are given individual treatment, and the phenomenon of Harlemania is explored, with its jive talk, zoot suits, speakeasies, rent parties, cabarets, and the great influence and appeal of jazz and blues music. The concluding chapter covers the decline of the movement and its lasting influence. Koopmans occasionally includes primary sources but relies more heavily on lengthy quotations from other historians. Sidebars focus on individual people and events, providing human interest as well as visual relief to this clear but often dry treatment of an exceptionally lively time. The black-and-white photos, while informative and adequately captioned, are*

*too few in number. The strength of this book lies in its analytical look at the Harlem Renaissance within its historical context..”*

*Levy, Debbie. Richard Wright: a Biography. Minneapolis, MN: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008. One hundred and sixty packed pages of information, photos, includes four-page chronology of Wright’s life, extensive guides to sources, detailed index.*

*\*\*McKissack, Lisa Beringer. Women of the Harlem Renaissance. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2007. White space and graphics (photos, paintings, a map) make this 48-page book approachable even by reluctant readers. Short, informative chapters include an overview (“A Renaissance Begins”), chapters on Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, Augusta Savage, and Bessie Smith, and an “Epilogue: So Others May Dream.” Also a glossary, dateline, list of people, and guide to sources. Indexed.*

*\*\*Muse, Daphne, ed. The entrance place of wonders: poems of the Harlem Renaissance. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2006. Includes an introduction to the Harlem Renaissance (1917-1935) and brief biographies of the poets.*

*Myers, Walter Dean. Jazz. Illustrated by Christopher Myers. New York: Holiday House. 2006. Accompanying audio CD presents text of book (narrated by James “D-Train” Williams and Vaneese Thomas) with music arranged and directed by Rob Mathes. History of and introduction to jazz, compellingly illustrated and presented. While not focused on Harlem Renaissance, a fine companion piece.*

*O’Meally, Robert G. Romare Bearden, a Black odyssey. Washington, DC: Moore Gallery. 2008. From the publisher: “In 1977, Bearden created a sequence of 20 collages based on episodes from Homer’s Odyssey. It may come as a surprise to even his most avid followers that this devoted chronicler of African American culture and the Harlem Renaissance would gravitate to such a canonical text. But in the essay accompanying Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey, scholar Robert G. O’Meally argues for their thematic consistency and suggests that, in the figures of Odysseus, Penelope, Poseidon, Nausicca and others, Bearden found themes sympathetic to the African American experience. These motifs of wandering, mourning and the questing for home--considering Bearden’s scores of interiors and exteriors, country and city life and depictions of family love--emerge as the central themes of all his art. Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey, the first in-depth consideration of these collages since they were originally exhibited 30 years ago, will prove a surprise to Bearden fans and newcomers alike.” Coffee-table size; 116 pages.*

*\*\*Price, John. Rebirth of a people. Chicago: Raintree, 2007. Sparse text, lots of photos. “Chapters” are a few sentences each with large photos: Rebirth of a people—Harlem’s golden age—A place to party—Churchgoin’—Rens and globetrotters—Powerful voices—The jazz age—Wowing the crowd—Women of Harlem—“I, too”—The picture takin’ man—Changing times—Dancing in Harlem.*

*Price, Sally and Richard Price. Romare Bearden: the Caribbean dimension. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. A coffee-table size, 190-page presentation of Bearden works along with essays on his life and aspects of his work.*

*\*\*Shange, Ntozake. i live in music. New York: Welcome Enterprises, Inc., 1994. A poem by Shange illustrated by/written to 20 Bearden paintings. A good introduction to the interplay of arts, with a focus on Harlem and city images and music.*

*Shull, Jodie A. Langston Hughes: "life makes poems." Berkeley Heights, NJ : Enslow Publishers, 2006. A volume in the African-American Biography Library. Includes many black-and-white photos. An extensive look at Hughes both as a poet, and as a political activist and leader. One hundred forty packed pages.*

*Shull, Jodie. Words of promise: a story about James Weldon Johnson. Drawings by Ken Stetz, Minneapolis: Millbrook Press, 2006. 68 pages mostly of text, include index.*

*\*Sims, Lowery S., and Daisy Murray Voigt, "selectors", The Block. Collage by Romare Bearden; poems by Langston Hughes, Introduction by Bill Cosby. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Viking, 1995. Cosby writes in his introduction, "Bearden shows us the sights,. . . Langston Hughes gives us the sounds" of the city block. An awesome way to introduce students to quintessential poetry and art of, and inspired by, the Harlem Renaissance. Includes one-page biography each of Bearden and Hughes.*

*Toolbert, Jane. James Weldon Johnson. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988. Introductory essay by Coretta Scott King as part of the Black Americans of Achievement series. 110 pages; many black-and-white photos. Includes a chronology and a guide to further reading; indexed. A chapter entitled "The Spirit of Harlem" describes Johnson's participation in the Harlem Renaissance as a writer, and as an NAACP leader.*

*Wallace, Maurice Orlando. Langston Hughes: the Harlem Renaissance. New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2008.*

*Wilkinson, Brenda Scott. African American women writers. New York: J. Wiley, 2000. Discusses the lives and work of such notable African American women authors as: Phillis Wheatley, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Brooks, Nikki Giovanni, and Terry McMillan. Six-page Chronology starts with Phillis Wheatley's birth c.1753; ends in 1998. Extensive index.*

*\*\*Worth, Richard. The Harlem Renaissance: an explosion of African American culture. Berkeley Heights, NJ : Enslow Publishers, 2009. 128 pages include photos, reproductions of paintings, timeline, extensive Chapter Notes; indexed. Recommended for its overview.*

### **For students: sound recordings**

Clinton, Catherine, ed. *I, too, sing America: three centuries of African American poetry*. Performed by Ashley Bryan and Renee Joshua-Porter. Middletown, R.I: Audio Bookshelf, 2000.

Marsalis, Brandford, *Quartet*. Romare Bearden Revealed. Cambridge: Rounder Records, 2003. Seven jazz pieces, each inspired by a Bearden painting, a photo of which is included in liner notes. From these notes, by Robert O'Meally: "This recording can be considered part of a jam session in which Romare Bearden's paintings play a vibrant part: the musicians playing the paintings of a visual artist who had a mighty brush with the blues." This four-page essay is worth borrowing the CD to read, as it focuses on the relationship among the arts during the Harlem Renaissance.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Jazz*. Pine Plains, N.Y: Live Oak Media, 2007. Jazz vocalists narrate and sing fifteen poems that celebrate different styles of jazz. Original music compositions performed by a live jazz ensemble accompany each poetry reading. Also features an introduction that explores the history of jazz, a glossary, and a jazz time line.

### **For students: historical fiction on Harlem Renaissance**

Dell, Pamela. *Shaky Bones: a story of the Harlem Renaissance*. Maple Plain, MN: Traditions Books, 2004. In 1926, a twelve-year-old aspiring poet nicknamed Shaky Bones enters the first annual Harlem All-School Young Poets Competition. Historical fiction in the first person can intrigue our young readers. Includes photos of the period, an afterword summarizing the Harlem Renaissance, lists of resources, ideas on discovering and preserving family history, a glossary, and a brief timeline.

Hartfield, Claire. *Me and Uncle Romie*. Illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2002. From Author's Note in the back of this picture book: "This story, which is fictional, was inspired by the storytelling quality of Romare Bearden's art and has incorporated many of the basic facts of his life." Beautifully illustrated in Bearden's style. A note at the end says, "The Romare Bearden Foundation supports this book as a way to introduce his art and personal history to children." Contact information given for the Foundation.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Dave at night*. New York: Harper Trophy, 2006. When orphaned Dave is sent to the Hebrew Home for Boys where he is treated cruelly, he sneaks out at night and is welcomed into the music- and culture-filled world of the Harlem Renaissance.

\*\*McKissack, Patricia C. *A song for Harlem*. Illustrated by Gordon C. James. New York: Viking, 2007. In the summer of 1928, Lilly Belle Turner of Smyrna, Tennessee, participates in a young author's writing program, taught by Zora Neale Hurston and hosted by A'Lelia Walker in her Harlem teahouse at the height of the Harlem

*Renaissance. Local Pittsburgh connection in the first of three short “afterwords” when a main character becomes a reporter for the Pittsburgh Courier.” Part of the “Scraps of Time” series.*

*Myers, Walter Dean. Harlem summer. New York: Scholastic, 2007. In 1920s Harlem, sixteen-year-old Mark Purvis, an aspiring jazz saxophonist, gets a summer job as an errand boy for the publishers of the groundbreaking African American magazine, “The Crisis,” but soon finds himself on the enemy list of mobster Dutch Shultz.*

### **For students: other fiction; misc.**

*Besarden, Romare, Li'l Dan the drummer boy: a Civil War Story; Forward by Henry Louis Gates; New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003. Gates writes in the Introduction: “Perhaps the main lesson of the book might be read as an unintentional revelation about its author, for it shows what one person can do with a few creative tools, profound ingenuity, and a deep and abiding love for one’s art, our common history, and our shared humanity.” What a strong summary of Bearden.*

*Hurston, Zora Neale, collector; adapted by Joyce Carol Thomas; illustrated by Faith Ringgold. The three witches. New York: Harper Collins, 2006. Full-sized picture book reproduces for children one of Hurston’s stories collected during her anthropological work in the Gulf states. Faith Ringgold, internationally acclaimed painter and illustrator, writes in her note, “I absolutely loved illustrating this book. Zora Neale Hurston is my favorite storyteller in the whole world. If someone would have asked me whose stories (other than my own) I would most enjoy illustrating, I would have shouted Zora Neale Hurston, for she can spin a tale better than anyone else I know. . . . We can never thank Zora enough for her brilliant research and collection of the great African American oral tradition. To be sure, a lot of these stories would have been lost without her vision. . .” And more. What a gift!*

### **For students: DVD/video**

*The art of Romare Bearden. Washington, DC: Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, 2003. A full, 30-minute color DVD narrated by Morgan Freeman with readings by Danny Glover. From back cover: “This film traces Bearden’s entire career, including his paintings and watercolors of the 1940s, experimental collages of 1964, mature collages of the next two decades, large-scale public murals, and late landscapes. This documentary also features commentary by art historians, artists, and others who knew Bearden, including Wynton Marsalis, Albert Murray, and Emma Amos.” Subtitles.*

*Been rich all my life/ a Toots Crackin production ; in association with YLE Teema ; produced & directed by Heather Lyn MacDonald. New York : First Run Features, 2006, c2005. Full screen. 1 videodisc (80 min.) : sd., col. with b&w sequences ; 4 ¾ in. Profiles the Silver Belles, a tap dance group who had performed during the*

*Harlem Renaissance at the Apollo Theatre and the Cotton Club and are still performing today.*

*Cora unashamed [videorecording] / produced by Marian Rees; screenplay by Ann Peacock; directed by Deborah M. Pratt; ALT Films; WGBH Boston; PBS. Full-length movie based on short-story by Langston Hughes. Interesting look at a side of Hughes' work not as well known as his poetry. Library's summary: "A town's lone African American woman is surrounded by social isolation and deep-seated racism while working as a housekeeper. Set in rural Iowa in the early 1900s, Cora is confronted with death, abortion and loneliness. Working as a domestic, she lives only for her daughter and the neglected child of her employers." Cautionary note: reference to abortion may make this film problematic for use in middle-school classrooms.*

*Dropping in on Romare Bearden. Glenview, IL: Crystal Productions, 2007. A cartoon introduction to Bearden's life and work. Middle-school-level students may laugh at this, so preview before using. From back cover: "Animated biographical sequences are combined with details and full-screen images of actual Bearden masterworks. The dialog will prompt viewers of all ages to make their own interpretations of the works of art. The DVD is accompanied by a guide with discussion questions and related art activities." (Note: this guide was not included with the DVD I got from Carnegie Library; I am attempting to get it from the publisher.)*

*Jazz. Episode two, The gift. Florentine Films production; produced in cooperation with BBC ; produced in association with WETA-TV, Washington ; a film by Ken Burns ; written by Geoffrey C. Ward ; produced by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick Alexandria, Va.] : PBS Home Video ; Hollywood, Calif. : Distributed by Paramount Home Entertainment, c2004. From 1917 through 1924, the "Jazz Age" begins with speakeasies, flappers, and easy money for some. The story of jazz becomes a tale of two cities, Chicago and New York, and of Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, whose lives and music will span three-quarters of a century. This episode also follows the careers of jazz greats James Reese Europe, King Oliver, Willie Smith, Fletcher Henderson, Paul Whiteman, and James P. Johnson. Includes information on songs featured in the episode, and the complete performance of Louis Armstrong's I cover the waterfront.*

*Kindred spirits: contemporary African-American artists. KERA, 1992; distributed by PBS. Maya Angelou's comments interspersed with presentations of the art, and comments of artists including John Biggers, Bessie Harvey, Lois Mailou Jones, Jean Lacy, Renee Stout and others. Focus is on the impact of Africa on art of African Americans, from the Harlem Renaissance to the present. 30 minutes; VHS.*

*Persistent women artists. Southern Oregon State College Productions, 1996; distributed by Reading & O'Reilly, Inc. Harlem Renaissance-inspired artist Lois Mailou Jones is one of three artists (Mine Okubo, Pablita Velarde) who, "in their 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> decades . . . discuss the political and social obstacles they encountered*

while continuing to create their vivid images expressing both the pain and the beauty of persisting in their endeavors. . . Their powerful personal paintings, drawings, lithographs, and murals reflect their experiences as Native, Asian and African American women.” (from VHS liner notes) 28 minutes; VHS.

Romare Bearden: visual jazz. Chappaqua, NY: L&S Video, Inc., 2004. Narrated by Wynton Marsalis, this 28-minute DVD/VHS highlights Bearden’s work, shows clips of him at work. (On same DVD disc: 30-minute film about Faith Ringgold.)

The story of jazz / a co-production of Toby Byron/Multiprises in association with Taurus Film, Munich, BMG Video and VideoArts Music ; produced by Toby Byron, Richard Saylor; written by Chris Albertson with Matthew Seig ; directed by Matthew Seig. New York, NY: BMG Special Products, p2002. The beginnings of jazz—Louis Armstrong—Original Dixieland Jazz Band—Bix Beiderbecke—Duke Ellington & the **Harlem Renaissance**—Benny Goodman & the kingdom of swing -- 52<sup>nd</sup> Street—Bird & Diz “Hot house”—A golden era—Birth of the cool—Electric jazz fusion.

Swingin’ uptown: renaissance in Harlem / Northshore Entertainment ; executive producers, Dennis Hedlund, Ron Davis ; written & directed by Marino Amoruso. West Long Branch, NJ: Kultur, c2003. Presenting music at the core of the Harlem Renaissance, extensive (captivating) video clips of key performers interspersed with commentary both from the performers and from historians. Discussion includes contrast between acceptance of performers in Harlem, including by whites who traveled there, and racist exclusions of the same artists outside of the black communities. Students will need some exposure to the art form and the times before watching. Bonus performance clips: Your feet too big / Fats Waller—I’m a shy guy / Nat King Cole—Take me back baby / Count Basie (Jimmy Rushing, vocal) -- Caravan / Mills Brothers—Calypso blues / Nat King Cole—The start of something big / Count Basie—Romance without finance / Tiny Grimes—Swinging on nothin’ / Louis Armstrong—Salt peanuts / Dizzy Gillespie—That’s my girl / Nat King Cole—Satin doll / Duke Ellington.

W.E.B. DuBois, scholar and activist. *fabian-baber, inc.* ; directed by Amy A. Tiehel ; scripts, Amy A. Tiehel, Jeff Wachtman, Scott Kraus ; produced by Jerry Baber, Amy A. Tiehel ; executive producer, Andrew Schlessinger ; Schlessinger Video Productions. Bala Cynwyd, PA: Schlessinger Video Productions, 1994. 29 minutes.

Zora is my name! Monterey, CA: Monterey Video, 2006. Dramatization of the life of Zora Neale Hurston who “was born at the turn of the last century, and grew to be an important voice with her written portrayals of Black American life in the rural south of the 1930s and 1940s, and the stories, songs and folklore that were her heritage and inspiration.” Stars Ruby Dee, Louis Gossett, Jr. 88 minutes.

Zora Neal Hurston: Jump at the sun. Co-produced by Bay Bottom News and Thirteen/WNET’s American Masters; producer and writer, Kristy Andersen ; director, Sam Pollard. Distributed by California Newsreel ([www.newsreel.org](http://www.newsreel.org)). 2008. 84 minutes. From the liner notes: “Intersperses insights from leading scholars and

rare footage of the rural South (some of it shot by Zora herself) with re-enactments of a 1943 radio interview discussing her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*. Zora's roots: the life of Zora Neale Hurston. *Eagle Productions; PBS Home Video, 2008*. This documentary tells her story through the people who knew her and the places and events that she brought to the world through her writing. 60 minutes.

### **DVD/Videos: background for teachers**

*Against the odds: the artists of the Harlem Renaissance / a production of NJN; produced, written and directed by Amber Edwards; executive producer, Nila Aronow. [Alexandria, Va.?] : PBS Home Video, c2006. Full screen. 1 videodisc (57 min.): color with b&w sequences; 4 3/4 in. Examines the outpouring of creativity in the visual arts by African Americans during the 1920s and 1930s, the period known as the Harlem Renaissance. Presents items from the 1990 exhibition "Against the Odds," curated by the Newark Museum. (Note: useful for more sophisticated student look into the period; accessible to high school students with a particular interest in the Harlem Renaissance, African American history, and/or art history.)*

*Brother to brother. Miasma Films; C-Hundred Film Corp.; Intrinsic Value; produced by Rodney Evans, Jim McKay, Isen Robbins, Aimee Schoof; written and directed by Rodney Evans. New Almaden, CA : Wolfe Video LLC, [2005]. Critically acclaimed drama that invokes the glory days of the Harlem Renaissance. As an elderly man, poet Richard Bruce Nugent meets a young, black, gay artist struggling to find his voice, and together they embark on a journey through his inspiring past. Nugent was the only openly gay renowned artist of the Harlem Renaissance. Film features his collaboration with Wallace Thurman, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and other artists on the magazine *Fire*. Includes love scenes between men, some nudity.*

*Romare Bearden: Visual Jazz. Hosted by Wynton Marsalis; created and produced by Linda Freeman; written and directed by David Irving. L&S Videos, 1999. From promotional website: "The video is narrated by Wynton Marsalis who masterfully draws parallels between jazz and the art of Romare Bearden. The video also treats viewers to rare footage of Bearden at work in his studio while he explains, in his own words, what he doing as he creates. Other guests and commentators include: Marilyn Kushner, Curator of Drawings and Prints at the Brooklyn Museum; Robert Blackburn, Master Printmaker; Jeffrey Bergen, President of ACA Gallery; Barrie Stavis, Playwright." 28 minutes. (I could not find this video via the Carnegie Library; a preview of it, with more information about Bearden including his relationship to Pittsburgh, is at <http://www.landsvideo.com/vf-bearden.shtml>; accessed April 18, 2009.)*

*Their eyes were watching God. Oprah Winfrey presents; a Harpo Films Production; directed by Darnell Martin; producer, Matthew Carlisle; written for television by Suzan-Lori Parks and Misan Sagay and Bobby Smith, Jr. Burbank, CA: Buena Vista*

Home Entertainment, 2005. Based on Zora Neale Hurston's book, starring Halle Berry. 113 minutes.

### **Websites/online resources**

\*\*“African American History Timeline: A chronology of black history from the early slave trade through Affirmative Action.” From Infoplease. An excellent timeline with illustrations and links, including useful link to sources on Harlem Renaissance. A good place to start this unit. <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtimeline.html> (Accessed 4/26/09)

“African American World: Arts and Culture: Harlem Renaissance.” [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/artfocus\\_03.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/arts/artfocus_03.html) Links to various artists, with this introduction: “In his 1925 essay, “The New Negro”, Howard University Professor of Philosophy Alain Locke encouraged African American artists to create a school of African American art with an identifiable style and aesthetic, and to look to African culture and African American folk life for subject matter and inspiration. Locke's ideas, coupled with a new ethnic awareness that was occurring in urban areas, inspired up and coming African American artists. These artists rejected landscapes for the figurative, rural scenes for urban and focused on class, culture and Africa to bring ethnic consciousness into art and create a new black identity. The New Negro movement would later be known as the Harlem Renaissance.” (Accessed 3/7/09)

“Afro-Poets: Net-Famous Black Writers.” A list of African American poets with links to biographies, poems. Several key Harlem Renaissance poets are included, along with earlier and more recent poets. Good source of quick overviews of specific poets. Updated November 2008. <http://www.afropoets.net/> (Accessed May 9, 2009)

“The Art of Romare Bearden.” Chatsworth, CA: Image Entertainment, 2006. Downloadable on-line video available from Carnegie Library; library notes, “This film traces Bearden's entire career, including his paintings and watercolors of the 1940's, experimental collages of 1964, large scale murals and late landscapes. Featuring commentary by friends including Wynton Marsalis, Albert Murray, and Emma Amos.” Direct CLP link allows film preview: <http://iisyl.einetwork.net/search~S1?/YBEARDEN%2C+ROMARE&searchscope=1&SORT=D/YBEARDEN%2C+ROMARE&searchscope=1&SORT=D&SUBKEY=BEARDEN%2C%20ROMARE/1%2C40%2C40%2CB/frameset&FF=YBEARDEN%2C+ROMARE&searchscope=1&SORT=D&3%2C3%2C> (Accessed 4/26/09)

\*\* “Artists by Movement: The Harlem Renaissance, early 1920's to 1930's.” From Artcyclopedia. A chronological listing of and link to articles about, representations of the art of, and information about current exhibits of artists of the period as well as artists influenced by them. Among those included are “artists at the core of the Harlem Renaissance movement included William H. Johnson, Lois Mailou Jones and the sculptor and printmaker Sargent Claude Johnson. Other prominent artists

associated with the Harlem Renaissance included Jacob Lawrence, Archibald Motley and Romare Bearden. Later artists influenced by the movement included Charles Sebree, Hale Woodruff, Beauford Delaney, John Biggers and Ernie Barnes (Barnes' Sugar Shack is the now-famous painting featured on the closing credits of the TV show Good Times).” A wonderfully complete and useful website; beware, you could get caught up on it and its links for hours!  
<http://www.artcyclopedia.com/history/harlem-renaissance.html> (Accessed April 18, 2009)

Bass, George Howard and Louis Henry Gates, editors. “Mule Bones.” Full text of play by Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes, along with story of the controversy between the authors that prevented the play from being published until the 1990s. Internet Archive.  
[http://www.archive.org/stream/muleboneacomedyo017963mbp/muleboneacomedyo017963mbp\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/muleboneacomedyo017963mbp/muleboneacomedyo017963mbp_djvu.txt) (Accessed March 14, 2009)

\*\*\*”Biographies of the Harlem Renaissance.”  
<http://www.42explore2.com/harlem2.htm> Dozens of links to information on many key people of the Harlem Renaissance. Last updated 2004, so some links are not live. (When accessed May 9, 2009, approximately two-thirds were live.)

Clayton, Jace. “The Harlem Renaissance: Three writers and their contemporary counterparts.” A look at Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, and Langston Hughes, including their influences on other writers, and those who influenced them, with links. Written 2007. <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/harlem1.html>

“Drop Me Off in Harlem: Exploring the Intersections,” from the Education Department at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This site includes multimedia resources in the form of audio, video, and image clips and an interactive, annotated map of Harlem in the 1920s. The site is presented as three sections: Faces of the Renaissance, A Place Called Harlem, and Themes and Variations. It also includes a Classroom Connections section, which provides curriculum resources for teachers. [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/harlem/facesmain\\_text.html](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/harlem/facesmain_text.html)

“Guide to Harlem Renaissance Materials.” Library of Congress. Self-described: “African-American expressions of writing, music, and art during the 1920s and 1930s are well represented in the vast collections of the Library of Congress. This guide presents the Library’s resources as well as links to external Web sites on the Harlem Renaissance and a bibliography.” September 2008. Many live, useful links. Extensive bibliography, with links, is most helpful. Compiled by Angela McMillan, Digital Reference Specialist. <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/harlem/harlem.html> Accessed 3/7/09.

“Harlem Renaissance.” BrainPop. A short cartoon introduces the Harlem Renaissance. Links to quizzes, short activities.

<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/harlemrenaissance/> (Accessed 4/26/09)

"Harlem Renaissance," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2009  
<http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2009 Microsoft Corporation. A useful overview of the period with links to more information about specific key figures.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761566483/harlem\\_renaissance.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761566483/harlem_renaissance.html) (Accessed April 18, 2009)

"Harlem Renaissance: Multimedia Resource." An exciting website with links to information on education, performers, French connection, literature, political issues, religion, philosophy; includes some powerful video clips (e.g., Billie Holiday singing "Strange Fruit"), images, notes on contributors, and lots of audio files. From John Carroll University. <http://www.jcu.edu/harlem/index.htm> (Accessed 3/7/09)

"Harlem Renaissance." Overview with links to more on various artists.  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761566483/harlem\\_renaissance.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761566483/harlem_renaissance.html) (Accessed 3/7/09)

"Harlem Renaissance Timeline." From Bookrags, a year-by-year list of key events, with some pre-highlights (eg, NAACP founding) and some as late as the mid-1930s (a 1935 riot in Harlem against discrimination by white businesses).

<http://www.bookrags.com/research/harlem-renaissance-timeline-hren-01/> (Accessed 4/26/09)

"Harlem Renaissance Women."

[http://www.powertolearn.com/themes\\_whm/harlem.html](http://www.powertolearn.com/themes_whm/harlem.html). Part of "Women Who Made History: Women's History Month" from The Power to Learn. Short essay with links. (Accessed 3/7/09)

"Harlem Renaissance Women."

[http://womenshistory.about.com/od/harlemrenaissance/Harlem\\_Renaissance\\_Women\\_.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/harlemrenaissance/Harlem_Renaissance_Women_.htm) from About.com: Women's History. Links to sites on specific women, biographies, context, and other sites on Harlem Renaissance women. (Accessed 3/7/09)

"Harlem Renaissance Women: African American Women Dreaming in Color."

[http://womenshistory.about.com/od/harlemrenaissance/a/dreaming\\_color.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/od/harlemrenaissance/a/dreaming_color.htm) Essay on women of the Harlem Renaissance with links. (Accessed March 7, 2009)

John B. Cade Library. "Harlem Renaissance Writers." Don't be put off by the misspelling of Alain Locke's name; this website has some excellent links to good information about key writers of the Harlem Renaissance (although including James Baldwin is stretching things).

<http://www.lib.subr.edu/data/writers%2001.29.2003.htm> (Accessed May 9, 2009)

McElrath, Jessica. "Harlem Renaissance: the New Negro Movement." Essay includes overview of Harlem Renaissance and links to information about key figures.

<http://afroamhistory.about.com/cs/harlemrenaissance/a/harlemren.htm> (Accessed May 9, 2009)

*"Musicians of the Harlem Renaissance."* Links to photos and short biographies of Louis Armstrong, Josephine Baker, Edward Kennedy Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker. <http://asms.k12.ar.us/classes/humanities/amstud/97-98/jazz/PAGE1.HTM> (Accessed April 18, 2009)

Online NewsHour Forum (PBS). "Harlem Renaissance." February 20, 1998.

Question/answer format discussion on aspects of Harlem Renaissance.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/february98/harlem1.html> (Accessed March 14, 2009)

\*\*"Poets of the Harlem Renaissance." A list of and links to information about and works of poets and general articles about poetry in the Harlem Renaissance. All links were live May 2009. <http://america.bibl.u-szeged.hu/?num=5&ch=B&code=B.4.1> (Accessed May 9, 2009)

Powell, Richard J. "African American Art: the Harlem Renaissance." An article followed by a list of examples of visual art from the period with links to larger representations. Excerpted from *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience, Second Edition*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah. Oxford University Press, April 2005. A useful quick look at some important art from the period.

[http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/a/african\\_american\\_4.html](http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/a/african_american_4.html) (Accessed April 18, 2009)

Reuben, Paul P. "Chapter 9: Harlem Renaissance - An Introduction." PAL:

*Perspectives in American Literature- A Research and Reference Guide*. Extensive time-line, an assessment, and many links to key figures. From *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature - A Research and Reference Guide - An Ongoing Project* © Paul P. Reuben (professor at California State University Stanislaus) (Accessed 3/7/09)

<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap9/9intro.html>

Richard Bruce Nugent website. Background on this writer/actor of the Harlem Renaissance and beyond. Website describes him: "Richard Bruce Nugent was a phenomenon that was not supposed to exist--an African-American artist influenced by Michelangelo, Beardsley, and Erte who devoured the novels of Firbank and Huysmans and wrote stream-of-consciousness prose--a black man trespassing in white Elysian Fields." (Tom Wirth) Links to his writings, drawings, paintings, photos of him, a chronology, more. <http://www.brucenugent.com/Portal.htm>

Romare Bearden Foundation. <http://www.beardenfoundation.org/index2.shtml> A full-bodied examination of the life and work of Bearden, complete with resources for teachers, an interactive timeline, bibliography, lesson plans, links to information on exhibitions, and much more. A fun place to visit for anyone interested in Bearden's life and work. (Accessed April 27, 2009)

Shomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. "Harlem, 1900-1940. An African-American Community."

<http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/> Includes interactive timeline with links for

each year; links to information on individual artists and publications; bibliographies; resources for teachers. (Accessed March 15, 2009.)

Walton, Anthony. "Double Bind: Three Women of the Harlem Renaissance." <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/19694> Reprint of an article from *American Poet*, 2007. Article about Gwendolyn Bennett, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Jessie Redmon Fauset, with links to poems, additional information. (Accessed May 9, 2009)

## **Data-bases, on-line resources via Carnegie Library**

**Note:** Carnegie Library databases are accessible to anyone with a library card. Most can be accessed remotely; a few require access from a Carnegie Library. What follows is sampling of some of the material this author found useful. Much more is easily available.

"*The African-American Experience: Topic Guide: Harlem Renaissance.*" Includes as separate links: Introduction, Featured Content, Related Content, Related Images, Key Figures, Timelines, Lesson Plans, Recommended Links. Website sponsors describe website: "An American Mosaic Online Resource: The African American Experience (AAE) is a full-text digital resource exploring the history and culture of African Americans, as well as the greater Black Diaspora. Wide-ranging and easy-to-use, AAE is the definitive electronic research tool for African American history and culture from one of the most respected publishers in the field. Its two primary goals: to provide rock-solid information from authorities in the field, and to allow African Americans to speak for themselves through a wealth of primary sources. Drawing on over 400 volumes, and designed under the guidance of leading librarians of color, this database gives voice to the black experience from its African origins to the present day." "Featured Content" on the Harlem Renaissance includes a useful, detailed historical overview as well as essays on a significant number of topics including in-depth information on individual figures, and a detailed time-line (1917-1935). An excellent resource for students, as well as for anyone wishing a general introduction along with a large number of links to more detailed, specific information, as well as lesson plans and links to many additional sources, including to primary-source documents. Accessed through Carnegie Library databases (*African American Experience*) at <http://aae.greenwood.com/guides/guide.aspx?id=TOPIC-2008716-633518181858288957> (April 12, 2009)

Maine, Steven. "Inside the Harlem Renaissance." *Art in America*, Oct2008, Vol. 96 Issue 9, p154d. A review of the exhibition "Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist" at the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas at Lawrence from September 8-December 2, 2007. PDF full text via History Reference Center. (Accessed via Carnegie Library April 12, 2009.)

Martin, Michelle H. "Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance." *Journal of African American History*, Summer2006, Vol. 91 Issue 3, p348. The article reviews

*the book Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance by Katharine Capshaw Smith. Includes interesting comments on how ideological differences among central-figure writers played out in their writings for children. History Reference Center database. (Accessed via Carnegie Library, April 12, 2009.)*

*Stevenson, Keira. "The Harlem Renaissance." History Reference Center article, 2009. Useful short overview of the period. (Accessed via EBSCOhost via Carnegie Library April 12, 2009)*

### ***On-line resources for teachers***

*"The Topic: Harlem Renaissance." Lots of links for teachers including lesson plans, much more. Resources are labeled by grade level. Site introduction: "This project includes over one-hundred and fifty websites providing biographies of writers, poets, artists, musicians, entertainers, activists, thinkers, and leaders of the Harlem Renaissance movement. These additional biography resources have been placed on a 'bonus' webpage entitled Biographies of the Harlem Renaissance. Be sure to check it out!" This website was created by teachers for teachers, but last updated 2008. The links I checked were live, but others may not be. (Accessed March 7, 2009)*  
<http://www.42explore2.com/harlem.htm>

### **Potential outside resources, field trips (*list in formation*)**