

## Harlem Renaissance: What Is It?

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<b>Grade Level</b>	8
<b>Subject</b>	ELA
<b>Curriculum Objective</b>	<p><b>5.01</b> Increase fluency, comprehension, and insight through a meaningful and comprehensive literacy program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using effective reading strategies to match type of text.</li> <li>• reading self-selected literature and other materials of interest to the individual.</li> <li>• reading literature and other materials selected by the teacher.</li> <li>• assuming a leadership role in student-teacher reading conferences.</li> <li>• leading small group discussions.</li> <li>• taking an active role in whole class seminars.</li> <li>• analyzing the effects of elements such as plot, theme, characterization, style, mood, and tone.</li> <li>• discussing the effects of such literary devices as figurative language, dialogue, flashback, allusion, irony, and symbolism.</li> <li>• analyzing and evaluating themes and central ideas in literature and other texts in relation to personal and societal issues.</li> <li>• extending understanding by creating products for different purposes, different audiences, and within various contexts.</li> <li>• analyzing and evaluating the relationships between and among characters, ideas, concepts, and/or experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>5.02</b> Study the characteristics of literary genres (fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading a variety of literature and other text (e.g., young adult novels, short stories, biographies, plays, free verse, narrative poems).</li> <li>• evaluating what impact genre-specific characteristics have on the meaning of the text.</li> <li>• evaluating how the author's choice and use of a genre shapes the meaning of the literary work.</li> <li>• evaluating what impact literary elements have on the meaning of the text.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Technology Goals</u></b></p> <p>1.10 Use spreadsheet and graphing terms/concepts to present and explain content area assignments.</p> <p>1.13 Review and use WP/DTP terms/concepts to describe and explain how assignments/projects were created.</p>

	<p>2.02 Modify/create and use databases to organize, report, and display data.</p> <p>2.05 Use proper keyboarding techniques to improve accuracy, speed, and general efficiency in computer operation.</p>
<b>Guiding Question</b>	What is the Harlem Renaissance and how is sensory language used to describe personalities or aspects of the Harlem Renaissance?
<b>Lesson Summary</b>	Students will identify sensory language in poetry and use sensory language to write an original work.
<b>Activating Strategy</b>	<p>Close your eyes and visualize a typical scene in your neighborhood. Describe this street scene. (Ask the students to consider a series of questions as they visualize):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Who is in the picture?</b></li> <li>2. <b>What are the people doing?</b></li> <li>3. <b>Why are they here?</b></li> <li>4. <b>What buildings, forms of transportation, signs, other objects can you see in the picture?</b></li> <li>5. <b>What sounds might you hear?</b></li> </ol> <p>Using photographs of Harlem which are linked below, students will describe the activities portrayed in the photographs. Students will share their descriptions.</p> <p>Harlem Neighborhood Websites:  <a href="http://www.harlemonline.com/community/history_of_harlem.html">http://www.harlemonline.com/community/history_of_harlem.html</a></p> <p>After discussing these impressions, suggest that many of these same aspects of everyday life can be identified in the culture of neighborhoods at any era. Read Harlem Renaissance: What Is It? as a class.</p>
<b>Cognitive Strategy</b>	<p>Provide students with copy of Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem." As a class, read the poem and highlight the sensory language (words/phrases) used. Tell the students:</p> <p><b>Hughes uses language that appeals to the five senses.</b></p> <p><b>He doesn't just tell you how awful it is to have your dream</b></p>

deferred; he uses physical images that you can relate to easily and then translate into the emotional reaction he wants you to experience. Picturing a dry raisin in the sun is a much better way to feel the loss of a missed opportunity than simply calling it a "dream deferred."

After reading the poem, "Harlem", students (as a group) write a sensory poem describing a feeling.

**Choice A:**

1. Review the list of notables and the web sites provided. Select 4 (2 women and 2 men) contributors to the Harlem Renaissance.

2. Organize the data on a table or as a word processed document using the following categories:

**Picture of Artist, Name of Artist, Life Span, Birthplace, Type of Works, Common Themes, Most Famous Works (you may not need all of the headings; use what is right for you)**

3. Choose 1 work from 1 artist and identify the sensory language used. Provide an illustration to explain the sensory language identified.

**Choice B:**

1. Select 2 aspects about Harlem culture during the 1920s and 1930s from the list provided and access their entries by typing the title in the search box of the American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers Project

**<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/wpaintro/wpahome.html>**

2. Identify cultural characteristics found in your assigned readings and post your information on a data table or word processed document with the following headings:

**Aspect of Culture, Occupations, Issues/Concerns, Leisure Activities, Vivid Images, Surprising Descriptions, Loaded Words (you may not need all of the headings; use what is right for you)**

3. Write a sensory poem describing your aspect of the Harlem culture of the time.

**Summarizing Strategy**

1. Complete a Gallery Walk of completed products.
2. In your journal write 3 big ideas/illustrations for each personality or aspect of Harlem culture viewed. What could you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste?

<b>Evaluation</b>	For this lesson, students will be evaluated on their sensory poem on a personality of the Harlem Renaissance or an aspect of the culture of the time.
<b>Resources</b>	Harlem Renaissance: What Is It? Handout Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem" List of Notables List of Cultural Aspects List of Harlem Renaissance Websites

## Harlem Renaissance Websites

### Websites Related to African American History

- [African American Odyssey](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aointro.html)  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aointro.html>  
This website, produced by the Library of Congress, presents an overview of African American history beginning with the Atlantic slave trade and continuing through the 20th century.
- [Reconstruction: The Second Civil War](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/)  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/>  
This website, produced as part of the PBS series *The American Experience*, discusses what happened to African Americans during the second half of the 19th century.

### Websites Related to the Harlem Renaissance

- [A Guide to Harlem Renaissance Materials](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/harlem/harlem.html)  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/harlem/harlem.html>  
The Library of Congress offers this annotated collection of Library of Congress resources related to the Harlem Renaissance, included digital materials collections, lesson plans, learning page activities, and exhibits.
- [The Harlem Renaissance Collection](http://165.29.91.7/classes/humanities/amstud/97-98/harren/HARREN.HTM)  
<http://165.29.91.7/classes/humanities/amstud/97-98/harren/HARREN.HTM>  
This website provides a very brief historical overview of the time period and includes links to noted leaders, writers, and entertainers.
- [Rhapsodies in Black: The Harlem Renaissance](http://www.iniva.org/harlem/home.html)  
<http://www.iniva.org/harlem/home.html>  
This website describes the development of the Harlem Renaissance and noted examples of art, poetry, and literature.
- [Harlem 1900-1940: An African-American Community](http://www.si.umich.edu/chico/Harlem/)  
<http://www.si.umich.edu/chico/Harlem/>  
This exhibition website, from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library, includes a timeline of the Harlem Renaissance.

- [Drop Me Off in Harlem: Exploring the Intersections](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/harlem/)  
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/harlem/>  
This ARTSEGE website explores the ways that different art forms and social movements interacted and flourished during the Harlem Renaissance.

### Jacob Lawrence Websites

- From Jacob Lawrence: Exploring Stories (presented by the Whitney Museum of American Art):
- [Meet Jacob Lawrence](http://www.whitney.org/jacoblawrence/meet/index.html)  
<http://www.whitney.org/jacoblawrence/meet/index.html>
- [Jacob Lawrence's Art](http://www.whitney.org/jacoblawrence/art/index.html)  
<http://www.whitney.org/jacoblawrence/art/index.html>
- [Jacob Lawrence: Over the Line](http://www.phillipscollection.org/lawrence/index.html)  
<http://www.phillipscollection.org/lawrence/index.html>
- [Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence](http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/exhibit/exhibitDetail.asp?WHEN=&eventID=2923) (presented by the Seattle Art Museum Special Exhibition Gallery)  
<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/exhibit/exhibitDetail.asp?WHEN=&eventID=2923>
- [Remembering Jacob Lawrence](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/remember/jan-june00/lawrence_6-13.html)  
[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/remember/jan-june00/lawrence\\_6-13.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/remember/jan-june00/lawrence_6-13.html)

### William H. Johnson Websites

- [The William H. Johnson Foundation for the Arts](http://www.whjohnsongrant.org/whjohnson.html)  
<http://www.whjohnsongrant.org/whjohnson.html>
- [A Journey Through Art with W.H. Johnson](http://americanart.si.edu/education/johnson/index.html) (presented by the Smithsonian American Art Museum)  
<http://americanart.si.edu/education/johnson/index.html>
- [Rhapsodies in Black: William H. Johnson](http://www.iniva.org/harlem/william.html)  
<http://www.iniva.org/harlem/william.html>
- [Street Life, Harlem](http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmah/harlem.htm) (by William H. Johnson, presented within the Encyclopedia Smithsonian: Harlem Renaissance entry)  
<http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmah/harlem.htm>

- [Mom Alice](http://wwwFOUNDERS.howard.edu/hucollection/JohnsonWilliamH1.htm) (by William H. Johnson, presented by American Art from the Howard University Collection)  
<http://wwwFOUNDERS.howard.edu/hucollection/JohnsonWilliamH1.htm>

### Duke Ellington Websites

- [Duke Ellington: Celebrating 100 Years of the Man and His Music](http://dellington.org/)  
<http://dellington.org/>
- [PBS Biographies: Duke Ellington](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_ellington_duke.htm)  
[http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist\\_id\\_ellington\\_duke.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_ellington_duke.htm)
- [Duke Ellington 1899-1974: America's Jazz Ambassador](http://library.thinkquest.org/10320/Ellingtn.htm)  
<http://library.thinkquest.org/10320/Ellingtn.htm>
- [Photograph of Duke Ellington](http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/08/0811001r.jpg) (from the Library of Congress)  
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/08/0811001r.jpg>

### Bessie Smith Websites

- [PBS Biographies: Bessie Smith](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_smith_bessie.htm)  
[http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist\\_id\\_smith\\_bessie.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_smith_bessie.htm)
- [Bessie Smith 1894-1937: Jazz Singer](http://library.thinkquest.org/2667/Smith.htm)  
<http://library.thinkquest.org/2667/Smith.htm>
- [Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum: Bessie Smith](http://www.rockhall.com/hof/inductee.asp?id=190)  
<http://www.rockhall.com/hof/inductee.asp?id=190>
- [Bessie Smith: Empress of the Blues](http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/386/bsmith.html)  
<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/386/bsmith.html>

### Langston Hughes Websites

- [The Academy of American Poets: Langston Hughes](http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C0E01)  
<http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C0E01>
- [America's Story from America's Library: Langston Hughes](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/hughes)  
<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/hughes>
- [I Hear America Singing: Profile of Langston Hughes](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ihas/poet/hughes.html)  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ihas/poet/hughes.html>

- [A Centennial Tribute to Langston Hughes](http://www.howard.edu/library/Reference/Guides/Hughes/)  
<http://www.howard.edu/library/Reference/Guides/Hughes/>

### **Countee Cullen websites**

- [Modern American Poetry: Countee Cullen](http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/cullen/cullen.htm)  
[http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/cullen/cullen.htm](http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/cullen/cullen.htm)
- [The Academy of American Poets: Countee Cullen](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/55)  
<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/55>
- [Countee Cullen](http://www.afropoets.net/counteecullen.html)  
<http://www.afropoets.net/counteecullen.html>
- [Rendezvous with Life: An Interview With Countee Cullen](http://newdeal.feri.org/magpie/docs/42winp19.htm)  
<http://newdeal.feri.org/magpie/docs/42winp19.htm>



Early in the 20th century, the industrial North seemed to call African-Americans out of the rural farm life of the South, the racism of the KKK and lynch laws, and the poverty of sharecropping to a promise of decent jobs with decent pay, a home of their own, and a night out dancing without the fear of having men in white sheets shatter the fun.

African-Americans responded to the call of urban Northern cities like Chicago, Detroit, and New York in multitudes. It was a time for African-Americans to set a mark in politics, art, literature, music- any aspect of American life.

During the 1920's Harlem, New York became a place of great activity for Negro writers and performers; the center of urban black life. It was considered the heart of African-American life and selected as home in most black literature of the time. Harlem stands as a symbol for the best and worst qualities of African-American life during the early 20th century.

The term Harlem Renaissance refers to an artistic, cultural, and social explosion of writing about race and the African-American's place in American life during the early 1920s and 1930s. It was a time of affecting social change, protest, and political advancements that was reflected in the art, the literature, the dance, and especially the music of the period.

This was the era of jazz and blues. A time when speakeasies were filled with both blacks and whites dancing to the rhythms of life set out by saxophones, trumpets, and drums. It was a time of great writers like Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay.

The movement gave rise to great confidence and racial pride. Artists, writers and musicians gathered in Harlem to share experiences and provide mutual encouragement.

Author, James Weldon Johnson, acted as a mentor to young

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Black writers such as Claude McKay and Countee Cullen. It was here that Langston Hughes met contemporary, Arna Bontemps and enjoyed the conversation and friendship of his peers.

The Harlem Renaissance ended with the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the start of the Great Depression, which left most Americans struggling to survive.

## Aspects of Harlem Culture

The Whites Invade Harlem

Harlem Rent Parties

Harlem Beauty Shops

Harlem Swing Club

Amateur Night at the Apollo

Street Cries and Criers

Al Thayer

"Slick" Reynolds

Bernice

Harlem Riot

Harlem Conjure Man

Life in Harlem Markets

Eddie's Bar

Domestic Workers' Union

Afternoon in a Pushcart Peddlers' Colony

City Street



### Notables of the Era:

Josephine Baker: singer, actress, activist  
Count Basie: musician  
Arna Bontemps: writer  
Sterling Brown: poet  
Countee Cullen: writer  
Daddy Grace: preacher  
W.E.B. Dubois: teacher, spokesman  
Duke Ellington: composer, musician  
Ralph Ellison: writer  
Father Divine: preacher, activist  
Marcus Garvey: activist  
Fletcher Henderson: musician  
Lena Horne: singer, actress  
Langston Hughes: writer, poet  
Zora Neale Hurston: writer  
Jack Johnson: boxer  
James Weldon Johnson: writer  
Nella Larsen: writer  
Alain Locke: writer  
Joe Louis: boxer  
Claude McKay: writer  
Bessie Smith: singer  
Paul Robeson: actor, activist  
Bill Robinson (Bojangles): dancer  
Wallace Thurman: writer  
Jean Toomer: writer  
James van der Zee: photographer  
Carl van Vetchen: photographer, writer  
A'Lelia Walker: patron  
Madame C. J. Walker: business woman  
Ethel Waters: singer, actress



## Harlem

*Langston Hughes*

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore—  
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—  
like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.  
Or does it explode?

Try your own hand at describing a feeling using five-sense imagery. Fill out the table below:

Feeling:

It looks like...

It sounds like...

It tastes like...

It smells like...

It feels like...