

Sisters in the Shadows: Black Women During the Black Arts Movement

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Rationale

This unit is intended to expose eleventh and twelfth-grade learners to the history of the Black Arts Movement (BAM) which took place between approximately 1964 and the early 1980's, marked by the creation of the Black Arts Repertory Theater (Baraka 27). Most importantly, this unit will hone in on the male chauvinism that silenced black women during that pivotal time in history. For example, though black women have been fighting to write in their own voices since emancipation, they were marginalized and misrepresented in literature, and many of their work went unnoticed and unpublished. The male leaders of the BAM often depicted women as strong black women who castrated the black man. Ultimately, the black female writers working during the Black Arts Movement who dared to assert their gendered identities and emphasize their unique experiences as black women in America, are often overshadowed by their male counterparts, many of whom believed that they were speaking for the race. Their response to black women's effort to articulate the particulars of their experience was often negative because they believed that their gender identities as men were universally applicable to the experiences of all.

In light of these conflicting viewpoints, the essence of this unit centers on helping learners understand the power in their own voices and experiences by studying black women's literature. In the words of Audre Lorde, "if I didn't define myself for myself I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive" (goodreads.com). Therefore, I intend to encourage learners to reflect on the struggles black women overcame by telling their stories in their own words. Unfortunately, black women did not have the freedom to speak out without being ostracized by black men. As a result, black women in the late 60's were beginning to "turn away from the larger society" and began to look within themselves and each other to fight for their own liberation from male chauvinism and racism in America. Consequently, learners will discover that their life experiences and their stories have value, and that it is up to them to change the rhetoric around the behavior and miseducation of black teens if they do not want to be misrepresented. Kay Lindsey in her essay "The Black Woman as a Woman," argues that

according to society black women are expected to be either mothers, domestics, prostitutes, or if they've earned a degree they may be teachers or social workers. Furthermore, the black woman is often defined in "terms that suggest power" such as "domineering," "matriarchal," or "emasculating." This illustration negatively depicts the black woman and further advances the oppression black people and black women suffered in America. Abbey Lindsey argues that "when we are defined by those other than ourselves, the qualities ascribed to us are not in our interest, but rather reflect the nature of the roles which we are intended to play" (Barbara 108). I will challenge students to think about the ways in which black teens are characterized in society today and to begin to dispel the images that they feel are inaccurate.

As we study black women in literature we will discuss the gender identity and sexuality. Black men and the white male patriarch marginalized and exploited black women simply because they were women. I want my learners to think about the roles they play in their family, community, school, and the world. I want them to discuss and understand how social norms and expectations impact their gender identities. We will examine and discuss the way in which we view the female body and how we view women in our society. I want both my male and female students to think about how we define or characterize women in our society today.

It is with Lindsey's words in the forefront of my mind that I think about my learners and their relationships and interactions with women every day. I work in a high school located in a low-income area of West Philadelphia. Most of my students either use public transportation or walk to school. While traveling to school and home, my learners are at risk of encountering violence, and young girls are often approached by men with sexual comments and motives. I often wonder how these experiences impact them personally and mentally. A lot of my learners are being raised by mothers, aunts, grandmothers, or sisters, and they are very protective of these women. Male students, in particular, get very sensitive and agitated when you "disrespect" their mothers. Evidently, there is respect for the black woman; however, I want my students to transfer their feelings from their immediate family members to all women.

This unit will provoke them to develop a sense of gender consciousness and cultivate an appreciation for diversity. Today with the spotlight on the attack on "our sons," society has forgotten the crisis around black girls. President Obama has created a program called "My Brother's Keeper" to help mentor and support young black males, but it still leaves pertinent issues surrounding young black girls out of the conversation. This program solicits men across the nation to mentor low-income boys. However, it does not bring national attention to young girls. Ultimately, the experience of black women in American is overshadowed by the rhetoric around the attack on black males. Not only do we need to save our sons but we also need to save our daughters. I want my students to know that for there to be a change in the black community or even in their lives they have to start seeing themselves as individuals and respect one another as individuals. In her 1970 speech, "I am a Revolutionary Black Woman," Angela Davis states that, "the success or failure of a revolution can always be gauged by the degree to which the status of women is altered in a radical direction" (Marable and Mullings, 483). In other words, Davis is suggesting that unless society pays attention to black women and the oppression that they face, real freedom will not be achieved. Therefore, in this unit, we will think about the following questions: What is the experience of the black woman in today's society? How do we view the female body today? How can art be used as a catalyst for change? How can literature

incorporate the personal and the political if the Black Arts Movement teaches us that they are one in the same? How can understanding and being aware of the Black Female Liberation Movement help to reshape our respect and understanding of black women in society?

Ultimately, this unit seeks to empower young people to develop self-awareness, self-determination, and self-identity as they come to understand the consequences of not developing these qualities. Furthermore, this unit aims to challenge male and female students to raise their level of gender awareness to reshape their thoughts about femininity, sexuality, and the female body. We will regularly discuss and analyze how women are depicted in pop-culture and juxtapose that with how women were represented in literature and in Hollywood during the 1960's through the 1980's. Learners will capture these experiences as well as their personal stories in a class anthology in the form of essays, poems, memoirs, songs, and art.

By creating an anthology, learners will think deeply about their position on challenging issues around women and reflect on the impact that these issues have had on their lives. It is clear that my learners are at a time in their lives where they will be leaving home and attending college with a diverse group of individuals each with their own story and identity. Nikki Giovanni believed that one must know who they are to understand whether or not they fit into a group. In other words, self-definition is essential to preserving one's true identity. Otherwise, one may lose oneself in a group who may not recognize them as they see themselves (Henderson 92). Giovanni's ideas are influenced by Malcolm X's notion that one must understand the importance of self-determination and self-awareness so as not to lose one's identity and give in to inferiority (Marable and Mullings 432). The idea is for seniors to think about themselves in terms of themselves as they prepare to face a world that may challenge how they view themselves and one another.

While studying black women's journey to liberation, learners will also study the rise and fall of the Black Arts Movement and its connection to the Black Power Era. Additionally, learners will be able to articulate the relationship between Hip Hop and the BAM. Hip Hop is a large part of my students' lives, so I want them to know how Hip Hop originated and to think about the ways in which Hip Hop has changed. I want them to think about the ways in which Hip Hop shapes our definition of black womanhood and how it depicts the female body. The point is to help my learners draw their own connection between the tumultuous 60's and 70's and the current state of the country today around race, gender, sexuality, and politics. Black people today feel angry and oppressed by law enforcement and a system that continues to marginalize them. So, I intend to expose learners to the history of activism and the struggle towards black nationalism so as to encourage them to speak up and out about what they feel is important to their communities and themselves as individuals. This unit aims to channel the anger expressed by young people so that they can be heard and respected as active contributors to society. Instead of internalizing the racism and violence against black life in our society, I hope to inspire learners to express their radical ideas in the form of art.

Background

The Black Arts Movement

The Black Power Movement materialized as the 1960's bubbled with agitation. Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), introduced an alternative to the non-violence promoted by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's. Under his leadership, the NOI sought to gain equal justice under the law, equality of opportunity and equal education for all people of color (Marable and Mullings 425-6).

When Malcolm X rose as the spokesmen and leader of the NOI, he roused black people into action towards social, cultural, and political change. In 1962 Malcolm X delivered his speech, "The Ballot or the Bullet" which reminded the people that educated or illiterate, middle class or poor, all black people face the same oppression. Malcolm X urged for the ballot or freedom. He called for the right to choose and elect politicians that will support and represent the black community and its needs (Marable and Mullings 428). He encouraged black people by suggesting that "we have to see each other as brothers and sisters and come together in warmth so we can develop unity and harmony...." The ballot or the bullet concept forces black people to reevaluate themselves, not white America. I, too, am asking my students to reevaluate themselves and think about how systematic decisions shape their communities and how they can impact their communities in a positive way.

Learners should understand that it was young people who were organizing themselves against oppression. For example, Stokely Carmichael, the leader of SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, broke away from the Civil Rights' Non-Violence approach to the struggle. In his essay "What We Want," Carmichael expresses how he began to lose faith in the nonviolent approach to the Black Freedom Movement. Carmichael believed that organizations like SNCC had nothing to offer frustrated black people other than being attacked. Consequently, he argues that these organizations may be inciting black people's frustrations rather than offering them hope. He believed that if blacks were to gain true liberation they must write their own history (Marable and Mulling 443-4). Other black organizations that were fighting for liberation, such as CORE, began to endorse the notion of "Black Power" as well, Floyd McKissick, the leader of CORE states in his 1967 speech, that "the right to revolution is a constitutional right" (Marable and Mullings 460). I want this point to be clear to my learners, that fighting for change is weaved into the fabric of their history and the history of this country. I want learners to understand that each of these leaders wanted black people to look within themselves and to each other to fight against oppression in this country and abroad.

The struggle towards liberation awakened young men in the suburbs of New York. It is while the nation is in racial conflict that young middle-class black artist like Leroy Jones (Amiri Baraka) began to "pull away from the bourgeoisie rubric that art and politics were separate and exclusive entities" (Baraka 24). He lived in the suburbs in New York and felt that the political status of the nation was not in the "soi-disant arts" community in which he lived. Baraka felt compelled to get involved. He had traveled to Cuba in 1962 and was influenced by the revolution

that the people were starting there. As a result, he formed groups, founded a political newspaper, and established relationships with other men who were like minded in New York to contribute to the fight against the struggle. He argues that being introduced to Malcolm X's philosophy and teachings on self-determination, self-respect, and self-defense "struck a chord" in the black youth (Baraka 25). He argues that the more conscious that the youth became, the more that the idea of the separation of arts and politics became nonsensical.

Under Malcolm X's leadership, the "turn your other cheek" rhetoric was simply not enough with acts of violence committed against nonviolent blacks in the form of "lynching, beatings, dog attacks, fire hoses and jail" displayed on television and broadcasted on the radio. Malcolm X taught black people to strive for "self-determination," "self-respect," and "self-defense," and he cultivated a sense of pride in the black community and encouraged Black Power. This new ideology incited a new type of black community, one that fought and sought after true liberation (Bracey et. al 12).

As a result, artists became more conscious and persistent on "an art of struggle...that related to the reality of [the history of blacks] and the real life of the world" (Bracey et. al 13). Ultimately, artists of the Black Arts Movement weren't concerned with earning respect from a mainstream that marginalized and stifled black people like the artist of the Harlem Renaissance. Baraka often faulted the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance for not representing the life of the poor and working class black people who were struggling right in New York and in this country. The Harlem Renaissance writers ignored the plight of poor black people living in New York and focused on the middle-class blacks and conforming to white America. In essence, Baraka viewed the Harlem Renaissance as a failure.

The Black Arts Movement began with the creation of the Black Arts Repertory Theater in Harlem in 1964. Baraka moved to Harlem following the assassination of Malcolm X in 1964 in the hopes of creating a "mass art." According to Larry Neal, Black Arts is the "aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept." He continues to describe the primary goal of the Black Arts writer which is to "confront contradictions arising out of the black man's experience in the racist West" (Bracey et. al 55). Neal accuses the black intellectuals during the Renaissance era of failing to challenge who they should be representing and writing for and what or whose truth they should express. He asserts that national and international struggles demand that the artist writes regarding the interest of black people. Baraka states in his poem, "Black Art,"

*... We want a black poem. And
A Black world
Let the world be a Black poem
And let All Black
People Speak this poem
Silently
Or Loud*

The Black Arts Movement calls for a change in the function of art and the artist. After Malcolm X's assassination, Baraka, Neal, and other artist and activist like Harold Cruse, sat around and brainstormed about what they would contribute to the struggle and thus the Black

Arts was formed. Now that the spokesperson for black power had been assassinated, it was time to speak more affirmatively about the condition of black people in America. With the creation of the Black Arts Repertory Theater School and the notion of a Black Arts, classes such as history, politics, drama, etc. were taught to incite black people to become educated in order to be self-reliant. As the programs reached the community, the idea of the Black Arts Movement was formed (Baraka 26).

The leaders of the Black Arts Movement “began to demarcate themselves from the hedonism and individualism that the blacks downtown possessed,” thus defining blackness was a broad and challenging concept. Difficult questions such as can middle-class blacks produce art that satisfies the people, is there a difference between middle and lower class black art, are middle-class artists striving for mainstream acceptance, and if so what do we do with their art. Furthermore, how do you seek upward mobility while also fighting for a revolution and how do you define what it means to be black and what issues are worthy of attention in literature? Because of this dichotomy, many blacks and whites rejected the Black Arts Movement for their obsession with blackness and hate against whites. According to critics, the work of the Black Arts Movement needed to express rage and reject white people in order to be “viable” (Smith 96). This is why Amiri Baraka, the father of the movement, suggests that early black writers were eventually artist who aimed for highbrow art to impress the mainstream. Baraka criticizes these writers for writing their own experiences and not the “real” experiences of black people. He believed that black art should reflect the struggle of the people and progress the revolution (Bracey et. al 16).

Under the Black Arts framework, poetry and other art forms needed to reflect the anger black people had towards the inequality they faced in this country. Black people were angry and tired of “unfilled promises,” “legislators,” “leadership that view blacks as enemies,” or “unnecessary burdens.” In other words, their needed to be a link between social frustration and its impact on literature. According to Larry Neal, another father of the Movement, the BAM opposed any concept that separated the artist from the community. The BAM related to the need for self-determination and nationhood and called for a cultural change in which the black artist would create new art forms and structures in order to preserve the culture. Overall, the purpose of the BAM was to educate, motivate, and liberate black people. The idea was to create the world through the black lens so that black people could feel a sense of pride in themselves and see themselves as beautiful in art form. Neal asserts that black art must “expose the enemy, praise the people, and support the revolution. But, most notably, black art must be collective from the people and returned to the people in a form “more beautiful and colorful than it was in real life” (Bracey et. al 56).

Unfortunately, the BAM failed because of the notion that there was a specific way to write and deliver black art. The progenitors of the BAM rejected the work of the Harlem Renaissance artists because it did not reflect the nuances of black consciousness. However, defining what it meant to be black, what it meant to be a black man, what it meant to be a black woman, and a black artist is a task that the men so arrogantly tried to surmount on their own. They didn't regard their broadly as partners but rather as subservient. Eventually the Theater failed, and the concept of black art was manifested in other ways. Jones and Neal both have slightly different definitions of the black aesthetic and black art. In his research on the BAM,

David Smith criticizes the men for their inability to clearly define black art. Furthermore, Smith suggests that the men confused social theory with aesthetics which is predicated upon crude, strident forms of nationalism that do not lend themselves to careful analysis (97). Because of this, there is very few scholarly research on the Black Arts Movement. Baraka and Neal felt the need to dictate to artist what they should be writing about and how they should write. What's more, the men went as far as to outline how black people should live their lives and how black women should carry themselves. Unfortunately, like Hip Hop, the BAM was ignored because it was aggressive and dismissive of western values and the sensation of the American Dream. The goal of the Black Arts Movement was to establish a black art, mass art, and revolutionary art. Ultimately the continued fight is to spark a cultural revolution (Bracey et. al 17).

Black Women During the Black Power Era and the Black Arts Movement

Notwithstanding its failures, The Black Arts Movement was successful in galvanizing young people who were in need of a revolution. Unfortunately, part of the reason why the Black Arts Movement fell apart is because of the way the male leaders regarded women who helped shape the movement. Toni Cade Barbara spoke on the issue of roles in the movement. Barbara believes that "a man cannot be politically correct and a chauvinist too" (Barbara 131). Black men in an attempt to progress the race dominated the rhetoric around issues in the black community, family, relationships, and politics. Barbara argues that instead of focusing on womanhood or manhood, we need to shift priorities and focus on selfhood (129). The idea of gender roles is a social construction that maintains the patriarchal power structure in our country. As a result, many Black Liberation organizations struggled with the woman who complained about the way they were being treated by the men. For example, educated black women were asked to serve coffee, perform clerical duties, and were offered a seat or two on the board (Barbara 130).

Women were fed up. They began to form their own organizations, caucuses, and magazines. The macho philosophy of the Black Power/Black Arts Movement resulted in so many demeaning experiences for the women of the BAM that many of them began "to protest and eventually break away." Black women wrote literature to "piece together an overview of themselves, and deal with the reality of being black in America. A country that values property over life has never valued Black life and view its women as monsters" (Barbara 5). They wanted to correct the images of themselves in literature as described by black men who often derived the image of the black woman from their fantasies, needs, and secondhand knowledge (Barbara 131). Women began to galvanize and develop their "consciousness" as black women and eventually they began to write themselves into the revolution.

This unit will focus on the contributions of authors and activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer was an activist and leader in SNCC, and she led several other organizations that served the people, and provided housing for the homeless. In 1962 Hamer states, "I work for the liberty of all people, because when I liberate myself, I'm liberating other people" (Marable and Mullings 421). Almost a decade later in her essay "I am a Revolutionary Black Woman," Angela Davis asserts that the success or failure of a revolution can be determined by the condition of women (Marable and Mullings 484). She believed that men must also fight for the liberation of women. In her speech, Davis states that black women are the most oppressed sector of society receiving lower wages, lower positions, inadequate housing, and suffering sexual abuse and

exploitation. She continues that women's sexual status in society was that of breeder and property of perverse desire (Marable and Mullings 485).

To further marginalize and suppress the black woman, America, according to Davis, created the myth of the strong matriarch, a black mother who conspires with the white man to castrate black men. As a result, women began to subscribe to self-sacrificing behavior by taking secondary jobs in order to avoid castrating her man. On the other hand, black men were brainwashed by this myth and perpetuated it in their own writing. She suggests that both black men and black women internalized the racism against them and had lost respect for each other. Davis proclaims that, "I will not be free until all black people are free" (Marable and Mullings 486). For the black community to achieve liberation from the oppression and marginalization of white America, black men have to start seeing black women as their partners and not their enemies.

With the help of Toni Cade Barbara, who published the anthology, *The Black Woman*, in 1970, twenty-seven women writers expressed the desire and the demand to be liberated from the oppressive roles men have placed them in either in society or literature. Writers and activists such as Abbey Lincoln, Gayle Stokes, and Michelle Wallace. These women wrote essays such as "Calling All Black Men," "Black Woman as a Woman," and "Is the Black Woman Castrating the Black Man." Each of these essays, speeches, and discussions describe the black woman's desire to be heard and to be recognized as the black man's partner in the revolution and not as his oppressor. Black women were asking the black man to see her as a person and recognize the sacrifices and the oppression she has faced in this country. Kay Lindsey articulates the struggle in her poem, "Poem,":

*...But now the revolution needs numbers
and motherhood has a new position
five steps behind manhood*
(Barbara 13)

The concept of castrating the black man is a common theme in the black women's writing featured in *The Black Woman*. The idea of a woman who was a leader or who thought politically was not taken seriously. She was considered to be too strong and too domineering. In school, I learned about the male political leaders because they held the majority. I've heard of leaders like Malcolm X, WEB Dubois, and Marcus Garvey. It is when I thought of the women that I struggled to create a list. Jean Carey Bond and Patricia Peery in a 1969 article, "Is the Black Man Castrated" argues that the black man always surfaces with his manhood intact. The black man is resilient and yet allows himself to believe that the black woman is out to steal his manhood (Barbara 147-8). The same black woman who has been shut out of society, she has been forced to work in kitchens, forced to keep silent, forced to drop out of school and forced to assume roles dictated by a patriarchal society as not to insult her man.

Black women in America have been misrepresented and marginalized. In search of manhood, the black man has characterized the black woman as being uninformed and lacking nonsexual preoccupations (Bracey et. al. 97). Additionally, black women have been exploited in film, drama, and radio, or they have been depicted as servants or too militant when they were

portrayed. Women argued that the characters representing black women were often static and lacking the complexities of true life. These depictions made it simple for society to rob the black woman of her humanity. If she is less than human, then she can be the victim of crime, abuse, abandonment and rape. She can have her children taken from her, and she can be accused of emasculating the black man, and her protest will be ignored (101).

Abbey Lincoln, in her essay "To Whom Will the Black Woman Cry Rape," described how dating back to slavery, black women were raped and denied the right to cry out in pain. She was blamed as the victim and called loose and "wanton," "sultry," "hot-blooded", and "amoral." She asked, "who will assuage her indignation? Who will glorify and proclaim her beautiful image" (Bracey et. al. 263)? Black women suffered from a triple consciousness, being Black, a woman, and American. It is unfortunate that many women subscribed to the patriarchal gender roles that were prescribed for them from fear that they'll be accused of castrating their man and therefore losing him. Not only was she encouraged to take lesser positions, but she was encouraged to mimic white women and to express femininity by imitating their looks and demeanor. She is made to feel inadequate and just "too damned much for everybody" (103).

Women were speaking out, and they wrote their experiences into the revolution and into history with a new approach to style, language, and stance on the treatment of black women and black people in America. Their work was radical, and it was honest. In essence, Barbara's anthology was an affirmation of the new found strength black women were cultivating as a result of their struggle. They were beginning to examine themselves and to define what it meant to be a black woman. Each of the women represented in *The Black Woman* came from different backgrounds ranging from writers and activist to everyday women who had ideas and wanted to express them. This is notable because it shows how women valued the voices of all women, merely being a black woman was enough to be included in the conversation.

Black women were beginning to define their own identities and were demanding that the world values their stories. They were talking about how "Black men and Black women are placing ultimate blame for their subjugation on each other, a propensity which fairly reeks of self-hatred" (Barbara 144). Bond and Peery question the source of this self-hate. They bring up the notion of the black matriarch as a myth, pointing out that black women endured the burden of male frustration and rage in the form of "abuse, desertion, and rejection" of their femininity and general appearance. Having economic success only increases her chances of rejection or else invites acceptance in the form of exploitation. To his dismay, failing in his attempt to protect the black woman and himself, the black man further degrades the black woman and she, in turn, insults him. According Bond and Peery's argument, it is clear that mainstream America has pitted black men and black women against each other (145).

"We Would Have to Fight the World," argues Michelle Wallace in an article written in 1975, Wallace describes her journey into black consciousness. She illustrates how as a young girl she fanaticized about having long hair, not to mimic white women, but to feel feminine "which meant being white" (Marable and Mullings 520). Years later, as Wallace came into consciousness, she started to realize that the rhetoric around "blackness" only sought to control her (the black woman) and spoke largely of the black man. After joining the National Black Theater and after reading literature by black men, she learned that men blamed women for the

castrating black men. Therefore, black women in the movement were expected to be soft-spoken, submissive, and "beautiful." If she (the black woman) projects aggressiveness, intelligence, or independence she would be denied the role of being a woman to her man (521).

Black women were struggling with the decision of fighting for her blackness and fighting for her womanhood. However, they disagreed on the direction that their groups should go. Although, they were beginning to form organizations led and controlled by women, in 1975 they were still reluctant to associate themselves with the white female feminist movement. Black women didn't have the white feminist groups to support her efforts towards liberation because many of them saw the black woman as "faceless masses of welfare mothers and rape victims to flesh out their statistical studies of the woman's plight." On the other hand, black women saw feminism as "whitey's" thing (Marable and Mullings 522). Black women had to deal with the conflict of not fitting in with the White Feminist Movement and the difficulty of forming an organized and sustainable sisterhood among black women. For example, within their organizations, there was chaos and conflict. In 1973 the National Black Female Organization was "bogged down in an ideological dispute." Black women couldn't decide on certain issues and in particular were split on lesbianism vs. homosexuality. Black women were divided. Wallace asserts that black feminist exist, they just exist as individuals because "there is not yet an environment in this society remotely congenial to our struggle." Ultimately, black women would have to fight the world (523).

Objectives

The school where I teach is under title 1, and all of my learners qualify for free lunch. Each period is 58 minutes, and we meet daily. At least 20% of my learners have IEPs, and others have reading levels ranging from middle school to grade level. During this unit learners will be able to explain how both the written and spoken word can influence a movement and spark a revolution. As outlined above, each area of the unit forces learners to think about and develop their own opinions about how black women are perceived in America and how they see themselves in America. Additionally, by the end of the unit learners be able to share their personal voice and experiences around the current social, political, and economic oppression blacks endure today.

Learners will gain historical background on the Black Arts Movement and Black Female Liberation Struggle. We will engage many texts, songs, and film excerpts to gain an understanding of the struggle, journey, desires, failures, and successes of black women from the 60's-80s. Learners will explore and discuss the experience of teens today as they keep in mind the history studied in this unit. We will think about and discuss the issues that are pertinent to each individual and develop a collective list of topics, issues, and concerns so that the learners will have ideas for their poetry and other writing assignments. Learners will examine how art can be used as propaganda to affect change or create cultural shifts in society. My goal is to help learners understand how black women produced literature and advocated for themselves in spite of their struggles. Learners will evaluate and make judgments on the notion that art integrates the personal and the political concerns of the artist. Each class will debate about whether or not the

political and the personal message are one in the same or separate. Learners will begin to understand that there is power in their words and will learn to make decisions on how to channel that power. I would like to allow the artist to express themselves in the art form of their choice. I do not want to limit their creativity and thus impede their growth as an artist and as individuals. Learners will have reading assignments outside of class and will participate in literature circles in order to conduct high-level discussions around the text we will study.

Strategies

- Whole-Group Discussions
 - Learners will engage in the text and make connections to contemporary issues in whole class discussions.
- Small Group Reading and Analysis
 - Learners will work in literature circles to analyze, discuss, and respond to the short works we read in class.
- Jig Saw
 - Students will read portions of essays and share their opinions on the author's purpose, argument, and style of writing. Learners will also jigsaw lines of poetry for analysis and interpretation.
- Presentations
 - Learners will improve their listening and speaking skills following the common core standards.
- Analytical Writing
 - Learners will write analytical and argumentative essays in response to the works we read both within and beyond the classroom.
- Creative Writing
 - Learners will write poetry/songs, short stories/ vignettes, scripts/dialogue to share their experiences in their own voices, like the women of the Movement.

Classroom Activities

- Week I
 - Introduction to the unit, selection of essays and poetry on the *Black Arts Movement* and women from *SOS Calling all Black People* and *The Black Woman*.
- Week II
 - A Genre Study: Looking more analytically at poetry, short stories, and drama written by Black Women of the Black Arts Movement. Analyzing and Evaluating themes, tone, style, and structure.
- Week III
 - Learners will delve more deeply in the plays written by black women and begin working on the project.

- Week IV
 - Complete and present final project: Multi-genre Class Anthology.

Daily and Weekly Tasks:

- Daily writing activities in the genres of poetry, short story writing, blogging, script writing, and expository writing.
- Weekly presentations based on a text-based analysis conducted on a work and presentations on small research topics related to the Black Arts Movement.
- Research on female artists and events that took place during the Black Power Era and the Black Arts Movement
- Independent Project Days in which learners will begin to create the literature they will publish in the class anthology.

Annotated Bibliography/Works Cited/Resources

Teacher Resources:

Bambara, Toni Cade. *The Black Woman; an Anthology*. New York: New American Library, 1970. Print.

An anthology of all black female authors. This anthology was created in 1970 to provide black women with a platform to share their works and opinions that reflect their concerns and life experiences. It is comprised of essays, poems, short stories, and plays.

Bracey, John H., Sonia Sanchez, and James Edward Smethurst. *SOS/Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader*. U of Massachusetts, 2014. Print.

S.O.S is an anthology of essays, manifestos, poetry, drama, short fiction and songs. The entire collection highlights the artists, activist, and organizations in the Black Arts Movement and seeks to expose the difficulties that helped to both begin and end the Black Arts Movement.

Daniels, Harvey, and Steven Zemelman. *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-area Reading*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004. Print.

This is a strategies book that helps educators to plan reading assignments that will increase student talk and help learners to think more critically about the text that they are closely reading.

Gladney, Marvin J. "The Black Arts Movement and Hip-Hop." *African American Review* 29.2 (1995): 291-301. Web. 30 Mar. 2016.

This article explains how Hip Hop emerged and its relationship to the Black Arts Movement. Hip Hop is described as being highly political, and a reflection of the urban atrocities black people experienced daily. The article further explains how and why Hip Hop became more mainstream and less political.

Henderson, Abney L. *Four Woman: An Analysis of the Artistry and Activism of Black Women in the Black Arts Movement, 1960s and 1980s*. Thesis. University of South Florida, 2014. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 1-116. Print.

In her thesis, Henderson outlines the lives of Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Nina Simone, and Elizabeth Catlett. Each of these women share a desire to be individuals as they write for the black man, woman, and child. These women were activist not only for Black people's rights but most importantly black female liberation from the male chauvinistic ideals of the leaders of the BAM. Her point is that the success of blacks has been predicated on the success of black women.

Musser, Judith. "African American Women's Short Stories in the Harlem Renaissance: Bridging a Tradition." *Melus* 23.2 (1998): 27. Web.

This article describes the themes, characters, and settings in black female literature. The article provides insight as to why black men and publishers did not pay much attention to the short stories that black women were writing. Discusses a shift in content from black issues to black female life.

Smith, David Lionel. "The Black Arts Movement and Its Critics." *Am Lit Hist American Literary History* 3.1 (1991): 93-110. Web.

This journal explains the tumultuous journey of the artist of the Black Arts Movement and explains why critics often negatively depict the movement, and why there is little research available on the Black Arts Movement.

Student Resources:

Bracey, John H., Sonia Sanchez, and James Edward Smethurst. *SOS/Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader*. U of Massachusetts, 2014. Print.

S.O.S is an anthology of essays, manifestos, poetry, drama, short fiction and songs. The entire collection highlights the artists, activist, and organizations in the Black Arts Movement and seeks to expose the difficulties that helped to both begin and end the Black Arts Movement.

Henderson, Abney L. *Four Woman: An Analysis of the Artistry and Activism of Black Women in the Black Arts Movement, 1960s and 1980s*. Thesis. University of South Florida, 2014. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 1-116. Print.

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Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing, 1984. Print.

This book is a collection of essays around sexuality, gender, identity and other issues concerning black women.

Shange, Ntozake. *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When the Rainbow Is Enuf: A Choreopoem*. New York: Scribner Poetry, 1997. Print.

This book is a choreopoem that stands as the turning point in black female literature. The poems in this collection discuss universal themes that reach all women regardless of race or sexuality. This choreopoem personifies the life and the struggles black women face while also highlighting the strength black women obtained as a result of their struggles. Shange is highly criticize for castrating and outing the black male in this text. This work is also one of the first major black female work that has been accepted by the mainstream.

Shange, Ntozake. *Nappy Edges*. New York: St. Martin's, 1978. Print.

This collection of poetry focuses on a range of topics that express the concerns of black women.

Appendix

TWIST

TWIST	Response	Textual Support
Tone: the attitude of the speaker toward the subject		
Word Choice: the specific words and their connotations, associations, or emotional impact		
Imagery: the sense impressions (sound, smell, sight, taste, and touch)		
Style: the author's use of figurative language and poetic devices such as repetition, rhyme, and rhythm		
Theme: the author's insight about life		
Thesis Statement:		

<https://app.uncoursesystems.com/school/webpage/10943687/1245644>

Four Sentence Rhetorical Précis Template

1. _____, _____ in
his/her (author's credentials) (author's first and last name)
_____, _____,
(genre: article, essay, short story, editorial, sermon, etc.) (title of text appropriately punctuated
underlined or in quotation marks) argues (or suggests, implies, claims, notes) that
_____.
(major assertion/thesis statement of author's text)

2. He/she supports (or develops) his/her claim by first _____
(comparing, narrating, illustrating,
defining, etc.)
_____, then _____, then
_____, and finally _____.

3. _____'s purpose is to _____
(author's last name) (persuade, criticize, explain,
entertain, inform, describe...,
_____ in order to
...prove, convince, bring about change, recommend, warn, etc.)

(to accomplish what?)

4. He/she _____ a(n) _____ tone for
(verb: adopts, establishes, creates, etc.) (informative, infuriated,
thoughtful, hopeful, serious, sarcastic, etc.)
_____.
(who is the intended audience)

(<https://teacherweb.com/TN/CordovaHighSchool/JChappell/rhetorical-precis-template.pdf>)

TPCASTT Poetry Analysis Poem: _____

<p>Title: Examine the title before reading the poem. What do you think the poem is about based on the title?</p>	
<p>Paraphrase: Put the poem in your own words. A paraphrase is more of a word-for-word translation than a summary.</p>	
<p>Connotation: Examine the author's diction and use of figurative language. Why does the author choose certain words and what are the multiple meanings and/or connotations of those words?</p>	
<p>Attitude: What is the author or speaker's attitude or tone? How do you know?</p>	
<p>Shifts: Note shifts in tone, subject, attitude, mood, etc. What effect do these shifts have on the meaning of the poem?</p>	
<p>Title again: Look at the title again now that you have read the poem. What do you think it means now?</p>	
<p>Theme: What is the message of the poem?</p>	

<https://app.oucoursesystems.com/school/webpage/10943687/1245644>

Pennsylvania Common core writing rubric

http://www.schoolimprovement.com/docs/Common%20Core%20Rubrics_Gr11-12.pdf

Content Standards

- CC.1.3.11–12. F
 - Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
- CC.1.5.11–12. A
 - Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
- CC.1.3.11–12. F
 - Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
- CC.1.3.11–12. A
 - Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the themes; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CC.1.4.11–12. G
 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.
- CC.1.4.11–12. S
 - Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction.
- CC.1.4.11–12. T
 - Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- CC.1.5.11–12. D
 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective; organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- CC.1.5.11–12. F
 - Make strategic use of digital media in presentations to add interest and enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence.