

# **Fly Away North: African-American Short Stories of the Great Migration**

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**Overview**

“We have seen that there is in Philadelphia a large population of Negroes, largely young unmarried folks with a disproportionate number of women.” – W.E.B. DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro.

This unit will focus its content on African-American short stories, art, news articles and several films focusing on U.S. migration of African-Americans. The curriculum’s compilation is intended to introduce students to literary knowledge about short story development, but also to assist them in developing knowledge of African-American migration, also known as The Great Migration. By reading the stories, news accounts, and film, students will find reflections of their own history. Because the African American short story often times juxtaposes social commentary, we will examine the stories that discuss the trends, patterns, and reasoning associated with the urbanization of Black people in the U.S. Distinction will be given to the literary tools and characteristics of the short story throughout the study of the curriculum unit.

While participating in the seminar, “*But Mostly I Lie a Lot Anyway*”: *The African American Short Story in the 21st Century*, I thought to develop a curriculum that could be used in courses in African-American Literature or African-American History. The short story often unfolds with the use of one character’s point of view, thus maximizing word usage in a short space. Reading a short story, with its rapid deployment of plot, details and setting, it is difficult to recognize plot development, but students will learn to chart the narrative through character, setting, timeline, conflict and point of view.

In using news accounts, students will be exposed to actual stories from a journalistic perspective so that they will be able to weave the trends and living conditions of African-American people of the migration era with the fictional narratives. Newspapers stirring Northern migration and/or societal astuteness and awareness like *The Chicago Defender*, *The Pittsburgh Courier* and *The Philadelphia Tribune*, will be utilized to link the cultural trends of the era. These selections of informational readings will improve the students’ information base to critically dissect and understand the fictional literature of the unit, which undoubtedly is linked to actual and factual events and/or goings on.

Through my use of art and film, I have consistently sought to utilize a variety of media in my pedagogy, particularly in my English Language Arts class over the past few years. I have gained a respect for the expressive arts as an important component of the course from the perspective of the artist (paintings, drawings, photography and sculpture) and the filmmaker (taking a story; giving it live images). As courses in art instruction are slowly being eliminated from public schools’ curricula offerings, the purpose of this unit is to demonstrate the importance of integrating the arts. I have chosen to include the Jacob Lawrence Migration Series collection in this unit. This collection is housed in Washington, DC (odd numbered panels) and New York City (even numbered panels).

Students will be required to consider the idea of agency as it gets worked out in the short story, considering how representations of the spoken word provides a window into the storytelling practices to be found in the African-American community. By discovering the short story’s ability to present multiple perspectives, its depiction of the resolution of a predicament, and its use of microcosm, students will come to value their own forms of agency, as they negotiate everyday life.

## Rationale

“Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died...” from James Weldon Johnson, Lift Every Voice and Sing (adopted as the Negro National Anthem)

This unit is created to introduce, conceptualize and understand African-Americans’ living trends after slavery. The unit will reveal and help to fill the major holes not found in text of African-American history or pulled out from the short story (theme) taught in schools

about African-American people and their movement throughout the U.S. after the abolition of slavery. In wanting to uncover the lineage of Black folks from the South, this unit is designed for a broader knowledge base, ancestry finding, and historical understanding. I wanted to research this topic so the multitude of students I serve can be enriched by Black American migration historical information. Knowing that much of their history, which can be found as tidbit interjections in literature, my students have been in some way teased in the knowledge of a surface self-discovery historical examination. Most students in Philadelphia think their families are originally from the Philadelphia area; the concept of speaking with their elders is most times for them a foreign event. More importantly, students deserve the opportunity to learn from an academic environment, initiating the exploration of “self.” Discovering which State they originated will give them a great deal to grow upon after leaving high school.

Short stories were often times written about the goings on after African-Americans acquired knowledge of a better life in northern cities, as well, African-Americans knowing that sharecropping would not truly encourage a family’s upward mobility nor would it provide for their children’s education. Students, after engaging with this unit, in African-American courses will learn to interact with and/or connect to characters through the historical implants offered in these stories, works of art, and film vignettes. As we proceed through the unit and its lessons, students will be required to consider migration and African-American literature as a language of creation, framing for students a way in which to see this movement, giving students a vocabulary to discuss African-American production via the writer – migrant, interpreter, historian, griot, stranger and ancestor.

This curriculum is also created to empower students academically, socially, and historically pertaining to the events and social issues of the era, while examining societal conflicts interspersed within the literary and artistic themes. Students given instruction from this unit will in effect, provide opportunity of analysis through life stories of fiction and perspectives of art. Students will also be given information to digest for comprehension of trends in the expectations of the dreams and hopes of African-American people in the migration.

While delving into the learning of material for students, using a holistic approach to teach this unit - drawing from art, literature, music, film and history, teachers will be able to saturate students using the plethora of elements assisting students’ ability to understand the moment in US History. These stories and/or moments in history will be approached in connection to the readings of short stories, allowing students to take hold of an understanding of their own family’s story. Considering the aspects of the subject matter discourse, the unit offers an English Language Arts teacher a content-rich experience, hence the included lessons are from a holistic approach for students’ success, achievement, and self-acceptance. With this in mind, even students from other countries will be able to engage in activities throughout the unit, which will build their confidence for US learning along the way.

## **Objectives**

*“...Winning people over one heart at a time.” – Isabel Wilkerson, author of The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*

Using the Common Core Standards (CCS) will support the curriculum<sup>1</sup>. In selecting to use the varied standards for instruction, students will become proficient in engaging in the migration accounts through art and literary expressions, narratives (written and oral), literature (short stories), and will have the skills making them capable of detailing their own personal migration story.

Students in the Philadelphia area typically cannot recall their families’ history, nor have they inquired into their family history beyond one generation. This curriculum unit will also expose students to specific guided instruction of delving into their past generation’s stories, ultimately giving way for them to create their own migration short story and migration collage for an artistic lens interpretation of that story.

Furthermore, this unit uses pedagogy of engagement, which emphasizes the relationship between text, context and the students’ experiences to investigate the text more thoroughly and in an intimate way. It also serves to note that much of the background study was included after also participating in the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute: *Stories of the Great Migration* held in Columbia, South Carolina on the campus of University of South Carolina (USC) under the direction of the African American Studies department.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the objectives of this unit’s design are to require students to become reflective readers, seeking meaning, monitoring what is being said from paragraph to paragraph, and then drawing a clear distinction between the thinking of an author and their own thinking. As students progress through the unit, they will master purpose in reading, ideas in a text that are integrated with art/film, and they will be able to look for systems of meaning<sup>3</sup> in text and art. Therefore, there is great deal to use in this unit for a high school classroom making it easier for teachers to chuck the information into smaller parts of need, style, and cross-curricular modes.

## **Short Story Stylistics**

“Federal Authorities Cannot Stop Northern Migration: Finds no law that prevents labor of any kind moving from one section of the country to another” – headline from the Chicago Defender, Nov. 4, 1916

In the lessons of the unit students will negotiate the pivotal moments of the migration narrative by focusing their attention on the following elements: a.) an event that propels

action northward; b.) a detailed representation of the initial confrontation with the urban landscape; c.) an illustration of the migrants' attempt to negotiate the landscape and his/her resistance to the negative effects of urbanization; d.) a vision of the possibilities of limitations from the North and the South.<sup>4</sup> However, and more importantly, students must be able to differentiate the prose writing characteristics of the short story.

The short story is an American literary form, not reliant on the novel form. The short story uses an economy that requires the writer to choose every word carefully, paying close attention to all the details included in each word. In the short story lessons about the Great Migration, students will become familiar with centrality of the Black voice - carrying connotations of life that no other ethnic voice brings to the table. Some might say that that is an assumption on both the writer and the reader, but for this unit, students will take into account that most 20<sup>th</sup> Century literature by African-American authors always contains a political and racial tone of climate in the USA, specifically those stories associated to the Great Migration.

Prior to the commencement of reading and/or viewing art/film, we will frame the study with the following questions: What is migration? What is a migration narrative? What is an African-American migration story, film, art, etc.? What experiences, texts, or landscapes do writers/artists draw upon in their exploration of migration? How do new approaches to African American literature prompt us to think about the Great Migration and literature/art?<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the lessons of the unit, students will be guided in deep reading by considering the following questions: Can I summarize what I think the meaning of the text is? Can I relate my life to the text? Can I create images or metaphors to explain the text? What question do I still have about the text? Can I connect this to other ideas I have or to stories, poems, news articles I have read? Most importantly, students will consider – how does the author use literary techniques and rhetorical devices (metaphors, irony, personification, tone, voice, imagery, etc.)? Why do authors do this? What are some other themes the author includes? What is stated in the text and what is implied? What are my thoughts about these themes? Students will be required throughout the study to engage with the text, art, and/or film. They cannot accept what the text claims, they will be trained to ask questions, read and research for answers, compare text to experiences and other readings and artistic representations.

## **Mapping Migration**

“We embrace Southern History, the realities of the Southern present, and the opportunities for Southern futures. ...., we don’t flinch from talking about race, class, religion, gender...” – from the Southern Foodways Alliance mission statement.

In this section of the unit, students will first learn to embrace the concept of human movement within their own country while probing and analyzing questions of demographic shifts in US History. Next, we will list factors that may have influenced migration, rather a mass exile from one part of the country to various places North. We will read various primary source documents and/or letters of persons of the era. Students will learn to read, understand and analyze Black folks' movement in the US through map study of archived US maps. This part of the study will also include looking at the realistic trends of literary connections via the railway lines of the era. For instance, in Stevie Wonder's song, *Living for the City*,<sup>6</sup> the boy from Mississippi would not have ended up in New York City, he would have probably ended his migration in Chicago or another nearby urban area. For this purpose, it will be of great importance that students gain knowledge of the migration patterns as they actually existed.

Students will be trained to use primary source documents (newspapers, letters, travel books and guides, railroad lines map images) for gathering resources to confirm and compare literary mentioning in writings to maps. To deepen their understanding of migration patterns, students will delve into Pullman Porter and Redcap writings; narratives while looking at the railroad. Also in this section of the study, students will learn to use the Jacob Lawrence, The Migration Series<sup>7</sup> panels to extend their knowledge and imagery of maps and mapping.

The essential questions we will consider at this point in the unit are – How did Jim Crow laws make travel different for African-Americans? Where did African-Americans find lodging? List some of the inferences made from your family coming to Philadelphia and/or other Northern cities? What were the influences causing Southerners to migrate north?

To further our discussions of migration and travel while looking at maps and travel logs, students will define: Ask students what they would pack in their migration suitcase or to pack a suitcase as seen in a Jacob Lawrence panel. What would they include? What types of preparations do they have to make? What types of decisions? When to migrate? Who will migrate and when will each family member migrate? Where will they migrate--To a place where there is family or someplace where there is no family? What do the migrants need to consider? Opportunities? Jobs? Community? Education? Climate?<sup>8</sup>

### **Northern Newsies**

“These people from the South changed the whole picture of life in Duquesne [Pittsburgh, PA].” –Stanley Dance from The World of Earl Hines.

Students in this section of the unit will discover some primary and secondary source documents and digital archives<sup>9</sup>, as well; they will perform oral interviews which will later be developed and made into a digital storytelling blog site and/or an oral narrative

site for future classroom use. It must be mentioned that prior to approaching any interview, students must become familiar with an interview and artifacts permission form.<sup>10</sup> The form should be obtained by every student in the class (for review); then agreed to and signed before the start of the interview with any person or their family members. It is necessary to do this only once, but if additional photographs of artifacts are taken after the first meeting then students must include all additional items photographed on an additional permission form. These forms should be kept and filed by the instructor for at least a year beyond the duration of the project.

First, let us discuss the oral interview, and then we will cover the objectives of the interview. To integrate the interview process into the curriculum, students will need some assistance in knowing this is an important part of the unit because of near comparisons to the varied fiction stories listed for reading later. The focus of the interview will be of family members who will have been pre-interviewed about their childhood to determine whether they migrated from the South. Furthermore, students will delve into inquiry with family members who are first generation migrants; those who remember particular details of traveling to and fro – North to South and then back to the North.

Students will be able to use the interview experiences not only as a median to documenting oral history, but also as a way to stimulate reflection upon their own lives. In a later lesson of the unit, students will be required to create their own short story. Next, we will begin the process of developing questions, open-ended questions and the process of active listening. Listening that affords the opportunity for students to build their next question upon the answers sometimes given by their interviewee. When developing questions there needs to be a logical sequence to them and begin questioning at an interviewees comfort point. For instance, ask them about their birthplace in the family (first born or middle child), where they were born- more than just the city and state, hospital or at home, within this framework of beginning questions students can insert follow up questions to bring out more details and to acknowledge their part in the conversation. However, students need to know they are more the listener than the talker.

Students can brainstorm a line of questions for the interview based on initial migration story readings, and then later evaluate their relevance for their projects. Remind students after the brainstorming session that they can ask to see pictures or other family heirlooms that might help to jar the interviewee's memory. Also, the picture or item can be used as an artifact. This can be adapted for classes, provide students with a teacher-generated questioning form<sup>11</sup>, giving students all the questions to be asked during an interview. This saves lots of class periods and homework assignment time, providing a helpful guide for students' success in the activity.

Additionally, we cannot forget using the newspaper as primary source documents that will support or oppose oral stories told to the students by their interviewees. Going to our local free library<sup>12</sup> to access the articles or use a friendly college or university link to

access the documents. So much is now on the Internet for teacher and students' use. Furthermore, students will view *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords*<sup>13</sup>, a film about the history of the Black press. During the viewing of the film, students will be required to discuss the impact of journalism by discussing the following points: The Black press as an activist tool; major developments in communications by Black newspapers between the 1920's and 1930's; the role of women and the news; visual imagery of African-Americans in the news (then and now)- any changes?; modes of distribution in the Jim Crow South.<sup>14</sup>

### **Southern Specialty Sensations**

“Yet, with another part of my mind, I am aware that no man is a villain in his own eyes.”  
– James Baldwin, taken from his notes on his play, “Blues for Mister Charlie”

As a part of the unit, students will be exposed to the hurtful portions of US history, most notably the savagery of lynching. Of importance in this section of learning, is that students should have a greater sense of the varied reasons Blacks in the South might have made the decision to go to the North. It is important that teachers temper the introduction of this segment in varied ways. First, one must consider students' reactions to the art and/or photography. Teachers can briefly and succinctly post the following questions in the classroom to guide responses and reactions: What is your first response to the work? How does it make you feel? What does it make you think of? Does the photo/art remind you of anything or instance?

Thoughts to ponder as the coursework proceeds: What image of race relations is evident? What image of the Southern Black community is presented? What experiences does the writer, photographer, artist bring to our thinking? What range of skills and education is presented of Blacks in the South? How did information become so widely disseminated in the South?

In addition, as a part of this unit's study, we will deal with the politics of language (vernacular/dialect) as it is represented in a story. Students will develop an annotated style of notes for understanding particular vernacular when reading certain stories, such as in Alice Walker's, *Everyday Use* – dashiki; in primary source documents - Boo weevil

### **Classroom Activity I**

“If the train stays on the track ... it's going to get where it's going.” – August Wilson, from “The Piano Lesson”

## Stories of the Great Migration

This lesson includes stories that directly use migration as one of its themes whether overt or veiled. The lesson gives teachers the option of use as a series or in isolated readings of particular stories or just in a single story reading.

**Objectives:** The goal of this lesson is for students to become familiar in reading and analyzing stories that have an overarching theme of the Great Migration. By the end of the lesson, students will be able to closely read the text, annotate text for comprehension, make observations about language and form, and finally, interact with the text to connect to their lives. Students will be able to develop a well-written analytical response using quotes from the text.

**Standards:** Use grades 9-10 and 11-12 CCS in English Language Arts for Reading; Writing; Speaking and Listening; and Language.

**Materials:** Printed (student distribution) and pdf (projection) short stories; projector, laptop or desktop computer, interactive whiteboard, colored pens/pencils, highlighter, notebooks or lined paper.

**Procedures:** Prepare story(s) you have chosen for student distribution, for marking the text and for projecting. You can use this lesson for use with stories written by female authors, from Southern or Northern perspectives, well known or lesser known authors, writers as cultural critics (i.e. - Amiri Baraka, Haki Madhubuti), stories with a geographical focus, or stories that have specific themes, i.e. railroad travel, lynching, employment, housing, education, etc. In this way, you can narrow the lesson since there are plethoras of migration short stories.<sup>15</sup>

Consider how you frame entry into the narrative, it is important to consider several observations that will fit into the overall tone of the class. Consider the connections you want to make after choosing an overarching theme for your chosen stories. Next, distribute story while giving students a brief introduction of the story (author, time period for historical context). Third, have students begin reading by examining the story's title to presume meaning and to entice reading interest.

Students will use review questions prior to reading any of the stories: 1. What/Who – to establish basic information: What's happening? To whom? How does it fit into the larger story? Who is speaking? What/Who is being described? Who/What is being addressed? Can you (reader) paraphrase the message? What can you infer from the initial reading?

2. How – regarding making observations in language and form: How does the passage (chunking the text)<sup>16</sup> express/convey meaning? Are figurative devices used? Are certain

words, phrases, sounds repeated? What about diction, dialect, vernacular, syntax – expected, familiar or not? Do any details seem odd or irrelevant?

3. Why – consider why the author writes the story the way he/she does: How do your observations from earlier questions deepen your understanding of the passage or story? Has it raised questions about the story, caused you to shift your thinking or change your mind? Do additional meanings, implications or ambiguities become visible? Do any contradictory meanings arise? 4. So what? Have students develop an analytic or interpretive thesis based on the reading and your notes from questions answered.

While students are interacting with the text, they should be guided in marking the text, paraphrasing as they progress, writing note in the margins of the stories, questioning the author and text, making comparisons and connections between text and their personal experiences. This lesson can be completed during 45-minute class periods over two or three days depending on the complexity of the story's themes and vocabulary. Also, it is important for students to have written summaries while interpreting the text and asking questions verbally as the reading activity occurs.

Summaries can be developed after students have fully taken notes and marked the text. Suggest these strategies for students: Write notes in margins. Circle or underline key words, phrases. Use symbols to emphasize important ideas, i.e. – stars, asterisks, emoticons, exclamation points, etc. Pose questions in the margins to express difference of opinion or to return for clarity. Underline, but caution students to only mark under a few words; connect them to margin notes, too. Use graphics- draw a picture, map, chart, or number a process. Talk back to the text by expressing agreement or disagreement, comment by using ideas that come to mind.

Assessment ideas (pick whichever is more relevant to students outcomes and discussions form readings): Students write and evaluative essay to be later posted online in a blog or wiki. Students create a journal entry with opposing points of view in reaction to the main character and another person. Students can write a letter to the author or main character generating possible questions for a personal interview possibility. Students can complete written responses to the questions listed in the plan.

## **Classroom Activity II**

“Love of all mankind should reflect some sign... ” – Curtis Mayfield from “The Makings of You”

Synopsis Series: Identity, Oral Narrative/Interview, And Historical Expressions

Objectives: The overall objective of this lesson is for students to draw from and intertwine the migration story with writings about identity, ancestry, connecting history

to identity and the framed tale. In this lesson, we will use not only the short stories<sup>17</sup>, but also primary source<sup>18</sup> documents – oral interviews, historical records, films and the novel (read in specifically assigned chapters to keep readings in the framework of the short story). When choosing stories for the lesson, consider several observations and which area you want to focus: 1. Region- moving beyond the Harlem Renaissance era; 2. Race/Gender/Class; 3. Well-known writers or less known writers<sup>19</sup>, etc.

After choosing the stories, provide biographical information about the writers and a historical context for the work. To further an introductory understanding of the story series provide visual images of the time in American era. Every story chosen must explore migration, students should be able to identify the type of migrant for each and later identify the motivation for migrating. Furthermore, while using film, oral interviews, and novel<sup>20</sup> excerpts include in the discussion historical aspects and language (dialect, vernacular). Students by the end of the lesson will be able to determine key literary elements of character, setting, conflict and resolution for analysis of the test and to investigate author's purpose (sometimes beyond migration). Students will also be able to design/develop responses to the short stories, sharing details about the story in whichever assessment chosen.

**Standards:** Use the CCS for English Language Arts; include those standards that highlight literacy in History/Social Studies, and Technical Subjects.

**Materials:** Short stories in print and projection presentation form, Interactive whiteboard, computer, audio, DVD/CD recordings, Internet access,

**Procedures:** Day one: Begin with reading a short story for class discussion. Alternately, the story can be read aloud or completed in a shared reading exercise, to the class. Ask students to spend the first few minutes of the class writing about the story in their writers' notebooks. To connect this introductory session to the activities that students will complete as they work later in the session, ask students to think about the following question as they respond: If you had to choose one object from your migration suitcase<sup>21</sup>, physical artifacts, to interest people in this story, what would it be and why would you choose it? Other objects chosen can be symbolic, represent something important to the characters, or represent the setting or mood.

Once students have had time to record their initial thoughts, introduce or provide support for use of literary terms such as setting, theme, character and so forth during this class discussion. Give students the opportunity to share their ideas, review the literary elements over a PowerPoint presentation or simply write them on the board. Use this as talking points for your class discussion of the elements. Have the students develop questions about the literary elements, then connect the elements to the objects. For homework, ask students to read over their responses and write a second entry that uses literary terms to explain and explore the objects they chose more deeply. If some students

have chosen a different object after this class discussion, allow students to make a different selection and include details about the reasons that they changed their minds in their homework.

Day two to five: Continue reading story selections, require students to understand the importance and impact of the literary elements in the context of an orally narrated story. Define the elements of plot: setting, rising action, climax, denouement/falling action. Recognize these elements of plot in an oral story told by someone else. Understand the definitions of antagonist, protagonist, and catastrophe in the context of plot.

Go over presentation protocol listed on the board. (Discuss the notes you took and the characteristics of the person you observed. Read your story summary aloud. Take opinions of story from volunteers. Listen carefully to the speaker or group. If your choice does not agree with the author, listen to his/her reasons and debate fairly if need be. Feedback about the story itself must be fair. Communicate effectively with words that would not be insulting or harsh.)

Assessments: Today, you are not students. You are authors who will present your stories to a group of new migrants that may challenge your ideas and identifications as found in the stories. Be prepared to speak, as well as, listen to information, respond to any questions your audience may have. Students present stories in front of the class. As a group, discuss the features of each observation that led the student to create their story. Have student volunteers identify the plot elements and give their opinions regarding each story.

### **Classroom Activity III**

“The experiences of the half million African-Americans from the South who headed North between 1916 and 1921 varied widely among individuals.”- Journal of Negro History, 1919

#### Migrating Me: I am telling my Story

This lesson is designed for students to be able to discover and explore their own migration story by using art to enter the story and then the written word. Throughout the lesson, students will be introduced to migration themes using art, music, poetry and storytelling (written, short films, and oral).

Objectives: Analyze and interpret primary source interviews to create their own artifacts to share in class. Through research and interviewing elder family members, develop a greater understanding of their own family’s migration – its causes and effects, regional impact, and relevance in their lives. Utilize the writing process (prewriting,

writing, revising, editing, proofreading, publishing). Study the Migration Series by Jacob Lawrence. Examine and analyze the meaning of The Migration Series. Evaluate how particular choices of subject matter, symbols, and ideas function to communicate meaning in art.

Standards: Use the CCS for English Language Arts; include those standards that highlight literacy in History/Social Studies, and Technical Subjects.

Materials: Colorful construction paper; sticker accessories; scissors; glue sticks; rulers; protractors; prepared handouts; music CDs (already prepared, i.e.- Jay Z- “Empire State of Mind”, Gil Scott Heron- “The Bottle”, Marvin Gaye – “Inner City Blues”, Nina Simone – “Mississippi Goddamn”, Ray Charles – “Georgia”, Mos Def – “Brooklyn” or “Fear Not of Man”, Gladys Knight and the Pips – “Midnight Train to Georgia”); Jacob Lawrence Migration panels CD or downloaded from website.<sup>22</sup>

Procedures: Play music softly in background while giving instructions and throughout the entire lesson’s activities. Students should have already performed oral interviews with their parents, grandparents, elder aunties and uncles (see Northern Newsies).

Day one to three or seven: To assist students in recalling their history provide them with a handout (*discuss in class, then require completion as a weekend or week’s homework assignment*) with the following questions: How has your story been shaped through past generations? How will your story shape future generations? If at any time you recall an interesting story or detail of personal or family history, use additional paper to record (or use your mobile device to record in audio) your memory.

The information students include on the handout<sup>23</sup> will serve as inspiration for the construction of the collage. List the following questions on the handout: 1. What is home to you? What does it mean to leave home? How did the generations before you shape your history related to the place where you grew up? Write about a time when you had to move from a familiar place to an unfamiliar place. How did you feel about this move? What mode of transportation was used? Write down details about the feelings that you associate with that time in your life. Were you excited? Reluctant? Frightened? Where were you going? Were you traveling with someone or alone? What else do you remember? Think about one of your migration stories. Describe foods or specific meals that you associate with moving from familiar to the unfamiliar place. Did your parents or grandparents ever tell you a migration story? If so, write down the details you remember. Has your family always lived in this part of the world? Tell a personal or passed down story about traveling to a new place to live. Do you remember a family vacation or a special place that you visited as a child? Write what you remember about that time or place. Do you have a school migration story? What do you remember about that time? Was this an easy or difficult transition for you? Why or why not? Have you ever settled down in one place and then found out that you had to move again? If so, describe this

experience. Write down any stories or memories that come to mind as you are working on this questionnaire handout.

Next day (after students return with their completed questionnaires): Prepare classroom with art supplies. **Do not put glue sticks out**; require your checking their collage work prior to being given glue sticks! When students arrive in class, review objectives purpose of showing their personal migration story in collage form without the use of magazines or pictures. Show the PowerPoint presentation of Red Riding Hood<sup>24</sup>. Students are to select a limited number of paper colors (4) and stickers (2 types). Have music playing in the background as students contemplate color and sticker strategy and placement/shaping of paper. Students who are proficient in art may serve as assistant while working with imagery and questions that may come up as they develop their designs.

Assessments: Students should all have a completed project. After they complete the collage, they are to write a short descriptive paragraph detailing the events of their migration story in the artwork. Students' collage must be given a title. After collecting finished collages, ask students to prepare paragraph for oral presentation in class the next day.

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than six million blacks to the industrial cities of the north and west; since the late 1960s, the arrival of black immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and Europe.

Boehm, Lisa Krissoff. Making a Way Out of No Way: African American Women and the Second Great Migration. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson, 2009. This text includes many primary sources – oral interviews, photographs, unpublished papers and so much more. A must have resource in researching America's Great Migration.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. <http://www.corestandards.org>. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers: 2010. This site gives you the full details on the Common Core. Refer to it when specific standards are needed to connect to the lessons. An easily accessible site.

Dunbar, Paul Laurence. The Sport of the Gods. 1902. rpt., New York: MacMillian 1970. Also online at <http://www.readbookonline.net/title/41273>. The novel traces the dissolution and decline of the Hamilton's, a southern black family prevented from shaping their own fate by forces beyond their control. The provincial Hamilton's are immediately attracted to the lure of the city and soon falling victim to its temptations.

Griffin, Farah Jasmine. "Who Set You Flowin'?"': The African-American Migration Narrative. Oxford University Press: New York, 1996. The author looks at African American migration across a wide range of genres--the literary texts of Richard Wright and Dorothy West, the paintings of Jacob Lawrence, and the music of Billie Holiday and Arrested Development, as well as photography and correspondence. Griffin identifies the Migration Narrative as a major theme in African-American cultural production and more. A great resource that can also be found on Google books.

Hedin, Raymond. The Structuring of Emotion in Black American Fiction. *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* .Vol. 16, No. 1 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 35-54: Duke University Press. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345383>. A good article that discusses the form of the Black American authors in writing form and novel structure.

Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>: USA. 2012. For use with primary source documents and digital interviews. A great resource for you and your students.

Marable, Manning and Elizabeth Kai Hinton, Ed. New Black History: Revisiting the Second Reconstruction. Macmillan: New York, 2011. This text covers a lot of

ground in the history of Black people in America from 1877 until Civil Rights movement of 1964.

Margolies, Edward. Native Sons: A Critical Study of Twentieth-Century Negro American Authors. Lipincott: Philadelphia, 1968. This book contains chapters discussing 16 authors - all of which discuss the Great migration in their own perspective of time, place, and societal status. It is missing the female perspective though.

Miller, R. Baxter. "Done made Us Leave Our Home": Langston Hughes; Not Without Laughter—Unifying Image and Three Dimensions. *Phylon*, Vol 3: 4, Fourth Quarter, 1976, pp. 362-369. A comparative study of a few great Black fiction authors to the imagery in the writings of Langston Hughes. Not really necessary for migration research, but a interesting read for teachers of literature, specifically African-American literature.

Philadelphiaans Reflect On City's Racial Legacy: NPR; rprtr. Liane Hansen. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92690538>, 2008. Accessed Feb. 12, 2012. This archive of an NPR radio show chronicles a woman's three generations of Philadelphians who began with her and her parents in 1922. The voice of a migrant is heard. This is an excellent resource for teachers and students.

Rutkoff, Peter M. and William B. Scott. Fly Away: The Great African American Cultural Migrations. John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore: 2010. This book is loaded with Black migration goodies – photographs, scholarly documentation, regional maps that show changes as movement occurred, and African influences in Black culture that have moved North with its people.

Smethurst, James. African American Roots of Modernism: from Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance. University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 2011. A good resource of information to fill in some of the gaps. This text was also chosen as one for the John Hope Franklin series in African American history and culture. A book of scholarly reading.

Smitherman, Geneva. "White English in Blackface or, Who Do I Be?" *The Black Scholars*, Vol 4:8/9. May-June 1973, pp. 32-39. A powerhouse writing of the day, talking about dialect, its origins, ramifications and more – without apology. Put your seatbelt on while reading. This is a good read for migration study when considering language, dialect, vernacular and Black people.

## Filmography

Goin' to Chicago. Pro/Dir. King, George. Southern Spaces: 1994. This film traces this history through the personal stories of a group of older Chicagoans born mostly in the

Mississippi Delta. A 71-minute film. An instructors guide can be found on the California Newsreel website.

Something the Lord Made. Producers: Silverman, Peter and Robert Caswell. Joseph Caswell, Dir. HBO Films: 2004. Students will love this film starring rapper, Mos Def. The film dramatizes Alfred Blalock and Vivien Thomas' fight to save the dying Blue Babies. Blalock praises Thomas' surgical skill and insists that Thomas coach him through the first Blue Baby surgery over the protests of Hopkins administrators. Yet outside the lab, they are separated by the prevailing racism of the time. 110 minutes running time.

Strange Fruit. Dir. Katz, Joel. California Newsreel: 2002. This film explores the tragic legacy of one of the most prominent protest songs ever written. Billy Holiday sings as viewers are moved visually along the history through the words of the poem. This is a 57-minute film.

The Ballad of Henry Box Brown: Free Download & Streaming: Internet Archive (film)

The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords. Nelson, Stanley. California Newsreel: 1998. This is an 86-minute film chronicling the history of the Black press and is central role in the construction of modern African-American identity. It also has an interactive CD for classroom use.

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow. Jersey, Bill and Richard Wormser and Sam Pollard. Quest Productions, Videoline Productions and Thirteen/WNET New York: The film offers a comprehensive look at race relations in America between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. This film has four programs, which show for 56-minutes each.

## **Students Resources**

Listed first are the short stories chosen to use for class. Please note other stories can fit into your teaching of The Great Migration, the stories chosen for this unit only are a sampling of what is available for use.

Bambara, Toni Cade. "The Lesson" 1972.  
Cooper, Desiree. "Night Coming" 2010.  
Cuthbert, Marion Vera. "Mob Madness" 1936.  
Dove, Rita. "Second Hand Man" 1985.  
Dunbar, Paul Laurence. "The Ingrate" 1899.  
Ellison, R. "A Party Down at the Square" 1997.  
---. "Flying Home" 1944.  
Fisher, Rudolph. "Miss Cynthie" 1923.

- Hughes, Langston. "Who's Passing for Who?" 1952.
- Jones, Edward P. "Bad Neighbors." *The New Yorker*: Aug. 7, 2006: p72.
- . "All Aunt Hagar's Children" 2006.
- McKnight, Reginald. "The Kind of Light that Shines on Texas." 1992.
- Oliver, Diane. "Key to the City" 1965.
- Walker, Alice. "Everyday Use" 1973.
- Williams, Sherley Anne. "Tell Martha Not to Moan" 1968.
- Dash, Leon. *Rosa Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America*. Basic Books: New York, 1996. This book chronicles the life of Rosa Lee and her children as they live in Washington, DC. The author chose to live with them to get a reality feel for their lives and living. You can use this text for reading of chapters to remain in the framework of a short story reading. This is a good book with excellent content to include in a migration lesson.
- Gates, Henry Louis. *Life upon these Shores: Looking at African American History*, 1513 2008. Knopf: New York, 2011. This text is filled with essays, a plethora of Black American profiles, prints, paintings, newspaper clippings and photographs. Gates does a phenomenal job capturing the perspectives of a people. A great addition for the classroom library as a reference text.
- , Nellie Y. McKay, eds. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. Second ed. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2003. Filled literary treasure chest. I bought this one! A must have for teachers of African American literature, it is brilliant and heavy literally and figuratively.
- In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience. *AAME*. Web. 10 May. 2012. This website gives you so many choices to connect you and your students to US African-American Migration materials for research, study, and discovery.
- Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. [www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/index.htm](http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/index.htm). Ferris State University: MI, 2012. Accessed July 16, 2012. This site allows you to access various digital objects and resources of intolerance to teach and promote social justice. This is a great resource for teachers and students.
- The Negro Motorists Green Book.  
[www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Race/R\\_Casestudy/Negro\\_motorist\\_green\\_bk.htm](http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Race/R_Casestudy/Negro_motorist_green_bk.htm). Victor H. Green and Company: New York: 1949. Accessed March 12, 2012. This site gives you the full traveling guide for Black for the year 1949. Students will love this book and it will help them realize the discrimination facts of the time period for Black people.
- Phillips Collection Education Department. *The Jacob Lawrence Migration Series Teaching Kit*. Washington, DC: 2010. Filled numerous teaching tools and ideas

for all students in all grades. Teachers can even arrange for a trip to the Phillips Collection Museum. This is a fantastic kit for any classroom. Or visit the museum website at <http://phillipscollection.org/collection/migration-series/index.aspx>.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House: New York, 2010. I love this book. This book can also be broken into smaller parts for students to read varied chapters. The author chose to write it in the narrative non-fiction genre, which makes it easily accessible for readers.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

<sup>2</sup> Valinda Littlefield, Ph.D. - AFAM Studies Director at USC

<sup>3</sup> Reconstructing the author's thinking through close reading of text and/or art.

<sup>4</sup> Farah Jasmine Griffin.

<sup>5</sup> Folashade Alao, Ph.D. University of South Carolina – NEH Handout excerpt

<sup>6</sup> Stevie Wonder, *Living for the City* 1974.

<sup>7</sup> Phillips Collection Education Department

<sup>8</sup> Folashade Alao, Ph.D., USC – NEH Handout excerpt

<sup>9</sup> Several newspaper sites have a cost attached to retrieve articles. Search around for free sites or the best deal.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to appendix for sample form.

<sup>11</sup> See appendix for questions.

<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia Free Library- located in neighborhoods across the City for easy access.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley Nelson

<sup>14</sup> For other online activities using this film go to <http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> See student resources for short story suggestions.

<sup>16</sup> Assigning small sections to read for a closer reading, helping students understand the author's purpose.

<sup>17</sup> See Students resources – short story titles.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>. Use as a guide for analysis of sources.

<sup>19</sup> Faloshade Alao, Ph.D.

<sup>20</sup> Wilkerson and Dunbar.

<sup>21</sup> What would they carry along with them as they travel? This can be a mini activity embedded within the lesson.

<sup>22</sup> <http://phillipscollection.org/collection/migration-series/index.aspx>

<sup>23</sup> Minuette Floyd, Ph.D. USC Art Education Department.

<sup>24</sup> Use

## **Appendix**

### **Common Core Standards**

These standards are applied to all lessons included in this unit. Furthermore, this unit also uses past practice Pennsylvania State Standards application in Geography, and the Arts and Humanities. The latter standards are incorporated in using the Common Core Standards.

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading*

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing*

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

*College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening*

2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

*College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language*

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.