

ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM AFFECT US ALL
History/ Literacy/ Social Skills

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6-8 Life Skills Students

TIPS: The Soviet World in Literature Workshop

Abstract

This lesson is designed for middle school students in a Life Skills classroom at a diverse Philadelphia public school. This unit includes subsections, approximately 6 to 8 45 -minute instructional blocks. This interdisciplinary lesson includes literacy, writing, history, and social skill training activities. This unit focuses on Russian and Soviet literature from the 19th and 20th centuries that grapples with antisemitism, written by authors like Isaac Babel, exploring the portrayal of Jewish characters and societal attitudes toward them. The students will also have opportunities to view racism in America's past through the lens of the writings of Langston Hughes. Finally, the unit will consider Hughes' travel to and engagement with the Soviet Union, bridging between these two societies and their distinct historical experiences regarding race and ethnicity. In the last several years, there has been a large influx of new students from many different races coming into my class. From time to time, I hear students having inappropriate conversations about the topic of racism that may come from not fully understanding how to approach differences in culture. This unit serves as a means to build tolerance and understanding among students with different backgrounds.

Narrative: Personal Connection

I was born and raised in Philadelphia, and reading and writing have almost always been important to me. Books have always been a part of my life. I cannot remember a time when reading and writing were not a vital part of my life. When I was young and I was sad, I read books to help me escape. When I was happy, I read all kinds of books. As a young child, my mother read to me to help me relax at night before I slept. Even now, I have books on my nightstand that I read to put me to sleep. Learning to read and write is something that I learned early in life from my family. Learning to read and write was hard for me at school.

Teaching children to read, write, and express their ideas clearly and creatively is a complex task. For children to grow as readers and writers, children need explicit instruction in the craft, mechanics, and process of writing, choice in what to write about, and plenty of time to practice. However, one must be able to read and comprehend what one reads to become a successful writer. Many children face many obstacles when reading literature. Most literature is culture-bound. We expect students to have prior knowledge of literary genres such as realistic fiction, myths, legends, and tall tales. If the teacher has not activated prior knowledge or built background information, knowing the vocabulary will not solve the problem. Many children may be able to read the words, but it doesn't mean they understand the text. Sometimes, children are

not aware of the background information that the author left unsaid, that traditional students inherently already know.

ELA has always been dear to me. My love for it comes from lessons that I received at home. Growing up, my mother gave us literacy lessons at our kitchen table. As a child, my mother would find books written by African American authors who wrote about different African American experiences. Most of the books she chose were realistic fiction. Mom had a good eye for choosing material that she knew would pique our interest. The books that my sister and I read were books we could relate to and wanted to read and write about. My mother called these lessons, book club. Mom would come up with different activities to do with the book. She would give us weekly chapter targets where we would have to read so many pages and then we would discuss and share our opinions of what we read. Before the book club meetings, sometimes mom would give us index cards with questions about things that we would have to come to the group having already answered. When we returned to the group, we would share our answers, and she would discuss and critique what and how we replied. Mom reviewed what we wrote and how we wrote. She would go over sentence structure and many grammatical rules. It was so helpful to me as a child, and it didn't even seem like it was a lesson.

Literacy was challenging for me at school, partially because I could not relate to the materials used at my school. The materials seemed so boring. The books were about people who lived very differently from me, looked very differently from me, and did things I never could relate to doing. I also think it was difficult at school because there seemed to be so many rules about literacy that were explicitly taught instead of teaching them as a scaffolding activity. I had to consider and focus on rules and structure instead of focusing on simply telling what I learned, read, and wrote. Now that I'm thinking back to my time as a middle schooler, I think about how difficult it was for me to learn ELA as an African-American born student and how difficult it must be for multicultural learners to read and write.

As I think about this unit, I plan to use middle school literature written by a Soviet and an African-American author who have written books about their experiences. In the last five years, there has been a large influx of multicultural students in my class. I am creating literacy lessons and experiences that reflect the large population of students I teach, the multicultural learners.

Introduction

Tolerance is the ability or willingness to accept something, particularly the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with. Tolerance is the capacity to endure continued subjection to something or to environmental conditions, without adverse reaction. Intolerance is sometimes seen as the opposite of tolerance. Intolerance is based on issues of power and control. Intolerance comes from the idea that certain people can or should have power and control over others. These ideas come from our history, where certain people took power over others. Intolerance can significantly negatively impact a person's mental and physical well-being, leading to increased stress, anxiety, depression, and even physical health problems. According to Merriam-Webster, "antisemitism is hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group." According to the Holocaust Encyclopedia,

“antisemitism has existed in many forms for over two thousand years.” Antisemitism is a type of intolerance that still exists today.

Unit Content

This unit is for learners who have little knowledge of antisemitism and racism. This unit includes three different chapter books that are the main focus of the unit. In other words, for one semester, I will use one chapter book about tolerance as an anchor text during morning meetings. Three texts will be used during the scheduled Elementary Literature block to teach about antisemitism and racism. The Fall semester will include 6 to 8 instructive ELA lessons lasting 45-90 minutes. The unit will be conducted in a project-based learning style. This interdisciplinary unit includes ELA, Science, Social and Emotional Learning, History, and Art activities.

All of the texts used in the Fall semester are realistic fiction texts. These texts include “The Story of My Dovecote,” written by Isaac Babel, translated by Boris Drayluk; *Not Without Laughter*, written by Langston Hughes; and readings from the essay collection and visual art album, *The Wayland Rudd Collection*. Lessons will include other texts, such as picture books, historical fiction, and poetry. Other texts that will be incorporated include additional works of Soviet literature and African American novels that address antisemitism and racism in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and America.

For each anchor text used, I will first introduce the book the students and I will read. I will survey the book before I start reading a chapter. I will skim the material and get a feel for the main topics and ideas in the text with the children. I will ask the students questions about the cover and summaries included with the book. I will read the back cover of the book with the students. I will conduct a probing activity to determine the student's prior knowledge about what will be read.

By using text and materials that are relatable to the students, we allow students to gain important literacy skills without realizing how impactful the skills are for them.

Problem Statement

As I look at how ELA is taught in Philadelphia over the past 50 years, it is clear that the demographics have changed, and the needs and understanding of literacy have changed. When one thinks about literacy education, one cannot help but notice that many of the old books and texts are filled with materials and information that students of today do not relate to and understand. My question is, are the literacy materials we use today biased against students of different races and backgrounds? Is there a need for students to learn about other races and backgrounds who have experienced some of the things they have experienced? What materials and practices can be used to change or reverse the negative effects of wrong-headed thinking and to engineer paths to understanding about race?

Vocabulary

Students will be exposed to a variety of new words throughout this curriculum unit. Some of the words that will be reviewed, but cannot be limited to include bias, racism, antisemitism, hate, and discrimination. Other words may need to be reviewed as the need is made necessary.

Rationale

Can Russian and Soviet literacy materials be used in a manner where American children learn vital skills, just as students learn using American articles of literacy? Whether you like it or not, global literacy is a big part of every community in Philadelphia. Philadelphia is becoming more and more diverse with different cultures moving here. Books have always been powerful and have influenced the literacy skills children use. Good literacy skills affect the way we live. And yes, Soviet literature, which often focused on the explanation of progressive values with regard to diverse identities, can be impactful for American children.

Focus Questions

How can a book inspire us to be better people? What have we learned in literacy that has inspired us? How do the materials we read affect the way we learn? What do we know about bias and racism, and how can we decrease the hurt? The focus of this unit will also be to examine different books to help students treat each other with respect.

Why Discuss Isaac Babel and Langston Hughes in a Unit

Isaac Babel and Langston Hughes were both prominent writers who wrote in different countries (The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively) and literary styles. However, some similarities can be drawn between them based on their work. Both authors focused on marginalized voices in the community in which they lived. Both Babel and Hughes were known for giving voice to those who were often overlooked or marginalized in society. Babel's stories often depict the lives of Jewish communities and soldiers in the era of the Russian revolution and Civil War, showcasing their experiences and struggles. Hughes was a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Hughes explored the experiences and culture of African Americans, and he gave voice to their joy, pain, and aspirations. Both writers are deeply rooted in their respective cultural and historical contexts. Babel's work reflects the confusion and violence of revolutionary Russia. Hughes's writing captures the spirit of the Harlem Renaissance and the fight for racial equality in the United States. Both Babel and Hughes developed distinctive literary styles that have influenced succeeding writers. Babel is known for his concise and powerful stories, often using vivid imagery and surprising comparisons, and often borrowing the rhythms of oral tales. Hughes's style is characterized by its use of jargon, blues rhythms, and powerful images, reflecting the oral traditions of African Americans. Both authors are known for their use of humor as they grapple with complex and serious topics. This unit will discuss the author's specific subject matter and cultural backgrounds. The unit will discuss how Babel and Hughes used their writing to illuminate the lives of those on the fringes of society, and it will explore the complexities of human experience in their unique cultural and historical contexts. The authors are used in this unit to discuss matters of tolerance and intolerance in society and how tolerance and intolerance affect the community.

Implementing Soviet Literacy

Soviet literature is a challenging topic for American students. Teaching about Soviet literature to American children requires a careful approach that addresses the unique experience of Soviet society and history. It's crucial to provide students with a balanced perspective, emphasizing the historical context and societal factors that led to the creation of an oppressive one-party dictatorship while also highlighting the positive achievements in progressive socialist policy, industrialization, literacy, education, and economic egalitarianism within the Soviet system. There is not one book that fully explains everything about Soviet history and society. This unit will have multiple parts related to my overall teaching plan: first, I begin with research-based reading instruction strategies. Students need support in learning how to read. I will encourage students to participate in and investigate experiences, customs, and traditions in their own families. This will allow students to approach their own experiences with hate and racism. I will help students connect with the larger themes in the books and understand the importance of practice, studying, and resistance. It will also help them teach them about the impact of words and the importance of what we read and learn.

Teaching Strategies

Literacy can be one of the most difficult subjects to teach. Teaching multicultural students about Soviet literature requires a scaffolded plan. There is not one book that fully explains everything about American literature. Soviet literature has its systematic structures that are much different from those of American literature. This unit will have multiple parts to my overall teaching plan: first, I begin with research-based reading instruction strategies. Special needs students need support in learning how to read. Educators should encourage all students to participate in and investigate each of their customs in their family. Helping students learn about their own experiences will help all the students prepare to approach Soviet literature.

The teaching materials that will be used throughout this curriculum are books, videos, and graphic organizers such as story maps, so students can display the information they learn. The students will learn in small instructional groups (SGI), so students are receiving and expressing understanding in a manner that they understand. In SGI, students will work together to build knowledge and help each other learn. This teaching strategy will also provide opportunities for students to share ideas and articulate their thoughts on a variety of topics. Students will have the opportunity to write reflections about what they are learning. I will utilize the turn and talk method that will allow teachers and students to learn from one another and to build a community and culture in the classroom. This curriculum unit will be student-centered. Students will be presented with opportunities through the use of various learning modalities, i.e., visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic.

Andrew Hamilton Elementary School

Andrew Hamilton is located in West Philadelphia at 5640 Spruce Avenue. We are a K-8 school named after the former Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Andrew Hamilton lived from 1676 to August 4, 1741. We are a restructured school, meaning that the school has a fairly new principal, mission, and newly constructed building. Our mission is that all teaching and learning must be maintained at the highest level. Every child will learn if taught properly and efficiently. Hamilton believes that all children are to be respected, nurtured, and taught at advanced levels. We will work until the children achieve their highest, optimal level.

We are relentless in this effort. Hamilton's priority is to prepare our children to be able to attend, achieve, and succeed at any high school/university of their choice. At Andrew Hamilton Elementary School, we strive to motivate, inspire, and educate all students in a safe, nurturing, and caring learning environment. We are a data-driven school where we collect, analyze, and use data to guide rigorous instruction, provide intervention, and enrichment opportunities for all students while empowering students to become productive and responsible citizens. Encouraging students to be independent thinkers as well as shifting and changing their mindsets towards a growth mindset, to lead them to a successful adult life. I have been teaching at Andrew Hamilton since 2014. It is home for me. The neighborhood has changed over the years. More and more multicultural learners are attending Hamilton every year. This is a title I school, meaning 95% of the school population lives in poverty and qualify for subsidized lunches and housing.

Grade Level: This curriculum unit has been written for middle school Life Skills Students (LSS).

Differentiation: All students learn best when they learn in a manner that nurtures their preferred learning style. For this unit, students will be instructed using multimodal instructional practices such as visual, listening, seeing, and hearing. Students will also be reading, writing, and creating art. Students will be writing about the things they learn. The students will also be able to discuss what they observe. Classes should meet four times a week with a forty-five-minute allotment of time for each class. Teachers may need to adjust and pace of this curriculum to the specific needs of their students. Educators should take into account the needs of LSS and Special Education services.

Instructional Blocks

Lesson 1 – Setting a Foundation for Tolerance

This lesson provides the foundations for the unit. Teaching lessons on tolerance before teaching about thoughts of bias and racism is crucial because it fosters a more inclusive and peaceful classroom by promoting understanding, respect, and acceptance of diverse viewpoints and backgrounds. It helps students develop social skills, understand the importance of empathy, and recognize the value of diversity, ultimately contributing to a more cohesive and robust society.

This lesson will use a chapter book by Jacqueline Woodson, *Brown Girl Dreaming*. This book is a book about her childhood and young adulthood in South Carolina and New York. Woodson uses poems to share what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Each day, the students will view her poems during morning meeting to get a glimpse into a child's life as she searches for her place in this world. The students will also reflect on how Woodson finds her voice through her stories.

Time Frame: various, 20-minute lesson blocks

Standards:

Literacy

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Reading Informational Text

CC.1.2.K.G Answers questions to describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.

CC.1.2.K.I With prompting and support, identify basic similarities and differences between two texts (read or read aloud) on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

Social and Emotional Learning

- **Self-Awareness:**

This involves recognizing one's own emotions, values, and strengths.

- **Self-Management:**

This focuses on managing emotions, behaviors, and effectively responding to situations.

- **Social Awareness:**

This includes understanding the perspectives, emotions, and experiences of others.

- **Relationship Skills:**

This emphasizes building and maintaining positive relationships, communicating effectively, and resolving conflicts.

- **Responsible Decision-Making:**

This focuses on making ethical and constructive choices, considering the consequences of actions.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- discuss, define, and explore tolerance and acceptance.
- discuss tolerance myths
- teach the impact of having tolerance
- promoting critical thinking on ideas about creating an atmosphere of tolerance

- Provide resources that a middle school class could use to learn about tolerance

Materials Needed:

- The teacher will need access to a smartboard with internet accessibility.
- A copy of *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson
- Colored pencils, crayons, and markers
- Writing paper and pencils
- Anchor Chart Paper

Objectives:

- Educator will go over small group norms
- Students will read one poem in the book each day until the book is completed.
- Students will engage in a close read each day.
- Students will identify issues and topics discussed in the book.
- Students will conduct a K-W-L about the topics discussed in the poem.
- Students will reflect on what they learned.
- Students will be advised about Woodson's book and how it will be used throughout the school year.

Instructions for Using Lesson 1:

1. Introduce the book and explain to the students how the book is broken up into five parts.
2. Explain what the overall book is about.
3. Read the first poem.
4. Ask students to take a few minutes to write a short reflection in their writing journal about what they heard.
5. Ask the students to write about their own experiences with having to accept someone who did not treat them well.
6. Ask students to define a role model and then identify a role model in their own lives.
7. Ask the students to describe the person and explain how he or she provides an example of an attribute or ability to which the students aspire.

8. After giving students five minutes for writing and reflection, have them partner up and share their responses.
9. Next, foster a whole-group discussion in which students generate a list of contemporary role models.
10. Record the names on the K-W-L anchor chart.
11. Foster a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of role models in society.
12. Discuss the topic of tolerance.
- 13.. During the students' ELA block, have the students work in small groups to generate a list of at least three choices that Woodson / Hughes / Babel make in their writing that are similar.
14. Also ask students to focus on at least two ways that Woodson diverges from Hughes's model.
15. As groups share out, ask them to consider the importance of models in creativity. How do the examples provided by artists, musicians, and writers help us develop our own creative capacities?
16. Give the students post it papers and write in ideas of role models and tolerance.
17. Fill in the K-W-L chart with the class.
18. Discuss how tolerance affected Woodson.
19. Review what the group learn during this activity.
20. Let the students know that tolerance will be an overarching theme during morning meetings.

Exhibit A: Small Group Norms

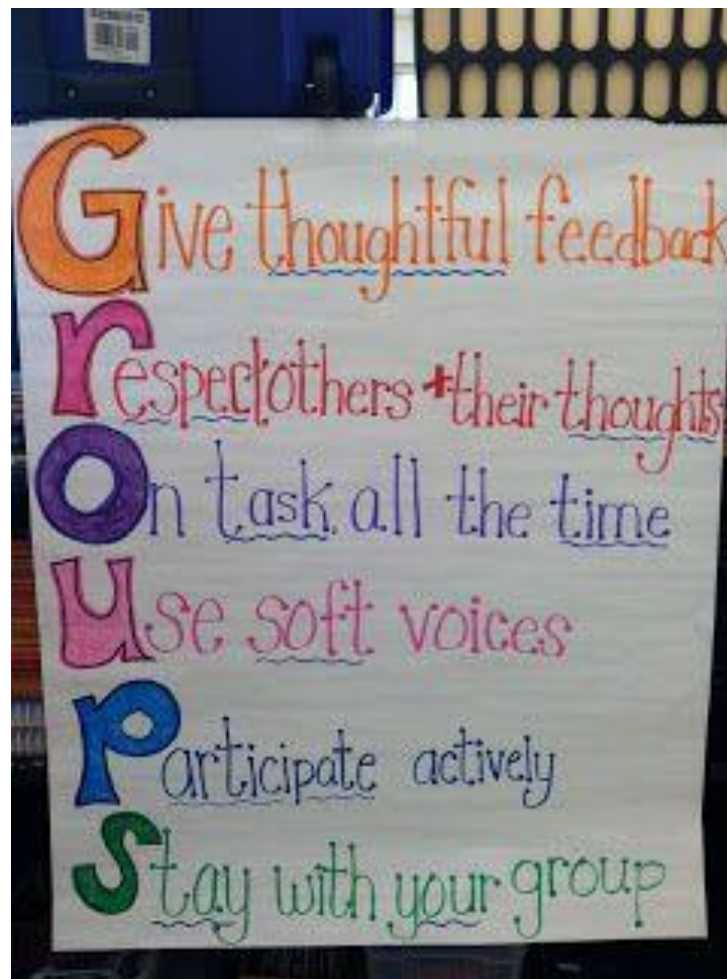
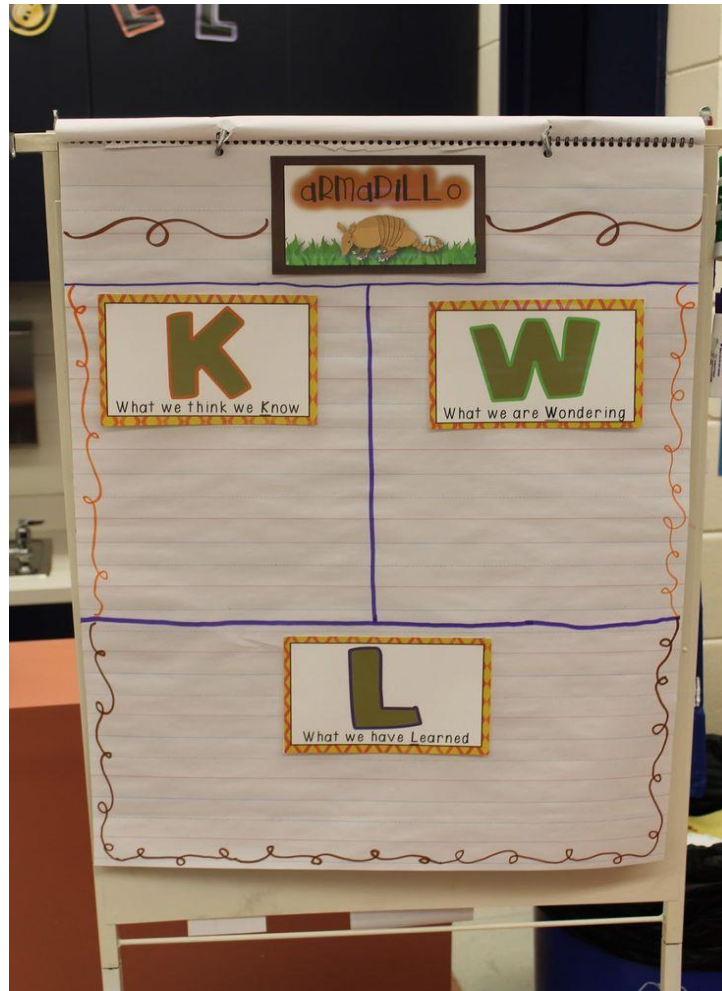


Exhibit B: K-W-L Anchor Chart



Lesson 2 – Introducing the Authors

This lesson provides a basic introduction to who Langston Hughes and Isaac Babel were.

Time Frame: 3 - 5, 45-minute lesson blocks

Standards:

Literacy Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Reading Informational Text Standards

CC.1.2.K.G Answers questions to describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.

CC.1.2.K.I With prompting and support, identify basic similarities and differences between two texts (read or read aloud) on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

Writing Standards

CC.1.4.1.A Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information.

CC.1.4.1.B Identify and write about one specific topic.

CC.1.4.1.C Develop the topic with two or more facts.

CC.1.4.1.D Group information and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because*, *and*, *also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Speaking and Listening Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.a: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

History Standards

CC.8.5.6-8.C: Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

CC.8.5.6-8.D: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CC.8.5.6-8.J: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CC.8.6.6-8.B: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. • Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving the purpose;

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- discuss, define, and explore antisemitism and racism.
- discuss antisemitism and racist myths
- teach the impact of antisemitism and racism
- promoting critical thinking
- Provide resources that a middle school class could use to teach about antisemitism and racism

Materials Needed:

- The teacher will need access to a smartboard with internet accessibility.
- Poster Board
- Colored pencils, crayons, and markers
- Writing paper and pencils
- Copies of reading materials

Objectives:

- Students will identify aspects of Isaac Babel's life
- Students will identify aspects of Langston Hughes' life
- Students will conduct an Internet research project on the authors' lives and works
- Students will be introduced to information about the Soviet Union
- Students will be introduced to the handouts that will be used throughout this unit
- Students will summarize in writing the connection between one poem's meaning and the sociohistorical context in which it was written
- Students will create an online visual representation of the authors' works, supported by examples from research
- Students will orally present the author's works and their relevant historical connections
- Students will identify connections between an author's work and the sociohistorical context in which it was written
- Students will analyze Langston Hughes and Isaac Babel in their historical context
- Students will create a Venn Diagram comparing the two authors.

Instructions for using lesson 2:

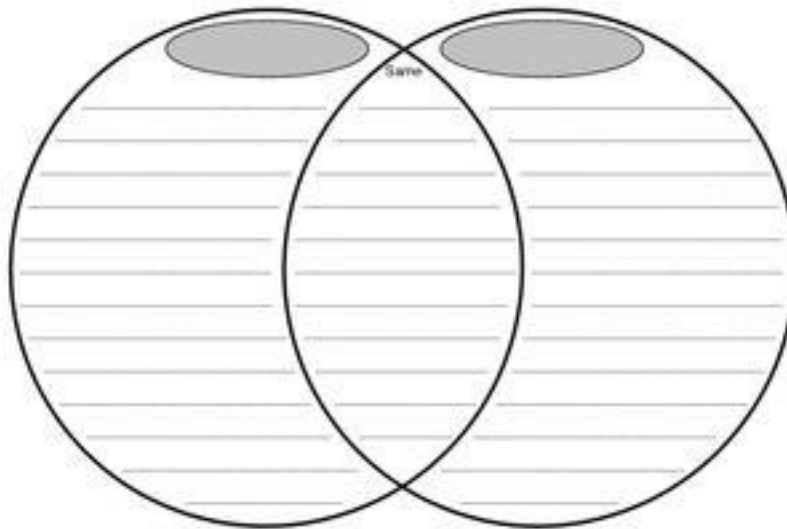
1. Give a background and introduction about Langston Hughes and Isaac Babel. (20 minutes)
2. Engage the students by showing short videos or images of Isaac Babel, and discuss his impact on literature. (20-30 minutes)
3. Tell the students how Isaac Babel was a prominent Russian writer who lived during a time of significant anti-Jewish discrimination and violence in the Russian Empire. Discuss what pogroms were and how they took place in many locations in a wave of anti-Jewish violence in the Russian Empire from 1881 to 1884, following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Explain how Jews were falsely blamed for the assassination, and how outbreaks of violence occurred frequently in subsequent years, particularly during times of heightened political crisis. Talk about how in 1882, the Russian government under Tsar Alexander III introduced the "May Laws," which further restricted where Jews could live and limited their economic activities. Babel was born in Odesa, a city with a significant Jewish population, and experienced the impact of these events firsthand. He wrote about the 1905 Odesa pogrom, during which his family was largely spared, in his story *The Story of My Dovecote*. Isaac Babel lived during a period of significant anti-Jewish discrimination and violence in the Russian Empire. This included government-sanctioned restrictions, widespread pogroms, and the targeting of Jews during the Russian Civil War. These events had a profound impact on Jewish communities, leading to mass emigration and inspiring the rise of Jewish self-defense and political movements.

4. Engage the students by showing short videos or images of Langston Hughes and discussing his impact on literature. (20-30 minutes)
5. Tell the students that during Langston Hughes's lifetime and career, Jim Crow laws and racial violence were deeply embedded in the American South, impacting Black Americans' lives in numerous ways. These laws enforced segregation and discrimination, while racial violence, including lynching, created an atmosphere of fear and oppression. Jim Crow laws significantly impacted Black Americans' lives, limiting their economic, social, and political advancement. Jim Crow laws significantly impacted Black Americans' lives, limiting their economic, social, and political advancement. Langston Hughes's literary work often addressed the injustices of Jim Crow and racial violence, reflecting his life's experiences and observations.
6. Briefly explore the authors' work as a whole and discuss the contribution to their communities.
7. Elaborate and discuss their roles as key figures in writing about inequality and oppression in their respective society, highlighting their unique styles and themes.
8. Analyze their work (40 minutes)
9. Read aloud clips from their more popular works.
10. Discuss the author's work, focusing on:
 - **Speaker and Audience:** Who is speaking and to whom?
 - **Voice:** What is the tone, attitude, and style of the speaker?
 - **Themes:** What are the main ideas or messages being conveyed?
 - **Imagery and Figurative Language:** How does Hughes use language to create vivid images and express emotions?
11. Discuss the authors' work, encouraging them to share their perspectives and the students' understanding.
12. Create a Venn Diagram Anchor Chart comparing the two authors. (20 minutes)

Exhibit C: Venn Diagram Anchor Chart

Name _____

Venn Diagram



13. Use the students' writing journal and prompt the students to write a poem about their dreams, experiences, or observations of their own life.
14. Provide the students guidance to write a poem (e.g., metaphor, simile, imagery) and encourage students to experiment with their own voice.
15. Allow the students to share their poems with the class or in small groups.

Lesson 3: All About “The Story of My Dovecote”, by Isaac Babel

This lesson provides a basic introduction to the aspects of Soviet literature, the collaborative and student-centered reading strategy, and the activities the students will be learning. Experts say, “Russian literature is important due to its profound explorations of the human condition, its rich and often bleak historical backdrop, and its enduring influence on world literature”. Students get the opportunity to learn about other cultures and see for themselves the struggles that others face. Teaching this lesson about Babel and the experiences of Russian and Soviet Jews allows teachers to teach empathy to their students. Collaboration is at the heart of this approach. Students reshape and add to their understanding as they construct meaning with other readers. Soviet literature often grapples with profound philosophical questions about morality, religion, and the meaning of life, inviting students to contemplate these issues in a way that is both intellectually stimulating and emotionally engaging. The process demonstrates the different roles and allows students to practice the techniques before they are responsible for completing the tasks on their own. After this introduction, students are ready to use the strategy independently, rotating the roles through four-person groups as they read the chosen book. The lesson can then be followed with more extensive small-group literature assignments.

Time Frame: 3-5, 45-minute lesson blocks

Standards:

Literacy

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

Writing

CC.1.4.1.A Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information.

CC.1.4.1.B Identify and write about one specific topic.

CC.1.4.1.C Develop the topic with two or more facts.

CC.1.4.1.D Group information and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because*, *and*, *also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.a: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and conclude in light of the information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

History Standards

CC.8.5.6-8.C: Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

CC.8.5.6-8.D: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CC.8.5.6-8.J: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CC.8.6.6-8.B: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. • Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving the purpose;

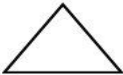
Instructions for using lesson 3:


This is a lesson that reviews the short story. The students will read the story over two to three days. After reading each day, students review what they learned in a triangle, square, and circle form. Students will close each day by reviewing the lesson on tolerance learned.

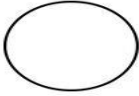
1. Separate students in small groups to conduct literature circles.
2. Introduction to the book by showing the students images of dovecotes and asking the students what they notice and what they think they are used for. (10-15 minutes):
3. Give the students a brief history of the significance of dovecotes, including their association with wealthy families and their role in providing a food source. (20 – 25).
4. Read a portion of “My Story of the Dovecote”. (“The Story of My Dovecot” is about the loss of innocence. In this story, the young first-person narrator is excited to do well in school to earn the dovecote (a coop for domesticated pigeons) that has been promised to him by his father as a reward. The dovecote symbolizes the boy's dreams of peace, wonder, and beauty. However, his dreams and innocence are shattered in his experience of the Odesa pogrom of 1905, in which his great uncle is murdered, along with the death of his birds. This experience leaves the boy traumatized and disillusioned. The child now realizes that the world is violent and dangerous, and what mattered to him before is no longer important. The narrator describes his exact moment of disillusionment while lying on the ground after being attacked by Makarenko, whom he had regarded earlier as a friendly member of his urban community, and who now cruelly kills his birds.
5. Students can build a detailed model, incorporating features of a dovecote, like pigeonholes and roof details. Students can research and present information about a specific dovecote or a type of dovecote. Students can create a drawing or painting of a dovecote, capturing its architectural details.
6. Close the lesson with a discussion (10-15 minutes): Discuss the lessons learned about the “Story of My Dovecote,” dovecotes, doves, and their significance.
7. Ask students to reflect on what they learned from the story and how it relates to other historical structures or topics of tolerance.
8. Evaluate students' understanding using a triangle, square, and a circle form.

Exhibit D: Triangle-Square-Circle Form

Triangle-Square-Circle







3 significant ideas that I took away from the lesson...

What concepts from the lesson are squared away in my mind?

What one or two questions are still circling in my head?

ELEMENTARY ASSESSMENTS • TRIANGLE-SQUARE-CIRCLE

Lesson 4: All About “Not without Laughter”, by Langston Hughes

Time Frame: 3-5, 45-minute lesson blocks

Standards:

Literacy

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Reading Informational Text

CC.1.2.K.G Answers questions to describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.

CC.1.2.K.I With prompting and support, identify basic similarities and differences between two texts (read or read aloud) on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

Writing

CC.1.4.1.A Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information.

CC.1.4.1.B Identify and write about one specific topic.

CC.1.4.1.C Develop the topic with two or more facts.

CC.1.4.1.D Group information and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because*, *and*, *also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.a: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and conclude in light of the information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

History Standards

CC.8.5.6-8.C: Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

CC.8.5.6-8.D: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CC.8.5.6-8.J: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CC.8.6.6-8.B: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. • Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving the purpose;

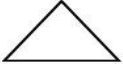

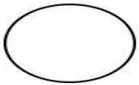
Instructions for using lesson 4:

This is a lesson that reviews the semi-autobiographical story of Hughes' life. The students will read the story over three to four days. After reading each day, students review what they learned

in a triangle, square, and circle form. Students will close each day by reviewing the lesson on tolerance learned.

1. Separate students in small groups to conduct literature circles.
2. Introduction to the book by showing the students images of Hughes and historical images from the time of the book. Ask the students what they notice and what they think about what they are viewing. (10-15 minutes):
3. Give the students a brief history of the significance of Jim Crow laws, including their association with race and the role in providing equality. (20 – 25).
4. Read a portion of *Not Without Laughter*. (*Not Without Laughter* centers on the experiences of Sandy Rogers, a young boy growing up in Kansas during the early 20th century. The novel portrays his coming-of-age journey amidst the challenges of poverty, racism, and family struggles, highlighting the importance of family, community, and resilience. The story is semi-autobiographical, reflecting Hughes's upbringing.
5. Students will summarize and describe the main points and themes of the novel in their own words.
6. Students can research and present information about the era.
7. Discuss the author's point of view, intended audience, and any notable literary techniques.
8. Address how Hughes effectively captured the vibrant culture and struggles of African Americans in the era.
9. Talk about how the novel's strength lies in the depiction of the characters' perseverance and their ability to find joy even in the face of hardship. Discuss Hughes's use of language and narrative style and how it effectively conveys the emotional depth of the story.
10. Close the lesson with a discussion (10-15 minutes): Discuss the lessons learned about *Not Without Laughter*.
11. Ask students to reflect on what they learned from the story and how it relates to other historical structures and topics of tolerance.
12. Evaluate students' understanding using a triangle, square, and a circle form.

Exhibit C: Triangle-Square-Circle Form

Triangle-Square-Circle	
	3 significant ideas that I took away from the lesson...
	What concepts from the lesson are squared away in my mind?
	What one or two questions are still circling in my head?

ELEMENTARY ASSESSMENTS • TRIANGLE-SQUARE-CIRCLE

Lesson 5: Wayland Rudd Collection & Images of Black Face

Time Frame: 3-5, 45-minute lesson blocks

Standards:

Literacy Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Reading Informational Text

CC.1.2.K.G Answers questions to describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.

CC.1.2.K.I With prompting and support, identify basic similarities and differences between two texts (read or read aloud) on the same topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.

Writing Standards

CC.1.4.1.A Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information.

CC.1.4.1.B Identify and write about one specific topic.

CC.1.4.1.C Develop the topic with two or more facts.

CC.1.4.1.D Group information and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because*, *and*, *also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Speaking and Listening Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.a: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and conclude in light of the information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3: Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

History Standards

CC.8.5.6-8.C: Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

CC.8.5.6-8.D: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

CC.8.5.6-8.J: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CC.8.6.6-8.B: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes. • Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving the purpose;

Art & Humanities Standards

9.1.8.A: Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.

9.1.8 B: Recognize, know, use, and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review, and revise original works in the arts.

9.1.8.E: Communicate a unifying theme or point of view through the production of works in the arts.

Instructions for using lesson 5:

This lesson serves to introduce images used during Babel and Hughes' eras. Students will learn about the culture during these times, and students will also get an opportunity to create their own African American facial images.

1. Separate students in small groups to conduct literature circles.
2. Introduction to the book by showing the students images drawn from the *Wayland Rudd Collection*, exemplifying representations of racial diversity and attitudes towards it in the USSR.
3. Students will also be introduced to a Langston Hughes' essay he wrote while he was in the USSR, *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*. Langston Hughes wrote about his experiences in the Soviet Union, particularly focusing on the stark contrast between the racial realities in the American South and the Soviet Union's apparent lack of racial discrimination. Hughes's observations centered on the Soviet Union's efforts to address racial inequalities and its approach to education and social mobility, which he contrasted with the Jim Crow system in the American South.
4. Ask the students what they notice and what they think about what they are viewing. (10-15 minutes):
5. Give the students a brief history of the significance of Jim Crow laws in America, visits of African Americans to the Soviet Union, associations with race, and the meaning of racial and other forms of social equality. (20 – 25 minutes).
6. Read and view a portion of the *Wayland Rudd Collection*. (*The Wayland Rudd Collection* centers on visual materials, specifically Soviet propaganda posters featuring images of Black and colored people. The book discusses Soviet ideology, racial representation in propaganda, Soviet-African relations, and the experience of Black people in the Soviet Union.)
7. Read and view *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*. (Hughes's essay, "A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia," highlights his travel to the Soviet Union in 1932.) Hughes was impressed by the Soviet Union's commitment to education and social uplift, noting the implementation of free public schools, native language education, and the opening of educational institutions in previously isolated regions. Hughes also observed the Soviet Union's apparent absence of racial discrimination, contrasting it with the Jim Crow system and the racism he experienced in the American South. Hughes emphasizes the stark difference between the racial realities in the American South and the Soviet Union. Hughes' observations in the Soviet Union were a significant departure from his earlier poetry, which had focused on the experiences of African Americans under the Jim Crow system. His visit to the Soviet Union provided him with a different perspective on race relations, and his essay reflects his admiration for the Soviet Union's efforts to address racial inequalities.

8. Students will summarize and describe the main points and themes of the book in their own words.
9. Students can research and present information about the era.
10. Discuss the author's point of view, intended audience, and any notable literary techniques.
11. As an exit ticket, students will get an opportunity to draw their black images and an opportunity to write about what message they are trying to convey.

Resources

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