



## **Paths to Prosperity: African Americans in Search of the American Dream**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 18.01.04  
by Barbara A. Sasso

As English teachers, we often teach novels that reflect the struggles of racism and poverty within the African American community through the twentieth century. Landmark civil rights laws in the 1960's changed the legal landscape of freedom in our country, but equality of opportunity and economic prosperity is still hindered by political policy and racism. It is critically important to reveal these truths to students, especially students in the African American community. However, as teachers, we should also be offering solutions to economic disparity that go beyond angry rhetoric, which are based in logic and are data-driven. What are some concrete ways families and individuals can break the cycle of poverty? What kinds of services should we as a society be fighting for? How does income parity benefit all of us? What are some ways to achieve this, and achieve a society that is more meritorious and efficient? This unit uses the play, *A Raisin in the Sun* as a model. The dreams of the Younger family are posed to students as choices to break out of poverty. Students will research the effects of moving to a good neighborhood, home ownership, college education, and entrepreneurship as economic paths to success.

(Developed for English/Social Justice, grade 10; recommended for English or ELA/African American Literature, ELA/Writing on Social Justice, ELA/Writing on Income Inequality, grades 9-12)

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