



Cultural Histories of 20th Century Black and Latinx Freedom Struggles

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.01.03
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This unit revolves around the 20th century and the Black and Latinx freedom struggles of that era. The goal of this unit is not only to teach this critical history, but also to introduce students to a new way of learning history: through the lens of cultural studies. We can learn a lot about a historical era and a people by examining their cultural production. A people's culture—their visual art, music, dance, and fashion—can be an expression of their joy, pleasure, beauty, and humanity, as well as their struggle, their rage, and their resistance to domination. This unit will focus on Black and Latinx cultures of resistance created in the US throughout the 20th century, including bomba and plena, the blues, zoot suits, the graphic art of the Black Panther Party, drag balls and disco, and hip-hop. By analyzing these creative expressions of resistance, students will learn about the political history that created the oppressive conditions to which the art is responding. More importantly, students will analyze the ways in which the cultural production can also be a political response, oftentimes with real political impact.

(Developed for African American and Latinx History, grade 12; recommended for African American and Latinx History, grade 12; U. S. History, grade 10; Civics, grade 11; and Art, grades 9-12)

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