



Jacob Lawrence, Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution

Guide for Curriculum Unit 22.02.05
by Sean Griffin

In this unit I attempt to help students make a connection between the Haitian Revolution, the Harlem Renaissance and their own lives. I begin the unit with an introduction to the slave trade which manned the plantations, producing massive amounts of sugar and other crops throughout the 18th century Caribbean, and ultimately leading to the uprising. Highlighting one of the revolution's legendary leaders, Toussaint Louverture, I lead students through a brief overview of the complicated conflict before flashing forward to the Great Migration which sprung from a similar desire for a better life. Focusing on the Harlem Renaissance artist Jacob Lawrence, we revisit the revolution through Lawrence's forty-one panel narrative depiction of the life of Toussaint Louverture. Finally, recognizing that Lawrence sought to tell the stories of many heroes through his work, I challenge students to illustrate and narrate the stories of one of their heroes and to share their work with others in a gallery walkthrough open to other teachers, classmates and their families.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2022 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University
For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>