



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1989 Volume I: American Communities, 1880-1980

The Impact of the Music of the Harlem Renaissance on Society

Guide for Curriculum Unit 89.01.05
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This unit contains background information on the musical heritage of black Americans as presented through the community of Harlem. The major focus of this unit will be the people, places, and music of the Harlem Renaissance from 1918-1933.

The unit is divided into four major sections. The first section states the purpose, objectives, targeted population, and background information on the Harlem Renaissance. Information is provided for music as well as other areas of artistic development such as literature, politics, religion, and visual arts. (This serves as an overview of the entire era).

The second section is the major focus of the unit. Highlighted are the careers of such notables as James Fletcher Henderson and Charles Parker. Background information as well as some of their major accomplishments, night clubs where they performed, well known compositions, education, and other related artistic information is provided.

The third section focuses on the night life of the Harlem Renaissance and its development into a viable force capable of competing with Chicago and New Orleans. The Cotton Club and Apollo Theatre are but two of the clubs/theatres that are mentioned. Also included in this section are featured musicians, musical styles, history of these clubs, and famous events that happened at these establishments.

The final section is an anthology of music from Ragtime to Rap as developed in or influenced by New York's rich tradition. Highlighted styles include swing, bebop, cool jazz, rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, soul, disco, and more. Information is provided using the various artist of each genre and rationales are given for the development of these styles. Also included are lesson plans, a teacher's bibliography, a student's bibliography, various composers of different styles, suggested recordings and more.

(Recommended for Music classes and Social Studies, grades 7-8)

Key Words

Afro-Americans Jazz Music Harlem Renaissance History American Communities

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