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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1990 Volume IV: American Family Portraits (Section I)

How the African-American Storyteller Impacts the Black Family and Society

Guide for Curriculum Unit 90.04.05

by Barbara P. Moss

The curriculum unit which I prepared is one in which I attempted to shed light on Black storytellers as they emerged from slavery to the present. I tried to show or give instances that promoted Blacks to want to sing or talk with someone about. Instances cited were those that I felt would be of interest to students who are predominantly Black and Hispanic. I also attempted to include information that my students can very readily understand and be stimulated to the point of seeking more information on their own. I'm hopeful that the curriculum unit that I prepared will enlighten and create some "self starters."

Some Black storytellers that I've talked about my unit are: Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Winnie Mandela, Bill Cosby, "Moms" Mabley, and Martin Luther King, to mention a few. Rappers have a story to tell, and I talk about them too. Students really identify with some of them and it tends to make the whole idea of studying this unit extremely exciting for the students. The lesson plans and activities that I included are flexible enough to be used in other subject areas. I look forward to Black History Month. I'm excited about introducing my unit to my sixth graders.

(Recommended for Social Studies during Black History Month, grade 6)

Key Words

Folklore American Afro-American Folktales Literature Oral Tradition

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