



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1992 Volume IV: The National Experience: American Art and Culture

---

## **The African-American Experience in the 20th Century through the Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence and the Novels of Bruce Brooks and Lorene Cary**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 92.04.04  
by Mary-Alice Howley

“The African-American experience in the 20th Century through the Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence and the Novels of Bruce Brooks and Lorene Cary,” attempts to motivate African-American students to read, study, write, and learn by using their heritage. It is hoped that each student will see himself or herself as part of a progressive, political and social movement. Towards this end the art of Jacob Lawrence which depicts Harlem street scenes, major events in African-American history, and events from the Civil Rights Movement is presented along with a summary of his biography. The PBS video “Eyes on the Prize” presents the fight to integrate public schools. The novels “The Moves Make the Man and Black Ice” tell the personal stories of young African-Americans who did the integrating.

The curriculum unit asks the students to view, discuss, write about and imitate the art of Lawrence. They listen to a lecture on his life. Lawrence is a successful role model for the young artist who needs to learn about the career paths open to artists. The video is viewed and discussed. The novels read have accompanying study guides which can be used in group work, classwork, or individual assignments. There is also a choice of related projects in which the students can demonstrate their mastery of art, research, cooking, basketball, letter writing, debate or public speaking.

(Recommended for Reading, Language Arts, and English, grades 8-12)

### **Key Words**

*Literature Afro-American Harlem Renaissance History 1850-1950 Lawrence Jacob Life Paintings Adolescence*

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>