



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

From Remus to Rap: A History in Theory and Practice of the African-American Storytelling Tradition

Curriculum Unit 92.04.06
by Joshua Perlstein

INTRODUCTION

The contribution that African-American writers have made to American culture has been vast. Sometimes the extent of that contribution has been blurred by the fact that much of the black artists work has been appropriated by white artists, who in addition to financial reward and critical acclaim, have gained credit for the development of new forms. Perhaps the best example of this came in the 1950's when the president of Sun Records was heard to remark that if they could find a white singer who sounded black that they would become millionaires. Soon after he signed Elvis Presley. In literature as well, African-American writers have had similar trouble attaining the respect that they deserve. Beyond the racial discrimination lay the fact that much of the narrative creations have been in the oral tradition, which in our segregated society has prevented them being recognized in the white establishment. Being denied a formal education did not prevent blacks from creating a very rich literary tradition; it is just harder to catalogue because so little of it has been written down. Inherent in the work is a power that resonates from its core. This core, or reason for creation, relates to the reason that these stories were told in the first place. More than a mere description of the circumstances that they found themselves in, the stories of African-Americans have always had survival and a quest for power as major themes. Sometimes diverting, sometimes empowering, the stories always concerned themselves with overcoming the terrible oppression that blacks have suffered in this country.

I will attempt, in this curriculum unit, to introduce students to works which form the basis of African-American storytelling. I will focus on three distinct time periods, each of which contributed unique forms. We will begin with the oral tradition which began during the days of slavery and carried on into the early part of this century. Next we will look at the works of Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston and specifically their contribution to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920's and 1930's. We will conclude with a look at Rap music, a form which is the most familiar and relevant to the students. By looking at each time period and discovering the similarities between them, I hope that the students gain an understanding of the black American storytelling tradition. I think that by seeing the past in the present and the present in the past they will gain a deeper insight into where they fit in the American landscape.

A literary history would only form the first half of the unit. The second part of the curriculum, once the students had a grasp of the form and function of stories in each of these periods, would be to create stories of their own in the style of each given period. In storytelling, unlike most other creative forms, the process of

creation and the product of creation are the same. It would be vital for these students understanding of the different forms to attempt to create stories of their own. While this would complete the educational agenda, I would hope that the students would also add storytelling to their survival skills as they cross the threshold into adulthood. Let us now focus on the form and focus of storytelling in each time period.

THE ORAL TRADITION IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN STORYTELLING

Transported from Africa and ripped from the security of their homes the black slaves in America still found a way to create vibrant stories. I would provide the students with two sources to form the foundation of their knowledge on the slave tradition. The first, *TALK THAT TALK*, is an anthology of African-American storytelling. It is so global in its coverage of the topic that I would introduce stories throughout the unit. But specific to the slave tradition it provides renderings of tales by authors of high repute such as Zora Neale Hurston, Ramona Bass, Linda Goss, and even William Faulkner. While many are reinterpretations, they go much farther than Joel Chandler Harris in capturing the spirit of the stories.

The second book that I would use is *The People Could Fly*, by Virginia Hamilton. Its strength lies in how Hamilton translates the slave dialect into a more accessible style for a modern audience, without losing the flavor of the stories. This second source would be used primarily in the second phase of the curriculum devoted to the creation and telling of stories. The first would give a more theoretical explanation of the form and function of the stories.

Both books cover the range of slave stories. They describe animal tales, ghost or spirit stories, tall tales, freedom tales, sermons, rhymes, and Raps. Many of these stories became popular to a general audience when they were written down by the journalist Joel Chandler Harris. In the writing he attempted to recreate the dialect of Southern blacks of the time. But somewhere in the translation from the mouth to the pen, much of the immediacy and potency was lost and replaced with a quaintness and folksiness that was far less threatening. For Harris, the slaves were a curiosity, their stories simply a way of revealing their crude lifestyle. But to the people who told them, the telling was a matter of maintaining their humanity and their dignity.

Most of the animal tales found their roots in African mythology. The characters of Rabbit, Bear, and Fox all have their African counterparts. It is the character of Rabbit that most often represents the slaves own position. Rabbit is essentially a trickster, much like Anansi the spider in African mythology. Rabbit is constantly using his brains to overcome the obstacles placed in his way by the more overpowering animals. By replacing the slaves persona with this animal, the teller empowered the listener by suggesting that there were ways to overcome the biggest obstacles in their lives as well. In most of these stories the main characters are neither good nor evil. It is an interesting facet of black American storytelling that the stories were as complex morally as the conditions that the storytellers found themselves living in. Often, the tricks that were attempted by Rabbit failed. By creating this imperfect hero, the storyteller seems to be telling the listener not to get too overconfident about the prospects for change. It is interesting to compare this mythology with something like the Odyssey, in which the hero always seems to conquer impossible odds. The difference may lie in the cultures that supported these myths: one, the Greeks, was the dominant culture of its time; the other, the slaves, were the repressed culture of their time. By this we can see how much mythology reflects the present as much as the past.

Another way of dealing with the strange workings of the universe was the supernatural tale. African-American

religious practices have a variety of influences, from Christianity to African tribal religions to Native American rituals. This form also tried to assign responsibility for good and evil and did not seek to empower but provided hope in another way. Basically, if a person could patiently withstand the tests, however difficult, that this world gave, then a reward would be waiting in the next. In that very strange theological equation, the amount of suffering now was directly related to the chances of redemption. This panacea has provided relief for many who preferred enduring oppression as opposed to fighting it.

The third form that the folktale takes is called the tall tale. One type of tall tale takes on an almost evangelical quality as it tries to explain the unexplainable. Once again the reader can find comparisons in African mythology with stories like *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears*. Creation myths and other explanation stories were told to demystify the natural world. The twist that these stories were given by the slaves is that they were told to explain the behavior of white people. By explaining it, there might be a way of overcoming it.

The last form that the slaves stories take and the one most literally involved in changing the system that oppressed blacks in the last half of the 19th century, are the freedom tales. By cataloguing escapes to freedom, imagined or actual, the stories do not attempt to cover up the hope for change with animal or theological analogies. The stories made the escape to freedom, in spite of its difficulty, seem attainable. By using examples of real people in real situations, they went beyond the hope inspired by the animal tales.

By providing the students with an outline of the different forms that the oral tradition began with, I would hope to impress in them the power of these stories. It would be important also for these students to see that there was a storytelling tradition that existed prior to slavery, i.e. the African tradition. Understanding how these were reinterpreted by the slaves would shed additional light on the slave experience. I find that whenever I read or tell any of the animal tales to students, their original purpose and power is lost on them. In a world where the anger caused by the oppressiveness of society is expressed in riots and an epidemic of handgun murders, it is difficult for these students to understand that the story was one of the only forms of empowerment available to the slaves. Certainly there were rebellions and violence, but on a daily basis stories provided the only means of security in a world that provided no freedom and no identity. I would like them to understand therefore how the evolution of the story reflects the changing place of African-Americans in American society. More specifically, by understanding the changes in form and content, as well as the intention behind the telling, they could best understand the current plight of black Americans. In summary the objectives of the first section of the unit would be:

1. To familiarize the students with the four types of stories listed above.
2. To discuss the function of these stories in the context of the time that they were first told.
3. To discuss what kind of a reaction that they cause in an audience today and what we may therefore learn from the difference between their original purpose and the current reaction.
4. To see how the slave tradition carried over from the African tradition and how comparing the stories in both mythologies would shed additional light on the slave experience.

MOVING INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

While much of the oral tradition that existed in the 19th century might seem innocuous and even silly to today's student, I believe that once they understand how these traditions moved into and determined the popular forms of the twentieth century, they will gain a deeper respect for the past. So the characters of African mythology found their way into the narratives described above. But the rhythms and rhymes of Africa could be heard not only in slave songs and gospels but the more poetic forms of storytelling known as the toast. The toast, a peculiar form of oral poetry, which was a gritty and vivid description of life on the street, on the road, in prison or wherever else hardship might be found. While much of the material is inappropriate to the junior high school student, there is enough material available to demonstrate how the characters and ideas of the slaves stories found expression in this twentieth century form. The toast is useful also because it was created to be performed.

The toast (no one seems certain as to why it is called this) is a completely social art form. The process of creation and the product of creation are one and the same. Although this tradition seems to have died off in the last thirty years, it remained a vital form of black expression for most of this century. It was competitive and historically was dominated by men. In barrooms, pool halls, front porches and prisons men would gather to tell stories. While entertainment was always one of the primary objectives, there was no doubt that the stories hoped to empower both listener and teller alike.

Commonly what would happen is that a group would gather and take turns telling the same story. Content and form remained fairly consistent so it was the teller's style that defined the quality. The three best known stories to survive the years of mouth-to-mouth revival were: *Stackolee* , *Signifying Monkey* , and *Titanic* . *Stackolee* told the story of a relentless badman who never had any regard for the law. This lawlessness seemed to be a twisted version of Martin Luther King's proclamation that the only place for a moral person in an unjust society is in prison. By breaking down the laws of society, *Stackolee* seems to be making a statement about these laws, which from the black perspective were designed to be oppressive. *Signifying Monkey* recreates the trickster persona so popular in the Brere Rabbit stories. Using his smarts Monkey tricks his enemy, the powerful lion, into a losing battle with Elephant. Although successful in this goal, Monkey is trapped in the safety of his tree, because if he comes down, lion will seek vengeance. This paradox reflects the complexity of any victory that the blacks won over the white man. Though victorious the Monkey has just traded one trap for another. The last toast, *Titanic* , is a retelling of the sinking of the famous ocean liner. Historically, there were no blacks on board. But in this version a lone black man emerges from the belly of the boat, swims to safety and leaves thousands of white people to die at sea. This fictionalization represents the blacks' hope of steering clear of the battleship of oppression

Toasts evolved in the following way. At first they parodied well-known stories. They would sometimes describe the life of a well-known person. Sometimes they were just a clever assemblage of names. And finally they were a way of describing a heroic act of the teller himself. In general, sound and rhythm were vastly important to the storytelling. The telling of these stories was dependent on musical as well as acting ability. Common to all these was a coming to terms with a general lack of power. As such and being that they were predominantly male in origin, many have a strong sexual undercurrent. Enough versions have been recast outside of the sexual domain so as not to be inappropriate for the age.

The objectives of the section on tall tales and toasts would be:

1. To understand the specific form and function of tall tales and toasts.
2. To understand the importance of performance in the telling of a story.
3. To understand the importance of rhythm in the telling of toasts.
4. To begin to create stories of their own, in the form of one of the styles of storytelling that they had heard in class.
5. To see how each storyteller shapes and gives personal meaning to a given text.

Storytelling moved into the twentieth century in one other significant way. Because slaves were denied a formal education, their stories survived by being told as opposed to written down. People like Joel Chandler Harris attempted to write these stories down but his translation lost the immediacy and impact on the audience. In the early part of the twentieth century the accomplishments of a new generation of literate blacks created new traditions in African-American storytelling. While much of this was happening in the North, much of the new writing came from Southerners like Zora Neale Hurston, whose written musings borrowed a great deal from the oral tradition. Also prominent in giving a literary voice to the black experience were poets Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson. The situation that they described in the North was very different from the oppression in the South. To address it, poems and stories protesting political and economic injustice were given eloquent articulation.

Although the inclusion of these literary giants diverts somewhat from the stated goals of the curriculum, I believe that they are very important in understanding the progression from Remus to Rap. The urban poetry took on themes common to all the forms discussed up until this point: impotence, trickery, and heroism. Because of the active voice used in most of these works, as well as the fact that many of these writers also wrote plays, much of the poetry is very adaptable to performance. It is this melding of folk traditions with urban urgency that is the forbearer of Rap: street toasts of the 1980's and 90's.

The objectives for the section on the movement of storytelling into the twentieth century would be:

1. To expose the students to the writing of African-Americans who may have grown up in circumstances more similar to their own than the 18th century slave.
2. To compare the content and form of these stories with stories from the oral tradition.
3. To adapt the work of a writer of their choice for performance to help them understand the active voice inherent in these written works.

THE ADVENT OF RAP

Although it would be nice to include a section on the protest movement and writings of the 1960's, I have not included it for the following reasons. Much of the telling during this decade was in a literary form. Playwrights such as Amiri Baraka and authors like James Baldwin are a bit too mature and complex for this age group. The emphasis on the written word has become so prominent at this point that it is at this time that the tradition of the toast seems to have died out. So to maintain our emphasis on the oral tradition, we make a huge leap forward from the Harlem Renaissance to Rap.

Since its infancy in the early 1980's, Rap music has had a difficult time finding a wide audience as well as critical acclaim. While the form is certainly popular among black youth, it has less acceptance among whites. This certainly was not true about Motown, which directed much of its marketing at a white market. But Rap music does receive this attention from the record companies. In fact they imitate earlier actions by trying to find white artists who sound black. Some claim that the music is alienating. Others suggest that it is the lyrics which threaten the security of a white audience. But regardless of its wider acceptance there is no denying the fact that Rap, like its predecessors, seeks to empower. Whereas earlier forms may have impelled the listener to action, Rap has become more specialized in the type of action that it calls for.

Since the 1950's, there have been two general schools of thought as to how to solve the problems of black Americans. Simply put, but more nobly expressed in the words of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, the solution would be non-violence or violence. Rap groups have taken the lead in the quest for justice but the means that they advocate are as diverse as the two men mentioned above. Some seem to favor talk and education. Others, like Public Enemy, take a more radical and explosive approach. In an ironic tribute to King's birthday, they advocate the violent overturning of the state of Arizona's decision not to celebrate it.

I believe that Rap music, with its often blatant disregard for authority, is immediately appealing to middle school students. To include it in the curriculum is perhaps risky. But I believe that it could be a valuable tool if the students are given a productive and carefully arranged way of appreciating it. I do not think that there is any way of denying that it is the successor to the oral tradition that began with the slaves and continued with the toast and on into the twentieth century. It remains the most popular of the black expressions of anger at the injustice that remains for them in this country. I believe that we have reached a crucial point in how blacks will survive and thrive in America. By learning to tell the stories of their lives, in a form that is so familiar to them, I hope that these students can help to solve the problems of their generation.

The objectives of this section on Rap would be:

1. To show how the oral tradition has survived into the present.
2. To create Raps, on topics that are of concern to the students, in order to bring meaning, purpose and the potential for change into their lives.
3. To understand how artistic creation can be a powerful weapon in times of social change.

TIEING IT ALL TOGETHER

As I stated in the introduction, I would like there to be a practical component to this curriculum. Hopefully by the time we had completed the telling of stories from the past century, the students would have enough of a handle on their form to begin to tell stories of their own, in the style of any of the given time periods. To encourage this process even further, I would bring in selections from the greatest stories told by African-American comedians. It does not take too much effort to see that the tradition of oral storytelling exists in the stories of Bill Cosby, Richard Pryor, and many others. I believe that these stories would inspire the students to see how they could apply the tradition to the creation of stories about their own lives. I would provide the students with a forum to express the stories of their lives, giving them the performance tools necessary to do

so, while encouraging them to find ways to transform their experience into performance.

The goal of this final section would be:

1. To give students the time and the means to create stories about their own lives, as a way of empowering themselves and seeing the possibility for change.

SAMPLE LESSON #1 to cover approximately one week

Comparing African and African-American Stories

OBJECTIVES

- ¥ To familiarize the students with the mythology of Africa and the mythology of African-Americans
- ¥ To understand the form that these stories were told.
- ¥ To understand why these stories were told.
- ¥ To see how and why the African stories evolved when they were told in America.
- ¥ To understand the function of the character of Anansi and Rabbit in particular and the Trickster character in general.
- ¥ To be able to associate human characteristics with animal characteristics as a way of understanding the use of metaphor as storytelling tool.
- ¥ To create the different characters from the story.
- ¥ To perform the stories.

STRATEGIES

In order to accomplish the goals stated above I would use the following assignments and exercises:

1. Read *Anansi the Spider* , by Gerald McDermott and the version of *Doc Rabbit, Brer Fox and Tar Baby* in *The People Could Fly* .

Questions for Discussion:

- ¥ Why are animals used to tell the stories?
- ¥ Why are certain animals used to convey certain characters?
- ¥ What is the difference in the world pictured in the first story and the world of the second?
- ¥ Are there any similarities between the two stories?
- ¥ What kind of animal would you be if your life was a story and why?

Practical Application of Material:

¥ Make up an animal story to explain the existence of something mysterious in the world (Why volcanoes erupt? Why the sun sets? Don't use scientific explanation, but imagine living in a time when these things could not be explained.)

¥ Make up an animal story using a Trickster character who overcomes a huge obstacle by using his/her brain.

Additional Dramatic Exercises:

¥ Create a Jungle. Have the students pick an animal from the Jungle. *On* their own, have them create a picture *in* their mind of that animal doing various activities (sleeping, eating, hunting, playing). Have them begin to physicalize these various states. Discover a voice for your animal. When everyone has completed a range of activities, allow them to begin to interact. Ask: Who are your enemies? your friends? What is your favorite thing to do? What makes you mad?

¥ Have a conversation between two different people by yourself. Use animal influences to help you discover your character.

SAMPLE LESSON #2 to be used for approximately one week

Creating Performances from the Stories of Zora Neale Hurston

OBJECTIVES

¥ To introduce the literature of Zora Neale Hurston to the students.

¥ To see how her stories derive from the slave and African traditions.

¥ To appreciate the differences between written and oral traditions in storytelling.

Practical:

¥ To learn the qualities of Story Theater, as developed by Paul Sills and Viola Spolin.

¥ To apply that knowledge to the interpretation of a story of their choice by Zora Neale Hurston.

STRATEGIES

In order to accomplish the goals stated above I would use the following assignments and exercises:

Read *King of De World* by Zora Neale Hurston. (Read the version of the same story in Hamilton called *He Lion, Bruh Bear, and Bruh Rabbit*, if the Hurston language is too difficult. Then go back to the Hurston.)

- ¥ How does the story read? Is it clear that it is still from the oral tradition?
- ¥ In what way does the story capture some new themes relevant to the 20th century and to the plight of Northern blacks?
- ¥ Who is the narrator of the story and what function does he serve other than to tell the story?

For Story Theater:

- ¥ How many characters are there? What types of animals are they?
- ¥ How many different locations are there?
- ¥ How much time goes by in the story?
- ¥ What is the style of the story (mystery, funny, ghost or spirit, action, dramatic)?
- ¥ What are the rhythms and the overall dramatic shape of the story?

For Performance:

1. Prepare the students by doing animal improvisations.
2. Have students “audition” for the various parts by showing how they would depict the characters described above.
3. Break the story up into sections. Each new section will be determined by a change of location or time. Each section will be set up by the narrator, Dad Boykin.
4. Determine an environment where the story is told. (Use Spolin’s WHERE? exercises to help set the place.)
5. Use the dialogue from the story as a starting point for an improvisation between the characters in each section.
6. Hone and shape the different scenes to fit the style determined for the piece.
7. Allow the narrator to introduce the sections.
8. Create ambience by the use of group sound to augment the feeling for each scene. For instance, if there is a suspenseful scene in the forest, the group can create the sounds of animals, wind, rain, etc.
9. Put all the elements of character, ambience and narrator into the piece and tell the story as a whole.
10. See if the natural rhythms of the story as written are reflected in the final product.

SAMPLE LESSON #3 to be used for approximately one week

Rappin' Langston, Rappin' James, Rappin' Martin, Rappin' Yourself

OBJECTIVES

- ¥ To introduce students to the poetry of Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson.
- ¥ To appreciate the rhythmic quality of this poetry as well as the rhythms of the preacher, specifically Martin Luther King.
- ¥ To listen to and read the lyrics for RAP songs and appreciate the debt that they have to the forms mentioned above.
- ¥ To take the writings and speeches of Hughes, Johnson and King and turn them into Raps.
To address some serious aspect of their own life by creating a Rap. This may or may not be preceded by a brief overview of poetry in general and a few attempts to put their experience into poetic form.

STRATEGIES

To accomplish some of the goals listed above I would give the following assignments and exercises:

Choose one of the following: *Dear Landlord* , by Hughes; *The Creation* , by Johnson; or *I Have a Dream* , by King.

- ¥ Analyze the rhythms in each selection.
- ¥ See if they are Rap-able.
- ¥ Memorize and present each Rap to the class.

Preparing to Rap your Life:

- ¥ Play Rhyming games. Go around a circle and create rhyming couplets. Do not worry about a story.
- ¥ Improvise situations where each line has to rhyme the line before.
- ¥ Ask student to come to class with a story centered around a given theme (AIDS, Homelessness, Unemployment). Tell them to keep it personal and not polemic.
- ¥ Find the story's title by deciding its theme.
- ¥ Employ repetition and rhythms and rhymes to create a Rap about the topic chosen. If possible, tape their Raps and play them back.
- ¥ Have a final discussion about the Power of Rap and whether creating their own taught them anything about themselves, their society, their past or their future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* . York: Bantam Books, 1983.
2. Adams, William, Editor. *Afro-American Literature* . New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1970.
3. Barker, Clive. *Theater Games* . London: Methuen, 1977.
4. Cooke, Michael G. *Afro-American Literature in the Twentieth Century* . New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
5. Chapman, Abraham, Editor. *Black Voices: An Anthology* . New York: Dutton, 1968.
6. Goss, Linda and Barnes, Marion, Eds. *Talk That Talk* . New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989 (This book has an exhaustive Bibliography on a variety of topics related to the form, origin and performance of African-American Storytelling.)
7. Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly* . New York: Knopf, 1985.
8. Harris, Joel Chandler. *Complete Tales of Uncle Remus* . New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1955.
9. Hodgson, John and Richards, Ernest. *Improvisation* . New York: Grove Press, 1966.
10. Huggins, Nathan, Editor. *Voices from the Harlem Renaissance* . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.
11. Hughes, Langston. *Selected Poems: Langston Hughes* . New York: Knopf, 1959.
12. Hughes, Langston. *Mule Bone* . New York: Harper-Collins, 1991.
13. Zora Neale Hurston. *Mules and Men* . New York: Harper Collins, 1990.
- ___ *Spunk* . Turtle Island Foundation, 1985.
14. Jackson, Bruce. *Get your ass in the Water and Swim Like Me* . Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
15. Johnson, James Weldon. *50 Years and Other Poems* . Boston: Cornhill Press, 1917.
16. Johnstone, Keith. *Impro* . New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 1979.
17. Koch, Kenneth. *Rose. Where Did You Get That Red?* . New York: Random House, 1974.
18. Lester, Julius, editor. *Further Tale. of Uncle Remus* . New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1990.
- ___ *More Tales of Uncle Remus* . New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1988.
- ___ *The Tales of Uncle Remus* . New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1987.
19. Radin, Paul, editor. *African Folktales* . New York: Schocken Books, 1987.
20. Seger, Linda. *Creating Unforgettable Characters* . New York: Holt, Henry, and Company, 1990.
21. Toomer, Jean. *Cane* . New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987.

22. Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation for the Theater* . Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.
23. Washington, Mary. *Black-Eyed Susans* . New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975.
24. Way, Brian. *Development Through Drama* . Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1967.
25. Yakim, Moni. *Creating a Character* . New York: Back Stage Books, 1990.

DISCOGRAPHY

1. Cosby, Bill. *Bill Cosby is a Very Funny Fellow. RIGHT!* Warner Brothers 1518.
2. ___. *I Started Out as a Child* . Warner Brothers 1567.
3. ___. *Wonderfullness* . Warner Brothers 1634.
4. ___. *Best of Bill Cosby* . Warner Brothers 1798.
5. Hammer, MC. *Let's Get It Started* . Capitol 90924.
6. ___. *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'em* . Capitol 92857.
7. Ice Cube. *Death Certificate* . Priority 57155.
8. ___. *Kill at Will* . Priority 7230.
9. Ice-T. *Colors* . Warner Brothers 25713.
10. Kris Kross. *Totally Krossed Out* . Columbia 48710.
11. LL Cool J. *Mama Said Knock You Out* . Def Jam 46888.
12. ___. *Walking With a Panther* . Def Jam 45172.
13. N.W.A. *N.W.A. and the Posse* . Ruthless 57119.
14. ___. *100 Miles and Running* . Ruthless 7224.
15. Pryor, Richard. *Bicentennial Nigger* . Warner Brothers 3114.
16. *Live on Sunset Strip* . Warner Brothers 3660-3660
18. Public Enemy. *Fear of a Black Planet* . Def Jam 45413.

Reading List for Students

Selections from:

1. *Talk That Talk.*
2. *The People Could FLY.*
3. *Get Your Ass out of the Water and Swim Like Me.*
4. *Mules and Men.*
5. *Selected Poems: Langston Hughes.*
6. *Voices from the Harlem Renaissance.*
7. Lyric sheets from musical artists listed.

Any additional classroom materials could be taken from the bibliography.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

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

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