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Langston Hughes: Artist and Historian

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A: Hughes: Life and Background

Langston Hughes was among four principal writers who achieved major recognition during the Harlem Renaissance. The Renaissance was an outstanding phase of literary and artistic development of black people in the United States. Hughes wrote in every genre on a sundry of topics. However, for purposes of this research, Hughes' role as a social critic of his time will be discussed. The paper will begin with bibliographical facts on Hughes for the benefit of demonstrating to the students the relationship between the artist and the art. Next, I will demonstrate how Hughes drew from the historically rich period in which he lived and became in essence an artistic recorder of history. A detailed study of selected poems that will reflect his attempts to protest injustice will follow.

Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902 in Joplin, Missouri. His youth was marked by constant moving and crisscrossing of the Mid-West due to his parents' repeated separations. For a period he lived with his grandmother whose husband, Sheridan Leary, had died with John Brown at Harpers Ferry. At twelve his parents permanently separated and he traveled with his mother who was in search of income to support them both.

Hughes completed elementary school in Lincoln, Illinois and graduated from Cleveland's Central High School in 1920. He began writing poetry and short stories in grammar school. It was also here, that Hughes experienced the injustices and violence of racial prejudice. These experiences are said to have formed the basis of his work.

In 1919, after high school graduation, Hughes went to Mexico where he spent the next two years living with his father, James Hughes, a prestigious businessman. The relationship ended disastrously between the two, one a stern businessman and the other a dreamy poet. He then left Mexico and moved to Harlem, the mecca of the Renaissance, and enrolled in Columbia University for a year.

During the years of 1923-4 he traveled to Africa and Europe. In 1925 Hughes was back in the US and his literary talents were discovered. A patron helped him enroll in Lincoln University. His literary career took its first steps thereafter. In 1926 he began winning many prizes for his work and became a habitué' of Black literary Harlem. In this year, he also published *The Weary Blues* and earned a special standing with many literary figures of the time. In 1927 he published *Fine Clothes to the Jew*.

In 1930 Hughes turned his attention from poetry to prose earning him a standing of versatility matched by few. Hughes also traveled to Europe, Russia, and the West Indies. His extensive travels added more experiences to his life and thus to his writings.

The 1950's has been said to be the most productive years of his life. He continued his versatile writing career producing works of prose, poetry, an opera, drama, a historical work and a critical work. In the 1960's he continued many of the above genres and in addition composed two anthologies—one in 1964 and the other in 1967, the year of his death.

Hughes is referred to as a “literary phenomenon.” He was one of the first Black men of literature who strove to make a productive and profitable career out of his writing. In addition to possessing an ability to write in every genre, he composed translations of his works and annually lectured and toured. And, not only was he a major literary spokesperson, he was also a promoter of Black writers and the artistic historian of black people whose ways, talks, gestures, dances, clothes, dreams, thoughts, frustrations and oppression he sought to capture with his pen.

B: Hughes: His Poetry

Although some of Hughes' poetry can be classified as non-racial, most of it can be categorized into the following: themes and variations on Black music, racial affirmation and/or racial protest (Richard Barksdale and Kenneth Kinnamon, *Black Writers of America*, 474) For purposes of this research only his poems on racial protest and injustice will be examined.

The historical context of Black literature during Hughes' period was economic crisis, social tension, world war and oppression of race in mind, body and soul. Hence, literature of protest would emerge. Hughes was one among those who met that challenge. Indeed, he is regarded by many readers who love verse and are committed to the idea of social and political justice as the most “eloquent of American poets to have sung the wounds of political injustice” (Rampersad and Roessel, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*) Included in his themes of protests are: war; Jim Crow laws; lynching; injustice; equality and inclusion; labor and economic issues; migration; religious bigotry; international oppression and civil rights issues. I will explore many of these themes in detail.

1. War/Jim Crow Theme

Hughes lived through two world wars. During the aftermath of World War II, he was in his forties. His writing career had matured and he had established himself a record of literary radicalism. Indeed, his war theme poems hold true this record. Hughes renounces warring in a cunning and sarcastic matter as he writes “A wonderful time-the war:/ money rolled in/ and the blood rolled out (*Green Memory*, Rampersad, 401). This tone is maintained in World War II as he shouts, “In wartime we had fun,/ Sorry that old war is done!/ What a grand time was the war,/ My, my!/Echo: Did Somebody Die? (Rampersad, 415). Hughes attempts to make the reader question those who declare war as he writes, “Truth is a bundle of vicious lies/tied together and sterilized—/a war-makers' bait for unwise youth”(221). Hughes also addresses the naiveté of those who would believe that war is noble, honorable, heroic, and patriotic. Analyzing the mind of a Mother in Wartime he tells the reader of how she speaks of war “as if the freedom's cause/ Were pled anew at some heroic bar,/As if the technicolor banners flew/ To honor modern man. He concludes the poem with the following lines” She thought that only/ One side won,/ Not that both/ Might lose.(558) *Official Notice* and *War* are also of a similar nature in that in these poems war yields no victor as it kills in a color blind fashion. In other war theme poems, Hughes exposes the hypocrisy of American soldiers fighting for freedom abroad while freedom is denied within her

own boundaries. In Jim Crow's Last Stand, Hughes declares, "Jim Crow can't fight for democracy . . . / If you want to get Hitler's goat,/ abolish poll tax so folks can vote" (299). In Bequmont to Detroit 1943, the voice of a black soldier inquires, "How long I got to fight/BOTH HITLER AND JIM CROW(281). Hughes assumes several different voices as he demonstrates that Jim Crow and democracy could not coexist. In the following poems this is evident: The Colored Solider; Dear Mr. President; Southern Negro Speaks; NAACP; How About It, Dixie; Dixie Man to Uncle Sam; Poem to Uncle Sam; Message to the President; Crow Goes, Too; Just an Ordinary Guy; Total War; and Will V-Day Be Me Day Too?

2. Unwritten Laws (Jim Crow) and Blind Justice (Court Upheld Laws)

Hughes was born and educated in the South during Jim Crow years. Although during most of his literary career Hughes was physically removed from the South, he did not forget its injustices. In fact, he healed his wounds from experiencing political, legal, and social injustice by using writing as a form of protest. Moreover, Jim Crow, the unwritten law of the South, became subject to many of his poems as did lynching, Dixie's sentence of death. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hughes would take on the injustices of the legal system.

3. Legal Related Poems

In Justice, Hughes accuses justice (the legal system) of being "a blind goddess with bandages hiding festering sores that were once eyes. The following legal cases surmise the basis for such verse.

On March 25, 1931 nine African-Americans youths were accused of raping two white women on a freight train near Painted Rock, Alabama. The accused were jailed in nearby Scottsboro. Hence the case became known as "Little Scottsboro." Eight of the defendants were sentenced to die and one, thirteen-year-old Roy Wright, to life imprisonment. The International Labor Defense brought a series of appeals and retrials, which after almost twenty years ended in the release of all defendants. The trial of Ozie Powell (Powell v. Alabama) is important in legal history because he was granted an appeal on the grounds that he had not had adequate legal counsel. This was the first time the Supreme Court recognized the right of defendants to competent legal representation. Hughes was moved by this case and thus visited the defendants in jail. This motivated him to write a book *Scottsboro Limited* which contained four poems and a play. Hughes' poem for Clarence Noris one of the defendants titled *August 19th* takes the reader into the mind of one who awaits a death sentence while revealing the minuteness of an individual before the law. He opens the poem with a series of rhetorical questions such as, "What flag of red and white and blue will fly for me when I die?" Hughes continues with "I am not the President,/Nor the Honorable So-and-So./But only one of the Scottsboro Boys/Doomed "by law" to go." Lines down in the poem Hughes asks, "For if you let the "law" kill me,/Are you free?" Hughes also parallels the similarities of court upheld justice with that of unrobed justice when he pleads with the world to "stop all the leeches/That use their power to strangle hope,/ That make of the law a lyncher's rope." He also does this in the *Ballad of Ozie Powell* another poem for a Scottsboro defendant as he writes, "The Law's a Klansman with an evil will. . . ."

In 1934 Arthur Weigs Mitchell, the first black Democrat elected to Congress, took a train to Hot Springs, Arkansas from Chicago. When the train reached the Arkansas border, he was forced to leave the first-class Pullman car for which he had purchased a ticket. He sued the railroad on the grounds that interstate travel should be exempt from Arkansas' restrictions. He lost in the lower courts, but in April 1941 the Supreme Court ruled that the same accommodation offered to whites must be made available to blacks. Hughes realized that this was a victory for Mitchell. However, segregation continued even on railroads. In his poem *The Mitchell Case* he writes accordingly, "Since the Constitution ain't enough—/ To protect a colored man—/ And we have to go to court to make/The crackers understand./But for poor people/ It's kinder hard to sue./Mr. Mitchell, you did

right well—/But the rest of us ain't you/. Seems to me it would be simpler If the Government would declare/They're tired of all this Jim Crow stuff/And just give it the air.

The Emmett Till murder case is a painful testimony of injustice in black history. It is fitting that Hughes wrote to about this case too. On August 24, 1955, Till, a fourteen year old black youth whistled at and made suggestive remarks to Carolyn Bryant in a store in Mississippi. One week later Till was murdered by Bryant's husband and brother -in-law. They were acquitted of all charges by an all-white jury. "Oh, what sorrow!/Oh, what pity/ Oh, what pain/ That tears and blood/ Should mix like rain/ And terror come again/ To Mississippi" is the opening stanza to Hughes poem on the Till case. This stanza could serve as a prelude to many other of Hughes poems on the climate of the south pre/post Civil Rights including: Kids Who Die, To Captain Mulzac, The Thorn, Dream Freedom, Death in Yorkville, Dream of Freedom, Birmingham, Bombings in Dixie, Ballad of Harry Moore, Judge William Hastie, Brotherly Love, Final Call, Demonstration, Panther, Birmingham Sunday, and Freedom.

4. Jim Crow Laws/ Migration

During the period in which Hughes wrote, blacks were disfranchised and stripped of rights in the US not only through discriminatory legislation but also through unlawful violent practices. In a 1896 case brought against the railroad, Plessy v. Ferguson, separate facilities for whites and blacks was declared, "separate but equal" as the Supreme Court ruled that public facilities did not violate the Constitution. Thereafter, the tone of racial exclusion continued to prevail especially in the south. It was not until the 1954's Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education that the 1896 case would be reversed. In Brown the court held that compulsory segregation in public schools denies black children equal protection under the law. In 1964, near the end of Hughes' career, a more sweeping civil rights bill outlawed racial discrimination in public accommodations and by employers, unions and voting registrars. In the voting rights bills 1964 and 1965 the use of literacy or other voter-qualification tests were banned, federal voting examiners in area not meeting certain voter-participation requirements were appointed, and poll taxes were barred. Hughes' poems on segregation/Jim Crow; migration; inclusion and Civil Rights are a direct sign of this time. The South, Jim Crow Car, and Ballad of Sam Solomon are poems in which Hughes shares with the reader the frustration of living under Jim Crow. In other poems Hughes draws comparisons between Northern and Southern living leading into the Black migration. The last two stanzas of One-Way-Ticket the southern migrant speaks, "I am fed up/with Jim Crow laws,/People who are cruel/And afraid,/ Who lynch and run,/Who are scared of me/And me of them./ I pick up my life/ And take it away/ On a one-way ticket—/Gone up North,/ Gone out West,/Gone (361)

I have used Langston Hughes as a vehicle to teach students many things about writing from the use of metaphors to the use of repetition. He had a masterful grip on language and was in tune with his community, country and world. Students who seek to use writing as a form of informing someone about something, as a form of therapy for unwinding their coveted thoughts and feelings or as a hobby and form of enjoyment can be inspired by Hughes' literary contributions.

Part II: From Pen to Brush

A. Jacob Lawrence and the Black Migration

Jacob Lawrence is said to have accomplished what no other artist has done in treating the black-American historical experience in his historical narrative the Great Migration series. The series, 60 panels, which has been compiled into a children's picture book is a "visual ballad." Each page is minimally narrated and still allows for visual discovery of an untold historical event: the migration of rural southern blacks to the industrial North.

Lawrence who was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey in 1917 and schooled in Harlem along with migrants, covered important aspects of the migration in his series. In doing so, he included panels that were in accordance with the fact the American legal system failed black people. In the south, there was no justice in or out of the courtroom for a black person as blacks were jim crowed, lynched, terrorized and denied the right to vote. Furthermore, when blacks tried to leave the south, they were thrown in jail along with northern labor agents who recruited workers. Lawrence's series compliments Hughes' poetry in that both artists recorded the black-American experience.

B. When Justice is Criminal: Japanese-American Experience Circa WWII

1. Background: The Japanese-American WWII Experience

During the 1940's racism and discrimination against black people continued. However the massive hands of racism touched not only black people but also other ethnic groups including the Japanese. During World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor mistrust and fear of Japanese-Americans spread. In March 1942, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), originated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, issued Executive Order 9066 to

oversee the incarceration of West Coast Japanese Americans. Incarceration and forced migration became government policy. All persons of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast including seventy thousand American born citizens were relocated. They were given no trial or hearing. Given two days and two hours, Japanese American ministers, business people, newspaper editors, farmers, fisher people, instructors of judo and flower arrangement were forced into relocation camps: evacuation centers, or concentration camps. These camps or centers were erected on Indian reservations or swamp and desert wasteland in remote areas in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming. They were housed in four-to-six room tar-paper shacks without running water or sometimes in filthy stockyards or stables. More detailed accounts of living conditions can be found in selected books listed in the bibliography. However, it is undisputed that medical, food, and sanitary needs in camps were below livable standards. In addition, barbed wire fences, armed men with rifles, machine guns, and tanks kept the 120,000 people imprisoned in the camps for years. According to the US law, arrest and imprisonment may not be imposed upon a citizen without do process including evidence of a crime and being proven guilty by a judge or jury using the evidence as proof. What led the US government to break its own law?

Shelia Hamanaka in her book, *The Journey*, cites General John De Witt's, the officer in command of the entire West Coast, declaration, "A Jap is a Jap" which was a blatant racial slur publicly accepted at the time. De Witt held that there was a "vast conspiracy" to sabotage vital facilities such as dams, power plants and factories next to Japanese land and argued for the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. She also brings forth Earl Warren, the Attorney General of California and later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who insisted that the fact no Japanese Americans had committed any act of sabotage was sure proof that they would do so in the future (page 14-15). There was at least one, U.S. attorney general Francis Biddle, who did point out that such propositions—such as Colonel Karl R. Bendetsten's to remove Japanese Americans due to military necessity— violated the constitutional rights of American citizens. However the War Department held as one official is quoted as remarking "that in wartime "the Constitution is just a scrap of paper."

Like other groups before them, the Japanese learned that the constitution was not intended to protect them. The US was determined to practice its policy of blind justice as they hired a commission to photograph the relocation. It was the intention of the WRA to use photography as a way of getting favorable images of its activities before the public. Eisenhower arranged for a number of photographers to record the uprooting of the West Coast Japanese Americans. Photographs of the barbed wire fences, watch towers, or armed patrollers and unsanitary conditions were selectively impounded not to be released.

Dorthea Lange, one of the WRA photographers, confided in Christina Garder how she was nearly overwhelmed by the quiet horror of what she had been photographing. To the WRA's dismay not all photographer shared their sentiment and not all the photographs spoke their truth. The camera unexpectedly battled with US justice as it told no lies and showed the erosion of civil liberties (Dorthea Lange and the War Relocation Authority).

In camps all prisoners over seventeen were ordered to fill out Loyalty Questionnaires. Based on the response, prisoners were separated and some were sent to maximum control facilities with tanks. Those who were drafted to fight for the US had families who were virtually imprisoned in their own country.

Riots also broke out in camps as the Japanese Americans protested. In May 1944 in Tule Lake, Shoichi James Okamoto was unjustifiably killed by a sentry. This killing of a member of a racial oppressed group goes down shamefully in US court history as mirroring others before it and after it such as the Emmett Till case to follow. Justice was blind. The sentry was fined one dollar for the unauthorized expenditure of U.S. property: the bullet.

On March 20, 1946 the last Japanese Americans left the concentration camps, each was given \$.25 and a ride home. Freed from the barbed wire prisons, Japanese citizens began to pursue justice. In 1948, the Evacuation Claims Act was passed.

Those who could show proof of loss were paid ten cents on every dollar, at a value averaging \$340 per victim. In 1972 the Executive Order 9066 was officially ended by President Gerald Ford. In 1976 President Carter signed a bill to create the commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians to investigate the relocation of Japanese. In 1982 a presidential commission, after a long investigation, issued the following verdict:

The incarceration of Japanese Americans was not justified by military necessity, and was not driven by analysis of military conditions. The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership. Widespread ignorance of Japanese Americans contributed to a policy conceived in haste and executed in an atmosphere of fear and anger at Japan. A grave injustice was done to Americans and residents aliens of Japanese ancestry who, without any individual review or probative evidence against them, were excluded, removed and detained by the United States during World War II. (Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1982).

In 1983 Hirabayashi, Yasui and Korematsu, three men jailed for refusing to comply with curfew, or war relocation orders reopened the cases which they had lost before the Supreme Court in 1943 and 1944. "Their lawyers gained access to secret files and proved that officials from the Departments of War and Justice had lied to the court and destroyed evidence in order to justify the camps as a "military necessity." The Supreme Court ruled that the detention of a concededly loyal citizen was unconstitutional. But in all cases the court failed to strike down the legality of the military order which forced the Japanese into camps" (Hamanka,34).

In the same year, a committee published a report, *Personal Justice Denied*. It admitted that the law had been broken and called for the government to apologize and make some payment to the Japanese who had been forced into camps. Five years later it did when Reagan passed the Civil Liberties Act.

2. Through An Artist's Eyes

Shelia Hamanaka paints the story of WWII Japanese Americans. A vivid twenty-five foot mural has been captured in an art history picture book which may be read in both words and pictures. Hamanaka, a third-generation Japanese American, calls her painting, "part of a whole body of work created by artists, writers, filmmakers, musicians, lawyers, and social activists who have felt a filial and personal obligation to discover and tell the truth of their own history."

Lessons Plans with Strategies and Objectives

Unit Summary:

Creative thinking requires more than just your intelligence, training, and knowledge. In addition, it requires one's imagination, intuition, vision and willingness to experiment . . . It is important to reading poems, writing poems, and writing about poems. (Sears, 14) In this unit, students will study the historical experiences of two ethnic groups in the United States pre/post World War II as they explore whether or not the United States' promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is myth or reality . In addition, students will discover how the artist combines creative thinking with critical thinking to become a social critic and historian. This unit is

designed primarily for a writing class, but can be used in social studies or art instruction as the lessons are integrated.

Student Unit Objectives:

- * to analyze and write poetry
- * to write an essay which demonstrates knowledge of analyzing poetry
- * to write creative historical fiction
- * to develop an appreciation for artist forms including photography and painting
- * to become familiar with the Japanese American WWII experience * to become familiar with the post-slavery African American experience
- * to become familiar with artists: Langston Hughes, Shelia Hamanaka, Dorthea Lange, and Billy Holiday

Lesson Plan I: Setting the Stage

Procedures and Activities:

1. Students and teacher will discuss the idea of America being the land of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness for all people. Students will be given the following assignment to begin and revise during the course of the unit as they gather enough supporting evidence to take a position:

The United States constitution is supposed to afford all people life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Is this just an idea, philosophy or rhetoric? Do all people(s) in the United States have equal protection under the law? Write a persuasive essay pro or con with regard to this argument.

**This assignment should be given to students who have been taught essay writing techniques. General rules of formatting essays apply to the persuasive essay. However, argument, or persuasive writing has general rules of thumb of which students should be made aware. Teachers in need of a resource to teach this type of essay should consult Writing Arguments listed in the references.*

2. Teacher will inform the students that several artists have had ideas about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness including Langston Hughes, Jacob Lawrence, and Shelia Hamanaka. Teacher will ask students if artist can be social critics. After discussing this, the teacher will inform the class that during the next several lessons, the class will explore how artists have taken to pen

and brush to share their views of some American experiences.

Lesson Plan II: Langston Hughes

Summary *This lesson is part of the aforementioned larger lesson. However, it is centered around the study of poetry and Langston Hughes. The teacher should review the poems listed on the Langston Hughes Poetry sheet and select poems to xerox and discuss with students. As one teacher comments in Writers Workshop, "I made a personal investment in poetry. I began to read it and enjoy it, and I brought my enthusiasm and joy to the kids as I shared the poems I loved" (page 69). The best teaching of poetry comes from poems that are read and taught with enthusiasm.*

Procedures

1. The teacher will introduce Langston Hughes as the featured poet. His life and literary accomplishments will be discussed.
2. Students will be given copies of selected poems. In groups they will read and analyze poems as they try to gather information about the social climate at the time during which Hughes wrote
3. The class will reconvene and the teacher will discuss poems and provide necessary background which can be taken from Part I of this unit
4. The teacher will play records of Hughes reading his poems with commentary.

Evaluation Compare two of Langston Hughes poems in terms of use of literary devices and content. How is the language? Simple? Conversational? Difficult? What points of view do they express? How do the poems state the meaning? Use the Literary Devices sheet to analyze Hughes' mastery of the properties of poetry.

*** The literary devices should be part of initial instruction in a writing class. There are many activities a teacher can do to facilitate learning in this area. For example, students can work in cooperative groups to personify as many items in the class within 15 minutes. The class can reconvene to discuss examples. Students should be encouraged to use devices when writing in a variety of genre. A Literary Devices sheet should be used throughout the year and added to as other devices of exposure increases.**

Extension Complete a mock interview with Langston Hughes based on analysis of Hughes' poetry. Offer Hughes' views on such issues as race in America and the American legal system.

Part II: From Pen to Brush

Lesson III: Jacob Lawrence

Summary The objective of this lesson is to recognize art as a vehicle for teaching history. Lawrence used a series of 60 paintings to tell the story of the African American migration from south to north. One of the reasons for the migration was because of the injustices of the southern legal system and lynching.

Procedures

1. Teacher will ask the students to explain the difference between immigration and migration. Students will be asked to explore reasons why people might immigrate or migrate. Students will share anything they might know about the subject.
2. Teacher will give background on the artist of the day: Jacob Lawrence and read the *Great Migration* to the class.
3. Students will take notes during the reading. (See Great Migration Note Taking Sheet)

Evaluation Students will write historical fiction as a post reading activity. The following prompt will be offered:

You are a reporter working for a black press during the Migration. Write a persuasive article convincing a perspective migrant to move North or to stay in the South. Use the note taking sheet to provide significant details to support your argument. Be sure to follow persuasive/argument writing guidelines.

Lesson Plan IV: Strange Fruit

Summary *Holiday, Billie (1915-59), one of the greatest jazz-blues singers of all time, also known as Lady Day. Born Eleanora Holiday in Baltimore, Maryland, she spent an impoverished childhood before moving to New York City in the late 1920s, when she began singing in Harlem nightclubs. She was vocalist with various orchestras, including those of Count Basie and Artie Shaw, and made many recordings with the saxophonist Lester Young and with the pianist Teddy Wilson. Throughout the 1940s and '50s Holiday appeared in clubs around the U.S. with great success.*

Holiday rarely sang traditional blues, but had an ability to transform popular songs into emotionally profound pieces. *Strange Fruit*, a composition she wrote after touring the South in the 30's where she saw a "black body swinging in the southern breeze," was such a piece. After listening to *Strange Fruit*, students will recognize music as another artistic form that can also do what poetry and painting can do: teach history. Students will also explore the symbolism in lyrics.

Procedures

1. Teacher will introduce the artist of the day: Billy Holiday.
2. Students will listen to the musical composition *Strange Fruit*

3. Teacher will lead a discussion exploring the symbolism in *Strange Fruit* and the relationship between Hughes poetry, Jacob Lawrence's *Great Migration* and Billy Holiday's *Strange Fruit* in terms of the idea of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Lesson Plan V: Japanese American Experience during WWII

Summary As did Jacob Lawrence, Shelia Hamanaka used art to teach an untold part of US history. She painted murals depicting the Japanese experience pre-post WWII. As students develop an appreciation for art, they will become familiar with Japanese American history.

Procedures

1. Teacher will ask students what they know about WWII
2. Teacher will read and discuss Shelia Hamanaka's *The Journey*
3. Teacher will assign half the class to read *A Shameful Chapter* in *From Sea to Shining Sea* and *Japanese Americans and Wartime Mistakes*, *Peacetime Apologies* in *Cobblestone* history magazine for young people..
4. The class will reconvene and discuss what was learned about this experience
5. Teacher will show photographs taken by Dorothea Lange

Evaluation Students will complete one of the following activities:

- *Write a Journal Account of a detainee at one of the internment camps
- *Write a letter to Japanese American soldier from a family member detained in a camp
- *Write a monologue from one person's point of view about the internment experience
- *Read *Farewell to Manzanar* and write a book review
- *Inspired by knowledge acquired about the Japanese WWII experience, write a Japanese tribute poem

Summary Students will complete lesson plan I essay assignment. Procedures:

1. Students will gather necessary information to pre-write essays
2. Students will submit draft to be peer edited.
3. Students will revise essays.
4. Teacher will schedule conferences with students before the final draft is to be submitted.
5. Student essays will be published in the classroom.

Evaluation Essays will be graded by holistic standards developed for persuasive essays. Student should have standards and be aware of the scoring process.

Culminating Activity: In Search of Renewal Collaging Our Past

Summary Student will research their cultural history and construct a collage which is reflective. Collages will be put together to create a mural which tells the story of American heritage. See Handout “Collaging the Past”.

Evaluation Creativity in collage and written components explaining the content of the collage.

Langston Hughes Poems

The Backlash Blue	Who But the Lord	Black Panther	
Dream Deferred	Christ in Alabama	Mississippi	
Death in Yorkville	Birmingham Sunday	*Klu Klux Klan	
Children’s Rhymes	*Dinner Guest: Me	Northern Liberal	
*Merry-Go-Round	Jim Crow Car	*One-Way-Ticket	
*The South		Jim Crows Last Stand	Freedoms Plow
I Dream a World	World War II	Green Memory	
Mother In Wartime	Official Notice	War	
Jim Crow’s Last Stand	Bequmont to Detroit	The Colored Solider	
Dear Mr. President	Southern Negro Speaks	NAACP	
How About It, Dixie	Dixie Man to Uncle Sam	Poem to Uncle Sam	
Message to the President	Crow Goes, Too	Just an Ordinary Guy	
Total War		Will V-Day Be Me Day Too	
August 19th		Justice	
Kids Who Die	To Captain Mulzac	Ballad of Ozie Powell	The Mitchell Case
		Birmingham	

Bombings in Dixie		Ballad of Harry Moore	Judge William Hastie
Brotherly Love		Final Call	Demonstration
Panther			Freedom
			The South
Ballad of Sam Solomon	Freedom Train	Black Seed	

*Students can listen to Langston Hughes read these poem with commentary (see audiotape in reference list)

Collaging the Past

Jacob Lawrence, Shelia Hamanaka, and Dorthea Lange all share one thing in common aside from being artist: they are historians. They used art to capture the historical experiences of their subjects.

Now you will have the opportunity to do what Lawrence did with African American history and what Hamanaka did with Japanese-American history. After you have researched your own cultural history, construct a collage that reflects the experiences of your ethnic group. Your collage can be based on a particular theme or event. Your collage can present a certain message or lesson. You may consult a book of symbolism to include important symbols in your collage.

Materials paper; magazines; newspaper; computer generated images; fabric; markers; paint; crayons; pencil; glue; poems; letters; word clipping; and scissors.

Evaluation You will be evaluated based on having completed a written paper explaining what your collage depicts and on creating a historically rich collage.

Literary Devices

Onomatopoeia : words that sound like what they mean; a word to represent or imitate natural sounds (examples: buzz, crunch, gurgle).

Assonance : last word in each line rhymes with last word in another line (example: would/should).

Simile : stated or direct comparison between two often unrelated things; uses like or as for a signal word to show the comparison being made (example: fast as lightening).

Metaphor : An implied comparison between two unrelated or unlike things without using like or as (example: Death is a thief in disguise).

Personification : giving an inanimate (not living thing) human characteristics (example: night skipped away).

Analogy : Comparison\juxtaposition between of two things (example: caged bird\free bird).

Senses : words and images appeal to sense of touch, sight, smell or hearing (example: bright red mango/ sending sweetness into Caribbean air/ slushy, wet, syrup in my welcoming mouth).

Great Migration Note Taking Sheet

1. What caused the migrants to leave the south?
2. How did the migrants travel?
3. Did migrants face any opposition when leaving?

4. What did the migrants seek in the North?
5. What benefits did the migrants find in the North?
6. What types of discrimination did migrants find in the North?
7. What types of living conditions did the migrants find in the North?
8. What types of jobs did the migrants find in the North?

Student and Teacher Reference List

Langston Hughes Reference

1. Poetry

Rampersad, Arnold ed. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* New York: Vintage Classics 1995

Individual Poetry Titles

The Panther and the Lash	Shakespeare in Harlem
Ask Your Mama	The Dream Keeper
Selected Poems	Fine Clothes to the Jew
Montage of a Dream Deferred	The Weary Blues
One-Way-Ticket	Scottsboro Limited
Fields of Wonder	Golden Slippers

2. History

A Pictorial History of the Negro in America

3. Autobiography

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