

Unit 3.3 • Harlem Renaissance

Unit Overview

This unit explores two linked historical eras: the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North in the early 20th century, and the Harlem Renaissance, which was an explosion of music, art, and literature in 1920s Harlem, New York.

Unit texts

Harlem Renaissance is about identity and finding a place where you can be your true self. In *The Great Migration*, students view Jacob Lawrence's artwork as they learn about the migration of African American families from the southern United States to the northern United States. In *Harlem Stomp!*, students will learn about the art, literature, poetry and music of the Harlem Renaissance. They will be asked to consider whether African Americans were better off in the North compared to the South at this time in history. Finally, they will read the novel *Bronx Masquerade*, by Nikki Grimes. This novel is told from the perspective of multiple high school students in Mr. Ward's English class as they navigate their developing identities. Sharing their poetry in Mr. Ward's weekly poetry slams allows these students to cultivate a sense of belonging in their classroom community.



Literature Used in Unit 3.3:

- *Bronx Masquerade* by Nikki Grimes
- *Harlem Stomp!* by Laban Carrick Hill
- *The Great Migration* by Jacob Lawrence

Unit skills and topics

Literary analysis	• Genre features of poetry, including mood and metaphor
Reading comprehension	• Questioning as a component of Reciprocal Teaching • Question-answer relationships (QAR): contrasts between “right there,” “think and search,” “on my own,” and “author and me” questions • Contrasting facts/details in different nonfiction texts on the same topic
Decoding	• Using syllable division patterns, such as V CV and VC V, and word parts (prefix, base, and suffix) to chunk and decode multi-syllable words
Writing	• Students write about appearance versus reality as part of a project on masks • Persuasive essay about the Great Migration based on several nonfiction texts (optional)
Debate	• At the time of the Great Migration, were African Americans better off in the North?
Fluency topics	• Origins of blues and rap music, ethnic foods in the Bronx, Bronx landmarks, poetry slams, dating violence, teen pregnancy, body image, conceptions of beauty, Michelle Obama, Jason Wu
English language development	• Generating questions about different perspectives • Demonstrating command of sentence structure