

Harlem Renaissance Webquest

PART 1: WELCOME TO THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE: The Harlem Renaissance marked a cultural period during the 1920's when African-Americans celebrated their heritage through music, art, literature, politics and social movements. View the following website to answer the questions:

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761566483/harlem_renaissance.html

1. *What is another name for the Harlem Renaissance?*
2. *What contributed to the beginnings of this movement?*
3. *What were some common themes within the movement?*
4. *List at LEAST 5 major authors, musicians, or political leaders associated with this movement.*
5. *Even after this movement ended, what enduring influences did it have on future generations?*

PART 2: POETRY IN MOTION: Langston Hughes was a famous Harlem Renaissance poet. Like others, he developed themes that connected the African-American heritage to the present. The website for this activity is:

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID15722>

STEP 1: Read “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” to yourself.

STEP 2: Press PLAY to hear Langston Hughes recite his poem.

PART 2: POETRY IN MOTION (cont) <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID15722>

1. *How old was Langston Hughes when he wrote this poem?*
2. *What rivers does Langston Hughes mention and how do they connect the past to the present?*
3. *Think: How does Langston Hughes' verbal reading of the poem affect its overall tone?*

PART 3: ALL THAT JAZZ MUSIC: During the Harlem Renaissance, jazz and blues music spread from New Orleans to Harlem and all throughout the country. At this website, Ron Scott writes:

This improvisational music called jazz is a unique sound, colored with political and social ramifications, weaved with Black cultural threads. It's the voice of the ancestors who speak through these great master musicians and the younger generation.

View <http://jazzmuseuminharlem.org/jazznotes.html> to discover:

1. *Who are three famous male and female jazz legends? (Hint - one used to play the trumpet in the picture that is now on display in the Smithsonian.)*
2. *What themes about the African-American heritage resonate from the rhythms of jazz?*
3. *Think: In your own opinion, why might a jazz museum be important for current and future generations?*

PART 4: DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY: Many clubs such as the Cotton Club featured talented African-American musicians in Harlem.

View the <http://www.cottonclub-newyork.com/about.html> to discover:

1. *Who were some famous customers?*
2. *What types of patrons were permitted to dance in this club?*
3. *Why did the owners choose this name for their club?*
4. *Think: If you were an African-American musician, how might you feel in this club after you had just finished playing your set?*

PART 5: EXPRESSION THROUGH ART: Like the music and literature of the Harlem Renaissance, visual artists painted or sculpted a rich variety of interpretations about African-American culture and heritage.

View <http://www.iniva.org/harlem/home.html> to discover:

1. *Who were some famous artists of the Harlem Renaissance?*
2. *Think: Compare and contrast your two favorite pieces of art from this website. How were these examples representative for the period?*

PART 6: POLITICAL BELIEFS: Many of today's political ideologies and groups such as the NAACP emerged during the Harlem Renaissance. View

<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Classroom/9912/renaissance.html> to discover:

1. *What types of laws actually disfranchised African-Americans after the Reconstruction?*
2. *What were the names of three organizations formed during the period of the Harlem Renaissance? How did their political beliefs compare and differ?*
3. *Think: Why was Ida B. Wells' role as a newspaper writer so important to African-Americans?*

PART 7: FEMALE ARTISTS: Along with political activists such as Ida B. Wells, the Harlem Renaissance produced significant writers and poets who shared a female perspective about African-American life.

View <http://www.zoranealehurston.com/biography.html> to discover:

1. Think: *After reading her biography, consider what you think she meant by this quotation: "I have the nerve to walk my own way, however hard, in my search for reality, rather than climb upon the rattling wagon of wishful illusions."*
2. Click on the Home Page of this site. *What famous book did she write that Alice Walker claimed was the most important book to her in her lifetime?*

PART 8: ENDURING LEGACIES: This journey has shown how the Harlem Renaissance represented a time of significant achievement by African-Americans despite the lingering racism of the times.

View <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/february98/harlem3.html> and read the responses to this question:

The art of the Harlem Renaissance seems overwhelmingly optimistic, despite the fact that Harlem was already in a state of economic decline and many African-American performers were not embraced by mainstream America. Why?

1. *Summarize two reasons why the art was optimistic.*
2. *Think: What images or ideas from these activities mean the most to you in today's times?*