

Unit 6

The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance

Teacher Guide



Introduction

Unit 6: The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance

Welcome

This introduction includes the necessary background information to teach the Core Knowledge Language Arts® (CKLA) unit *The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance*. **For detailed information about the CKLA approach to instruction, including reading, writing, grammar, morphology, spelling, speaking and listening, differentiation of instruction, and resources available in Grade 7 CKLA, see the Introduction to CKLA on pages 11–21 of the Unit 1 Teacher Guide.**

Lessons and activities address various aspects of a comprehensive language arts curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards–English Language Arts (CCSS–ELA): reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and morphology. When applicable, Grade 7 also covers Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (CCSS–RH and CCSS–RST). Lesson 10 contains a Unit Assessment that assesses all of the skills taught in the unit. **Unit 6 contains ten daily lessons, each of which will require a total of ninety minutes, i.e., in schools in which forty-five minutes daily is allocated for English instruction, teachers will typically need to allocate two instructional days for each lesson.**

This unit contains two Pausing Points that may be used for differentiated instruction and have been included on the Pacing Guide on pages 14–15. We have included an optional Mid-Unit Comprehension Check, which can be given at the end of Lesson 5 (PP.1), and an optional End-of-Unit Comprehension Check (PP.2), which could be included at the end of the unit as part of the Pausing Point Activities. These assessments allow you to assess students’ general comprehension of the reading and help to inform your decisions about grouping and support. If you decide to administer these assessments, be sure to allocate an additional forty-five minutes for each of these assessments. Following the completion of *The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance* lessons, several culminating activities are suggested from which teachers may choose.

It is recommended that you spend no more than twenty-one instructional days total on this unit. Please refer to the Pacing Guide on pages 14–15 for guidance.

Why *The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance* Is Important

This unit examines a selection of essays, poems, and a play produced by Black writers in the early 1900s. Most of the works students will read in this unit were produced either by people who lived and took part in the artistic flourishing in Harlem, New York, or by keen observers of the movement. In terms of literary skills, students will focus on analyzing the themes and ideas of an artistic movement and how they are expressed in a variety of texts. Students will also identify and analyze the central ideas and argumentative structure of nonfiction essays. Throughout the unit, students will be asked to make judgments about how the texts they read reflect different ideas, themes, and aspects of the Harlem Renaissance.

Students will read selections from *The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance*, a Core Knowledge Foundation Reader prepared for this unit.

In the early 1900s, a series of events—principally the outbreak of World War I—caused a labor shortage in industrial cities across the northern and western parts of the United States. The consequence of this was a mass movement of African Americans out of the South to these industrial cities in a movement called the Great Migration. African Americans who settled in these new cities formed communities and cultures. In Harlem, New York, the predominantly Black community gave rise to an outpouring of new art, ideas, and political movements that we call the Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance produced a wide range of artworks, from the poems of Langston Hughes to the plays of Zora Neale Hurston and the music of Louis Armstrong. These were described and promoted by essayists and political thinkers who wanted to take note of one of the most momentous artistic and political movements of the early 1900s in America.

These artworks and essays cover a range of topics and express a variety of hopes, dreams, anxieties, and struggles. The work of the Harlem Renaissance is a powerful expression of what it meant to be Black in the early 1900s—formally free but everywhere constrained by the limitations of racial prejudice and economic hardship. The Harlem Renaissance is a flourishing of art that explores this unresolved anguish, but it is also a powerful rallying cry for justice and liberation.

Teaching and Discussing Sensitive Topics

The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance addresses the sensitive topics of slavery, racism, and prejudice. These topics are often emotionally charged and may be challenging to teach to middle school students. You may wish to spend some time educating yourself about how to sensitively and comprehensively address topics of race, cultural differences, and bullying before teaching this unit. **We strongly encourage you to consult the following additional resources in advance of and during your teaching of this unit.**

Sharing Experiences in the Classroom

Some students in the classroom who come from varying backgrounds or claim varying identities may enjoy the opportunities this unit provides to relate and share their own experiences with the class, but others may not. Teachers are encouraged to use their own judgment and may wish to speak ahead of time with students and parents to discover how students feel about sharing their own experiences in class.

Important Note on the Language of Race: Changes Across Time

Many of the texts used in this unit were written in the 1800s and early 1900s. In referring to racial identity, speakers and writers in these texts use terms that were accepted in their times but in many cases are no longer accepted today. In the primary sources used in the Reader, for the sake of historical accuracy, the terms used by writers and speakers to refer to race have not been changed. In the introductory texts that provide background information, the authors of the Reader have aimed to use terms to denote race and ethnicity that are generally accepted now.

Online Resources for Culturally Responsive Teaching

The following organizations and resources have been identified to support culturally responsive, inclusive, and accurate teaching of the material in this unit. Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the websites described below can be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-6-Harlem-Renaissance/OnlineResources>. Note: There are multiple resources; be sure to click the arrow on the left margin.

Embrace Race This organization provides free resources, including video clips, blog posts, and “tip sheets” for talking with students about race, racism, and how to make changes. There are live and recorded video clip conversations with individuals who have experience and expertise in talking with students about race. You can register for upcoming conversations, as well as watch previously recorded clips.

Facing History and Ourselves This organization provides several free resources, including teaching strategies, to support history education that helps students and educators to think and talk about historical injustices and the relationship between history and our lives.

Civil Rights Teaching This organization offers lesson materials and readings that promote various interpretations of the civil rights movement and frame it as the long-term efforts of many committed activists and other participants. These resources challenge ideas of civil rights as the product of a few gifted leaders and instead promote it as a movement made up by many people fighting for a common cause.

Learning for Justice The mission of Learning for Justice is to help teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy. Its website provides free resources to educators, to help supplement curriculum, inform teaching practices, and create inclusive school communities where all students are valued. Below are some of the specific resources provided on the Learning for Justice website:

- **Social Justice Standards** provide a roadmap for anti-bias education.
- **Let’s Talk** facilitates discussions about race, racism and other difficult topics with students to provide strategies and facilitate difficult conversations about race and racism that you can also use to build competency when discussing other types of discrimination such as gender bias, ableism, and religious or anti-LGBT persecution.
- **Teaching the Movement** provides resources for teaching about the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.
- **Critical Practices** offers practical strategies for accomplishing academic and social-emotional goals side by side.
- **Civil Rights Done Right** is a set of resources and curriculum improvement strategies to support educators in cultivating a deeper understanding of Civil Rights history.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching** offers guidelines on how to model culture-aware teaching in the classroom.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching Resources for Educators** provides links to a variety of books and resources to help you teach culturally sensitive topics, or for students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

- **Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy** by Gholdy Muhammad (Scholastic Teaching Resources, 2020).
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students** by Zaretta L. Hammond (Corwin, 2014).

Advance Preparation for Unit 6

The Harlem Renaissance was a rich and productive period for many Black artists and thinkers. You may find it a great benefit to research and find other examples of Harlem Renaissance artists and thinkers to provide broader context and comparison to the texts students will be reading in class. These comparisons may also provide excellent opportunities to challenge students by asking them to look deeper or more broadly at trends within the Harlem Renaissance.

We have provided some resources to assist this advance preparation. Use this link to download the CKLA Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links needed for Advance Preparation may be found: <https://www.coreknowledge.org/free-resource/ckla-unit-6-Harlem-Renaissance/OnlineResources>.

Pacing Guide

The following is an overview and pacing guide to teaching the lessons of this unit. If possible, we encourage teachers to allocate additional time to administer the optional Mid-Unit and End-of-Unit Comprehension Checks.

Lesson 1		Lesson 2		Lesson 3
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Core Connections 45 min “There From the Beginning – The African American Literary Tradition,” and “Sympathy”	Reading 45 min Read-Aloud: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “The Great Migration and Its Causes,” “What Caused the Great Migration” and “The New Frontage On American Life”	Reading 45 min Whole Group: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “James Weldon Johnson—A Multitalented Renaissance Man” and “Harlem: The Cultural Capital”	Reading 45 min Independent: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “The Role of the Black Press in the Great Migration,” “Impressions of Dixie: Another Emancipation Coming,” “The New Negro Movement and Its Ideas,” and “The New Negro (1925)”	Reading 45 min Close Reading: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “The New Negro and The Historic Sense of Self—A New Way of Defining What a Pioneer Is” and “The Negro Pioneers”
Lesson 3	Lesson 4		Lesson 5	
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Reading 45 min Small Group: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “The New Negro Woman” and “The Task of Negro Womanhood”	Reading 45 min Partner: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “The New Negro Spirit in Verse—The Poetry of the Early Harlem Renaissance,” “The Heart of a Woman,” “Heritage,” and “If We Must Die”	Reading 45 min Small Group: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “The Harlem Renaissance of Langston Hughes,” “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “The Minstrel Man,” and “David’s Old Soul”	Reading 45 min Whole Group: <i>Harlem Renaissance</i> , “Zora Neale Hurston—Power in the Pen,” “On Colorism,” and <i>Color Struck</i> (Scenes I–II)	Morphology 15 min Introduce Greek and Latin Roots <i>amo, erro, facio, fragilis, finis</i> , and <i>neos</i>
Optional Mid-Unit Comprehension Check				Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Plan

Lesson 6		Lesson 7		Lesson 8
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
Reading 45 min Read Aloud: <i>Harlem Renaissance, Color Struck</i> (Scenes III–IV)	Spelling 15 min Introduce Spelling Words	Morphology 15 min Practice Greek and Latin Roots <i>amo, erro, facio, fragilis, finis, and neos</i>	Grammar 15 min Introduce Eliminating Wordiness and Redundancy	Grammar 15 min Introduce Frequently Confused Words
	Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Plan	Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Plan	Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Draft	Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Draft

Lesson 8	Lesson 9		Lesson 10
Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19
Spelling 15 min Practice Spelling Words	Grammar 15 min Practice Eliminating Wordiness and Redundancy and Frequently Confused Words	Spelling 15 min Spelling Assessment	Unit Assessment 35 min
Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Draft	Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Share, Evaluate	Writing 30 min Write a Multimedia Report: Revise, Edit	Unit Feedback Survey 10 min

Pausing Points	
Day 20	Day 21
Culminating Activity 45 min	Culminating Activity 45 min

Core Connections

The Core Connections section of Lesson 1 provides a broad overview of relevant background knowledge for *The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance*. Considering prior knowledge needed for comprehension is consistent with the CCSS three-part model concerning text complexity (specifically with regard to the qualitative dimension of knowledge demands). Students who had CKLA in earlier grades may have had exposure to this relevant background knowledge. For those students, the Core Connections lesson will serve largely as a review of important related content. Students who did not have CKLA in earlier grades might not have prior knowledge of this related content. For those students, the Core Connections lesson provides foundational background knowledge about topics addressed in this unit. The Core Connections lesson ensures that all students have adequate background knowledge for the unit.

During the Core Connections lesson for Unit 6, students will learn about art, culture, fashion, and ideas from the Harlem Renaissance. Students will become familiar with core themes of the movement by reading and responding to “Sympathy,” a poem written during the period. Students will start a Know, Want to Know, Learned Chart that they will return to during the unit, featuring ideas, themes, and people from the Harlem Renaissance.

Unit Assessment—*The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance*

Today you will read two selections. After reading the first selection, you will answer several questions based on it. Then, you will read the second selection and answer several questions based on it. Some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B.

W. E. B. Du Bois: “Returning Soldiers”

1. We are returning from war! *The Crisis* (the newspaper Du Bois was writing in) and tens of thousands of black men were drafted into a great struggle. For bleeding France and what she means and has meant and will mean to us and humanity and against the threat of German race arrogance, we fought gladly and to the last drop of blood; for America and her highest ideals, we fought in far-off hope; for the dominant southern oligarchy entrenched in Washington, we fought in bitter resignation. For the America that represents and gloats in lynching, disfranchisement, caste, brutality and devilish insult—for this, in the hateful upturning and mixing of things, we were forced by vindictive fate to fight also.
2. But today we return! We return from the slavery of uniform which the world’s madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.
3. It lynches.
4. And lynching is barbarism of a degree of contemptible nastiness unparalleled in human history. Yet for fifty years we have lynched two Negroes a week, and we have kept this up right through the war.
5. It disfranchises its own citizens.
6. Disfranchisement is the deliberate theft and robbery of the only protection of poor against rich and black against white. The land that disfranchises its citizens and calls itself a democracy lies and knows it lies.
7. It encourages ignorance.

Lesson 10

AT A GLANCE CHART

Lesson	Time	Activity	Materials
DAY 1: Unit Assessment	35 min	Unit Assessment	Activity Page 10.1
Unit Feedback Survey	10 min	Unit Feedback Survey	Activity Page 10.2

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Erase or cover any morphology and grammar charts displayed in the classroom prior to the assessment.

UNIT ASSESSMENT

35 minutes

- Make sure each student has a copy of Activity Page 10.1. You may have collected this activity page from students at the beginning of the unit.
- Tell students they will read two selections, answer questions about each, and respond to a writing prompt. In the next sections, students will answer grammar and morphology questions evaluating the skills they have practiced in this unit.
- Encourage students to do their best.
- Once students have finished the assessment, encourage them to review their papers quietly, rereading and checking their answers carefully.
- Circulate around the room as students complete the assessment to ensure everyone is working individually. Assist students as needed, but do not provide them with answers.

Reading Comprehension

The reading comprehension section of the Unit Assessment contains two selections and accompanying questions. The first selection is an informational text, an essay by W. E. B. Du Bois addressing Black soldiers returning from World War I. The second selection is a literary text, a poem by Langston Hughes.

These texts were created using guidance from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and recommendations from Student Achievement Partners (achievethecore.org). These texts are considered worthy of students' time to read and meet the expectations for text complexity at Grade 7. The texts feature core content and domain vocabulary from *The Genius of the Harlem Renaissance* unit that students can draw on in service of comprehending the text.

The questions pertaining to these texts are aligned to the CCSS and are worthy of students' time to answer. Questions have been designed to require deep analysis of the text, rather than focusing on minor points. Thus, each item might address multiple standards. In general, the selected-response items address Reading standards, and the constructed-response item addresses Writing standards. To prepare students for CCSS-aligned assessments, such as those developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced, some items replicate how technology may be incorporated in those assessments, using a paper-and-pencil format.

UNIT ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Text

The texts used in the reading comprehension assessment, “Returning Soldiers” (informational text) and “Brass Spittoons” (literary text), have been profiled for text complexity using the quantitative measures described in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Supplement to Appendix A, “New Research on Text Complexity” (corestandards.org/resources). Both selections fall within the Common Core Grades 7–8 Band.

Reading Comprehension Item Annotations and Correct Answer and Distractor Rationales

* To receive a point for a two-part question, students must correctly answer both parts of the question.

Item	Correct Answer(s)	Standards
1 <i>Inferential</i>	Students should identify two or more central ideas, such as: Black soldiers fought for democracy abroad and now they should begin a struggle for democracy at home; American society of the time was deeply racist; and/or African Americans suffered political and racial injustices.	RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.8
2 <i>Inferential</i>	The idea develops from fighting in a foreign war to a new struggle for democracy at home—it turns from a summary of past events to a rallying call for the future.	RI.7.3, RI.7.4,
3 <i>Evaluative</i>	These short lines each introduce an idea. They are points on the author’s list. Each of them is followed by a longer paragraph that explains and explores the idea.	RI.7.5
*4 Part A <i>Inferential</i>	It means service in the military is a form of “slavery.” It is a reference to historical slavery.	RI.7.1, RI.7.4
*4 Part B <i>Evaluative</i>	The idea illustrates that Black people are willing to temporarily endure hardship in order to achieve a wider and greater freedom.	RI.7.2, RI.7.4, RI.7.6
5 <i>Evaluative</i>	Student answers will vary but should recognize that Du Bois is arguing that the United States had acted hypocritically, fighting for freedom abroad but denying it to African Americans at home. Du Bois wants African Americans to continue to struggle for freedom, this time in their home country.	RI.7.2, RI.7.3, RI.7.6

6 <i>Literal</i>	They do hard, unpleasant labor, and they do it because of all the things they need to buy.	RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.4
7 <i>Inferential</i>	The repetition helps to communicate the repetitiveness of the speaker’s working life. It expresses the hard, unchanging, monotonous nature of his work.	RL.7.5
8 <i>Evaluative</i>	The poem reveals the hard work and monotony of service labor at the time. The repetition of the line “Hey, boy!” reveals the lack of respect and dignity Black people were shown. The cities mentioned are those Black people migrated to during the Great Migration.	RL.7.3, RL.7.9
9 <i>Inferential</i>	Initially, the poem speaks of the real spittoons the speaker has to clean, which are dirty and disgusting; later, the image of the spittoon becomes a beautiful and humble offering to God.	RL.7.2, RL.7.3
10 <i>Evaluative</i>	These lines reflect the things that are always on the speaker’s mind—the things he has to continue working hard for. They illustrate his determination but also his struggle. They also reveal how his circumstances have forced him into this frantic, repetitive way of thinking.	RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.9

Writing Prompt Scoring

The writing prompt addresses CCSS W.7.4, W.7.10, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, and L.7.6.

Score	4	3	2	1
Criteria	Student writes a clear, coherent response. Response includes all the following: an analysis of how the texts address the central ideas of the Harlem Renaissance and textual evidence. Response includes sentence variety, effectively uses precise language, and has no errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Student writes a mostly clear response. Response includes most of the following: an analysis of how the texts address the central ideas of the Harlem Renaissance and textual evidence. Response mostly includes sentence variety, uses precise language, and has minimal errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Student writes a response that has some omissions in an analysis of how the texts address the central ideas of the Harlem Renaissance and textual evidence. Response may include sentence variety and precise language and has a number of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Student writes a response that has many omissions in an analysis of how the texts address the central ideas of the Harlem Renaissance and textual evidence. Response does not include sentence variety and/or precise language and has many errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.