

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 7: Lesson 16 Use evidence from text and images to build knowledge about the Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance.





Note Catcher for Paintings

What I Notice	What I Wonder

“The Harlem Renaissance: A Cultural Rebirth,” by James Hall

Great waves of African Americans migrated to northern cities to take advantage of the many factory jobs that opened up in response to World War I (1914–1918). Unfortunately, social attitudes of the early 20th century forced these black folks to settle in segregated urban housing. So, they created bustling black metropolises—cities within cities. This caused a period of remarkable artistic and intellectual activity in New York City’s African American community, leading to the Harlem Renaissance.

While other cities saw similar developments and had their own rebirths, at the time New York City was very much the cultural capital of the United States. It was a publishing and writing center, home to most of the significant museums and galleries, and site of major music venues. Thus, the largely African American neighborhood called Harlem, located in northern Manhattan, is viewed as the starting point of the modern black artistic movement. From around 1923 to the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, black writers and artists who gathered in Harlem generated an extraordinary amount and diversity of conversation, debate, and culture.

An important first impact of the Harlem Renaissance was the wide range of political action taken by both organizations and individuals who demanded improvements in African American economic and educational opportunities. After black soldiers had participated honorably during World War I, they hoped to come back to an America ready to accept and recognize their contributions and accomplishments. But outbreaks of racial violence due to the legality of Jim Crow laws dashed these hopes.

Legal protection then, especially against lynching, became a priority for African Americans. Organizations such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the National Urban League, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) all had headquarters in New York. They started magazines, held rallies and marches, and argued their ideas in all kinds of ways.

Though the political beliefs of each group differed, they shared the conviction that it was time for the emergence of a “new Negro” in both person and attitude, one who was no longer willing to accept the

status quo. Indeed, many historians believe that “New Negro Movement” is a more accurate term for the development of black life in the 1920s than “Harlem Renaissance.”

A number of individuals, including W.E.B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Arthur Schomburg, began to reflect on how cultural activity might aid the African American community in its struggle.

Note Catcher for Text

What I Notice	What I Wonder

Independent Practice: How do the ideas in Lawrence’s paintings connect to the beliefs in the Harlem Renaissance?

Sourced from EL Education