

The Harlem Renaissance Worksheet

Name _____

Date _____

Ideas of The Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance was a major movement in African American art and culture. It began in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. It started in the 1920s and continued into the 1930s. The time period produced not only important African American literature but also music, drama, art, and ideas.

An important idea behind the Harlem Renaissance was that African Americans refused to be considered less important than white Americans. They wanted to own their African American culture. They wanted to decide how to present their culture. Also, artists wished to show they were capable of creating their own art forms. They did not want to copy the art white Americans created.

During the Harlem Renaissance, many great African American musicians rose to fame in the Renaissance Theater. The theater was a music hall in Harlem.

Some famous artists were jazz musicians like Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday. The American poet Langston Hughes wrote an important poem called "Harlem." The poem famously begins with the line, "What happens to a dream deferred?" The poem is about the African American struggle for equality and freedom in the United States. The books, plays, music, and thoughts of the Harlem Renaissance still inspire American artists and writers of all cultures.



Josephine Baker was a singer, dancer, and actress who started performing during the Harlem Renaissance.

Directions: Fill in the graphic organizer below with the main idea of the text. Explain how the details you chose support your main idea.

Supporting Detail #1	<div style="text-align: center;">Main Idea</div>	Supporting Detail #2
Supporting Detail #3		Supporting Detail #4



The Harlem Renaissance worksheet serves as an essential educational tool designed to explore the profound cultural, artistic, and intellectual movement that emerged in the early 20th century. This period, primarily spanning the 1920s and 1930s, marked a significant transformation in African American culture and history. The Harlem Renaissance was characterized by a flourishing of literature, music, visual arts, and social thought, profoundly influencing American culture and society. This article will delve into the key aspects of the Harlem Renaissance, outline its historical context, highlight notable figures and works, and discuss the importance of worksheets in teaching this critical period.

Historical Context of the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance took place during a time of significant social change in the United States. Several key historical events set the stage for this cultural explosion:

1. **The Great Migration:** Between 1916 and 1970, millions of African Americans moved from the rural South to urban centers in the North and West, seeking better economic opportunities and escaping Jim Crow laws. This migration led to the establishment of vibrant African American communities in cities like New York, Chicago, and Detroit.
2. **World War I:** The war created job opportunities in industrial cities, further accelerating the migration. Returning African American soldiers also brought back new ideas about civil rights and equality, contributing to a growing sense of racial pride.
3. **Cultural Exchange:** The interaction between African American culture and the broader American society during this period led to the blending of various cultural influences, giving rise to unique art forms and expressions.

Key Themes of the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance was marked by several key themes that defined its artistic and cultural expressions:

- **Racial Pride:** Artists and intellectuals sought to celebrate African American culture and history, promoting a sense of pride in their heritage.
- **Social Critique:** Many works from this period addressed issues such as racism, inequality, and the struggles of urban life.
- **Exploration of Identity:** Artists explored themes of identity, examining the complexities of being African American in a racially divided society.
- **Innovation and Experimentation:** There was a focus on breaking traditional artistic forms and exploring new styles and genres, particularly in music and literature.

Notable Figures of the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance produced a plethora of influential figures across various disciplines. Here are some of the most significant contributors:

Literature

1. Langston Hughes: A central figure in the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes was a poet, novelist, and playwright known for his impactful works that captured the African American experience. His poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" reflects on heritage and identity.
2. Zora Neale Hurston: Hurston was an anthropologist and author best known for her novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God," which explores themes of love and self-discovery in the life of an African American woman.
3. Claude McKay: A Jamaican-American writer, McKay's poetry and novels often addressed the struggles against racism and the quest for identity, with works like "If We Must Die" becoming iconic.

Music

1. Duke Ellington: A prominent jazz composer and bandleader, Ellington's innovative arrangements and compositions, such as "Mood Indigo" and "Take the 'A' Train," helped elevate jazz to an art form.
2. Louis Armstrong: Known as one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time, Armstrong's trumpet playing and unique voice brought jazz to a broader audience, influencing countless artists.
3. Bessie Smith: Often referred to as the "Empress of the Blues," Smith's powerful voice and emotional depth in her music resonated with audiences, making her a key figure in the blues genre.

Visual Arts

1. Aaron Douglas: A painter and illustrator, Douglas is often considered the "father of African American art." His works often incorporated themes of African heritage and social justice.
2. Jacob Lawrence: A prominent painter known for his vibrant use of color and storytelling through art, Lawrence's series of paintings depicted the Great Migration and the African American experience.

The Impact of the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance had a lasting impact on American culture and society, influencing subsequent generations of artists, writers, and thinkers. Some of the key impacts include:

1. **Cultural Awareness:** The movement helped raise awareness of African American culture and history, contributing to a greater understanding and appreciation of diversity within the United States.
2. **Civil Rights Movement:** The Harlem Renaissance laid the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement by fostering a sense of identity and community among African Americans, inspiring future activism and advocacy for equality.
3. **Artistic Innovation:** The experimentation and innovation seen during the Harlem Renaissance influenced various art forms, including literature, music, and visual arts, leading to the development of new genres and styles.

Using the Harlem Renaissance Worksheet in Education

A Harlem Renaissance worksheet can be an invaluable resource for educators seeking to engage students in learning about this transformative period. Here's how to effectively incorporate it into the curriculum:

Components of a Harlem Renaissance Worksheet

A well-structured Harlem Renaissance worksheet may include the following components:

1. **Timeline of Events:** A chronological overview of key events and milestones during the Harlem Renaissance, helping students understand the historical context.
2. **Biographical Information:** Sections dedicated to notable figures, including their contributions and significance within the movement.
3. **Key Themes and Concepts:** A breakdown of the major themes that defined the Harlem Renaissance, encouraging students to analyze and discuss these ideas.
4. **Art Analysis:** Visual components where students can analyze and interpret artworks or music from the period, deepening their understanding of artistic expression.
5. **Discussion Questions:** Thought-provoking questions that foster discussion

and critical thinking, encouraging students to connect the Harlem Renaissance to contemporary issues of race, identity, and culture.

Benefits of Using Worksheets

Using worksheets in the classroom provides several advantages:

- **Active Engagement:** Worksheets encourage students to actively participate in their learning through analysis, discussion, and creative expression.
- **Reinforcement of Concepts:** They help reinforce key concepts and themes, aiding in retention and understanding.
- **Assessment Tool:** Worksheets can serve as assessment tools to gauge students' understanding of the material and provide feedback on their learning progress.

Conclusion

The Harlem Renaissance represents a pivotal moment in American history, showcasing the creativity and resilience of African Americans in the face of adversity. By utilizing a Harlem Renaissance worksheet, educators can effectively engage students in exploring this rich cultural movement, fostering an appreciation for the contributions of African Americans to art, literature, and society. As we reflect on the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance, it becomes clear that its impact continues to resonate, inspiring ongoing conversations about race, identity, and cultural expression in contemporary America.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of a Harlem Renaissance worksheet?

The purpose of a Harlem Renaissance worksheet is to help students understand the key figures, themes, and cultural significance of the Harlem Renaissance, facilitating engagement with the material through structured activities and questions.

What key figures should be included in a Harlem Renaissance worksheet?

Key figures to include in a Harlem Renaissance worksheet are Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Duke Ellington, Claude McKay, and Louis Armstrong, among others, as they played significant roles in shaping the movement.

What types of activities can be included in a Harlem Renaissance worksheet?

Activities in a Harlem Renaissance worksheet can include matching key terms with definitions, analyzing excerpts from literature, discussing the impact of jazz music, and exploring visual art from the era.

How can a Harlem Renaissance worksheet enhance students' understanding of American history?

A Harlem Renaissance worksheet can enhance students' understanding of American history by highlighting the contributions of African American artists and thinkers, exploring the social and political context of the time, and examining how the movement influenced subsequent cultural developments.

What themes are commonly explored in Harlem Renaissance worksheets?

Common themes explored in Harlem Renaissance worksheets include identity, racial pride, the quest for equality, the celebration of African American culture, and the impact of the Great Migration on urban life.

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