

Harlem Project Teacher Directions

Summary: After analyzing several Black poets, and the basic philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois, students form groups of 5 or 6, with each student assuming the persona of a different Black writer. Then, as a group, students respond to either a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (the conservative/nonviolent/build alliances stance) or Malcolm X (the radical rebellion/bloodshed stance) in the form of a scripted panel discussion. The quotes are on the student directions handout. An assumption of time as being a nonexistent barrier is required. Student responses must be consistent with the analysis of the writers' work and biographies.

Note: This project was created for an American Literature class, to study African American poets and issues during the Harlem Renaissance, but can be adapted to a different time period, using different writers or historical characters for the panel discussion, with the exception of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois. Below are links to the poems used; any American Literature textbook would contain student-friendly biographies.

Writings:

"Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois Disagree" in *The Progressive Era and World War I*, chapter 7 (or any source that outlines their opposing stances— Washington's conservative "cast down your bucket where you are," establishing economic security as a means of securing civil rights and higher education— beyond educating teachers for Black schools— later, and DuBois's more radical demands for civil rights, political power, and higher education NOW.

This link is to Washington's Atlanta Compromise Speech which outlines his stance:
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/88/>

DuBois's position is from his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Chapter III, pages 50-58:
<https://books.google.com/books?id=7psUAAAAYAAJ>

Below are two links that provide student-friendly synopses of their positions.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/etc/road.html>
<https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080912144859AAVERqp>

*Frederick Douglass, (from *The Narrative of the Life*, in *Literature* Donald T. Hollenbeck and Julie West Johnson eds.,. Evanston, IL: McDougal, 1984, or another source that shows Douglass's views about the oppressive and dehumanizing aspect of slavery)

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html> (page 9 "Colonel Lloyd...--page15)

* Paul Laurence Dunbar

"Douglass" <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/douglass/>

“We Wear the Mask” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44203>

“Sympathy” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/46459>

“The Haunted Oak” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44195>

*These writers were not part of Harlem Renaissance, but were included to provide historical perspective

Harlem writers:

Langston Hughes

“Harlem” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/46548>

“I, Too” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/47558>

“Dream Deferred” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/46548>

“Song for a Dark Girl” <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/song-for-a-dark-girl/>

Countee Cullen

“Yet do I Marvel” http://www.favoritepoem.org/poem_YetDoIMarvel.html

“Tableau” <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/tableau-2/>

“Incident” <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/incident/>

Claude McKay

“America” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44691>

“If We must Die” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44694>

“The Lynching” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/56983>

Procedure

1. Students read the Washington/DuBois excerpt independently. As part of the class discussion, we filled out the ideas chart together, and created a continuum on the board, with Washington on the Conservative side, and DuBois on the Radical side. All subsequent writers were placed on the continuum, based on discussions of their work and their biographies. This helps establish their positions for the panel discussion.
2. As a class, we filled out the chart for both Douglass and Dunbar (read earlier), establishing the issues that emerged after slavery was ended (segregation, jobs, violence—lynching, intimidation—education, rights).
3. Students read “Harlem,” and as a class we discussed the poem and filled out the chart.
4. I established groups for the Harlem Project, and they read and discussed the rest of the poems, filled out the chart, and plotted the writers on the continuum, in groups. This could also be done independently or as a class, depending on time.
5. After going through the directions for the panel discussion, students chose their writers. I gave them 3 days to write. It is important to monitor the groups so they are discussing not only what their character should “say,” but what quotes from their works would support their positions. Make sure they are writing together, connecting the writers’ comments like a real discussion, rather than passing a paper around and writing in silence (this is the beauty of the project—hearing

things like “he wouldn’t say that—look what he wrote in “The Lynching.” Or, “He was married to DuBois’s daughter so he must have had some fights about being conservative!” as you walk around the room). I becomes student-led learning at its best!

6. My students “performed” their work for the rest of the class, but that takes another two days.
7. Groups were graded on Evidence of Preparation and the clarity of their performance (volume, eye contact, pace). Individuals were graded on completeness and accuracy of the written work for their writers.

AZ College and Career Ready Standards

Reading Standards

Key Ideas and Details 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas (AZ.9-12.RI.9-12.2) (AZ.9-12.RL.2)

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.(AZ.9-12.RI.10) (AZ.9-12.RL.10)

Writing Standards

Production and Distribution of Writing 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (9-12.W.4)

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (9-12.W.9)