# Arts Integration Unit Plan

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<th>Teacher Name:</th>
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<th>Collaborating Teacher(s):</th>
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| Unit Title: | Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride? |

## Unit Objectives:

Students will be able to describe the Harlem Renaissance and how different forms of art express racial pride.

## Standards Addressed:

- B.12.3 Recall/select/analyze historical periods and relationships among them
- B.12.5 Use various types of evidence to develop a coherent argument

## Materials Needed:

- DBQ curriculum handouts/student and teacher packets

## Essential/Guiding Questions:

- What is the Harlem Renaissance?
- What are some art forms from this time period?
- What is the difference between high art and folk art?
- What is racial pride?

## Prepare in Advance:

- Student work packets

## Pre-Assessment Strategies:

- Do hook exercise and discuss.
Mini-Q’s in Literature
Unit 4

Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride?

MINI-Q™ LESSON PLAN

NOTE: Time required to do a Mini-Q varies greatly with skill level, grade, and DBQ experience. Time range is generally two to five 45-minute class periods.

1 to 2 DAYS: 45–90 minutes

Step One: Hook Refer to the Step One teacher notes in the Mini-Q. Read the directions aloud. The purpose is to get students engaged, talking, and wanting to do the Mini-Q.

Step Two: Background Essay Refer to the Step Two teacher notes in the Mini-Q. Students can write out answers to the BGE questions, or the questions can simply be discussed.

Step Three: Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing The task of recognizing and defining key words in the question is a crucial habit of mind. The second task of pre-bucketing based on clues in the question is an important categorization skill.

2 DAYS: 90 minutes

Step Four: Document Analysis Model Document A with the whole class, showing the kind of thinking and detail you expect in student answers to the Document Analysis questions. Working in pairs or groups of three, students proceed to examine the remaining documents, writing answers to the Document Analysis questions.

1 DAY: 45 minutes

Step Five: Bucketing and Chickenfoot Have students complete the bucketing and chickenfoot work page. This step will help students clarify their thesis and road map. Then do a Thrash-out.

1 DAY: 45 minutes (Optional)

Step Six: Essay Writing Conduct an in-class writing workshop. You may want to use the Essay Outline Guide or the Guided Essay in the Toolkit. The Guided Essay is especially helpful for students needing extra support.

MINI-Q LESSON PLAN: CLEAN VERSION OPTION

If students are ready, use the Clean Version of the Mini-Q, which requires them to handle more of the analysis on their own. Estimated time to complete is 2 to 3 class periods.
Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride?

Overview: Between World War I and the Great Depression, Harlem became a hotspot for African-American artists of all kinds—painters, dancers, musicians, playwrights, and poets. During this time, now known as the Harlem Renaissance, a debate sprang up between two camps as to how to best express racial pride. This Mini-Q asks you to read poetry from this period and join the debate.

The Documents:
- Document A: “Heritage”
- Document B: “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem”
- Document C: “The Creation”
- Document D: “Homesick Blues” and “Po’ Boy Blues”
Hook Exercise: High Art and Folk Art

**Painting #1**

![Campus Landscape by James Herring, 1922](image1)

**Painting #2**

![The Janitor Who Paints by Palmer Hayden, 1937](image2)

**Task One: Analyzing Painting #1**

1. What do you see in this painting? Describe the subject matter.
2. Are there any clues in this painting as to the identity of the artist?

**Task Two: Analyzing Painting #2**

1. What do you see in this painting? Describe the subject matter.
2. Are there any clues in this painting as to the identity of the artist?

**Task Three: Comparing the Two Paintings**

1. Based on your knowledge of the word *high*, which of these paintings would you guess is an example of “high art”? Why?
2. Based on your knowledge of the word *folk*, which of these paintings would you guess is an example of “folk art”? Why?
3. Which of these Harlem Renaissance paintings do you think is more likely to spark feelings of racial pride among Harlem residents? Explain your thinking.
Harlem Renaissance Poetry:
Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride?

*Between two rivers*
*North of the park*
*Like darker rivers*
*The streets are dark.*

Thus begins Langston Hughes’s poem, “Island.” The island of the title is Manhattan, the most populated borough of New York City. There, nestled between the Hudson and East Rivers and north of Central Park, is the area known as Harlem. It was in Harlem between World War I and the mid-1930s that a rebirth of African-American arts of all forms—literature, music, theater and painting—occurred. Originally called the New Negro Movement, this period is now known as the Harlem Renaissance.

Between 1910 and 1930, roughly 1.6 million African Americans moved from the rural South to industrialized Northern cities. This was called the Great Migration. Black people were attempting to leave behind the racial discrimination that continued to trouble the South long after the end of slavery and were looking for new opportunities in the North. Followed by Chicago and Philadelphia, New York City was the top destination, and Harlem was at its heart. While African Americans made up just 10% of Harlem’s population in 1910, that number grew to 70% in 1930, and by 1950, Harlem was 98% black. Because of the high number of black-owned businesses, Harlem became a symbol of African-American self-sufficiency.

Not surprisingly, this was a time of great racial pride for African Americans. Pride in being black became a major theme in the essays, art, and poetry of the era. However, many black writers had strongly opposing opinions regarding how best to show this pride. In his 1926 essay, “Criteria of Negro Art,” W.E.B. DuBois, an important African-American thinker and writer of the time, wrote: “Until the art of the black folk compels recognition, they will not be rated as human.” According to DuBois, then, the stakes of the Harlem Renaissance were high. In order to end racial discrimination, black artists must create high art that would prove themselves to be the intellectual equals of whites. This meant that some African-American artists studied abroad to learn the techniques of European master artists. Having the same skills and knowledge as whites would strengthen black pride.

On the other side of the argument, some black writers criticized those who seemed only to mimic white literature and art. These writers thought the best way to show pride in being black was to create folk art, which celebrated African-American culture and the lives of everyday people. Some of these writers wrote in dialect, which meant that instead of worrying about conventional spelling and grammar, they wrote according to the way real people talked. In his essay, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” Langston Hughes writes about a conversation with a young poet:

“One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, ‘I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet,’ meaning, ‘I want to write like a white poet,’ ....And I was sorry the young man said that, for no great poet has ever been afraid of being himself.”

For writers like Hughes, black pride came not from imitating whites but from strengthening one’s identity as black.

Many poets of the Harlem Renaissance struggled with questions of racial identity and black pride even as they struggled to express themselves. In this Mini-Q, you will engage in the same struggle. Read through the poems in the documents that follow and then answer the question: Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does high art or folk art best express racial pride?
Background Essay Questions

1. Where is Harlem?

2. What was the Harlem Renaissance?

3. When did the Harlem Renaissance take place?

4. Why did so many African Americans go to Harlem between 1910 and 1930?

5. What did W.E.B. DuBois think was the best way for African-American writers to show racial pride? Which camp (“high art” or “folk art”) does he represent?

6. What did Langston Hughes think was the best way for African-American writers to show racial pride? Which camp (“high art” or “folk art”) does he represent?

7. Define these terms:
   industrialized
   Great Migration
   self-sufficiency
   high art
   folk art
   dialect
Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

2. Which terms in the question need to be defined?

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: Using any clues from the Mini-Q question and the Background Essay, think of possible analytical categories and label the buckets.
Document A: “Heritage”

Source: Countee Cullen, Color (Excerpt, edited), 1925.

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

So I lie, who all day long
Want no sound except the song
Sung by wild barbaric birds
Goading massive jungle herds,
Juggernauts of flesh that pass
Trampling tall defiant grass
Where young forest lovers lie,
Plighting troth beneath the sky.
So I lie, who always hear,
Though I cram against my ear
Both my thumbs, and keep them there,
Great drums throbbing through the air.

Document Analysis

1. What is the title of this poem? What does this word mean? (Hint: It’s related to the word *inherit.*

2. An *image* is a mental picture, such as “Copper sun” or “Great drums throbbing.” List three other images that strike you in this poem.

3. What place do these images describe?

4. List some of the difficult words in this poem. Why does Cullen sometimes use difficult words?

5. A *couplet* is two rhymed lines in a row. Great English writers such as Chaucer and Shakespeare were big users of couplets. Are there couplets in this poem? Give one example.

6. *Meter* refers to the rhythmic structure of a poem, and it originated in ancient Greece. Check the meter by counting the syllables in the first four lines. Is there a pattern? Explain.

7. Is this poem an example of high art or folk art? Explain.

8. Does this poem express racial pride? Explain.
Document B: “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem”

Source: Helene Johnson, 1927.

You are disdainful and magnificent—
Your perfect body and your pompous gait,
Your dark eyes flashing solemnly with hate,
Small wonder that you are incompetent
To imitate those whom you so despise—
Your shoulders towering high above the throng,
Your head thrown back in rich, barbaric song,
Palm trees and mangoes stretched before your eyes.
Let others toil and sweat for labor’s sake
And wring from grasping hands their meed of gold.
Why urge ahead your supercilious feet?
Scorn will efface each footprint that you make.
I love your laughter, arrogant and bold.
You are too splendid for this city street.

Definitions:

disdainful: feeling superior
pompous: full of oneself
meed (archaic): reward
supercilious: snobby
efface: erase

Document Analysis

1. A sonnet is a 14-line poem. To whom is this sonnet written?

2. The word “meed” is archaic; that is, it hasn’t been commonly used for hundreds of years. Why do you think Johnson uses the word “meed” instead of the modern word “reward”?

3. Is the subject of this poem described positively or negatively? Back up your answer with at least two words or phrases from the poem.

4. A poem’s pattern of rhymed lines is called a rhyme scheme. Try to describe this poem’s rhyme scheme.

5. Shakespeare wrote sonnets that had ten syllables in each line. How many syllables are there in each line of Johnson’s sonnet?

6. Is this poem an example of high art or folk art? Explain.

7. Does this poem express racial pride? Explain.
Document C: “The Creation”

Source: James Weldon Johnson, God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse (Edited), 1927.

And God stepped out on space,  
And he looked around and said:  
I’m lonely—  
I’ll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see  
Darkness covered everything,  
Blacker than a hundred midnights  
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,  
And the light broke,  
And the darkness rolled up on one side,  
And the light stood shining on the other,  
And God said: That’s good!

...And he spat out the seven seas—  
He batted his eyes, and the lightnings flashed—  
He clapped his hands, and the thunders rolled—  
And the waters above the earth came down,  
The cooling waters came down.

...Then God walked around,  
And God looked around  
On all that he had made.  
...He looked on his world  
With all its living things,  
And God said: I’m lonely still.

Then God sat down—  
On the side of a hill where he could think;  
By a deep, wide river he sat down;  
With his head in his hands,  
God thought and thought,  
Till he thought: I’ll make me a man!

Up from the bed of the river  
God scooped the clay;  
And by the bank of the river  
He kneeled him down;  
And there the great God Almighty  
...This Great God,  
Like a mammy bending over her baby,  
Kneeled down in the dust  
Toiling over a lump of clay  
Till he shaped it in his own image;  
Then into it he blew the breath of life,  
And man became a living soul.  

Document Analysis

1. Look at the source line. On what oral tradition did Johnson base this poem?

2. Which Biblical story is the subject of this poem?

3. In the Book of Genesis in the King James Bible, God says, “Let us make man in our image.” Compare this to God’s voice in lines 3 and 4 in “The Creation.” Describe the difference.

4. “Mammy” is a Southern term for a female African-American servant. Who is said to be “Like a mammy” in the second-to-last stanza?

5. Is this poem an example of high art or folk art? Explain.

6. Does this poem express racial pride? Explain.
Document D: “Homesick Blues” and “Po’ Boy Blues”

Source: Langston Hughes, *Fine Clothes to the Jew*, 1927.

Note: *Blues* is a musical form created by African Americans out of many sources, including African spirituals and the work songs of Southern plantations.

“Homesick Blues”

De railroad bridge’s
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge’s
A sad song in de air.
Ever time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station.
Ma heart was in ma mouth.
Went down to de station.
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin’ for a box car
To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin’
I opens ma mouth an’ laughs.

“Po’ Boy Blues”

When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
Since I come up North de
Whole damn world’s turned cold.

I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong.
Yes, I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong,
But this world is weary
An’ de road is hard an’ long.

I fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
Fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
She made me lose ma money
An’ almost lose ma mind.

Weary, weary,
Weary early in de morn.
Weary, weary,
Early, early in de morn.
I’s so weary
I wish I’d never been born.

Document Analysis

1. What word appears in the title of both of these poems?
2. What is *blues*?
3. Read the first stanza of each poem. What similarities do you notice?
4. Are there any “misspelled” words in these poems? Why do you think that is?
5. Identify the socio-economic class of the speaker in each poem. Provide a line or two from each poem as evidence.
6. Are these poems examples of high art or folk art? Explain.
7. Do these poems express racial pride? Explain.
**Bucketing—Getting Ready to Write**

**Bucketing**

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. It is okay to put a document in more than one bucket. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.

**Thesis Development and Road Map**

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your road map. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The road map is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.
From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Unit Title

Paragraph #1

Grabber

Background

Restating the question with key terms defined

Thesis and Road Map

Paragraph #2

Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: Supporting detail and quotation from document with document citation

Argument: Connecting evidence to the thesis

Paragraph #3

Baby Thesis for bucket two

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #4

Baby Thesis for bucket three

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #5

Conclusion: “Although” statement and restatement of main idea
Harlem Renaissance Poetry Mini-Q

Student Mini-Q Lined Paper

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Mini-Q’s in Literature
Unit 4

Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride?

MINI-Q™ LESSON PLAN

NOTE: Time required to do a Mini-Q varies greatly with skill level, grade, and DBQ experience. Time range is generally two to five 45-minute class periods.

1 to 2 DAYS: 45–90 minutes

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MINI-Q LESSON PLAN: CLEAN VERSION OPTION

If students are ready, use the Clean Version of the Mini-Q, which requires them to handle more of the analysis on their own. Estimated time to complete is 2 to 3 class periods.
Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride?

Overview: Between World War I and the Great Depression, Harlem became a hotspot for African-American artists of all kinds—painters, dancers, musicians, playwrights, and poets. During this time, now known as the Harlem Renaissance, a debate sprang up between two camps as to how to best express racial pride. This Mini-Q asks you to read poetry from this period and join the debate.

The Documents:
- Document A: “Heritage”
- Document B: “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem”
- Document C: “The Creation”
- Document D: “Homesick Blues” and “Po’ Boy Blues”
Hook Exercise: High Art and Folk Art

Painting #1

Campus Landscape by James Herring, 1922

Task One: Analyzing Painting #1
1. What do you see in this painting? Describe the subject matter.
2. Are there any clues in this painting as to the identity of the artist?

Painting #2

The Janitor Who Paints by Palmer Hayden, 1937

Task Two: Analyzing Painting #2
1. What do you see in this painting? Describe the subject matter.
2. Are there any clues in this painting as to the identity of the artist?

Task Three: Comparing the Two Paintings
1. Based on your knowledge of the word high, which of these paintings would you guess is an example of “high art”? Why?
2. Based on your knowledge of the word folk, which of these paintings would you guess is an example of “folk art”? Why?
3. Which of these Harlem Renaissance paintings do you think is more likely to spark feelings of racial pride among Harlem residents? Explain your thinking.
Background Essay

Harlem Renaissance Poetry Mini-Q

Harlem Renaissance Poetry:
Does High Art or Folk Art Best Express Racial Pride?

Between two rivers
North of the park
Like darker rivers
The streets are dark.

Thus begins Langston Hughes’s poem, “Island.” The island of the title is Manhattan, the most populated borough of New York City. There, nestled between the Hudson and East Rivers and north of Central Park, is the area known as Harlem. It was in Harlem between World War I and the mid-1930s that a rebirth of African-American arts of all forms—literature, music, theater and painting—occurred. Originally called the New Negro Movement, this period is now known as the Harlem Renaissance.

Between 1910 and 1930, roughly 1.6 million African Americans moved from the rural South to industrialized Northern cities. This was called the Great Migration. Black people were attempting to leave behind the racial discrimination that continued to trouble the South long after the end of slavery and were looking for new opportunities in the North. Followed by Chicago and Philadelphia, New York City was the top destination, and Harlem was at its heart. While African Americans made up just 10% of Harlem’s population in 1910, that number grew to 70% in 1930, and by 1950, Harlem was 98% black. Because of the high number of black-owned businesses, Harlem became a symbol of African-American self-sufficiency.

Not surprisingly, this was a time of great racial pride for African Americans. Pride in being black became a major theme in the essays, art, and poetry of the era. However, many black writers had strongly opposing opinions regarding how best to show this pride. In his 1926 essay, “Criteria of Negro Art,” W.E.B. DuBois, an important African-American thinker and writer of the time, wrote: “Until the art of the black folk compels recognition, they will not be rated as human.” According to DuBois, then, the stakes of the Harlem Renaissance were high. In order to end racial discrimination, black artists must create high art that would prove themselves to be the intellectual equals of whites. This meant that some African-American artists studied abroad to learn the techniques of European master artists. Having the same skills and knowledge as whites would strengthen black pride.

On the other side of the argument, some black writers criticized those who seemed only to mimic white literature and art. These writers thought the best way to show pride in being black was to create folk art, which celebrated African-American culture and the lives of everyday people. Some of these writers wrote in dialect, which meant that instead of worrying about conventional spelling and grammar, they wrote according to the way real people talked. In his essay, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” Langston Hughes writes about a conversation with a young poet:

“One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, ‘I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet,’ meaning, I believe, ‘I want to write like a white poet,’ ....And I was sorry the young man said that, for no great poet has ever been afraid of being himself.”

For writers like Hughes, black pride came not from imitating whites but from strengthening one’s identity as black.

Many poets of the Harlem Renaissance struggled with questions of racial identity and black pride even as they struggled to express themselves. In this Mini-Q, you will engage in the same struggle. Read through the poems in the documents that follow and then answer the question: Harlem Renaissance Poetry: Does high art or folk art best express racial pride?
Background Essay Questions

1. Where is Harlem?

2. What was the Harlem Renaissance?

3. When did the Harlem Renaissance take place?

4. Why did so many African Americans go to Harlem between 1910 and 1930?

5. What did W.E.B. DuBois think was the best way for African-American writers to show racial pride? Which camp (“high art” or “folk art”) does he represent?

6. What did Langston Hughes think was the best way for African-American writers to show racial pride? Which camp (“high art” or “folk art”) does he represent?

7. Define these terms:
   - industrialized
   - Great Migration
   - self-sufficiency
   - high art
   - folk art
   - dialect
Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

Understanding the Question

1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

2. Which terms in the question need to be defined?

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: Using any clues from the Mini-Q question and the Background Essay, think of possible analytical categories and label the buckets.
Document A: “Heritage”

Source: Countee Cullen, *Color* (Excerpt, edited), 1925.

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
*One three centuries removed*
*From the scenes his fathers loved,*
*Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,*
*What is Africa to me?*

So I lie, who all day long
Want no sound except the song
Sung by wild barbaric birds
Goading massive jungle herds,
Juggernauts of flesh that pass
Trampling tall defiant grass
Where young forest lovers lie,
Plighting troth beneath the sky.
So I lie, who always hear,
Though I cram against my ear
Both my thumbs, and keep them there,
Great drums throbbing through the air.

Document Analysis

1. What is the title of this poem? What does this word mean? (Hint: It’s related to the word *inherit.*)

2. An *image* is a mental picture, such as “Copper sun” or “Great drums throbbing.” List three other images that strike you in this poem.

3. What place do these images describe?

4. List some of the difficult words in this poem. Why does Cullen sometimes use difficult words?

5. A *couplet* is two rhymed lines in a row. Great English writers such as Chaucer and Shakespeare were big users of couplets. Are there couplets in this poem? Give one example.

6. *Meter* refers to the rhythmic structure of a poem, and it originated in ancient Greece. Check the meter by counting the syllables in the first four lines. Is there a pattern? Explain.

7. Is this poem an example of high art or folk art? Explain.

8. Does this poem express racial pride? Explain.
Document B: “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem”

Source: Helene Johnson, 1927.

You are disdainful and magnificent—
Your perfect body and your pompous gait,
Your dark eyes flashing solemnly with hate,
Small wonder that you are incompetent
To imitate those whom you so despise—
Your shoulders towering high above the throng,
Your head thrown back in rich, barbaric song,
Palm trees and mangoes stretched before your eyes.
Let others toil and sweat for labor’s sake
And wring from grasping hands their meed of gold.
Why urge ahead your supercilious feet?
Scorn will efface each footprint that you make.
I love your laughter, arrogant and bold.
You are too splendid for this city street.

Definitions:
disdainful: feeling superior
pompous: full of oneself
meed (archaic): reward
supercilious: snobby
efface: erase

Document Analysis

1. A sonnet is a 14-line poem. To whom is this sonnet written?

2. The word “meed” is archaic; that is, it hasn’t been commonly used for hundreds of years. Why do you think Johnson uses the word “meed” instead of the modern word “reward”?

3. Is the subject of this poem described positively or negatively? Back up your answer with at least two words or phrases from the poem.

4. A poem’s pattern of rhymed lines is called a rhyme scheme. Try to describe this poem’s rhyme scheme.

5. Shakespeare wrote sonnets that had ten syllables in each line. How many syllables are there in each line of Johnson’s sonnet?

6. Is this poem an example of high art or folk art? Explain.

7. Does this poem express racial pride? Explain.
Document C: “The Creation”

Source: James Weldon Johnson, God’s Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse (Edited), 1927.

And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I’m lonely—
I’ll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: That’s good!

...And he spat out the seven seas—
He batted his eyes, and the lightnings flashed—
He clapped his hands, and the thunders rolled—
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

...Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that he had made.
...He looked on his world
With all its living things,
And God said: I’m lonely still.

Then God sat down—
On the side of a hill where he could think;
By a deep, wide river he sat down;
With his head in his hands,
God thought and thought,
Till he thought: I’ll make me a man!

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down;
And there the great God Almighty
...This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneed down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in his own image;
Then into it he blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.

Document Analysis

1. Look at the source line. On what oral tradition did Johnson base this poem?

2. Which Biblical story is the subject of this poem?

3. In the Book of Genesis in the King James Bible, God says, “Let us make man in our image.” Compare this to God’s voice in lines 3 and 4 in “The Creation.” Describe the difference.

4. “Mammy” is a Southern term for a female African-American servant. Who is said to be “Like a mammy” in the second-to-last stanza?

5. Is this poem an example of high art or folk art? Explain.

6. Does this poem express racial pride? Explain.
Document D: “Homesick Blues” and “Po’ Boy Blues”

Source: Langston Hughes, Fine Clothes to the Jew, 1927.

Note: Blues is a musical form created by African Americans out of many sources, including African spirituals and the work songs of Southern plantations.

**“Homesick Blues”**

De railroad bridge’s
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge’s
A sad song in de air.
Ever time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station.
Ma heart was in ma mouth.
Went down to de station.
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin’ for a box car
To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin’
I opens ma mouth an’ laughs.

**“Po’ Boy Blues”**

When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
When I was home de
Sunshine seemed like gold.
Since I come up North de
Whole damn world’s turned cold.

I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong.
Yes, I was a good boy,
Never done no wrong,
But this world is weary
An’ de road is hard an’ long.

I fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
Fell in love with
A gal I thought was kind.
She made me lose ma money
An’ almost lose ma mind.

Weary, weary,
Weary early in de morn.
Weary, weary,
Early, early in de morn.
I’s so weary
I wish I’d never been born.

**Document Analysis**

1. What word appears in the title of both of these poems?

2. What is *blues*?

3. Read the first stanza of each poem. What similarities do you notice?

4. Are there any “misspelled” words in these poems? Why do you think that is?

5. Identify the socio-economic class of the speaker in each poem. Provide a line or two from each poem as evidence.

6. Are these poems examples of high art or folk art? Explain.

7. Do these poems express racial pride? Explain.
Bucketing—Getting Ready to Write

Bucketing

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. It is okay to put a document in more than one bucket. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.

Thesis Development and Road Map

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your road map. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The road map is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.
From Thesis to Essay Writing

Mini-Q Essay Outline Guide

Unit Title

Paragraph #1
Grabber

Background

Restating the question with key terms defined

Thesis and Road Map

Paragraph #2
Baby Thesis for bucket one

Evidence: Supporting detail and quotation from document with document citation

Argument: Connecting evidence to the thesis

Paragraph #3
Baby Thesis for bucket two

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #4
Baby Thesis for bucket three

Evidence

Argument

Paragraph #5
Conclusion: “Although” statement and restatement of main idea