

INTERACTIVE MAP LESSON:

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

RECOMMENDED TIME

90 minutes

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- List aspects of African American culture that thrived during the Harlem Renaissance.
- Characterize some of the people who played a major part in the Harlem Renaissance.
- Describe a few of the important sites of the Harlem Renaissance.
- Explain how cultural developments reflected the lives of the people of Harlem.

LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- **Learning Styles:** linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial
- **Skills Mastery:** judging information, synthesizing information

RESOURCE

- **Interactive Map:** [The Harlem Renaissance](#)

CONTEXT

The 1920s was a time of general economic prosperity and cultural development in the United States. Groups that had been marginalized before the war sought ways to set themselves apart and gain recognition in American society. The Harlem Renaissance represented the cultural awakening of African Americans during the 1920s. The Harlem Renaissance developed where and when it did because of the migration of many African Americans to northern cities, the experiences of African American soldiers who fought in World War I, and the growing political movements that stressed African American pride and the desire for equality in society.

Developing Cultural and Sociopolitical Literacy. In this lesson, students will learn about aspects of African American culture that thrived during the Harlem Renaissance, some of the people who played a major part in the movement, a few of the important sites of the Harlem Renaissance, and cultural developments that reflected the lives of the people of Harlem.

OPEN

1. **Vocabulary.** Before beginning the lesson and interactive map activity, be sure that students understand the meaning of the term *renaissance* (a rebirth or revival, particularly of an intellectual or cultural nature).
2. Present the information from the Context section to students in the form of a brief lecture. Tell students that they will be learning about the people, places, and cultural developments of the Harlem Renaissance.

TEACH

3. Have students explore The Harlem Renaissance Interactive Map on a computer. Students may work individually or in small groups, depending on the number of computers available.
4. Have students complete the online review at the end of the interactive map. Check their scores to confirm their overall understanding of the material presented in the interactive map activity. If time permits, allow students who received low scores on the review to explore the interactive map further. Encourage them to take notes on the electronic notepad that is available to them throughout the activity.

If many students in the class experience difficulty with the interactive map activity and review, you may wish to have them complete one or more of the optional activities below to ensure mastery of the learning objectives.

CLOSE

5. **Judging Information.** Ask volunteers to recount information from the interactive map about a person or place of the Harlem Renaissance that caught their interest. Then ask the class what aspect of the Harlem Renaissance has had the strongest or longest-lasting impact on American society as a whole. Encourage students to justify their answers with simple logic or with facts contained in the interactive map.

OPTIONS

- **Synthesizing Information.** Organize the class into three groups and assign each group one of the following locations in Harlem: the Savoy Ballroom, the New York City Public Library on 135th Street, or the Lafayette Theater. Have students refer to the Harlem Renaissance Interactive Map to write short skits that show what a typical day or evening at their location might have been like during the Harlem Renaissance. Encourage them to base their characters on the people mentioned in the interactive map activity. Have each group present its skit to the rest of the class. To assess students' work or to guide students, use the [Skits and Reader's Theater](#) Rubric.
- **Making Comparisons.** Tell students that the term *Renaissance*, when it is capitalized, usually refers to the cultural and intellectual reawakening that took place in Europe from the 1300s to the 1500s. Have students use the library and the Internet to find general information about the European Renaissance. Then have students use their notes and the Harlem Renaissance Interactive Map to write three to five paragraphs comparing the European Renaissance to the Harlem Renaissance. To assess students' work or to guide students, use the [Comparing and Contrasting](#) and the [Writing Assignments](#) Rubrics.