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# Black Migration from the South to Chicago

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# Black Migration from the South to Chicago

Title: Black Migration from the South to Chicago

Type of Teaching: Unit Plan

Grade Level: Intermediate Grades 4th through 6th

Time Frame: Approximately Two Weeks

Subject: Social Studies with Language Arts Integration

## Teacher Information:

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Description: Students will explore the hardships faced by African Americans in the South in the early 1900's and the perceived opportunities of the North. Students will critically examine historical documents and interpret information.

Technology: internet access

Category: Historical Analysis of Migration, U.S. History Assessment

## Lesson One: Background Information

- Teacher presents vocabulary

migration: the movement of persons from one locality to another

plantation: an estate where cash crops are grown on a large scale

sharecropper: small tenant farmer on a plantation who receives credit for seed, tools, living quarters, and food, who works the land, and who

receives an agreed share of the value of the crop minus charges

lynching: putting a person to death by mob action without due process of law

Jim Crowe laws: laws that enforced racial segregation

segregation: a social system that restricts people to separate institutions and facilities based on race

equality: a state of being considered the same

- Explanation of Jim Crowe laws, sharecropping, and the conditions for African Americans in the South in the early 1900's

The following books are excellent resources for the teacher: Arnesen, Eric. Black Protest and The Great Migration: A Brief History

with Documents. Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2003. Grossman, James, R. Land of Hope:

Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration. The University of Chicago Press, 1989. Lemann, Nicholas. The Promised Land: The Great Migration and How It Changed America. Vintage Books, 1991.

- Explore The History of Jim Crowe  
<http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/home.htm>

- Journal Assignment: What were the conditions of sharecroppers in the South? What do you think it was like to be the son or daughter of a Black sharecropper in Georgia?

### **Lesson Two: Motivation to Leave the South**

- Further Explanation of Jim Crowe
- Examine pictures of sharecroppers and conditions in the South from the Library of Congress

- Discuss the occurrence of lynching in the United States Use Time Line of African American History, 1901- 1925 in African- American Perspectives: Pamphlets from the Daniel A.P. Murray Collection from the Library of Congress  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aap/timelin3.html>

- Journal Assignment: Imagine you are a single Black man in Mississippi. What would motivate you to leave the only home you have ever known to go to the North? If you were a married Black man with a family, would your motivation be different or the same? Which of these two people risk more leaving his home?

### **Lesson Three: The Journey North**

- The role of the Chicago Defender
- Read newspaper articles and letters written during the Great Migration
- Examine maps  
Use Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress
- Use Chicago: Destination for the Great Migration in the African-American Mosaic from the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam011.html>
- Journal Assignment: Suppose you are a Black person from the South and are preparing to go North. How do you prepare for your journey?

### **Lesson Four: Northern Cities and Chicago**

- Explore African American Life in the North
- Examine pictures of Black life in Chicago from the Library of Congress

- Compare conditions in the South to the conditions in the North using the photos already viewed
- What was the Chicago Black Belt?
- Discuss Race Riots
- Journal Assignment: Suppose you are Black person from the South and have come North to escape racism and for better opportunities. What do you find in Chicago? Is it what you expected? What hardships do you face? Do you regret leaving your home in the South?

### **Lesson Five: Population Shifts**

- Teacher explanation of census
- Internet Research  
U.S. Census Bureau  
<http://www.census.gov/>
- Students will track the population of African Americans in the United States in the South and in the North during the early the 20th century.
- Use Migrations in the African- American Mosaic from the Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam008.html>
- Journal Assignment: What motivated Black people to leave the South and go North? What attracted Black people to Northern cities?

### **Lesson Six: Jacob Lawrence**

- Internet Research  
Jacob Lawrence: Exploring Stories  
<http://www.whitney.org/jacoblawrence/index.html>
- Use the following books as a resource:  
Duggleby, John. Story Painter. Chronicle Books, 1998.  
Lawrence, Jacob. The Great Migration: An American Story. HarpersCollins Publishers, 1993.
- Journal Assignment: Choose one of Jacob Lawrence's paintings from The Great Migration series. Explain the painting in detail. Write a short story to support the painting.