

## **Romare Bearden and the Community**

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### **Introduction**

In every classroom, there is always the student that can answer every question. I also have a student that can make a 'connection' to everything that I teach. However, although every community has connections to each other, even my brightest has a difficult time making these connections. The community of the United States of America connects people - we all have the right to vote. The community of each classroom is unique in itself, but each student is a part of it. It may be simple to get the rote memorization for a definition of a community, but what does each of these communities mean to my students? Students will learn about community, but also become familiar with their identity. With such a diverse school community, students may have a difficult time with their own identity when compared to their peers.

This curriculum unit will show and teach, not only the textbook definition of community, but how does the artist Romare Bearden represent his community? Why is it significant to his history? How is it significant to black history? My school is majority African-American students and this will branch out from the typical black history studies. In addition to the history, students will be exposed to art and a local celebrity.

I chose this topic for several reasons. I have a strong personal attraction to the visual arts and am constantly looking for topics that are relatable for my elementary school children. Finding something exciting to draw their attention to the knowledge needed in the media center is always a great thing to have. As my students are given topics to research in order to become information literate, the topic of Romare Bearden will serve as a locally important figure, but also as a well-known artist around the globe. Students can personally relate to Bearden and students can seek out landmarks in the city. In order for students to become information literate, they will be successful users and producers to information and ideas.

### **Background Information**

I serve as a media specialist/teacher librarian in the large, urban school district of Charlotte, North Carolina. I teach grades kindergarten through fifth grade at a Title 1 elementary school. The school is located in a low-income district, with a high population of African American and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students. The majority

of our ESL students are Hispanic, but not all. The school supports a partial magnet program that brings students in from farther out than the surrounding neighborhood. The magnet program is a Learning Immersion and Talent Development Program. The Talent Development students are grades three through five academically gifted students. The school also has three K-2 Multiage classes with each of the grades one, two and kindergarten students in the same class.

In order to support and teach this unit, instructors should have basic knowledge of Romare Bearden's history and art. By becoming familiar with Bearden's history and various eras of his work, the teacher can lead students through a study of his artwork and reflections of their community. In addition to Bearden, the instructor of this unit should become familiar with his past, as well as his family. This includes, but not limited to, his childhood, various homes and the Harlem Renaissance. This will help the instructor understand the influences on his art, such as the train theme, specifics in his pieces and his nature of being socially conscious. When Bearden creates his Mecklenburg works, most of the pieces have a train in them – representing his memories of trains near his house. Students can find things in their environments that are always there. For example, my school is in a neighborhood that is located within a few miles of an international airport. Many students can relate to those planes – as they fly by all day – every day.

The bulk of the strategies and classroom activities will follow the Big6™ Instructional Strategy, created by Michael Eisenberg. This strategy was implemented for media specialists several years ago, but will be used throughout my school district by 2014. Several districts across the nation use this strategy, but any teacher, regardless of this specific strategy, can use it. The six steps will be explained in the strategy section below. The strategy focuses on teaching information technology. As I teach the about community, the students will be implementing informational technology techniques that follow the media specialist strategies.

## **Rationale**

Romare Bearden shuffled through his memories to create his artwork. He would travel his life's recollections and visit Charlotte, Greensboro, Harlem, Pittsburgh and St. Maartin. As he moved from one part to the next, he would not just create a visual memory. He would create based on what he smelled, what he could taste and what he could feel. Each piece that he produced filled explained a special memory. They were not exact replicates of what actually happened – just what he remembered. It did not matter if it was a not carbon copy of the past because he and the viewer can see, smell and taste the images. In *Maudell Sleet's Magic Garden (1978)*, Bearden stated during an art show, "I can still smell the flowers she used to give us and still taste the blackberries."

This unit will use his method of creating memories to study community. Each young student will be able describe communities and create a memory of their own. Bearden creates many of his southern pieces based on memories of Charlotte, North Carolina. My students will be able to personally relate and their own community to compare against his – many years before. Using the picture books created by Bearden will provide an introduction to him and support verbal and visual literacy. In addition to his picture books and art, the unit will also use virtual maps to study locations of his childhood.

Being able to see and comprehend is a vital skill for children to be successful. Comic books have been heralded in recent years as a good tool for young readers. They can see the pictures and connect words in “*raison d’etre*...to tell stories in pictures.”<sup>2</sup> Bearden tells stories in his pictures, but students should be taught to “read” them. This skill will be reflected in literature in picture books. As most children that will be using this unit are still developing reading skills, building visual literacy will allow children to “attain deeper meanings from literature and an awareness of how visual images are used in their own meaning making.”<sup>3</sup>

Focusing on visual literacy in the media center, while learning informational technology skills, will also assist English-as-a-Second-Language or ESL students. Vardell supports use of art to teach any curriculum, “Whether we choose biographies, informational books, picture books or folktales, we can find many examples that showcase the arts in the ways that educate ESL students about classic arts as well as provide opportunities for language learning and connections across the curriculum.”<sup>4</sup> My school has a high and growing number of ESL students and this will help this visualize assignments and grow descriptive vocabulary as we work through the unit.

### Brief Bearden Biography

Romare Bearden was an African-American artist born in 1911 and passed away on March 12, 1988 at the age of 76. He began his life in Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. When he was three, his family moved to New York City (specifically, Harlem) and from there his life was very disjointed. He began school in Harlem, but moves in with his maternal grandparents in 1921, and attends fourth grade in Pittsburgh. While he eventually graduates high school in Pittsburgh in 1929, he is moved between Harlem, Pittsburgh and Canada for his school-aged years. Also, during this time, he spends summers with his paternal grandparents in North Carolina.

He spends his college years producing cartoon illustrated for New York University publication and political cartoons for the NAACP journal. He graduates from NYU with a Bachelor of Science in Education and spends time as a social worker in New York. He joins the Harlem Artist Guild and begins his lifelong study of art. He studies many artists and spends time in France. He was a very talented and smart man, spending time on a “broad range of intellectual and scholarly interests, including music, performing arts,

history, literature and world art.”<sup>5</sup> He was a great humanist and often supported young artists.

Bearden married Nanette Rohan in 1954 and eventually settled in a second home in St. Martin. The Caribbean had an important influence on the artist and is represented in a lot of his work later in his life. Each of the communities his paints represented the different units of his life. They shift from the dirty factories in Pittsburgh to the beautiful, flowing landscapes of the Caribbean. Students will use his diverse experiences in life to learn and describe their own communities.

## **Objectives**

The library media center and its librarians are shifting goals and missions to survive the twenty-first century. Instead of merely being a place to find books and study, the modern library is a place to relax, take advantage of social networking and learn in a new way. The new media center is a place of not only learning information, but also creating it. At my library, the mission is to ensure that scholars are effective users and producers on information and ideas. This unit will support this mission, as well as support classroom curriculum goals. Specifically, the unit will cover several standards within the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Information Skills and Social Studies for grade two.

This unit is intended for second grade students in a traditional classroom setting. Aside from traditional classroom setting, it can be taught as a unit within the media center for a class that will visit regularly. As a media specialist, I am planning to use this unit over the course of several weeks and visits from the same classes. I will use this unit to teach six second-grade classes. These students will be on average reading level and understand the basic concepts of the media center and its tools. While most classroom activities will be done as a large group, I will have activities that require individual and small groups to work on assignments. I will group lower-performing students and lower English skills with higher performing students. These students can assist each other to create the best-finished product.

Materials used in this unit may or not be on the students’ reading levels. Romare Bearden’s children’s books will be used as read-alouds and discussion pieces. Prior to reading these books, challenging vocabulary and topics will be introduced to students and discussed throughout the reading.

I will make the most out of the fixed schedule in the school media center. I see each of the six second-grade classes, one each day, on a six-day rotation schedule. The unit should take approximately one-quarter of the school year and is planned for eight class visits. This would also allow flexibility for the unit to be taught in a classroom, only

needing thirty minutes each week. The second-grade classes visits for forty minutes, but ten minutes must be designated for book checkout. Each lesson in this unit is designed to last for approximately thirty minutes.

## Strategies

This unit is to be applied over the course of a quarter of school year. As mentioned previously, I will be using it as media center curriculum in collaboration with second-grade standards. This can easily be used in the regular classroom to teach information technology strategies. It requires 30 minutes approximately once per week. Many of the strategies can be applied towards many topics to communicate research skills.

This unit is formatted to follow the Big6™ Instructional Strategy, but it is simply one instructional strategy to teach the unit. From the Big6™ creators, it is a strategy best used to teach students to “identify information needs and then find, use, apply, and evaluate information of those needs.” The Big6™ Instructional Strategy is part of my district’s Strategic Plan 2014 and is used across the nation in various school districts.

Throughout the unit, students will keep project folders. Each student will receive a file folder to compile work and writing samples throughout the unit. This folder will be used for evaluation at the end of the unit. Also, it can serve to study as data to evaluate teacher/media specialist effectiveness. As my district, and many others continue to search for evaluation tools for educators, this compilation and pre-/post-tests may help me (as the media specialist) to determine the most effective strategies to use in the media center.

Each lesson will involve three parts: a warm-up, whole-group lesson and individual/small group activity. Warm-up activities provide a time for students to come into the media center and get prepared for the lesson ahead. These activities may include the following:

- At the beginning of the unit, the students will be given two KWLS chart for their folders. They should write what they already **K**now about community and what they **W**ant to know about community. The other chart will be the same, but for Romare Bearden. A discussion will following, explaining the goals for the unit to the students.
- Present an image such as, *Evening of the Gray Cat, 1982*, and ask students to reflect in small groups the types of things seen in Bearden’s portrayal of a southern home. Students should discuss what is similar and different from their own homes.

- Present a pair of images to the students, side-by-side. The students will be given a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the images. The images may include *Watching the Good Trains Go by, 1964* & *Pittsburgh Memories, 1984*. This will allow students to compare the communities of Bearden's south to Bearden's Pittsburgh.
- Present several of Bearden's southern works. These images all have trains. Ask students to draw or write about something that they would include in an image that would remind them of home. The images might include *The Conversation, 1977*, *Train Whistle Blues No. 1, 1964*, and *Sunset Express, 1984*.
- Present *Fish Fry, 1967*. Using this image, ask the students what they see. Have them write a description of the image telling me what they hear, smell, taste and feel like. Students may also describe the meals of the image and discuss the food that was served.
- Present an image of the south with an image of St. Martin. Use *Gospel Morning, 1987* (south) and *Bees in Golden Space* (Caribbean). Ask students to describe the lifestyle of each community. Students should use descriptive words, including the senses, to compare the communities.

Look at Bearden pieces each class and discuss how the artist represents his community (work, live, play?) The students may discuss in their small groups (3-4 students) a proposed question or they may have a writing option. This will be varied; it will provide students different strategies to absorb the material. Bearden pieces that will be used can be found in the Mint Museum's catalog, and include:

- *The Tin Roof, 1978*
- *Evening of the Gray Cat, 1982*
- *Family, 1971*
- *Family, 1986*
- *Watching the Good Trains Go By, 1964*
- *The Train, 1974*
- *Sunset Express, 1984*

Whole-Group Strategies will include read-alouds of Bearden's children books, introduction to Bearden with instructor presentations and activities. Prior to a read-aloud, students will make predictions to the subject of the story. For example, the instructor may present the book and ask, "Based on the title/cover picture, what do you think this story is about?" Throughout the reading, the instructor should ask questions to support the story. Questions may be: "What will happen next?" or "What is going on in this picture?" Full book information will be found in the bibliography following the unit.

Individual Practice may include worksheet activities and art assignments, as well as writing entries. The individual assignments may also be small-group activities. These activities will be addressed in the classroom activities to follow. One tool that will be used consistently will be graphic organizers. Graphic organizers serve as a visual representation of the material that is being learned. It helps students make connections to the material. This will allow for differentiation of the various levels of students. Venn diagrams will be used for comparisons of art works listed previously and throughout the classroom activities. Other graphic organizers will include:

- Describing Wheel. When students are given one of Bearden's pieces to describe using senses, this will help them lay it out. This will look like a bicycle wheel. The middle will be written the topic, or artwork name. The spokes will divide various sections. I will write things "I smell..." and "I hear..." and "I see..." in the various divides to lead the children to describing the art piece. Students should think about how these things (songs, sights, and smells) make a community.
- KWL Charts. This chart has three columns titled, "What I **K**now," "What I **W**ant to Know," and "What I've **L**earned." These charts will remain in their folders throughout the unit. As previously mentioned, the charts will serve as a way for students to ask questions and keep up with knowledge learned. They may use their KWL charts to note what they have learned throughout the unit. These charts will serve as an evaluation tool for the instructor and the students.
- Venn Diagram. This organization places two empty circles partly overlapping. One circle includes an item and the other circle something else. What is unique about each item goes in their respective circles. However, when there is something that the two have in common, it will go in the part of the circles that overlap each other.

A "Romare Bearden Parking Lot" will be posted in the media center to address on-going questions and ideas. This will be a small white board in the media center for the second graders to write questions or ideas about the unit. The students can use dry erase markers to write these inquiries, or circle questions that are important to them. Students may write questions or comments on this board at anytime throughout the day to be addressed later. When time allows, the instructor will review the board and answer questions for the students. This allows the young students to ask questions without speaking out in class. Also, many students will most likely have the same questions and this can tackle them.

### 1.0 Task Definition

The unit will begin with a Task Definition phase. This is the first of the Big6™ strategy. It will be used to prepare students for the unit and introduce them to Romare Bearden.

Students will become familiar with Bearden and will work with the instructor to define a problem to be solved. This *problem* will be the basic of study and the objective for the remainder of the unit. The instructor leads the students to create their own objectives, but will guide the students to questions such as:

- Who is Romare Bearden?
- Where did he grow up and/or live?
- What is community?
- What does my community look like?
- How did Romare fit into my community?
- What influenced his art in his communities?
- Can an artist create a community? How?

These final objective questions that are created by the students will be posted around the front of the media center. These will remain throughout the quarter to serve as a reminder to answer the questions. As we answer questions, we can add checkmarks beside those questions. These will also serve as review. The instructor can randomly choose wall objectives and ask “How did we meet this objective?”

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: Who is Romare Bearden?*

Students will begin this lesson with an introduction to Bearden. The instructor will read My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden’s Childhood Journey by Jeanne Walker Harvey. This walks the students through a visually engaging picture book about a young Bearden and his displacement from Charlotte to the north. Before reading, the instructor will highlight vocabulary words, such as canvas, engineer, locomotive, porter. These words should be written on large cards or on the board. Visual examples can also be provided to help define and explain the vocabulary. I will also highlight the importance that this book is nonfiction, or “real” and explain that Romare Bearden was a real person from Charlotte, NC.

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: What do we want to know?*

During the second activity, students will be introduced to the KWL chart. The instructor will review Bearden and will review the book read the previous week. If time allows, a second reading may be beneficial for some classes. At this time, the instructor will explain that the second grade students will be working on a project and Romare Bearden and community. Explaining the KWL chart and folders, the students will proceed to fill out the “K” column and the “W” column.

After the students have completed their assignment, the instructor will lead them in a discussion of the “What I want to Know” column. The class will work together to create a common base questions that will be answered throughout the unit. This will help the



students take ownership in what they will be learning during this time. Even though the teacher is guiding, they can “choose” the questions they want answered. These questions will be written on sentence strips or posters and posted on the wall for the remainder of the unit. Questions to be answered should include, but not limited to:

- Who is Romare Bearden?
- What is community?
- How did Romare Bearden represent his communities?
- What was most important in Bearden’s memory?

## 2.0 Information Seeking Strategies

The second step of this unit will introduce students to sources that are available to students to gather information. Students will discuss where and how to investigate sources to find information to answer questions posed in the first section of the unit. Students can find information with books, websites, and audiovisuals. In addition to these, the students can gather information from observation and knowledgeable people. If funding is available, students can visit a local museum with a Romare Bearden exhibit. Locally, students can visit the Mint Museum in Charlotte, NC. This will allow students to view the art personally and make notes of the art. This will be valuable in viewing the collage aspects of his work. This will also be valuable, as students can ask the museum guide questions related to the unit. In order to guide the students through the Bearden exhibit, they will be given a worksheet with study questions to answer. These can be specific to the pieces, or the exhibit as a whole. Questions may be:

How many pieces are collage?

How many trains do you count?

Which pieces have trains?

What do you see in *example piece* that is like your community?

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: Where can information be gathered?*

This activity will teach students to think about the places that information can be gathered. The activity will serve as a chance for students to *think* about the tools they are using. Students will list all the sources that can be used to find information. Once all these sources are listed, the students should circle the items on their list that can be used easily at their school media center. These should be books, internet, movies, and knowledgeable people.

The students will be broken into groups to work together to compare and contrast these tools. Each group will get a Venn diagram. Groups may be comparing and contrasting:

- Nonfiction book vs. Nonfiction film
- Encyclopedia vs. Internet
- People vs. Nonfiction books
- People vs. Internet

Students may consider if the material is new or old; if there's valuable information; if it is always available; and, if it has been created by someone reliable. These questions should be posted or placed inside the Venn diagram circles to guide students. At the end of the group work, all groups will determine the best tool in their Venn diagram and the instructor will lead a discussion. As a whole-group, students will rank the tools that are available in the school media center and which tools they will be using to answer their questions from step one of the unit.

### 3.0 Location and Access

The third step of the unit focuses on what sources are available to the learner and the quality of these sources. These sources will include tangible materials in the media center, as well as electronic multimedia and online databases. Students will also be guided to find resources locally (i.e. museums, art teacher). The activities for this unit will focus on determining the best sources and the most readily available.

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: How do I locate and use a variety sources?*

Students in second grade will rely heavily on the use of books and other tangible materials in the media center, so it is very important they have the knowledge to use a book. This activity will focusing on learning parts of a book. Students should be aware that they do not have to read the entire book to gather the information that they need.

To begin, the instructor should have a nonfiction book with the following parts: cover, title page, table of contents, index and glossary. This book preferably will be on community. The instructor will walk the students through each part of the book. To begin, knock on the front cover and explain. Point out the title, author and illustrator (if necessary). Next, simply go through the book and point out the parts (title page, table of contents, index and glossary). Explain the purpose and use of each one.

Students will now participant in a relay labeling activity. There will be team assignments with 3-5 students per group. Each table will have a book with each part. The instructor will be at the front of the room with enough piles of index cards for each team. Each pile will be identical. Each index card will require students to answer questions about the parts of the book, based on the book on their group's table. One student will come and get the first question. Once their table has answered the question

or identified the part, a second student will come to the front and get the second question. This is continued until each group has answered all the questions. The instructor may decide to reward the winning team, or simply applaud the entire class when everyone has finished. Questions/Tasks for index cards may be as follows:

- Use the front cover to identify the title and author of your book.
- Use the spine to identify the call number.
- Find the title page. Who is the publisher?
- Find the table of contents. What is on page 14?
- Find the table of contents. On what page is ...?
- Find the index. On what page would you find...?
- Read page 4. There's a bold word. You will find the definition in the glossary. What is the definition of the bold word?
- Ask a question specific to the book and have the students find it and answer. The instructor may want to include several of these questions to show that students can use the book.

Students should use quiet voices and each student of the group should identify each task. The instructor will monitor to make sure **all** students are using the tools. If time allows, the instructor can go over answers. The instructor should review parts of a book for each read aloud in the unit.

#### 4.0 Use of Information

Students are now introduced to Romare Bearden and community, as well where to find information and judge its source. The fourth phase of the unit will give students a section to use information sources to compile the information. This is when they actually gather the information.

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: Where can I gather information outside the media center? (two classes)*

In this activity, students will look beyond books and computers to find information about Bearden. This will take place as a city field trip, or as a virtual field trip (depending on location and budget). As a school in Charlotte, NC – Bearden's hometown – the instructor will lead students through a tour of significant places of Bearden's childhood.

The instructor will begin the activity by re-reading My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey by Jeanne Walker Harvey. This is a wonderful reminder of Bearden's childhood and the influences of his art. The instructor will lead a discussion about the different places that were important to him. These places can include his grandparent's house and the train tracks around their house.

The instructor will then introduce several other places around Charlotte that are important places to gather information about Bearden. A great way to integrate technology is to use the Levine Museum of the New South's Sanborn Maps. These overlap maps of Bearden's time and the current city map. Important places are pointed out. A SmartBoard will be used to allow the movement and study of these maps. If a SmartBoard is unavailable, a projector and computer will suffice. Students can note places that will be useful to visit on the field trip.

On the day of the field trip, students should bring paper and pencils to collect information. The instructor will assign a few students with cameras to capture images. Places that will be visited are:

- Southern Railway South Graham Street Trestle (grandparent's house location)
- Charlotte's Main Library (view Bearden art)
- Romare Bearden Park
- Pinewood Cemetery
- Trade Street Train Station location
- Mint Museum Uptown (view Bearden work)

Students will take notes, pictures and/or draw images as information collection. At each location, the instructor will note the importance and allow students to share in the discussion of these places that Bearden once stood. This is important to show students that important information can be collected by visiting places and talking to people – not just reading books.

## 5.0 Synthesis

Students will use the fifth unit of the section to compile the information previously gathered to compile a final project. This project will be outlined in the classroom activity, but will express the main objectives of the unit. Students should reflect information learned about Romare Bearden and how he relates to their community. This may include making a collage representing the school or surrounding area's community and comparing it to Bearden's representation. The students will work together to create a final project.

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: How can I best organize my information?*

In order to compile the unit into one final project, the students will have an experience with collage. This activity will be two weeks for the classes. In the first week, the students will be asked to bring in an image or small item that best represents their community. They will look back and review the previous assignments in their folders and think about the best item that represents them in the community. Magazines will be

provided for students to use for this image. They can select images from the media center or from home. If the students cannot find an image or small item they like, they can draw a picture. The clippings will go in their folders for the next week.

During the second week, the students and instructor will alternate sharing with the class. This will be a “show and tell,” moment to allow students to explain why they brought their image. After the discussion, students will be given paper to write down the information. The paper should be a variety of shapes, sizes, colors or materials. In the last few minutes of class, the students will place the items and writings on a large bulletin board or poster board in the class or media center. Students can glue or staple the materials.

When the final class has completed this step, the instructor can fill in the board to complete a “community collage.” This will be presented in a way that all students in the school can see. With the entire second grade (approximately 125 students) taking part of the collage, it should represent the school community and offer a very diverse perspective of the school’s community.

## 6.0 Evaluation

The evaluation section is the time to reflect upon the unit and determine the best and worst of each student’s work. Students will work with the instructor to develop an evaluation tool in order to give the students ownership of their own work. With guidance, the students can decide what the most important parts of the unit and how to know if they learned what was needed.

*Classroom Activity | Essential Question: How can I decide the quality of the final product? Did the final product meet those standards? (two classes)*

Working as a whole group, the instructor will lead students to create a form of evaluation of work. This should be simple questions with a way to measure the effectiveness. Students will understand that the evaluation will be done personally, as well as, other outside teachers judging. The teacher should lead the students to select five elements, from step one, to evaluate. Each element will be given a one-to-ten rating, for a total of fifty points for the project. These elements should be:

- Did I show who Romare Bearden was?
- Do I reflect the meaning of community?
- How is community reflected in Romare Bearden’s art?
- Does my project explain the different elements of community?
- Is my project neat and well-organized?

The students will each judge each element of their final work. The instructor will help compile the average of student's evaluation and school faculty. A brief discussion should follow. Students should discuss if the project succeeded and discuss what could have made it better. This information will also serve as data for the instructor to improve the project in the future, based on needs of the students.

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<sup>1</sup> Schartzman, Myron. *Romare Bearden: celebrating the Victory*. New York: Grolier, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Mouly, Françoise. "Visual Literacy: Exploring This Magical Portal." *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* 9, no. 1 (2011): 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> Galda, Lee, and Kathy Short. "Visual Literacy: Exploring art and illustration in children's books." *The Reading Teacher* 46, no. 6 (1993): 506-515.

<sup>4</sup> Vardell, Sylvia M., Nancy L. Hadaway, and Terrell A. Young. "Sharing the Arts with ESL Students." *Book Links* 12, no. 6 (2003): 55-61.

<sup>5</sup> "Romare Bearden Foundation." Romare Bearden Foundation.  
<http://www.beardenfoundation.org> (accessed October 3, 2011)

### **Bibliography for Teachers**

Caravette, Loretta. "Portrait of the Reader as a Young Child." *Children & Libraries* 9, no. 2 (2011): 52-57.

This is a short article that discusses the importance of picture books and a collaborative effort of teachers, parents and librarians in the success of young readers.

*Charlie Rose: The Art of Romare Bearden*. Film. Directed by Mike Jay. Lanham: Charlie Rose, Inc., 2004.

The first half of this Charlie Rose episode invites major players from Bearden's life to discuss him. Ruth Fine offers a studious approach to the artist, while the others delve into other aspects of his life.

Corlett, Mary, Leslie King Hammond, Jay Emerling, Carla Hanzal, and Glenda Gilmore. *Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections*. London: D. Giles Ltd, 2011.

This book serves as the Mint Museum catalog for the Southern Recollections exhibition in Charlotte, NC. Many pieces for the unit were selected from this collection and can be found in this beautiful book.

Corlett, Mary Lee. *From Process to Print: Graphic Works by Romare Bearden*. Petaluma,

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CA : Pomegranate, 2009.

This book has a lot of full-color reproductions that walks the reader through Bearden's process of printmaking and techniques. It also includes a nice essay by the author that speaks highly of Bearden's innovative techniques.

Duke Library Digital Collection. "Inside New York's Art World: Romare Bearden"

YouTube . [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zcp1pW8I\\_tI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zcp1pW8I_tI) (accessed May 27, 2011).

This interview of Romare Bearden by Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel of the popular art series offers an intimate look of Bearden. Viewers can learn to see Bearden as a person and how he came to create the art he is known for.

Fine, Ruth E., and Mary Lee Corlett. *The art of Romare Bearden*. Washington: National Gallery of Art , 2003.

This extensive scholarly contribution could be used as your only Bearden reference. It outlines his life and work from beginning to end. It includes full-color images of Bearden's art, as well as, his poetry.

Galda, Lee, and Kathy Short. "Visual Literacy: Exploring art and illustration in children's books." *The Reading Teacher* 46, no. 6 (1993): 506-515.

This article highlights the concept of visual literacy and the importance of using images to develop reading comprehension with elementary students. The author gives multiple books and ideas to build visual literacy.

Glazer, Lee Stephens. "Signifying Identity: Art and Race in Romare Bearden's Projections." *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 3 (1994): 411-426. [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) (accessed September 19, 2011).

This scholarly article a study into the voice and identity of Bearden and his work. It discusses more of Bearden's Projections work and its racial influence.

Lewis, David Levering. "City of Refuge." In *When Harlem Was in Vogue*. New York: Penguin, 1997. 25-49.

Lewis delves into the history of Harlem and its African American growth. He highlights the art and music movement during the early 20th century. This offers a good base as to Bearden's growth and experiences during his early adulthood.

Mint Museum Charlotte. "Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections." MintWiki.

<http://mintwiki.pbworks.com/w/page/40216557/Romare-Bearden%3A-Southern-Recollections> (accessed June 27, 2011).

This wiki, created by the Mint Museum in Charlotte, NC, compiles a lot of information about Bearden's life. This site supports the Mint's fall 2011 Bearden exhibition.

Mouly, Françoise. "Visual Literacy: Exploring This Magical Portal." *Children &*

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*Libraries: The Journal of the Association for Library Service to Children* 9, no. 1 (2011): 12-14.

This brief article supports the use of comics and graphic novels to teach not only reading, but also visual literacy. Graphic novels are very popular right now and this suggests way to use them to support reading.

O'Meally, Robert, Romare Bearden, and Bridget Moore. *Romare Bearden: A Black Odyssey*. New York: DC Moore Gallery, 2008.

This beautiful book shows Bearden's series of collages based on his viewing of Homer's *Odyssey*. It shows the familiar characters represented by African Americans and would make a great comparison to the original.

Powell, Richard, Margaret Ellen Di Guilio, Alicia Garcia, Victoria Trout, and Christine Wang. *Conjuring Bearden*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

This is a great book to explore Bearden's use of the conjur woman. He has several versions of her throughout his career. The book also has good additional text on Bearden for brief reading.

Price, Sally, and Richard Price. *Romare Bearden: The Caribbean Dimension*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

This book offers a nice perspective of Bearden during his time of Caribbean influenced paintings. It offers a lot of color reproductions and Bearden's own writings. This really allows the reader to understand Bearden on a more personal level.

"Romare Bearden papers, 1937-1982." Archives of American Art.

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/romare-bearden-papers-5881/more>  
(accessed October 1, 2011).

This is a great resource to learn about Bearden and his work through many primary sources. This includes writings about Bearden, as well as writings (with doodles) by Bearden. This helps understand the inner workings of Bearden. Teachers may pick and choose some of these materials for their students.

Tomkins, Calvin. "Profiles: Romare Bearden: Putting Something Over Something Else." *New Yorker*, November 28, 1977.

This article offers a great inside into Bearden. It's a nice profile with personal quotes and his personal art history - up until its publication in 1977.

Schartzman, Myron. *Romare Bearden: celebrating the Victory*. New York: Grolier, 1999. A book printed for middle school art-history lovers, this text provides a chronological view of Bearden, with plenty of art with rich descriptions.

Vardell, Syliva M., Nancy L. Hadaway, and Terrell A. Young. "Sharing the Arts with



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ESL Students." *Book Links* 12, no. 6 (2003): 55-61.

Using arts with ESL students can offer many benefits for comprehension, in addition to finding enjoyable means to ensure engagement.

### **Student Reading List**

“The Art of Romare Bearden.” National Gallery of Art.

<http://www.nga.gov/feature/bearden/index.shtm> (accessed October 5, 2011).

The National Gallery of Art offers a brief biography of Bearden, and also has a nice section on Bearden’s techniques throughout his career.

“The Art of Romare Bearden.” San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

<http://www.sfmoma.org/bearden> (accessed November 3, 2011).

This interactive website allows users to become familiar with Bearden’s work as well as his relationships with jazz musicians.

Bearden, Romare, and Langston Hughes. *The Block: collage*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995.

This picture book uses Bearden’s work *The Block* as the illustrations, combined with Hughes poetry to describe the African American experience during the Harlem Renaissance. It really works together to gather an understanding of Bearden’s life during his time in Harlem.

Bearden, Romare, Maya Angelou, and Henry Louis Gates. *Li'l Dan, the drummer boy a Civil War story*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

This is the only children’s book that was written and illustrated by Bearden. It shows the variety of talents that Bearden has, while telling a beautiful story. It is also a great way to excite those with an interest in music.

“The Block.” The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/210002087?img=0> (accessed November 16, 2011).

The Met in New York City is displaying Bearden’s work “The Block” during the Fall of 2011. This link allows viewers from any location to view the creation and study the block of Harlem that Bearden created.

Hartfield, Claire, and Jerome Lagarrigue. *Me and Uncle Romie: a story inspired by the life and art of Romare Bearden*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2002.

This picture follows a young boy as he visits his Aunt Nanette and Uncle Romie in Harlem. While his uncle is working on collages for an art show, his aunt shows his around New York City. This is a great introduction to Bearden’s life in Harlem through the eyes of a child.

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Harvey, Jeanne. *My Hands Sing the Blues: Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey*.  
Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2011.

This picture books offers a great look into Bearden's journey as a child, with his life in the south and move to the north. The images and words show Bearden and allow children and adults to understand the depths of his work.

"Romare Bearden Foundation." Romare Bearden Foundation.

<http://www.beardenfoundation.org> (accessed October 3, 2011)

The foundation, originally directed by Bearden's wife, it a plethora of information and up-to-date happenings involving Bearden's work and special events. This is a tool that would be great introduction to Bearden and his work.

Shange, Ntozake, Eric Baker, and Linda Sunshine. *I Live in Music*. New York: Welcome Books, 1994.

Bearden was a fan of jazz, which is often evident in his art. Shange enters his lyrical poem to perfectly complement Bearden's artwork.

### **List of Materials**

- Double pocket folder for each student
- Sentence strips and/or poster board
- Pencils and markers