

# **Shedding the Mask: Using the Literature of the Civil Rights Era to Reveal the Motivations of the Movement**

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## **Introduction**

This is a unit for students in my Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics class that examines the transition of thought that occurred in the African American community from the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement through the 1970s. The students in AP Government are seniors who have already completed studies on the civil rights movement in the AP class as well as their US History and Civics and Economics classes.

The Civil Rights Era in America is a topic that students enjoy studying. They are drawn to the themes of alienation and oppression. I believe students relate strongly to these themes because, as teenagers, they see their lives as lacking in certain freedoms: adults control how they spend much of their time, they are often not able to make decisions for themselves, and they must often hide who they are to please the people around them. It is this last point that will be the center of my unit. I want students to understand more than the important people, events, and dates of the Civil Rights Movement that are studied in the Advanced Placement Government curriculum. I want them to understand the motivations of the people involved in the movement, and reading the literature of the era will provide that opportunity.

African-American culture is rich with literature and music that chronicles what it is like to be marginalized in society. Unfortunately, students explore very little of this literature in school. Students, in their history and English classes, study what may be called the “top layer” of African-American literature and history, meaning they learn the big names they need to know for standardized tests: Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, Langston Hughes. There is usually no study of writers and artists who directly challenged the white power structure or displayed anger toward whites. (I visited my school’s library and found *zero* works by James Baldwin on the shelves.) I do not want students to think that the fight for civil rights ended with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The struggle for equality continues today for many groups, including young people.

We will begin with the concept of masking: the necessity to hide oneself from society and present a persona that is acceptable to others. We will read Paul Lawrence

Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" and discuss how African-Americans have needed to mask themselves throughout American history and what emotions and thoughts they have needed to conceal. We will discuss the negative aspects of masking, such as the need for self-protection and the denial of one's true identity. We will also discuss how people have used masking in a more positive way, sometimes to manipulate the existing power structure. Once students have examined the basic concept of masking, we will discuss what specific images masks have presented: what aspects of African-American identity were concealed and why would concealment be necessary? Students could be given a picture of a blank mask and label it with their thoughts to help guide discussion. We would also discuss what thoughts and feelings lie beneath the mask (resentment, shame, anger?). Finally, we would discuss the consequences of masking. What price does a person pay for hiding their true identity? We could listen to Maya Angelou recite her poem "Mask," which incorporates Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" and reveals the pain associated with masking.

The first section of the unit is designed to connect the students to the people in the Civil Rights Movement by creating a physical representation of the masks the students themselves wear. This activity could range from creating simple masks from paper to a more complex art project using clay or papier-mâché. Each student would decorate his or her mask with words, pictures, or symbols that represent the mechanisms they use to mask their thoughts and feelings. If I feel students may be reluctant to reveal personal thoughts and feelings, we could create a mask as a class or in small groups that depicts ways young people in general mask their feelings. This activity is designed to help students understand the feelings associated with masking

The second section of the unit explores the African-American community's early attempts to shed the mask. Writers in the first half of the twentieth century used literature to seek legitimacy from white society; they were writing for a white audience. We will read selections such as "I, Too" by Langston Hughes, "Colored Soldiers" by Dunbar, and "Incident" by Countee Cullen. We will discuss the level to which these efforts were successful and the overall utility of an appeal to the power structure at large. If time permits, we can also discuss works written by white artists during the movement (also written to persuade white audiences) and the efficacy of those works. Can a white writer genuinely and adequately write about being black in America? "Strange Fruit" would be a good example to use.

Section three of the unit deals with the transition that occurred in African – American literature wherein writers began to abandon appeals to the white community for acceptance, and wrote, instead, for black audiences. Questions to consider include: what led to this transition, how are the emotions expressed in this new literature different from those expressed in the earlier works, and what was the reaction from black and white audiences? Selections by Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, the New Breed writers (Mari Evans, Claude McKay, Ismael Reed), and Amiri Baraka could be included.

This section of the unit could include an examination of the music that was created from the early days of the civil rights movement through the 1970s. The same transitions that occurred in the literature of the period occurred in the music. We will begin with the spirituals that transitioned into protest songs and discuss the emotions present in those songs. We will then listen to jazz and blues selections and discuss how the musicality and themes of these works evolved from the black experience in America. Finally, we will listen to works from the 1960s and 1970s that express black pride (“Say It Loud—I’m Black and I’m Proud,” “Respect”) and highlight the ongoing struggle (“What’s Going On”). Marvin Gaye’s career is a good example of masking: he wanted to be a crooner in the vein of Frank Sinatra, but was pushed into R&B and later expressed his frustration about many things on his “What’s Going On” album.

**Culminating activities:** Students will select a group of people who are marginalized in today’s society (in America or elsewhere) and create a poem, song, or short story that either describes how the group must mask themselves and the effects that has or describes the destruction of the mask and revelation of the genuine identity beneath. Students could do both: create a work from a “masked” perspective and one from an “unmasked” perspective. The second culminating activity involves creating a timeline of significant events in the Civil Rights Movement annotated with developments in African-American literature and music.

**Optional Assignments:** If time permits I would like to have students read a novel that deals with these issues. *Native Son*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Middle Passage*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Roots* are possibilities.

## **Objectives**

Overall objectives for this unit:

1. Students will develop an understanding of "masking" as a mechanism of coping with an existing power structure. The purpose of this objective is to introduce students to the concept that throughout history, minorities have had to adapt themselves to fit what is acceptable to the majority. Students may feel that they would not participate in masking; they would be able to assert their individuality. We will explore how all people participate in masking to some degree and students will identify the masks they wear.
2. Students will explore how and why African Americans have used masking out of necessity as well as by choice. After students have grasped the concept of masking, they will focus on masking throughout African-American history. The purpose of this objective is to expose students to the different ways African-Americans have used masks as a means of self-protection.

3. Students will understand how African Americans subverted the mask through literature and music. We will identify various ways African Americans have used masking to their advantage in order to undermine the white power structure. This allows students to see that African-Americans are not simply “victims” of white oppression, but have a strong tradition of subversion and have been able to find ways to assert their power and individuality.

4. Students will explore how African American literature and music underwent a transition from seeking acceptance from the white power structure to empowerment for the black audience. Students will have previously studied how African-Americans subverted the white power structure, but here they will see open rejection of the mask. They will read works that are written by black artists for a black audience and focus on empowerment rather than acceptance. We will also explore more challenging works that are openly hostile to white culture and explore the pain, resentment, and anger that African-Americans felt (and may continue to feel). The ultimate goal for the unit is for students to synthesize all of the information about masking techniques and the lasting impact of masking with the objective information they learned in the standard AP Government Civil Rights unit. I want them to see that civil rights is not a ten to fifteen year period in American history that can be summed up in a list of Congressional actions and court cases. I want them to understand that even though we have laws that protect racial and other minorities, we still have to deal with the lasting effects of two centuries of racism. How people feel is important. How people view themselves is important. It is not sufficient to say “those days are over.”

## The Course

Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics is a course taken primarily by seniors at Independence. AP Government and Politics students explore all aspects of the American governmental system, including voting behavior and patterns, creation and implementation of public policy, and the history of civil liberties and civil rights. While the civil rights unit is usually of the most interest to the students, it is also the shortest unit of study in the course. It is also a fairly sterile examination of the movement, consisting of a litany of court cases and statutes. The heart of the movement--the pain, violence, anger, and motivations of the people involved--is not "relevant" to preparation for the AP exam. I believe that understanding what motivated the movement is as important as knowing the outcomes. This unit will allow students to delve into the feelings of the participants and, hopefully, inspire them to fight injustice in their own way.

## Challenges

The first major challenge of teaching this unit is its placement in the curriculum. This unit is designed to be taught after the required unit on Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, but not as a part of it. Because the AP exam is administered in early May, I have approximately one month of instruction remaining after students sit for the exam. It is difficult to keep students engaged during this time, as they view the class as being effectively over. I believe this unit will capture students' interest because it combines art, music, and literature in a way they may not have experienced before.

The greater challenge in teaching this unit is the subject matter involved. We will be reading about and discussing issues of racial tension in America. Lessons involving race relations must take into consideration individual students' background, perspective, and experience. Some students may not see the utility in studying events and feelings that are unpleasant. Why should we awaken attitudes that are long past? Other students may not feel that this is "their" history. Why should I learn about other cultures? These questions are precisely why I want to teach this unit and why I think it is important. Students often do not realize that these events are not so far in the past. They also do not understand that centuries of discrimination have influenced many aspects of American culture. A person's experience in society informs how they see themselves and the world they live in, and that experience carries over into the following generation. I want my students to understand how the experiences of their ancestors influenced the decisions they made.

## Rationale

In *The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka: The Jazz Aesthetic*, William J. Harris says "to couple the word *black* to an idea makes it dangerous and alien to many white people; conversely, it makes it affirming and communal to many black people."<sup>i</sup> Perhaps this is why so many avant-garde black writers are left out of the educational canon. There is a danger in reading works that may elevate black consciousness (in the view of the white power structure). Black artists have played on this fear, including Baraka's own *The Slave*, in which he takes the "grinning minstrel" and turns him into a revolutionary.<sup>ii</sup> This fear is precisely why students of all ethnicities should read literary works that fall outside the canon. Twenty-first Century students must be the first generation to be taught that empowering one group does not automatically mean that other groups are rendered impotent. Whites have nothing to fear from other racial groups asserting their own identities. In fact, an understanding of each other's mindset could bring about positive results for everyone.

Many avant-garde writers have expressed concern that the mass media, because it controls access to information, is able to implant images into the collective psyche.

Baraka believes that the media is able to “paralyze the spirit of his people” by presenting images of African-Americans which is almost exclusively negative.<sup>iii</sup> Baraka says, “the Black artist is desperately needed to change the images his people identify with, by asserting Black feeling, Black mind, Black judgment.”<sup>iv</sup> This criticism is prevalent today. Black children spend 52% more time watching television than other youths.<sup>v</sup> If what they are seeing is primarily negative stereotypes, then schools are negligent if they do not expose students to a different view. Reading works that are created for them by a black artist counteracts the negative media images.

## **Teaching Strategies and Classroom Activities**

### Section One: Background

The first group of lessons in this unit is designed to introduce masking as it occurs in American culture as a whole and provide background information regarding masking in African-American culture

#### *Day One: Students recognize their own masks*

The opening lesson is designed to introduce students to the concept of masking by having them identify the aspects of their own identity that they hide from the world. Students will create an actual mask to serve as a visual representation of these aspects. Each student will have a paper cutout of a mask and materials to create an art collage on both sides of the mask. On the front of the mask, students will create an artistic representation of the qualities and characteristics they project to the world. On the back of the mask, they will create an artistic representation of the qualities and characteristics they hide from the world. These masks will not be shared with the class or put on display in the classroom. They are meant to provide each student with not only an understanding of the basic concept of masking, but also to help them realize that they are in some way participating in masking themselves. This activity will connect the students to the subject and create buy-in for the unit.

Materials needed for this activity include white papers, markers, colored pencils, scissors, glue, and any other art mediums the teacher may have. Magazines are an excellent resource for finding images that reflect our “projected” selves and our “masked” selves.

After completing the activity, students will participate in small-group discussions to debrief their experiences in creating the masks. Students will be reminded that they do not have to reveal any personal information unless they choose to do so. They can speak in generalities regarding their own masking behavior. Examples of discussion questions include:

- Had you ever thought about the aspects of yourself that you hide from the world?
- Do you hide aspects of yourself intentionally?
- How much time and energy do you spend consciously masking these qualities?
- Have you ever decided to reveal something that you had previously hidden about yourself? If so, what made you decide to “unmask?”
- Why do people choose to hide some aspects of their personality from the world?
- Why do you mask the things you do?
- What are the effects of masking?
- Can masking ever have a positive result?

The class will then come together for a whole-group discussion. Individuals can share responses they heard in their small groups. Students do not have to reveal personal answers if they do not wish. Students can say “I heard someone in my small group say . . . .” The class will conclude with a brainstorming session in which students attempt to identify different groups who have participated in masking and why they engaged in the practice.

For homework, students will read “We Wear the Mask” by Paul Laurence Dunbar and answer the following questions:

- How does this poem relate to the discussion during class?
- Did you think of any particular group of people while reading?
- Do you think Dunbar was writing for a particular group of people?
- What is Dunbar’s attitude about masking? Cite specific language from the poem.

*Day Two: Masks in African-American history and culture*

Now that students have an understanding of masking as a general concept, the focus shifts to masking in African-American history and culture. Class will begin with a brief history of the mask’s use in African celebrations and rituals. Interestingly, the mask as used in African ritual is designed to allow the wearer to assume a new identity: to literally become someone else.

In general, the mask form is a physical mechanism to initiate transformation whereby the wearer takes on a new entity, allowing him to have influence on the spirits to whom he is appealing to or offering thanks.<sup>vi</sup>

In America, masking becomes figurative. African-Americans, from the beginning, were forced to hide many aspect of their identity and assume a false persona that was acceptable to the white power structure. Slaves were given new first names and the surname of their owners, often required to convert to Christianity, and expected to adopt European cultural norms. A good example of this is Phillis Wheatley, a Massachusetts slave who was taught to read by her slave masters and in turn wrote poetry that was renowned in the Colonies and England. Students will read “On Being Brought From

Africa to America”, in which Wheatley discusses her gratitude at being taught Christianity and appeals to all Christians that all African-Americans can be “refin’d and join th’angelic train.”<sup>vii</sup>

While Wheatley seems to have accepted her mask willingly, others in the African-American community participated in masking out of necessity. Masking was a means of self-preservation for African-Americans throughout the country, but particularly in the South, where strict moral and social codes were in place. A particularly striking example of this is the story of Emmett Till, the 14 year old who was brutally murdered in Mississippi for whistling at a white woman. From Chicago, Till did not understand the role a black male had to play in 1955 Mississippi.<sup>viii</sup> Students will view *The Untold story of Emmett Louis Till* (or a portion of it) to understand the unrelenting social codes of the Jim Crow South and the dangers one faced for not following them. Possible discussion questions include:

- Why did such social codes exist, particularly in the South?
- Why would African-Americans comply with these codes?
- What might an effect be of having to comply with social customs that continually place one group in deference to another? Discuss the effect on both groups—the group in power and the group who is deemed subordinate.

For homework, students will read a portion of Jean Toomer’s *Kabnis* and write a short reflection essay on the masking that occurs in that story and the student’s reaction to it in light of the Emmett Till documentary.

## Section Two: Wearing the Mask

### *Day Three: Literature Before the Civil Rights Movement*

This lesson focuses on African-American literature written prior to the civil rights movement in the late 1950s and 1960s. Much of the literature in this era was written by black artists for white audiences. Like Wheatley’s poems, literature in this era is often an appeal to the better nature of white Americans. It is literature that asks for acceptance and recognition from the white power structure. Many of the African-American writers during this time are attempting to demonstrate that they can fit into the established canon by writing poems that fit traditional styles. They employ standard structure and rhyme scheme. There is no overt attempt to subvert acceptable forms of poetry or assert African-American themes or identity. The poems are statements of how well African-Americans can fit into white society. Examples of works to be read:

- “I, Too Sing America”, Langston Hughes
- “The Colored Soldiers”, Paul Laurence Dunbar
- “The New Negro”, Alain Locke



This lesson continues with an examination of the impact of masking. Students will watch Maya Angelou perform her poem “When I Think About Myself,” combined with Dunbar's “We Wear the Mask.” The poem explains the pain associated with masking one's true identity. Possible discussion topics:

- What does Angelou mean by "my life has been one great big joke?"
- What is the significance of laughter in the poem?
- What is the tone of this poem?
- Who is the intended audience?

#### *Day Four: Subverting the Mask*

Read *Br'er Rabbit and the Tar Baby* to the students. Discuss the meaning of the story (Br'er Rabbit uses his nemesis' prejudices against him).

African-Americans found ways to use whites' preconceived notions against them. A good example of this is Booker T. Washington. Washington publically accepted racial segregation while secretly financing litigation that challenged it. He convinced whites to support the Tuskegee Institute by assuring them that an African-American with an industrial education posed no threat to the white power structure. Washington relied on the support of whites to continue educating blacks. Because of his apparent acceptance of disenfranchisement, some in the African-American community criticized his work.<sup>ix</sup>

After watching "Jim Crow Stories: Booker T. Washington" on pbs.com, students will engage in a Socratic seminar to debate the following topic: was Booker T. Washington accepting of the mask forced on him by white society, or was he actively subverting the mask?

For homework, students will read excerpts from *Loving v. Virginia* (1967).

#### Section Three: A Change is Gonna Come

#### *Day Five: The Loving Case*

This lesson focuses on the slow transition that occurs in African-American literature, from an appeal for acceptance and equality (a white audience) to an assertion that African-Americans will eventually be integrated into society on their own terms and valued for their own unique qualities (a black audience). Advances in the civil rights movement parallel this transition.

Students will discuss *Loving v. Virginia*. The class could also watch the documentary "The *Loving Case*." The Lovings were an interracial couple in 1960s Virginia. They had to marry in Washington, D.C. and lived secretly in Virginia. Their life together was an exercise in masking. They often lived separately to hide their marriage. After being arrested for violating Virginia state law prohibiting interracial

marriage, they filed suit, arguing that the Virginia law violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.<sup>x</sup> Possible discussion topics:

- Would laws such as Virginia's have ever been abolished if federal courts had not ordered them to?
- Are there any parallels to the Loving case today?

For homework, students select a favorite song and bring a copy of the lyrics to class the following day. They should select a song that is connected to a strong emotion, such as sadness, anger, fear, or love. In a brief paragraph, the students should explain their emotional connection to the song.

#### *Day Six: Why do People Write Poetry?*

The lesson is to assist students in understanding why African-Americans would use literature as a way to express their feelings about oppression and injustice. Students will share their chosen songs and explain why the song "speaks" to them. Questions for discussion:

- What is the emotional effect of listening to the song?
- Are there other songs, books, poems, movies that you turn to when you are dealing with strong emotions?
- Why do people turn to different art forms when they are sad, angry, fearful, etc.?
- If these works of art help you manage your feelings, what impact do you think they would have on the author as he or she is creating that work?
- Do you write poetry or music or keep a journal? Why?

The objective of this lesson is to help students realize that people have always used stories and music to help them manage their feelings, and that the students have been doing it themselves, even if they did not realize it. The idea is to prepare them for the following day's lesson, which requires students to think about why African-Americans began to write differently and change who they were writing for.

For homework, students will write a response to the following questions: Do you think there is a genre of music that is written for a specific audience? Why wouldn't an artist want to appeal to everyone?

#### *Day Seven: Black Art for Black Audiences*

This lesson begins with a brief discussion of the homework assignment in which students thought about writing for a specific audience.

Students will read the following quote from Langston Hughes' *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*:

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. . . . We build our temple for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.<sup>xi</sup>

Students will write a brief paragraph explaining this quote and how it foreshadows the type of literature that is to come.

Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one (or more) of the following poems and have them discuss the differences between this poem and the earlier works studied.

- “If We Must Die”
- “Dinner Guest: Me”
- “Warning”
- “Different Image”
- “The Idiot”
- “Negritude”
- “Alabama Centennial”
- “Ka’Ba”

After small group discussion, groups will share out their thoughts with the class.

#### *Day Eight: To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*

Play "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black" as students enter class. Have students reflect on how the song might have impacted African-American youth in the 1960s.

This lesson focuses on the "Black is Beautiful" movement and the influence of Africa on clothing and hairstyles in the late 1960s and 1970s. Read and discuss:

- “Untitled” (by Daphne Diane Page)
- “Viva Noir!”
- “Beautiful Black Man”

View portions of *Black Power Mix Tape*, which shows the style of the era as well as previews the militant tone of the literature in the next day's lesson. Discuss the ways in which African-Americans began to embrace African clothing and hairstyles.

Additional activities:

- Listen to "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud"

- Listen to "Respect"
- Watch a clip from "Soul Train"
- Read "And Still I Rise"
- Watch clips of Muhammad Ali's "poetry"

*Day Nine: Poems That Kill*

This lesson deals with the marked change in tone from early African-American literature. Amiri Baraka called for "poems that kill."<sup>xiii</sup> New Black poets not only reject the mask, they are openly hostile to the white power structure that imposed it for so many years. Gone are the days of "Yessir" to keep the peace and keep from losing a job. The new poetry deals with issues of injustice, poverty, violence, and racial intolerance, but it does not ask for white acceptance. It confronts race and class head-on and forces whites to recognize the anger that results from centuries of being denied civil liberties and self-expression. Read and discuss:

- "Black Art"
- "The Primitive"
- "A Poem for Black Hearts"
- "The Nice Colored Man"
- "My Birthright, Too"
- "Speak the Truth to the People"
- "Reflections on April 4, 1968"

Discuss why these poets used language and thematic elements that were designed to shock people. Do artists do this today?

Assignment: Compare Dunbar's "The Colored Soldiers" to Gwendolyn Brooks' "Negro Hero." What are the differences in tone, theme, audience, etc.

For homework, students will find three examples of African-Americans who changed their name (Muhammad Ali, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Malcolm X, for example). Write a paragraph that explains why African-Americans would want to change their name.

*Day Ten: When Is It OK to Use the N-word?*

This lesson deals with signifying and the use of the word "nigger" by African-Americans in today's society. "Signifying" means to take a negative element and turn it into a positive one. Poems to read and discuss:

- "Incident"
- "Execution"

- “Nigger”
- “Stereo”

Other areas for discussion include use of the word “nigger” in today’s black culture, especially in popular music.

The class will engage in a Socratic seminar to discuss the process of signifying and why it is acceptable to many African-Americans to use "nigger" in casual conversation while it is unacceptable for whites. As this is a particularly sensitive topic, students will create a list of norms for the discussion. The teacher should closely monitor the discussion to ensure student comfort while allowing honest and open communication between students.

#### *Day Eleven: Culminating Activities*

Students will use their prior knowledge of events in the Civil Rights movement to create a timeline of events that they feel are most significant (15-20 events). Students will then annotate the timeline with music and literature that exemplifies the event. For example, a student could choose the March to Selma as an important event. This could be annotated with Dudley Randall's “The Idiot,” which describes a black man's peaceful reaction to being beaten by a white police officer. The poem is relevant to the Selma march because it addresses the problem of police violence against civil rights protestors (which the marchers faced) and the disagreement amongst civil rights leaders about how far to carry the practice of nonviolent protest (which occurred between King's SCLS and other groups).

The second activity involves a return to the concept of masking. Students will select a group of people who have been marginalized (in America or elsewhere) and create a literary or artistic work that describes how the group has been forced to mask itself and the effects this has had. Alternatively, the students could describe how a group has been able to destroy the mask they have been forced to wear and what new public identity has been revealed.

#### *Additional assignment:*

There are many novels and short stories that deal with masking and the search for identity:

- *Invisible Man*
- *Roots*
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
- *Middle Passage*
- *Song of Solomon*

- *The Bluest Eye*
- *Native Son*
- *The Salt Eaters*
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

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- Wheatley, Phillis. "On Being Brought from Africa to America." Virginia Commonwealth University. <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Wheatley/brought.html> (accessed November 25, 2012). Text of Wheatley's poem.



## Reading List for Students

Adoff, Arnold, and Benny Andrews. *I Am the Darker Brother; An Anthology of Modern Poems by Negro Americans*. New York: Macmillan, 1968. Anthology of African-American poetry.

Randall, Dudley. *Black Poets (A New Anthology)*. New York: Bantam Books, 1971. Anthology of African-American poetry.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. New York: Liveright, 1975/1923. Compilation of poetry and short stories.

Wagner, Jean. *Black Poets of the United States; From Paul Laurence Dunbar to Langston Hughes*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973. This book is not an anthology of poetry, but an analysis of the poets themselves, their major works, and the times in which they wrote.

Wheatley, Phillis. "On Being Brought from Africa to America." Virginia Commonwealth University.  
<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Wheatley/brought.html> (accessed November 25, 2012). Text of Wheatley's poem.

## Materials for Classroom Use

### Books

Adoff, Arnold, and Benny Andrews. *I Am the Darker Brother; An Anthology of Modern Poems by Negro Americans*. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Randall, Dudley. *Black Poets (A New Anthology)*. New York: Bantam Books, 1971.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. New York: Liveright, 1975/1923.

Wagner, Jean. *Black Poets of the United States; From Paul Laurence Dunbar to Langston Hughes*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973.

Wheatley, Phillis. "On Being Brought from Africa to America." Virginia Commonwealth University.

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Wheatley/brought.html> (accessed November 25, 2012).

### Videos

"Dr. Maya Angelou - YouTube." YouTube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sA4gcnnbAcU> (accessed April 18, 2012).

"Nina Simone - To Be Young, Gifted and Black - YouTube." YouTube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3OIfuVpocU> (accessed November 25, 2012).

*The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*. DVD. Directed by Gran Hugo Olsson. Orland Park, IL: MPI Home Video, 2011.

*The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*. DVD. Directed by Keith A. Beauchamp. New York, N.Y.: Thinkfilm, 2005.

### Other Materials

Art materials needed to create student masks and timelines: white paper, markers, magazines, etc.

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<sup>i</sup> Harris, William J.. *The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka: The Jazz Aesthetic*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, (1985), 17.

<sup>ii</sup> Harris, *The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka: The Jazz Aesthetic*, 24.

<sup>iii</sup> Harris, *The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka: The Jazz Aesthetic*, 26.

<sup>iv</sup> Harris, *The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka: The Jazz Aesthetic*, 26.

<sup>v</sup> Huber, Bridget. "Compared to Other Youth, Young Blacks Awash in Alcohol Ads, Study Says | FairWarning." FairWarning: News of safety, health and corporate conduct | FairWarning. <http://www.fairwarning.org/2012/09/compared-to-other-youth-young-blacks-awash-in-alcohol-ads-study-says/> (accessed November 25, 2012).

<sup>vi</sup> "African Masks." index.html. <http://www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-masks.html> (accessed October 29, 2012).

<sup>vii</sup> Wheatley, Phillis. "On Being Brought from Africa to America." Virginia Commonwealth University. <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Wheatley/brought.html> (accessed November 25, 2012).

<sup>viii</sup> *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*. DVD. Directed by Keith A. Beauchamp. New York, N.Y.: Thinkfilm, 2005.

<sup>ix</sup> "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow. Jim Crow Stories . Booker T. Washington | PBS." PBS: Public Broadcasting Service. [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_people\\_booker.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_people_booker.html) (accessed October 30, 2012).

<sup>x</sup> Staples, Brent. "Loving v. Virginia and the Secret History of Race - New York Times." The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia. [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/opinion/14wed4.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/opinion/14wed4.html?_r=0) (accessed November 25, 2012).

<sup>xi</sup> "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926)." Welcome to English « Department of English, College of LAS, University of Illinois. [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g\\_l/hughes/mountain.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/hughes/mountain.htm) (accessed November 25, 2012).

<sup>xii</sup> Harris, William J.. *The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka*, 80.