

Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 6, WEBISODE 11

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview



Let's Discuss

Persistent poverty, racism, and lack of opportunity in the south drove half a million African Americans north and west between 1916 and 1921 in what is called the Great Migration. It was the largest internal movement of a people in our nation's history. With the outbreak of World War I, American industry mobilized to produce manufactured goods for the conflict, creating a demand for unskilled labor. Recruiters, ads in prominent African American papers, letters back home, and word of mouth propelled African Americans north to the industrialized cities including Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis. Entire communities pulled up roots and headed north, seeking a better quality of life free from the lynchings, Jim Crow laws, voting restrictions, and the poverty of the agricultural south. Although African Americans faced segregation and racism in overcrowded northern cities, many still believed the north offered greater opportunities for themselves and their children.

African American scholar, writer, and activist W.E.B. DuBois protested the shameful treatment of black Americans. He helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and edited its newspaper, the *Crisis*. DuBois also inspired a number of important African American writers in the period of literary and artistic flowering known as the Harlem Renaissance, including Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and James Weldon Johnson.

Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
 - What problems did southern African Americans face in the early twentieth century?
 - How did DuBois help America move toward freedom?
2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

African Americans faced widespread discrimination, lynching, voting restrictions, Jim Crow laws, poverty, and unequal access to opportunity. These conditions fueled their migration to northern factories, where they often faced conditions nearly as bad as those they left behind. Among those who advocated for equal rights was W.E.B. DuBois, the African American scholar and activist. DuBois helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and edited its newspaper, the *Crisis*.



History Sleuth

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Examples of Jim Crow Laws*. Students read the sheet with teammates to discuss the following questions. Visit each team as students read the examples and discuss the Jim Crow laws.
 - What was it like for African Americans to live under these laws? For whites?
2. Lead the class in a discussion of how segregation harms both races, but especially the minority race. Use questions such as the following to spark discussion.
 - Why was it possible to pass unjust Jim Crow laws?

Teacher Directions

Students respond to the following prompt.

If you had lived in the south during this time, would you have moved north? Why or why not? What risks would you face by staying? By leaving?



What do you Think?

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Sir I Will Thank You With All My Heart*. Students read the four primary source documents to answer the following questions.
 - Why did half a million African Americans move north? What did they seek?
 - What hopes did they have for the future?
2. Students write a letter to the *Defender* similar to these examples, expressing their present condition in the south and their hopes for the future. Alternative lesson suggestion: Students write a letter back home to a cousin in Alabama, telling of the opportunities he or she has found and inviting the cousin to come north.



Moving Toward Freedom



Connections

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Art — Students view Jacob Lawrence's *The Migration of the Negro*. Students create their own paintings in the style of Jacob Lawrence.

Language Arts — Students read *Story Painter: The Life of Jacob Lawrence* by John Duggleby. Students write a brief biography of Lawrence's life.

Library — Students read the autobiographies or biographies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois and create biography cards (cards with brief biographical facts and a picture) for each man.

Expressive Arts — Students role-play a dialogue between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois in which they state each man's ideas and philosophies.

Examples of Jim Crow Laws

Read the following descriptions of Jim Crow Laws, and then discuss with your teammates: What was it like for African Americans to live under segregation? For whites?

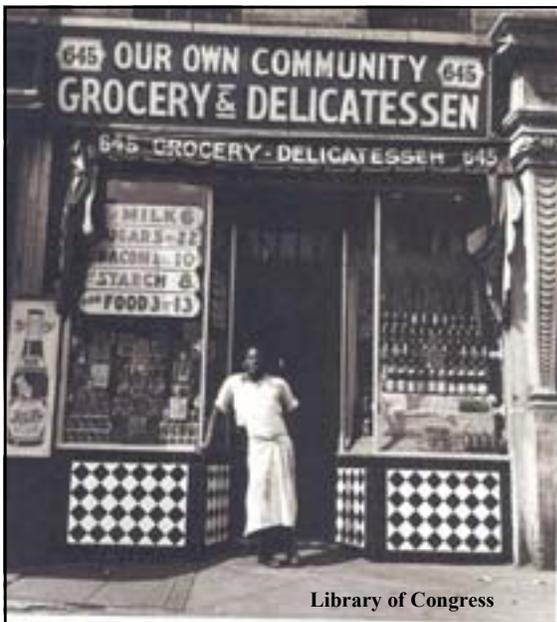
- ◇ In Oklahoma, telephone booths were segregated.
- ◇ Mississippi had separate soft-drink machines for blacks and whites.
- ◇ In Atlanta, Georgia, an African American could not "swear to tell the truth" on the same Bible used by white witnesses.
- ◇ In Mobile, Alabama, curfews ordered African Americans off the streets by ten o'clock each evening.
- ◇ In North Carolina, factories were separated into black and white sections.
- ◇ In Birmingham, Alabama, it was against the law for blacks and whites to play cards, checkers, dominoes, or other games, or play together on athletic teams.
- ◇ In Florida, textbooks for white and black students were segregated in separate warehouses.
- ◇ In Washington, D.C., even pet cemeteries were segregated by race. Public parks, jails, and prisons were segregated.

Jim Crow laws separated blacks and whites from birth to death. Under Jim Crow laws, there were separate hospitals, orphanages, prisons, waiting rooms, elevators, and drinking fountains. African Americans could not be served at white restaurants or stay in white hotels. They had to purchase movie tickets at a separate booth, use a separate entrance, and sit in a segregated section (usually the balcony). White taxi drivers could not carry black passengers; Negro drivers could not accept white passengers. A black college professor—or any other black American—could not use a public library. Laws prevented marriage between whites and blacks. Upon death, an African American used the services of a black funeral home and was buried in a black cemetery.

"Sir I Will Thank You with All My Heart":

Letters from the Great Migration

With the outbreak of World War I, northern factories stepped up operations to produce goods needed for the conflict and found themselves needing additional workers. Some factories sent recruiters south to bring laborers north. Editorials in the *Chicago Defender*, a black-owned and edited newspaper, encouraged people to come north. Black activist W.E.B. DuBois urged African Americans to “vote with their feet” against the racism, lynching, and segregation of the south. Thousands of help-wanted ads in the *Defender* convinced southerners that well-paying jobs awaited them in Chicago. People wrote the newspaper asking about jobs and opportunities in the north.



Lutcher, Louisiana, May 13, 1917

Dear Sir:

I have been reading the Chicago defender and seeing so many advertisements about the work in the north I thought to write you concerning my condition. I am working hard in the south and can hardly earn a living. I have a wife and one child and can hardly feed them. I thought to write and ask you for some information concerning how to get a pass for myself and family. I dont want to leave my family behind as I cant hardly make a living for

them right here with them and I know they would fare hard if I would leave them. If there are any agents in the south there havent been any of them to Lutcher if they would come here they would get at least fifty men. Please sir let me hear from you as quick as possible. Now this is all. Please dont publish my letter.... If you will instruct me I will instruct the other men how to come as they all want to work. Please dont publish this because we have to whisper this around among our selves because the white folks are angry now because the negroes are going north.

SELMA, ALA., May 19, 1917

Dear Sir:

I am a reader of the Chicago Defender I think it is one of the Most Wonderful Papers of our race printed. Sirs I am writeing to see if You all will please get me a job. And Sir I can wash dishes, wash iron nursing work in groceries and dry good stores. Just any of these I can do. Sir, who so ever you get the job from please tell them to send me a ticket and I will pay them. When I get their as I have not got enough money to pay my way. I am a girl of 17 years old and in the 8 grade at Knox Academy School. But on account of not having money enough I had to stop school. Sir I will thank you all with all my heart. May God Bless you all. Please answer in return mail.

BESSEMER, ALA., 5/14/17
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

April 23, 1917

Gentlemen:

I want to get in tuch with you in regard of good location & a job i am for race elevation every way. I want a job in a small town some where in north where I can receive verry good wages and where I can educate my 3 little girls and demand respect of intelegence. I prefer a job as cabinet maker or any kind of furniture mfg. if possible.

Let me hear from you all at once please. State minimum wages and kind of work.

Yours truly.