

Abstract:

Soul to Spirit to Speak to Writers: Poetry & Song

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This curriculum unit has been prepared specifically for use in the School District of Philadelphia English Language Arts classroom. The unit can be used in a high school setting, general and/or advanced curriculum classes. This curriculum unit also reflects instructional strategies that can be adapted for use in the learning support classroom environment. The unit satisfies the need to expand the boundaries of assigned classroom texts to meet the add-on of new School District of Philadelphia African-American curricular requirements in the English Language Arts curricular frameworks.

This curriculum unit represents the past, present and future essence of the African-American writer, more specifically the poet, and the representation he or she poses in our society. The unit study begins with noted Black poets in American history Phyllis Wheatley and Paul Lawrence Dunbar; then the study proceeds into the poets and poetry of the Harlem Renaissance. Next, students will be guided in delving into acquaintance, understanding, awareness and learned peer discussions comprising Black poets of the 60's and then briefly examining works of lyricists' poets of the 70's and 80's. Finally, students will delve into the poetry of rap artists, critically analyzing their poetry and lyrics. More importantly, this unit gives students a diverse spectrum of the Black poet and their response through the word to societal messages, trends and the political stance of the varied time periods, with an emphasis in the Harlem Renaissance Era.