

MOVING OBJECTS

Grade Level: 3 to 5

IN THIS LESSON

In this lesson, students will explore and analyze the items in a Great Migration artifact kit to gain insight about one of the biggest population shifts in the history of the United States. They will then write a short story about the object.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand how and why people migrate
- To make a positive link with the people of the past through objects
- To develop visual acuity and visual literacy
- To develop investigative and analytical skills
- To cultivate creative thinking, imagination, and cooperation

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.

Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.

SUGGESTED ARTIFACTS

ALL CIRCA 1920–30

- Suitcase
- Household goods and kitchen gadgets
- Hair styling tools
- Women’s hats, gloves, jewelry, and accessories
- Men’s hats, clothes, and accessories
- Children’s clothing and toys
- Record player and vintage records
- Music and culture magazines
- Schylling harmonica (reproduction)

SHEET MUSIC

- “Where Is My Mama,” 1927
- “Swanee River Moon,” 1921
- “Honeymoon Lane,” 1926
- “Show Business,” 1924
- “Pretty Little Baby,” 1925
- “Tie Me to Your Apron Strings Again,” 1925

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- What Is It? worksheets (at end of lesson)
- Magnifying glasses (optional)

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This lesson was developed and written by Beatrice Quatroke.

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ACTIVITY

1. Begin by explaining to students that they will be studying artifacts to learn about the Great Migration. Present the artifact kit to students, ideally in an old trunk or suitcase.
2. Let students choose the artifact they find most interesting.
3. Model the process of “reading” the artifact with students. First describe the physical qualities of the object. What is it made of? Who made the object and why? Are objects like this still used today? If so, how have they changed or stayed the same? Lead students in the practice of using good descriptive adjectives.
4. Distribute copies of the What Is It? worksheet for each student to complete. You may want to provide books and/or internet sources to enhance student understanding of the objects.
5. When the worksheets are complete, have students share their findings with the class.
6. Students should write a short story about the object. The story can even be written from the point of view of the artifact. How does the object feel about moving from the South to the North?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Read the poetry of Langston Hughes aloud to the class.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Chicago History Museum, <http://www.chicagohistory.org>

Great Chicago Stories, *A Bronzeville Story* and downloadable artifact images
<http://www.greatchicagostories.org>

<http://www.newsreel.org/aahistor.htm>

Video resources provide interviews and historical information about the Great Migration.

DuSable Museum of African American History, Chicago

<http://www.dusablemuseum.org>

Museum chronicles the African American experience in the United States from slavery to the present.

Thomas Sowell, *Migrations and Cultures: A World View*, Basic Books, 1996

Patricia C. McKissack, *Color Me Dark, The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, The Great Migration North*, Scholastic, Inc. New York, 2000

PBS Kids Go! interactive jazz timeline. <http://pbskids.org/jazz/time/index.html>

History of blues music. <http://academic.uofs.edu/student/PENDRAKS2/page2.html>

Langston Hughes poems. <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/83>

Judith S. Baughman, *American Decades: 1920-1929*. New York: Gale Research, 1996

WHAT IS IT? (page 1)

1. What is it made of?

2. What was it used for?

3. Is it still used today?

4. Who do you think was the first owner of this artifact?

Turn to next page

WHAT IS IT? (page 2)

5. Was it expensive?

6. Imagine and describe a dramatic or surprising event in the life of this object.

7. How do you think the artifact ended up in Chicago?

8. Do you think the artifact liked or disliked moving? Why?