

It's a Long Way from Home

Lesson 1: Reader's Theater

Focus Questions

What was the Great Migration? Why did African Americans from the South choose to relocate to Chicago during the Great Migration? What was the Stroll? What was life like for teenagers on the South Side during the Jazz Age?

Core Understandings

Students will understand that the Great Migration brought over 500,000 African Americans to Chicago. They will understand why African Americans left the rural South and what factors led them to relocate here. They will understand what life was like for teenagers on the South Side during the Jazz Age.

Knowledge

Students will know that the Great Migration was a significant historical event both locally and nationally. They will know about the key locations, living conditions, and social life on Chicago's South Side in the 1920s.

Skills

Students will use their language arts skills to interpret the past and their analytical skills to discern fact from fiction. They will gain an understanding of how works of art are produced.

Common Core ELA Standards

CCSSR1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

ISBE Social Science Standards

Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the US.

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

Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the US.

Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the US.

ISBE Fine Arts Standard

Goal 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

In This Lesson

Through a reader's theater performance of *It's a Long Way from Home*, students will make personal connections with history and gain an understanding of what life was like for teenagers on Chicago's South Side during the Jazz Age. The story elements of character, setting, dramatic tension, and resolution are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Diane Shalda.



Activity

Distribute individual copies of *It's a Long Way from Home* to students.

http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/Its_A_Long_Way_from_Home_by_Katherine_San_Fratello.pdf

Assign student volunteers the following roles for a reader's theater performance:

Narrator

Louis

Robert

Aunt Celia

Young Man at Party

When you are finished with the reading, discuss how slang is depicted in the story. In general, why do people use slang? Why do teenagers use slang? Before the discussion, you will want to distribute copies of the story's vocabulary words. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/jazz/vocabulary.php>

Lesson 1 Home Connection

Have students compose a letter to a friend as if they were Jazz Age teenagers and using all eight of Robert's "fancy talk" phrases from the story vocabulary handout. Next, have students write a list of contemporary words, slang, and/or expressions that parallel Robert's. Have students compose another letter using the contemporary slang.

Materials & Resources

- **Printouts of *It's a Long Way from Home*:**

http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/Its_A_Long_Way_from_Home_by_Katherine_San_Fratello.pdf

- ***It's a Long Way from Home* vocabulary words:**

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/jazz/reading.php>

Instructional Notes

It is a good idea to have students read the story before the reader's theater performance. For more tips on facilitating reader's theater, see the Classroom Activities section of the *Great Chicago Stories* website. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/classroom/reader.php>

Extension Activities

After the performance, discuss the story's reading-comprehension and critical-thinking questions. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/jazz/reading.php>

Have students write a diary entry from the point of view of a recent southern migrant. Remind students that in a diary one has the opportunity to be “brutally” honest, disclosing innermost thoughts and feelings one would never say aloud.