TEACHING RESOURCES

Suggested activities, discussion questions, and teaching strategies are provided on the following pages and are organized by subject areas: Social Studies, Language Arts, Math and Science, and Visual Arts.

We encourage you to use the ideas suggested as a toolbox, drawing from various subject areas to create broad and rich learning experiences.

Recommended books and web sites:

Books:

For Adults:


Powell, Richard J. *Jacob Lawrence*. New York: Rizzoli, 1992


For Young Readers:


Web Sites

Jacob Lawrence:

www.Jacoblawrence.org
Web site of the Jacob Lawrence Catalogue Raisonné Project features biography, timeline, an extensive archive of images of Lawrence’s works, and information about upcoming exhibitions, other related events and resources.

www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/jacoblawrence/contents.htm
Jacob Lawrence as a storyteller; lesson plans and activities for elementary grades.

www.archivesofamericanart.si.edu/oralhist/lawren68.htm
An extensive interview with Jacob Lawrence about his youth, his early training, and his career as an artist, October 1986

Harlem

www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture—the leading center at the New York Public Library for research on African-American history and culture

www.mcny.org
Contains extensive archive of archival photographs of Harlem, features on the Harlem Renaissance

Migration

www.pbs.org/goingtochicago/migrations/
Information about the migrations of African-Americans to the North; accompanies documentary film/video “Going to Chicago”

Leading artists and writers who documented the migration experience; archival photographs.

www.americanhistory.si.edu/yomus/ex11fact.htm
Information related to past exhibition, From Field to Factory.

And for a broad range of subjects, see the curriculum and classroom resources available through the AT&T Learning Network: http://www.att.learningnetwork
SOCIAL STUDIES

Jacob Lawrence valued his community and observed it closely; it inspired his art. Look at Beginnings to see photographs of Harlem and Lawrence’s depictions of the scenes he saw in his neighborhood.

* Research the Harlem community in the first half of the 20th century—its size, population, economy, cultural and political life.

* Investigate your community. (Individual students or groups could do this.) Find out about its history—how it developed, who founded it, why it was established.

* Compare your community in the past with the way it is now. Describe its present character. What are the differences? (Different people, ages, occupations, buildings, transportation, open space)

* Interview residents who have lived in your community for a long time. How do they view the neighborhood? What do they think about the community now? How has it changed? Has change made the neighborhood better or worse? Why? Each student could write a report on the interview, for class discussion. What is regarded as good change? Bad change? Why?

* Research the Great Migration. When did it occur? Create a list of reasons why African-Americans left the South and migrated North. (See Jacob Lawrence, The Migration Series, Panel 3)

* What were the major northern cities to which African-Americans migrated? Find them on a map of the United States.

Have you and your family always lived in your present city? Where did your family come from? Why did they move?

* Find out about the origins of others in your class or group. Make a list of the cities or countries from which they came and locate these places on a map.

* Discuss and list reasons for moving from one place to another, comparing conditions at the time of the Great Migration (about 1917-1940) and the present.

* Research the Civil Rights movement. Who were some of the leaders of the movement? Find out about the strategies used to press for racial equality. Locate the cities where major Civil Rights activity occurred. (See Confrontation at the Bridge)

An * indicates questions and activities useful in preparation for Stanford 9 Tests.
LANGUAGE ARTS

* Create a dictionary, guidebook, or “encyclopedia” of your community, writing about the history of the community, about the businesses and homes, and including summaries of interviews with residents. Organize the information, and develop a Table of Contents and an index, arranged alphabetically.

* Think about your neighborhood and organize your ideas by listing (1) things you like about it; (2) things you don’t like and would like to change; (3) places that are important to you in your neighborhood; (4) your favorite activities. Write a short essay (one page) describing one point on your list and telling why you selected it.

* Imagine that you have migrated from a home in the South to a northern city. Write a letter to your best friend or a relative who remains behind, describing your feelings about moving and telling about your new home and community.

Look at *Play Street* or *Brownstones*. Describe what is happening, noting the different details that Jacob Lawrence includes in these compositions to give a sense of the community.

* Look at the sections *Beginnings* and *The Young Artist*. Answer the following questions:
  
  How old was Jacob Lawrence when he moved to Harlem?
  a. six  
  b. ten  
  c. three  
  d. thirteen  

  Which of these famous African-Americans did Jacob Lawrence paint?
  a. Michael Jordan  
  b. Harriet Tubman  
  c. Martin Luther King, Jr.

  In which city is Harlem located?
  a. Washington  
  b. Chicago  
  c. Seattle  
  d. New York

  Who was Jacob Lawrence’s first art teacher?
  a. Leonardo da Vinci  
  b. Charles Alston  
  c. Vincent van Gogh

Look at *Taboo*. What does the word “taboo” mean? Why do you think Jacob Lawrence gave this painting that title?

Define: urban, rural, community, migration, discrimination, inspiration

Collect a group of images (photographs, clippings from newspapers or magazine) that relate to each other. Arrange them as a series, so that they tell a story. Write captions for each image to narrate the story.

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MATH and SCIENCE

*Look at Peddlers Reduce Their Prices in the Evening to Get Rid of their Perishables, or Ice Peddlers. * Answer the following questions:

* If the peddler charges 60 cents a pound for bananas and reduces the price by 50%, what is the new price per pound?
  a) 54¢   b) 30 ¢   c) 45 ¢

* Joe has three dollars. He wants to buy some oranges, priced at 50 cents each. How many oranges can he afford?
  a) five    b) four   c) six

* Jill buys two pounds of potatoes at 75 cents a pound, three pounds of onions at 65 cents a pound, and one head of lettuce at 95 cents. How much money does she owe?
  a) $5.60    b) $4.40    c) $4.85

* Jill gives the vendor a $20 bill. How much change will she get?
  a) $15.60    b) $16.50    c) $12.40

* Mrs. Johnson knows that her three children each eat two apples a day. How many apples should she buy for the whole week?
  a) 24    b) 42    c) 37

* The ice peddler (vendor) has three large chunks of ice: one weighs ten pounds, another weighs fifteen pounds, and the third weighs nineteen pounds. How many pounds of ice does he have?
  a) 44 lbs.    b) 38 lbs.    c) 52 lbs.

* Michael wants to buy .65 (65%) of the first chunk, and Tiffany wants to buy .30 (30%) of the second chunk. How much will Michael buy?
  a) 3 _ lbs.    b) 4 _ lbs.    c) 6 _ lbs.

* How much will Tiffany buy?
  a) 5 lbs    b) 3 _ lbs.    c) 4 _ lbs

* Compare the climate of the Southeastern United States with that of the North. What are the differences in temperature, rainfall, snow?

* Look at Red Earth—Georgia. Why is the earth red in that state? Are there other places that also have “red earth?” Compare the soil of Georgia with that of western Pennsylvania or Ohio. Describe the differences.

Look at The Butcher Shop. Can you tell what the weather is like? How?

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VISUAL ARTS

Jacob Lawrence used the artist’s language of line, shape, color, and pattern to portray his subjects. His style is the way in which he used these elements.

Creating community collages: see Children’s Art. Students can work together to create a group collage of their neighborhood. Cut bold, brightly colored shapes representing buildings, cars, buses, trucks, and signs. Combine these elements, overlapping shapes and colors, and creating patterns, as Jacob Lawrence did in his depictions of his community.

Repeated lines, shapes, colors create a pattern. Look at Panels 1 and 3 of The Migration Series. How many patterns can you find? Of lines? Of shapes? Of color?

Look at the figures in Ironers and in the Harriet Tubman series, Panel 4. Which figures look heavy, solid? Why? Which figures are light and lively? How did Jacob Lawrence achieve these effects? Look at the shapes and colors.

Jacob Lawrence was a master at using poses and gestures to convey mood. Are the figures in Ironers happy and joyful? What visual clues does the artist give to suggest state of mind? Look at the shape of their shoulders, the position of their heads, and the lines of their arms.

Lawrence often used diagonal lines to suggest motion. How does he do that in Ironers? Find the lines and trace the direction of movement. Compare the use of diagonal lines in this picture with Harriet Tubman series, Panel 4.

Looking at these two images, see how the artist used the picture’s space. Which figures fill the space? Which figures move through the space? In which picture is there more space? How do you know?

Look at Play Street and Studio Corner. In these pictures Lawrence used diagonal lines to create perspective, suggesting deep space. Compare them with Over the Line or Munich Olympic Games. Is the space deep or flattened? Are the forms and figures inside the space or pushed forward to the surface? How does your eye move around the different images?

Jacob Lawrence told stories through his art, unifying a series visually through repeated colors, shapes, and patterns. Think of a family event or story, and divide it into its beginning, middle, and end. Draw your story in a series of sheets or panels.

Lawrence frequently conveyed meaning through his placement and poses of figures. Look at The Migration Series, Panel 19. Where is the figure located? How does the figure relate to the space around it? Lawrence used the composition symbolically to express the idea of discrimination. Look at Confrontation at the Bridge and Card Game. What is happening? How do you know? What clues has the artist provided?