Harlem Voices Rise

Explore the themes, genres, and styles of the Harlem Renaissance.

6.T.PM.1 "Periods & Movements: Demonstrate knowledge of dominant themes, genres, and verbal styles of literature from a particular time period."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each genre named in the passage, circle phrases that name a theme, and number three details that describe a writer's verbal style. Your marks will show how Harlem Renaissance authors shared ideas while using different kinds of writing and voices.

Writing from Harlem

1 During the 1920s and 1930s, Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City, became a center of Black art and writing. This cultural flowering is called the Harlem Renaissance. Many Black Americans had moved north during the Great Migration, bringing stories, music, and hopes for new opportunities. Writers used poems, novels, essays, and plays to show daily life, celebrate Black culture, and challenge unfair treatment. Their work reached readers far beyond Harlem and shaped American literature.

2 Poetry was especially important. Langston Hughes often drew on blues and jazz, music styles heard in Black communities. In poems such as "The Weary Blues," his lines can sound musical, with repeated words, beats, and everyday speech. Other poets chose formal patterns, proving that Black writers could use many voices. Novelists such as Zora Neale Hurston included lively dialogue and regional dialect, or speech linked to a place. These choices helped characters sound distinct and made ordinary conversations part of literature.

3 Harlem Renaissance authors returned to several strong themes. They expressed pride in Black history and identity. They also examined racism, unequal chances, and the pressure to be seen fairly in American life. Some works showed city excitement, crowded streets, clubs, and music. Others explored family, work, migration, or dreams for the future. Although authors shared concerns, they did not all write alike. A quiet poem about loneliness and a humorous story told in dialect could both belong to the movement because each connected to Black life and culture.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Name two genres used by Harlem Renaissance writers. Then name one author from the passage and the genre connected to that author.

2. What are two major themes that Harlem Renaissance authors explored?

3. What music styles influenced Langston Hughes's poetry, and what two features could make his lines sound musical?

4. Why could a quiet poem about loneliness and a humorous story told in dialect both be part of the Harlem Renaissance?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a Harlem Renaissance author. Write exactly three sentences describing a new work: name its genre, state one theme, and describe one verbal style choice. In the third sentence, explain how your choices connect the work to the Harlem Renaissance.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 6 · 6.T.PM.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each genre named in the passage, circle phrases that name a theme, and number three details that describe a writer's verbal style. Your marks will show how Harlem Renaissance authors shared ideas while using different kinds of writing and voices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two genres used by Harlem Renaissance writers. Then name one author from the passage and the genre connected to that author.	**Poems and novels are two genres. Langston Hughes is connected to poetry, and Zora Neale Hurston is connected to novels.**
2	What are two major themes that Harlem Renaissance authors explored?	**Answers include pride in Black history and identity, racism and unequal chances, fair treatment, city life, family, work, migration, and dreams for the future.**
3	What music styles influenced Langston Hughes's poetry, and what two features could make his lines sound musical?	**Blues and jazz influenced his poetry. His lines could use repeated words, beats, and everyday speech.**
4	Why could a quiet poem about loneliness and a humorous story told in dialect both be part of the Harlem Renaissance?	**They could both belong because they connected to Black life and culture, even though they used different tones and verbal styles.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My poem, "Morning Train," follows a family leaving the South for a northern city. Its theme is hope for a fairer future, and its short repeated lines echo the beat of a train. These choices connect it to the Harlem Renaissance by exploring migration and Black life through a musical voice.

For Part 3, check for exactly three sentences, a named genre, a theme, a style choice, and a clear connection to the Harlem Renaissance.