Voices of Harlem

Trace how one literary movement shaped themes, genres, and voices.

7.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 words or phrases that show a recurring theme, circle each genre or form, and number three details that describe a writer's verbal style. Your marks will help you connect the Harlem Renaissance to the kinds of literature and voices it produced.

Writing a New Renaissance

1. In the 1920s, the Harlem Renaissance brought a burst of Black American writing, music, and art to Harlem in New York City. Many Black families had moved from the rural South to northern cities during the Great Migration. Writers explored what it meant to build a full life amid opportunity and racism. Their work often expressed racial pride, community, freedom, and the energy of city life. Magazines, theaters, and publishers gave artists places to share new voices with wide audiences.

2. Poetry was especially visible in the movement. Langston Hughes used the rhythms and repeated lines of blues and jazz in poems such as "The Weary Blues." His plain, musical language could sound like a performer speaking to a crowd. Claude McKay wrote sonnets, a tightly patterned poetry form, including "If We Must Die," which speaks with a formal, urgent voice about resistance. Although both poets addressed Black experience, their poem forms and sounds created different effects.

3. Other writers chose fiction, essays, and drama. In the novel Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston used vivid description and Southern Black speech to portray Janie Crawford's search for independence. Essayists such as Alain Locke argued that Black artists should shape their own cultural image. Onstage, plays and musical revues drew on dance, song, and everyday conversation. Across these genres, writers mixed formal literary techniques with voices heard in Black communities, making the period's literature both artistic and rooted in lived experience.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Name two recurring themes of Harlem Renaissance literature from paragraph 1. What challenge or situation did writers explore along with those themes?

2. How did Hughes's and McKay's poetry differ in form and verbal style? Give one detail for each poet.

3. What genre did Hurston use, and which two language choices did she use to portray Janie's search for independence?

4. What combination of techniques and voices connected literature across the different Harlem Renaissance genres?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a literary period or cultural movement you have studied. In exactly three sentences, invent a title and describe a poem, story, or play that fits it, state a theme and genre, and include a 5-10-word quoted phrase that shows its verbal style.

ANSWER KEY

Voices of Harlem

GRADE 7 · 7.T.PM.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that show a recurring theme, circle each genre or form, and number three details that describe a writer's verbal style. Your marks will help you connect the Harlem Renaissance to the kinds of literature and voices it produced. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two recurring themes of Harlem Renaissance literature from paragraph 1. What challenge or situation did writers explore along with those themes?	**Themes include racial pride, community, freedom, and city life. Writers explored building a full life amid opportunity and racism.**
2	How did Hughes's and McKay's poetry differ in form and verbal style? Give one detail for each poet.	**Hughes used blues and jazz rhythms, repeated lines, and plain musical language. McKay wrote tightly patterned sonnets with a formal, urgent voice.**
3	What genre did Hurston use, and which two language choices did she use to portray Janie's search for independence?	**Hurston used a novel, or fiction. She used vivid description and Southern Black speech.**
4	What combination of techniques and voices connected literature across the different Harlem Renaissance genres?	**Writers mixed formal literary techniques with voices heard in Black communities, connecting art to lived experience.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During the Harlem Renaissance, a fictional blues poem titled “Roots on Lenox” explores community pride. Its repeated phrase, “Our drums wake every window,” creates a musical, chant-like style. The poem's theme, genre, and voice fit a movement that celebrated Black culture.

Accept equivalent themes, genre names, and style evidence when students support their ideas with passage details. For Part 3, check for exactly three sentences, a movement, a genre, a theme, an invented title, and a quoted 5-10-word phrase that demonstrates style.