

## Class Activity for: *Great Migration* (2010 Student Projects)

### Lesson Information

Suggested Grade Level: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Lesson Title: Dreams vs. Reality: The Great Migration

Rationale: Using Omaha, NE as a backdrop, students will explore and learn why African-Americans moved to the North during the Great Migration, and what realities faced them in the North.

Guided Questions: Why would African-Americans move, by the thousands, from the South to the North during the early 1900s through the 1920s? What factors were pushing them from the South? What factors were pulling them to the North? What realities did African-Americans find once they arrived in the North?

Lesson Goals: Students will be able to connect a major concept of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American History, the Great Migration, to local history. The readings, artifacts, and the oral history students will examine bring to life this national event and place it right here in Omaha. Students can analyze the short term and long term impact of this movement on a local scale, and learn more about Omaha's African-American community in this changing and evolving era.

Suggested Time: 30-45 minutes (full lesson; teacher can pair down to fit shorter time frame)

Required Materials: At least one computer with internet access for every two students

### Activity Instructions

Introduction/Anticipatory Set: Challenges and Successes for African-Americans

1. Place students into small groups.
2. Assign each group one of the following events to research (either with their textbook or online resource).
  - Dred Scott decision
  - Emancipation Proclamation
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - Jim Crow Laws
  - Plessy v. Ferguson
3. Instruct the groups to research a date for their assigned event and be able to provide a detailed description of the event.
4. Each group should put the title of their event, the date, and description on a poster size (if available, or 8x11) sheet of paper.
4. Once all groups are done, have one member from each group place their poster on a wall or the board; posters should be arranged in chronological order.
5. As a large group, have students take turns responding to and discussing the following questions:
  - What challenges were facing African-Americans before and after the Civil War?
  - What successes did African-Americans achieve after the Civil War?
  - Which do you think had a greater impact on the lives of African-Americans as they moved into the 20<sup>th</sup> century...the challenges or successes? Why?
6. Use this last discussion question to transition into the lesson activity:

Based on their history, what opportunities might African-Americans want to pursue in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

Directions/Procedures for Instruction:

1. Working in pairs, instruct students to go to the Making Invisible Histories Visible website ([www.ops.org/invisiblehistory](http://www.ops.org/invisiblehistory))
2. Students will click on 2010 Student Projects and then on the Great Migration project
3. Students will read the information, explore and analyze the artifacts, as well as watch the oral history video to find answers to the *guided questions (beginning of the lesson plan)*.
  - a. Students should answer the questions in a notebook or sheet of paper so they can refer back to it for their assessment.
4. Once the students have answered the guided questions, they will work to create a journal entry. For the entry they will pretend to be an African-American moving from the South to the North during the Great Migration. Students' entries should cover the following:
  - a. Reasons for moving?
  - b. Hopes, dreams, and fears of leaving the South and moving to the North?
  - c. Successes they had once in the North?
  - d. Challenges they had once in the North?
  - e. Connect the Great Migration to future successes and challenges faced by African-Americans (i.e. how is the Great Migration integral to African-American history both in Omaha and nationally)