



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2007 Volume I: Adapting Literature

Using Film and Literature to examine The Great black Migration: An Analysis of "A Raisin in the Sun" through poetic voices

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"And we have decided to move into our house because my father, my father, he earned it for us, brick by brick."

Walter Lee

When Walter Lee presents the question to mama, "Why did you move here to Chicago forty years ago from the south?" mama explains, "I guess I came here to make a better life for me and my family." This will serve as the springboard for introducing the Great Black Migration and the artistic expressions it occasioned in poetry and drama. Since my eighth grade students live in Chicago, we will examine jobs, housing and educational opportunities, organizational support systems and poetic protest.

Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* sets the stage for examining conflicts and themes that arise from these historical and social events. Almost fifty years ago a young African American woman wrote the play *Raisin in the Sun* describing some of the conflicts faced by a family struggling to achieve the American Dream. Have the Dreams of African American's dried up like *a Raisin in the Sun*? The poet Langston Hughes asks this very compelling question: "what happens to a dream deferred?" As a writer Lorraine Hansberry uses the plot of her play to explore the overarching theme of fulfilling one's dreams which reverberates in each of her characters.

"Does a play or film reflect society's cultural, social or political views or visa-versa?" In this unit students will examine, identify, interpret, and constructively critique recurring themes in the play and film. As a Nationally Board Certified Teacher in the field of Middle Childhood Generalist, I have the richness of integrating curriculum across content areas. Excerpts from the play and poetry will be used to emphasize various themes that students can also identify through film analysis, making real life connections in the process.

(Developed for Language, Visual and Performance Arts, and Social Studies, grades 7-10; recommended for Language, Visual and Performance Arts, and Social Studies, grades 7-10)

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