



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2011 Volume IV: The Big Easy: Literary New Orleans and Intangible Heritage

La Francophonie, beyond the Hexagon

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Examined through an interdisciplinary study touching upon geography, history, literature and language, a selection of authentic works from New Orleanian poets known as *Les Cenelles*, will serve as a spring board for students of AP French to improve their reading comprehension skills, and to broaden their understanding of the Francophone world with boundaries stretching far past the borders of France.

Focusing on the French influence in Louisiana, we will endeavor to integrate the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational, while developing cultural perspectives, and connections. This unit lends itself well to performance-based student assessments; *de rigueur* in Foreign Language pedagogical circles. The interpretive phase of communication is the study of a text written by native speakers, intended for native speakers. Students will interpret, analyze, memorize and recite some poems from this anthology while gaining insight into the social predicament of the francophone, American poets who penned it. This group of nineteenth century *personnes de couleur libres*, produced the first anthology of African American verse ever published in the United States, carefully navigating the paradoxes thrust upon them because of their caste – not completely black or white – and in defiance of the racial ostracism they battled in antebellum New Orleans.

(Developed for AP French, grades 11-12; recommended for French IV Honors and AP French, grades 11-12)

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