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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2012 Volume IV: Narratives of Citizenship and Race since Emancipation

The Heart's Migration: Finding, Making, Coming Home

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For generations of African Americans traveling along the winding paths of the diaspora, home was a dream or a vague, distant memory. During slavery, home was not where slaves actually lived; without the rights of citizenship, they were legal castaways. With Emancipation, a simple question became quite complex: where is home? Throughout a high school course in African American literature, students will use the lens of "finding home" to connect with the authors we study.

Students will keep detailed journals reflecting on how the search for home is presented in works of African American literature. Each journal entry will include visuals, including photographs, images from magazines and the Internet, and/or original drawings. Periodically, there will be class discussions to highlight how the idea of home is changing and developing. Additionally, there will be activities including a debate and a class cookbook and banquet. The culminating project will be a laminated photo quality poster combining text and images; each poster will also have an artist's statement and a "Home Bill of Rights." This poster will be something the students can take with them to their "new homes," their college dorm rooms.

(Developed for African American Literature, grades 11-12; recommended for African American and American Literature, grades 11-12; AP Language and Composition, grade 11; and Literature and Composition, grade 12)

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