

The Delta Blues: Heading North

Due to the many hardships experienced living in the Delta, African Americans headed north from the Delta region and other parts of the South during the period called the Great Migration.

This lesson will focus on the first wave of migration from 1915 – 1930 from Mississippi.

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Grade Level	7
Duration	2 - 5 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS
ELEMENT FOUR: THE PHYSICAL AND HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACES
ELEMENT NINE: THE CHARACTERISTICS, DISTRIBUTION, AND MIGRATION OF HUMAN POPULATIONS ON THE EARTH'S SURFACE

Arizona Geography Standards

ESSENTIALS 070401
PO 1 Construct maps
PO4 Locate physical and cultural features
ESSENTIALS 070402
PO1 Describe the human and physical characteristics of places and regions.
ESSENTIALS 070404
PO2 Describe the push and pull factors that cause human migrations.
PO4 Analyze how social, physical, good climate, farmland, and economic resources influence where human populations choose to live.

Arizona American History Standards

ESSENTIALS 070107
PO13 Describe important events associated with WWI.
c. Migration of African Americans north

Overview

The largest internal migration in U.S. history took place in two waves. The first occurred from 1915 to 1930 when African Americans left the South in large numbers heading north. Many left the Delta region in Mississippi to relocate in Chicago and other large northern industrial cities.

Purpose

In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of the push and pull factors impacting individuals' decisions to leave the Delta. Through

research and class discussion students will locate where the Delta is as well as popular destinations. They will examine what life was like for Blacks living in this region at this time in history. Then create visual or multi – media presentations to showcase their learning.

Materials

- Web search student handout
- Political Map of the United States with state names

<http://alliance.la.asu.edu/azga/>

- Physical Map of Mississippi

<http://geology.com/store/wall-maps/mississippi-wall-map-lg.jpg>

- Annotated web resource list

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Construct a map showing the location of the Mississippi Delta region and northern cities that were preferred destinations.
2. Describe what it was like for Blacks in the Delta during this time period.
3. Analyze the push and pull factors contributing to the Great Migration.
4. Create a visual or multimedia presentation answering the questions:
What was life like in the MS Delta in the 1910s and 1920s?
What were the push factors for Blacks moving north during the Great Migration?
What were the push factors that compelled them to leave the Delta?

Procedures

Students should have had experience in making maps and applying the five themes of geography.

SESSION ONE

1. Teacher briefly introduces the basics of what the Great Migration was.

2. Using a projection of the Mississippi physical map as a guide, students will locate the MS Delta on the U.S. political map coloring it green. Using an atlas, students will locate and label popular northern destinations: Chicago, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia.

3. Students read an overview of the Great Migration from their textbooks or one of the overviews listed on the web resources noting any information that would help them answer the questions that will be a focus of their presentations.
4. As a class discuss the overview, answering questions and listing important points students make.

SESSION TWO

1. Students complete a web search using the resources listed and others of their choice. This can be done as homework or as an in class assignment.
2. Students work in pairs to create a visual or multimedia presentation (ex.: poster, movie, music, power point, photo story, skit, poetry, etc.).

SESSION THREE

1. Students share their presentations with the class.

Extensions

1. Explore the blues that developed in the Delta and the place they held in people's lives, listening to and discussing the music.
2. Graph GDP for whites and blacks living in the Delta.
3. Investigate cotton as a primary crop in the region, its production methods, financial significance, and the impact on the work hands lives.

Sources

See attached web resources list to be used as part of the student handout.