

**Unit: Identity and the great Migration, the Blues and Civil Rights**  
**Grade Level: 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Goals:**

**Through non-fiction materials and the novel The Watsons Go To Birmingham students will understand the role of migration in the South, Civil Rights, importance of the Blues and identity and society.**

**II. Specific Objectives:**

**Students will be able identify and analyze the relevance of tracking the migration of blacks from the south to the north.**

**Students will be able to compare the relevance of African American Blues music to identity and society.**

**Students will be able to explain and summarize the importance of the civil rights in relation to the migration and equality of individuals.**

**Students will be able synthesis migration, equality and music to their own individuality and community.**

**III. Procedures**

**Through background information and mapping students will identify and analyze the migration of blacks from the south to the north. Students will watch “The Promised Land” and then write a brief response to the film. Students will then trace the path of the Illinois Central to the north.**

**Students will draw their focus toward Flint, Michigan and through background information will identify the importance of African Americans in Michigan. Students will read/listen to the novel The Watsons Go to Birmingham by, Christopher Paul Curtis through the Chapter 8.**

**Students will be introduced to the relevance of the Blues in the Delta. Students learn about and listen to music by Charlie Patton, Robert Johnson and B.B. King. Students will analyze the lyrics of the songs and explain how they relate to identity and community. Students will read Ch. 9 of the novel and synthesis the importance to music to the individual and community.**

**Students will build background knowledge on the civil rights movement through the article on “The March Continues”. Students will read the article and take notes on any key facts or details of importance. Then in rotations of groups of five students will present to the class their findings. Students will then finish reading the novel.**

#### **Assessment:**

**After completion of the novel students will complete one of the following projects:**

**Migration: Student will create a portfolio that reflects their own migration. The portfolio must include a map reflecting the migration, an interview of a family member that explains how and why they migrated, and documentation of the culture they left vs. the culture they are presently living in.**

**Music: Students will create a project that compares and contrasts the Blues vs. the music they listen to. Students must research three blues artists and three of their own artists. Each piece must include a brief biography of the artist, one of their songs and a summary of what the song details. Students then must compare and contrast Blues Music to their own music.**

**Civil Rights: Students will research the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church Bombings. Students will create a posterboard that reflects the background of where and why the bombing occurred, the relevance to civil rights, who the victims were, their story and what happened to the case. Finally students will relate the violation of civil rights to their own identity and community.**

#### **IV. Materials/Resources**

[www.lib.niu.edu](http://www.lib.niu.edu)- <http://www.lib.niu.edu/1996/iht329633.html>

“Chicago and the Great Migration” by, James Grossman and curriculum materials. (includes further instruction and map)

History Matters” Primary sources letters from the Great

Migration:[historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5332](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5332)

Pearson, Barry Lee. Jook Right On.

[www.msbluestrail.org](http://www.msbluestrail.org)

[www.pbs.org/the](http://www.pbs.org/the) blues

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)- <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/march-continues>

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1963\\_birmingham\\_church\\_bombing.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1963_birmingham_church_bombing.htm)

[http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m\\_r/randall/birmingham.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/randall/birmingham.htm)

1. Take notes as you read [The March Continues](#). Identify key facts and details about the importance and symbolism of the Civil Rights Memorial. Also select two quotes, sentences or passages from the story that you find compelling or inspiring.
2. Arrange a cluster of five desks as the front of the room. The five students sitting there should begin a “popcorn review” of the material. In this activity, the first student stands and provides a key fact about the importance or symbolism of the Civil Rights Memorial. Another then pops up and states an additional piece of information that adds to the prior point. Keep going until all five in the group have had a turn.
3. Rotate in new clusters of five students and repeat the activity. Each new cluster should begin with a fresh fact or statement.
4. Reflect for a moment on the information covered during the review. Craft a three-sentence summary about the importance, symbolism and impact of the Civil Rights Memorial.
5. As a group, review the information on the provided timeline. Brainstorm ideas for creating a monument or memorial honoring this movement. Should it honor the movement as a whole or one key event or person?
6. Draw on the information you have learned about the Civil Rights Memorial as you think about your monument. Consider:
  - What message(s) do you want your memorial or monument to convey?
  - What should it look like? Should it be big or small? What colors, materials, textures, and shapes might be best?
  - Should there be words on your memorial or monument? Should there be symbols? If so, what words and symbols would you include?
  - Should you include educational exhibits? Should there be an open space where visitors can reflect? Why?
  - Where should your memorial or monument be placed? Why?
7. Create a sketch of your memorial or monument. Take turns sharing your drawings with the class. Explain why you came up with your design.
8. Revisit the quotes or passages you identified in the news article at the beginning of this activity. Reflect on how they might relate to all of the designs your class created. Using both sides of a note card, write for three minutes on one or both of the following prompts:
  - Can a society ever be truly free of prejudice and discrimination?
  - What are my responsibilities in creating positive social change?

