

Art in Many Forms, Grade 10

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Lesson Plan Summary:

Objective:

By studying the picture from the TIDES Database and reading “A Black Man Talks of Reaping,” students will understand how various forms of art can represent an individual’s view of himself and his place in society. **TEKS §110.43 English II. (b) 7(A), 8(B, C, D), 10(B), 19, 20.**

Introduction:

Individuals use a variety of methods such as writing, photography, and various forms of art to express their own ideas about themselves and their perceived place in society.

Directions:

1. Have the students study the painting of the black man and his work, which can be found on the TIDES website (<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u?Newton,1729>). Discuss the painting in terms of the landscape, the prominent figure of the man, the type of work being done in the painting, and the man’s clothing. Have students discuss what the man may be thinking as he works.
2. Have the students read “A Black Man Talks of Reaping.” Discuss the images within the poem and the tone of the poem. Ask students to discuss and answer the following questions:

How is the poem similar to the painting?

Do you think the man in the painting could be the man speaking in the poem?
Why or why not?

Which art form does the best job of creating images for the reader/viewer? Why?

Extension Activities:

Have the students search the TIDES Database for another image that can be paired with a poem either the teacher or student chooses. The student literature books are an excellent resource for this assignment since most, if not all, literature books have poetry within them. The teacher may want to focus on a particular author, theme, or time period.

Materials:

A Black Man Talks of Reaping, by Arna Bontemps
(<http://www.nathanielturner.com/blackmantalksofreaping.htm>)

Reapers, by Jean Toomer
(http://www.simonhuggins.com/uricon/classic/toomer_jean/reapers.htm)

A Black Man Talks of Reaping

by Arna Bontemps

I have sown beside all waters in my day.
I planted deep, within my heart the fear
That wind or fowl would take the grain away.
I planted safe against this stark, lean year.

I scattered seed enough to plant the land
In rows from Canada to Mexico
But for my reaping only what the hand
Can hold at once is all that I can show.

Yet what I sowed and what the orchard yields
My brother's sons are gathering stalk and root,
Small wonder then my children glean in fields
They have not sown, and feed on bitter fruit.

Bontemps, Arna . "A Black Man Talks of Reaping." The Poetry of the Negro, 1746-1970. New York: Doubleday, 1970.

Reapers

by Jean Toomer

Black reapers with the sound of steel on stones
Are sharpening scythes. I see them place the hones
In their hip-pockets as a thing that's done,
And start their silent swinging, one by one.
Black horses drive a mower through the weeds,
And there, a field rat, startled, squealing bleeds.
His belly close to ground. I see the blade.
Blood-stained, continue cutting weeds and shade.

Toomer, Jean. "Reapers." CANE. New York: University Place Press, 1951