

# ***What Happens to a Dream Deferred?***

A U.S. History Simulation by Jared Kushida (KIPP King Collegiate High School)

## **A Dream Deferred, by Langston Hughes**

What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore-- And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over-- like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.  
Or does it explode?

### ***Essential Questions:***

- 1. What rights do we all deserve?*
- 2. How can we get them?*
- 3. What happens to a dream deferred?*

## ***Intro***

***Free at last!*** President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the victory of the North in the Civil War, and the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments were beginning to undo the centuries of mistreatment of African Americans. The progress was promising and the dream of civil rights was becoming a reality. But after the smoke from the Civil War cleared, it was up to President Lincoln to put the union back together again. A major priority of his plan of **Reconstruction** was the issue of civil rights for freed slaves. What rights were they entitled to? This seemingly obvious question was not soon answered, as Lincoln was assassinated and President Johnson opposed any meaningful changes to help African Americans. Numerous civil rights acts went unsigned and the memories of the **Dred Scott** decision and the **Black Codes** seemed thicker than ever. Momentum for anti-racist legislation was slowing down, and white racism was still festering. The rise of the **Ku Klux Klan**, the increase in **lynchings**, and the passing of legalized segregation in the form of **Jim Crow Laws** made the civil rights movement seem a distant memory.

But sometimes, *it is darkest before the dawn...* Millions of African-Americans left the South and the chains of the plantation for a new beginning in Northern cities. New York's Harlem boomed with new African-American migrants looking to redefine what it meant to be black in America. Harlem became the center of the African American cultural universe, producing some of the greatest thinkers, musicians, artists, and leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, as the **Harlem Renaissance** offered hope in scholarship and expression, African-Americans everywhere looked for political leadership and a solution to the fears and problems they faced everyday. New civil rights leaders **Booker T. Washington**, **W.E.B. Du Bois**, and **Marcus Garvey** stepped up and emerged to carry the torch that had burned out after the failure of reconstruction. The three major leaders had very different opinions however, on how best to pursue civil rights for African-Americans...

## ***Objective***

In an effort to build strength in numbers for a Harlem-based movement for civil rights, Du Bois, Washington, and Garvey have called for a town hall meeting in order to educate Harlem's finest leaders on how they plan to gain civil rights. At this meeting, they will be attempting to persuade the most famous and popular cultural leaders of the Harlem Renaissance to join their movement for civil rights. These cultural icons include: Activist and writer **Ida B. Wells**, poet extraordinaire **Langston Hughes**, writer and intellectual **Zora Neale Hurston**, writer and journalist **Jessie Fauset**, writer **Claude McKay**,

artists and sculptor **Meta Warrick Fuller**, dancer and ex-soldier **Bill “Bojangles” Robinson**, and musician **Bessie Smith**.

You along with a partner or two will represent the perspective of one of these leaders. If you are a Big 3 leader, you will need to persuade everyone to join you by delivering a passionate, educational speech on your philosophy and methods for gaining civil rights. If you are a Harlem leader, you will be delivering a speech of introduction, questioning the Big 3 leaders, ultimately deciding who you will side with, and why. Your major focus will be to ask challenging and probing questions to the major leaders to try and learn as much about them as possible.

***Student Responsibilities: All students will...***

1. Carefully complete full character analyses of the three major civil rights leaders of early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
2. Read about, and become experts on 6-7 Harlem Renaissance leaders of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
3. Prepare an arsenal of seminar questions and responses to ask on Simulation Day.
4. Take a challenging quiz on the early civil rights movement with a focus on these leaders.
5. Write an original, powerful, passionate, convincing 1-2 page speech from your character’s perspective. This speech explains who you are, why you should be listened to, what your philosophy of gaining civil rights is, and why in light of your past and present it is the best philosophy to follow.
6. Engage in a simulation where students are in character and speeches are delivered with excellent speaking skills. This is followed by a seminar discussion in which Garvey, Washington, and Du Bois try to convince the Harlem Renaissance leaders to join their movement for civil rights. During the simulation, all students ask probing and challenging questions to other characters, while thoughtfully and accurately responding to questions directed at their own character.



# What Happens to a Dream Deferred?

## Speech and Simulation Performance

1. **Speech Content** – Speech accurately represented the group’s perspective. Speech was dynamic, creative, engaging, and unique to the cause.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

2. **Speech Quality** – The speech was delivered confidently and smoothly. Speech was not read directly off notes, but rather the speaker glanced at them sparingly. Volume, posture, and energy were all good. Rhetorical devices were used well.

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3. **Costume** – Your speech deliverer came to the simulation dressed in accurate costume.

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Seminar Criteria	Name:	Name:	Name:
<b>Questions asked</b> - Ask questions to other groups and challenge them to think critically and react appropriately. Give others something to think about, and make it interesting. If you never ask a question, this will be a zero.	Score: ____/8	Score: ____/8	Score: ____/8
<b>Responses to questions</b> - When a question was posed to your group, you stepped up to answer it quickly, confidently, and accurately.			

<p>You did not state the obvious, and you went into depth and detail in your responses. You used evidence in support. If you never respond to a question, this will be a zero.</p>	<p>Score: ____/8</p>	<p>Score: ____/8</p>	<p>Score: ____/8</p>
<p><b>Behavior</b> - Great listening skills, positive nonverbals (never putting head on desk, etc), and no side conversations. Following directions, never yelling over others, and helping to contribute a respectful seminar discussion.</p>	<p>Score: ____/5</p>	<p>Score: ____/5</p>	<p>Score: ____/5</p>
<p><b>Perspective</b> – Always stay in character and make accurate statements that are justifiable. Say nothing, get a zero here.</p>	<p>Score: ____/8</p>	<p>Score: ____/8</p>	<p>Score: ____/8</p>
<p><b>Totals:</b></p>	<p>Score: ____/47</p>	<p>Score: ____/47</p>	<p>Score: ____/47</p>
<p><b>Comments:</b></p>			

