

Process Paper

Having always been interested in social movements famous for bold marches and demonstrations, it fascinated us how the Harlem Renaissance advocated for change but voiced its demands through lively art. The Harlem Renaissance was a movement that began around 1925 when African Americans expressed their feelings through numerous types of art. To narrow down the topic, we settled with the visual arts of the Harlem Renaissance. Though slightly less renowned than the rest of the movement, it broke color barriers as much as the other parts of the Harlem Renaissance. Black artists showed their talent and racial pride through their artwork, gaining control over the misrepresented African-American identity in the process.

After confirming our topic, we pored over shelves of books and scoured the Internet for sources. We read W. E. B. DuBois's well-known book *The Souls of Black Folk*. It was mentioned frequently in our research as a defining political and philosophical book of the Harlem Renaissance. An invaluable addition to our research, it focused mainly on the hardships blacks had to overcome to eventually rise to triumph. Another helpful primary source was an article written by journalist Levi Hubert, titled "The Whites Invade Harlem," showing whites' perspective and disdain of the Harlem Renaissance, claiming that African Americans were unable to produce meaningful artwork.

We each gathered our notes and wrote a research paper. After watching tutorials and getting a feel for NHD WebCentral, we created a website plan on paper. Countless revisions later, we began to structure our site. After setting up a rough draft, we perfected our website, making the whole project flow more and choosing the best pictures and quotes for each page. Because our topic is so visual,

we were able to find an abundance of photographs, especially of paintings. Once we polished the website, we submitted it. After regionals, then states, we read the judges' notes and fixed our website accordingly.

During the early 20th century, racism was a prevalent barrier for blacks looking to emerge in American society. Whites dominated the fine arts due to the common belief that African Americans were too unintelligent and unsophisticated to have their own culture, traditions, and input in the art world. Consequently, the enormous potential of African-American culture and identity was blocked by racial discrimination and white supremacy for centuries. The Harlem Renaissance, a flowering of black artistry and independence beginning in the early 1920s, broke down this barrier and allowed black artists to properly represent their identity and culture in mainstream America after centuries of degrading stereotypes. Though this movement was centered in Harlem, the phenomenon spread across the country. Through the visual arts, influential black artists, along with black musicians, actors, and writers, rose to fame with masterpieces that often addressed African-American history and hardship. Though the Harlem Renaissance waned due to the Great Depression, the movement showed the world the immense capabilities of blacks, inspiring later generations.