

Classroom activities

1. Read a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar and then sing (or listen to a recording) of a song based on the same poem. Ask students to reflect on what the poem may mean for them today from their perspective and point of view and how setting the poem to music changes what they get out of it.
2. Discuss what it might have been like to be an African-American in the arts in the early to mid twentieth century. What challenges might these artists have faced? What were they able to accomplish? How does that compare to now?
3. Watch clips from *Carmen Jones* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. How are these depictions of African-Americans different? How does that relate to the source material (a French opera and an American play)?