

# The Experience of African Americans: Nationally and in New Jersey.

In this lesson, students will read about the history of the African American experience. Students will have an opportunity to learn and reflect on how the increasing power and success of African Americans resulted in a backlash from white society, leading to the creation of Jim Crow laws, racial violence, and racism. Students will examine specific historical examples from national and local contexts.

All resources are available on the Why the Humanities Matter website:

<https://blogs.stockton.edu/humanities/session-descriptions/>

1. Assign the first resource for your students to read:  
*Overview of the African-American Experience*
2. As they read, have them take notes about the different eras and influences of the African American experience.
3. Ask them to take notice of the increasing power and success of African Americans and negative reactions from white Americans:
  - o Ending of Reconstruction and the creation of Jim Crow laws, racial violence, discrimination, and racism
4. Also ask them to take note of the influence African Americans have had on American culture.

## Successes

- Strong cultural identity
- Worship
- Music
- Contributions to the economy and infrastructure
- By 1870, African Americans had sent 22 representatives to Congress
- The Great Migration
- Contributions to unions

## African Americans and New Jersey

1. Assign the next two resources:
  - *African American Contributions to the History of New Jersey: Some New Jerseyans of Note*
  - *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: a short history.*
2. Students should read the introduction to resource 2. Ask them to contrast the information with their prior perception of how New Jersey treated African Americans.
3. Assign students one specific African American from resource 1 and ask them to present information to the class.
4. For further research: ask students to search resource 2 and find an additional New Jerseyan and report the information to the class.
  - a. Paul Robeson
  - b. William Still
  - c. Jacob Lawrence
  - d. Jessie Redmon Fauset
  - e. Florence Spearing Randolph
  - f. William James "Count" Basie
  - g. Larry Doby
  - h. Thomas Mundy Peterson