Great Migration Case Study: The Fight Against Jim Crow in Grand Rapids, MI

Place in the Curriculum: This is my final lesson in my Great Migration mini unit. The previous day, my students work on the Jim Crow Moves North Group DBQ. That lesson is focused on discrimination faced by participants of the Great Migration across the North. This lesson provides context for the Black experience in a mid-sized northern city and compares different responses to Jim Crow from the Black community. Background on the strategies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois is helpful. My students discuss these men in the previous unit in this lesson.
Objectives: - Students will contextualize the experience of Black residents in a northern city after the Civil War - Students will analyze the extent that Black citizens' lives improved after migrating to Grand Rapids - Students will compare different responses to Jim Crow from the Black community of Grand Rapids
AP Skills: 1.A Identify a historical concept, development, or process. 1.B Explain a historical concept, development, or process. 4.B Explain how a specific historical development or process is situated within a broader historical context. 6.A Make a historically defensible claim. 6.B Support an argument using specific and relevant evidence.
Notes: Teachers are encouraged to adapt these materials as they see fit. This lesson starts and ends with whole-class learning and provides opportunities for independent student work throughout the middle sections. However, the whole experience can be implemented in a student self-directed format, if preferred. Students can click through the slidedeck and use it to follow the handout. We encourage you to copy, revise, condense, add to any of these materials to fit your objectives and student needs.

6 mins	**Teacher led Introduction** The teacher should guide students through the introduction in the slides presentation. Students should follow along on the handout. - Review the lesson's "central questions" (slide 2). - Review the context and show photographs of Comstock Row and James Craig (slides 3-9). - Students should complete questions #1-3 of the handout.
2 mins	**Teacher led Slides:** Move on to the Great Migration, slide #10 and question #4 of the handout, I give the students about 60 seconds to brainstorm and then have them do a quick think-pair-share with someone seated next to them. After reviewing life for Black residents in the South following the Civil War (slide 11), read the Michigan Civil Rights Act of 1885 (slide 12). Ask students why this might be significant for potential migrants (question #5 of handout).
2 mins	Read the Richard Wright poem, "Warmth of Other Suns" (slide 13). Ask for students to list the emotions described by the author. I give them another short brainstorm time and a chance to respond to question #6 of the handout and share out responses.

	- Sample answers: Fear, hope, etc.
15 mins	**Student Independent Work**: Students will be exploring primary sources and local anecdotes to understand more about how the city of Grand Rapids treated new black residents who had moved to the City following the Civil War. - Use slides 14-15 to introduce the purpose of the independent work section. - Make the slides presentation available to the students. They should start on slide 16 with the map of Grand Rapids. As they take a "mini tour" of the city, they will click through points on the map to learn about different aspects of the Black experience in Grand Rapids. The map will lead them up through slide 28. I recommend prompting students to click on every link and then choose what they consider to be the 3 strongest examples for question #7 of their handout. You can adapt this to your time constraints as you see fit.
5 mins	**Come back together as a large group**. Facilitate a class discussion around what they learned/discovered on their "mini tour." - Allow time for students to share and then have them fill out the chart for question #8 in their handout. *At this point, I make sure to reference the stop on the tour at Park Congregational Church and visits to the city by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois (slide 28). This will help to set up the next part of the lesson.
8 mins	**Teacher led Slides -** *Based on your own judgment, you may want students to keep their computers open to follow along since they already have slides pulled up, or you can have them shut their computers and focus attention to the front of the classroom as you lead them.* **Transition to Part 4: The Black Community's Response to Discrimination** We will now continue as a whole group and move on to explore several different responses to the discrimination that the Black community experienced in the city, starting with the Grand Rapids Study Club, then taking an in-depth look at the work of the Grand Rapids chapter of the NAACP. - Read through slides 30-33 on the Grand Rapids Study Club. Allow students to record their thoughts and responses to questions #9-11 on the handout. For Question #11 and Slide 33, give the students a chance to pause. Break up your own talking while allowing them to read the quotes off the screen silently. - Introduce the work of the Grand Rapids chapter of the NAACP (slide 34) and present the slides that feature Rosa Parks and Thurgood Marshall (slides 35-36). - Use slide 37 to explain that the same famous strategies the NAACP employed in the South in the 1950's were actually employed decades earlier in Grand Rapids. Give them a brief introduction to Emmett Bolden and Oliver M. Green, emphasizing the parallels with well-known figures Rosa Parks and Thurgood Marshall. Students should continue completing questions (#12 and 13 on their handout)
9 mins	**Student Independent Work**:

	Explain to students that they are about to delve into the details of NAACP direct action in Grand Rapids (this will be very similar to the NAACP/Rosa Parks strategy that they are already familiar with!). Give a brief intro to Ms. Hallie Q. Brown and set them loose for 9 (ish) more minutes of independ work. In this time, they should read from slides #38-50 and complete questions #14-18. Students should start working on the slides with Hallie Q. Brown and then work through the 4 part strategy employed by Oliver M. Green to attack Jim Crow in Grand Rapids. *As instructed in slide #49: Remind students to stop and predict their answer to #18 (how do you think the GR Press responded to the historic decision of the Bolden case?), before you move on to the next slide!!* ***Since the wrap up discussion is so important, I want to prioritize that! If students are not going to be able to complete all of slides #38-50 & questions #14-18, tell them about 7 or 8 minutes into this individual work to skip ahead to slides #48-50 and give them a minute to read the conclusion of the case and the GR Press response (there was no GR Press response). This will allow all students to have key discussion time at the end.***
10 mins	**Teacher led Processing Discussion** **The processing discussion is KEY! No matter how far the students are with questions #14-18, with 10 minutes left in class, transition to the conclusion discussion.** OR - If you choose, you can have your students choose a few of the questions to write their responses to these questions for homework. I prefer to *not have them write anything down* for these questions and instead have a whole group discussion to end class. Don't forget to emphasize this key point from historian Dr. Randal Jelks: “This small community’s collective agency reflected the determination of African Americans nationwide to be free from the corrosive effects of racial segregation.” Yes, the focus of this lesson was on one mid-sized midwestern city, but it is representative of a microcosm of the Black responses to Jim Crow outside of the South in the period between the world wars.