

Teaching Guide:

Great Migration in North Carolina

Note for Teachers:

This is the Teaching Guide for the Great Migration in North Carolina Case Study:
museumofthenewsouth.org/schools/great-migration-in-north-carolina/

Sections:

Background Information

Activity Instructions and Rubrics

Student Objectives

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

Background Information

In the twentieth century, millions of African Americans from the rural South moved to cities in the North, Midwest, and West. Historians call this movement the Great Migration. This movement occurred in waves between 1910 and 1970. Before 1910, ninety percent of African Americans in the United States lived in the South. By the 1970s, only about fifty percent of U.S. African Americans lived there. The Great Migration in North Carolina began in the earliest wave, called the First Great Migration, between 1910 and 1940.

Many factors contributed to the Great Migration. After the Civil War and during the Reconstruction Era from 1865 to 1877, formerly enslaved African Americans experienced freedom along with the challenges of creating new lives. The federal government provided some support for this transition. The passage of 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution ended slavery, defined who was a valid citizen of the United States, and allowed almost all men to vote and run for office. Many African American men won political offices at the local, state, and even federal level. Southern states also focused on public schooling for African Americans through the Freedmen's Bureau, which provided new educational opportunities for formerly enslaved people.

Requirements for Southern states to reenter the Union during the administration of President Andrew Johnson were lenient. Each state had to repeal its ordinances of secession and ratify the 13th Amendment. However, despite that leniency and the federal government's efforts to accommodate millions of African Americans, the struggle between maintaining a pre-war way of life in the Southern states and following new laws giving African Americans more equality caused friction between Black and white communities.

There was an almost immediate backlash to the advancements of African Americans with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist terror group. The KKK targeted Black people, organizations, and politicians. The KKK and other groups encouraged and intimidated white voters to their side and Black voters away from the polls. Southern states began using Black codes, which regulated what Black people could or could not do, from having particular jobs to living in certain areas. As the federal government became less involved in the South, Southern states were able to legally enforce racial segregation, which restricted African American lives and disenfranchised African American voters through such means as poll taxes and literacy tests. By the early 1900s, many African Americans desired an escape from these oppressive laws and the constant threat of violence intended to keep them in line.

Because of segregation, African Americans also had limited economic opportunities in most Southern places, particularly rural ones. The dominant farming system in the South was tenant farming and sharecropping, which involved poor farmers using and living on the land of

wealthier landowners. Sharecroppers paid those landowners either with money or crops that they grew. They were often exploited by landowners who claimed large debts for tools and supplies. They could also not control issues with the crops like pests and unusual weather that would leave them in debt. The desire to pursue better work and leave behind the toil of sharecropping motivated many to migrate.

Cities in the North and Midwest were booming with new economic opportunities in the early 1900s. Particularly during World Wars I and II, the demand for industrial labor was high and jobs plentiful because so many men were fighting wars abroad. Many of these employers recruited in the South through newspaper ads. Others heard about opportunities through word of mouth and photographs of thriving Black communities in other places. The promise of better jobs, higher wages, and improved living conditions motivated many to buy a one-way train ticket to leave the agricultural South for the industrialized North. But was life better after migrating?

Activity Instructions and Rubrics

Letter

Students will write a letter from the perspective of an African American who lives in a Northern city and a response from the perspective of an African American in the South. Letter should include the following:

- Date ranging from 1910-1940 (First Great Migration)
- Proper letter format beginning with a greeting (salutation) such as Dear _____, and ending with a closing phrase such as Sincerely, _____
- At least 6-8 sentences for each letter explaining life in person's location, including reasons as to why they do or do not like where they live

Exemplar:

New York City, New York, June 1920

Dear Sally,

I am here in New York City! I cannot get over all the tall buildings they have and the amount of people in one place. I sure do miss seeing you everyday though. I hope you will come to live in New York City with me. I found a good paying job working in a hotel as a maid. It is hard work, but it is good pay. I live in an apartment with two other roommates who are from Georgia. I hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,
June

Modification: Reduce the sentence requirements for students if needed.

Extension: Increase the sentence requirement and have students create an image or drawing to accompany their letter.

Suitcases

Students will fill up two suitcases with images. One will represent what African Americans brought with them from the South during the Great Migration and the other will represent what they would bring if they moved to a different place. They should choose at least five images for their personal suitcase and write a 2-3 sentence explanation for each image, which could include how the image represents where they are from or their culture and customs and how it would impact them in their new environment. For the Great Migration suitcase, they should choose at least five images that represent items African Americans would have packed and

write a 2-3 sentence for each item about how it represents where they were from and their lives and cultures and how the items would impact them in their new environment. Remember, for historical accuracy the dates of the entire Great Migration were 1910 to 1970. The items can be physical, such as a blanket, or an idea or concept, like Southern hospitality. An optional rubric is included.

Exemplar:



- The glass of sweet tea represents North Carolina for me because I think the South has the best sweet tea. When I travel up North, it does not taste the same and sometimes even comes out hot! Having sweet tea from the South would make me happy up North because I would have my favorite drink done just right.
- The books represent who I am because I love to read. Bringing books about the South will help me to remember my home and may be interesting to Northerners who have not traveled to the South. It would also allow me to learn about the differences in the North and the South.
- The pig and barbeque represents my love for North Carolina BBQ, which is essentially pulled pork. I know in many Northern states, a BBQ represents different kinds of meat such as hamburgers and hotdogs. I like hamburgers and hotdogs, but NC BBQ is my favorite and I would definitely love to have it when I move to the North.
- The beach represents my love for North Carolina and South Carolina beaches. I love the sound of the ocean and the number of beaches we have in the South. I know the North has beaches as well and I would be excited to compare how their beaches are with the NC beaches.
- The people shaking hands represent Southern hospitality. I love how friendly people can be in the South, even if they do not know who you are. I would love to do that in my new home in the North because I think it is important to always be nice.

Modification: Shorten the sentence requirements and/or reduce the number of images required for students if needed.

Extension: Have students write a 2-3 paragraph essay using one of the following prompts:

1. How were personal items you picked to take with you similar to items someone would have packed during the Great Migration? How were your personal items different? When comparing and contrasting items from different time periods, what did you find surprising or interesting? Why?
2. Describe a time that you either made a life-changing move or imagine that you had to make a life-changing move and describe it. What made it life-changing? What scared, worried, and/or excited (or what would scare, worry, and/or excite) you about the move? Why?

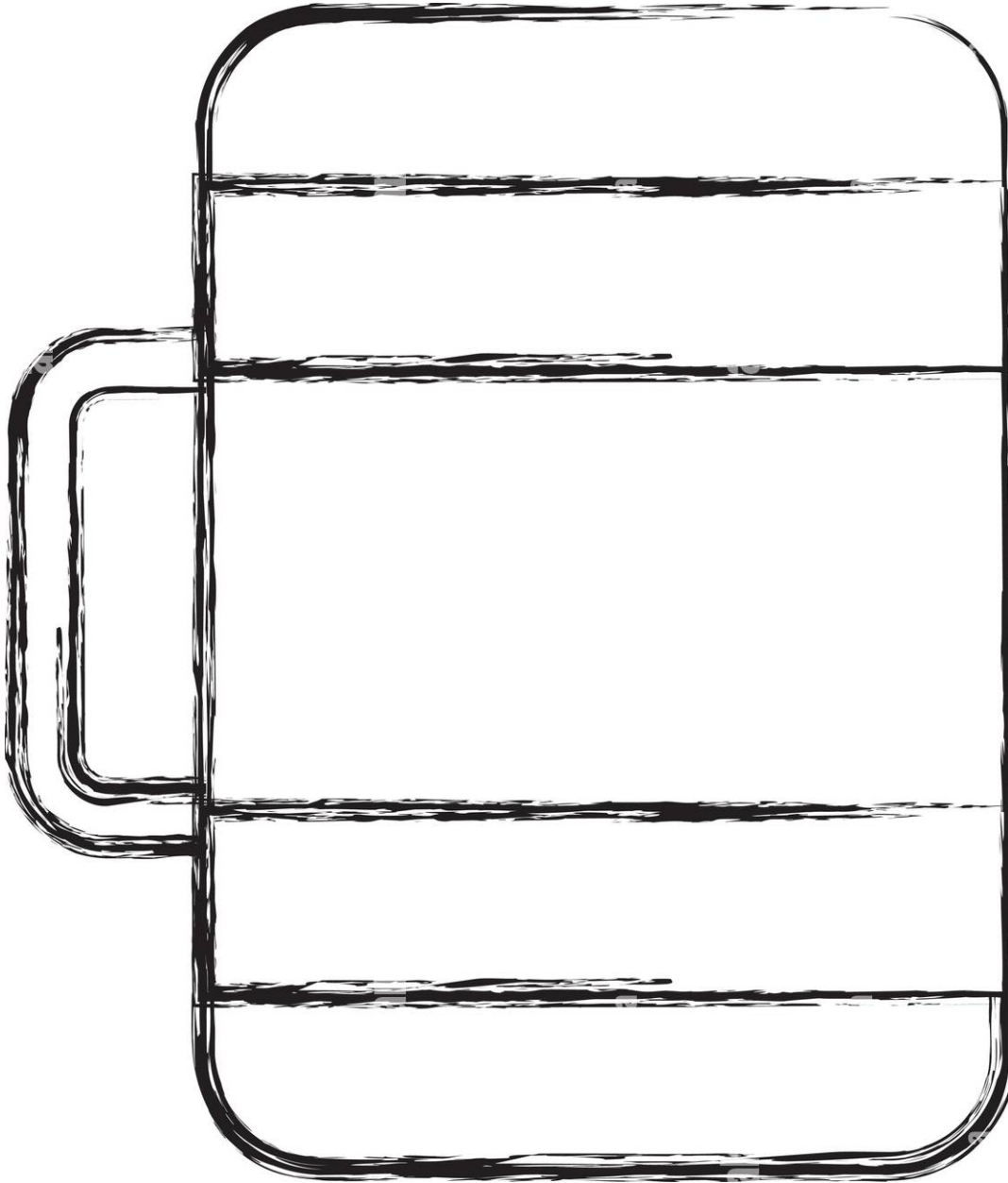


Image ID: JB2018
www.alamy.com

alamy

Great Migration in North Carolina: Suitcase Rubric

Topic	Level 3 (25 Points)	Level 2 (15 Points)	Level 1 (5 Points)	Total Points
Images	Student has at least 5 images for each suitcase	Student has at least 3 images for each suitcase	Student has at least one for each suitcase	
Image Representation	Student has at least 5 images that are relevant to the student and African Americans during The Great Migration	Student has at least 3 images that are relevant to the student and African Americans during The Great Migration	Student has at least one image that is relevant to the student and African Americans during the Great Migration	
Sentence Explanation	Student accurately explains the images and their relevance to themselves or to the Great Migration	Student somewhat explains the images and their relevance to themselves and the Great Migration	Student provides little explanation and/or struggles to explain the images	
Sentence Structure	Student has at least 2 sentences for each image	Student has at least one sentence for each image	Student has some sentences but not at least one for each image	

Essay

Have students write 2-3 paragraphs about the effects the Great Migration had on North Carolina's economy and communities. They may use the case study sources and their own additional research. Any material taken directly or put into their own words from sources should be cited. An optional rubric is included.

Modification: Shorten sentence and/or paragraph requirements for students if needed or have them explain the effects of the Great Migration on North Carolina through images.

Extension: As an add on to their original essay, have students compare and contrast the effects of the Great Migration to another event that had a large impact on North Carolina's economy, such as the Great Depression, Civil War, etc.

Middle School Informative Writing Rubric

Element	Needs Improvement 1	Fair 2	Strong 3	Excellent 4
Topic	Topic is unclear.	Introduces the topic but the focus is unclear.	Introduces the topic.	Clearly introduces the topic.
Evidence	Little to no facts, concrete details, quotations, or examples included.	Attempts to develop the topic with facts, concrete details, and examples but some of the information is not relevant.	Develops the topic with facts, concrete details, quotations, and examples.	Thoroughly develops the topic with relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, and examples.
Explanation & Analysis	Little to no explanation or analysis of the information presented.	Explanation and analysis attempt to discuss the information but is unclear or lacks depth.	Clear explanation and analysis that discusses most of the information presented.	Clear and concise explanation and analysis that thoroughly discusses the information presented.
Conclusion	Abrupt ending. No concluding statement.	Ends with a concluding statement that does not clearly relate to the topic.	Ends with a concluding statement about the topic.	Effectively ends with a strong concluding statement.
Formal Tone and Style	Informal language present throughout.	Writing contains some informal elements (e.g., contractions).	Writing attempts to maintain a formal and objective tone.	Writing maintains a formal and objective tone throughout.
Organization & Transitions	Little to no attempt at organization.	Attempts to organize ideas, but transitional language is needed.	Organizes ideas in a logical way. Transitional language used.	Strong organization and transitional language used skillfully throughout.
Mechanics (Spelling & Grammar)	Distracting mechanical errors throughout.	Mechanical errors distract at times.	A couple errors present, but they do not distract.	Mechanics reflect careful editing.

Student Objectives

1. Students will analyze a variety of types of primary sources to help them understand push/pull factors during the Great Migration.
2. Students will be able to explain how moving out of the South presented opportunities and challenges for African Americans.
3. Students will be able to explain the impact the Great Migration had on the development of North Carolina and the United States.

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

- 8.H.2.1** Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts on the development of the US.
- 8.H.3.1** Explain how migration and immigration contributed to the development of NC and the US from colonization to contemporary times.
- 8.H.3.3** Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political, and social change in the US.
- 8.H.3.4** Compare historical and contemporary issues to understand continuity and change in the development of NC and the US.
- 8.G.1.1** Explain how location and place have presented opportunities and challenges for the movement of people, goods, and ideas in NC and the US.