

A Raisin in the Sun

1. Question & Research Task

Adapted from Adler, Thomas P. "Hansberry, Lorraine." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2013. Web. 18 July 2013.

Lorraine Hansberry was the first African American playwright to achieve critical and popular success on Broadway. She became famous for her first completed play, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), a drama about the attempt of a black family to escape from the 1950s Chicago ghetto. This play provides a study of the search for identity by African American men and women, both within the family and within a racially prejudiced American society.

Before the [Civil Rights movement](#) and legal desegregation, neighborhoods like Chicago's Southside were [segregated](#) by laws like Racial Restrictive Covenants. In this lesson, you will explore the social conditions that affect the characters you will be reading about in *A Raisin in the Sun*.

See the image to the right and click [here](#) to review the Sociological Approach to Literary Criticism.

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How will the application of the sociological approach help you to understand the racial tensions in Chicago in the 1950s?

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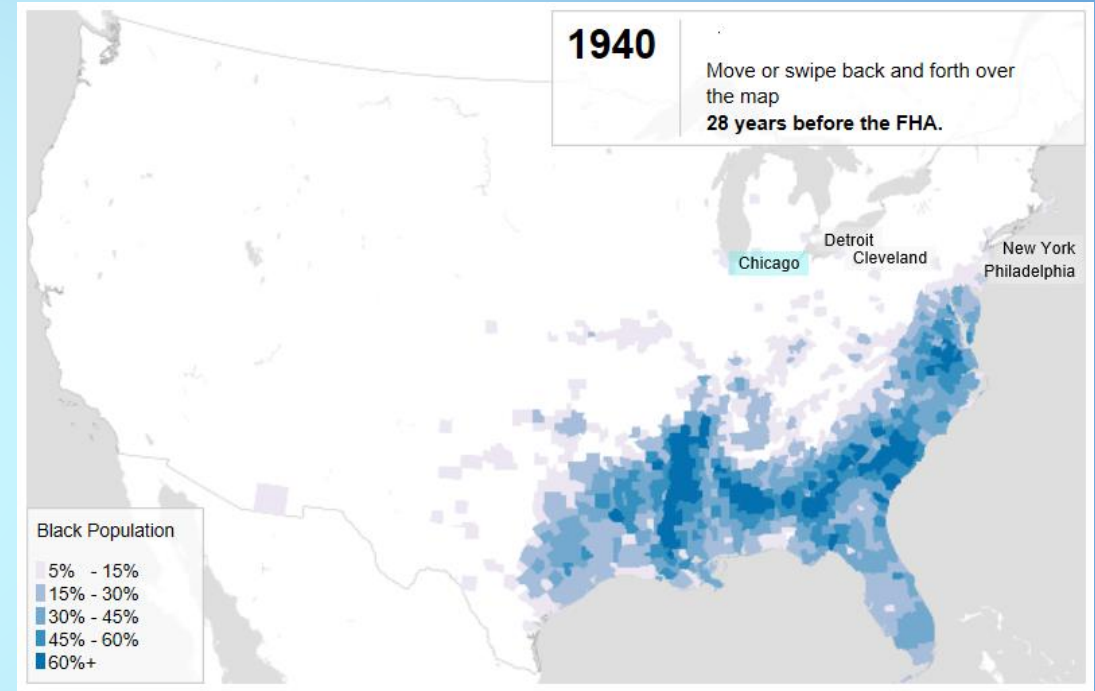
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Click the image above to launch an interactive showing population shifts.

Image Source: NHGIS

2. Information Sources

You will use these resources to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3. When required, see your teacher/librarian for login information.

- [Racial Restrictive Covenants Map](#)
- [Hansberry's Victory over Restrictive Covenants](#)
- [Housing Segregation in Chicago in the 1950's](#)
- [Early Civil Rights Movement](#)
- [Racial Politics of 1950s Photo Story](#) *Use the arrows to scroll through the photos at the top.
- **The 1950s:** [Intro](#) | [Culture](#) | [Economy](#) | [Society](#)
- [1950's Family Life](#)
- [The 1950's](#)
- [How Americans Spent Their Money in the 1950s](#)
- **American Decades, 1050-1959 (GALE eBook)**
 - [Black Americans and Society](#)
 - [Women's Roles](#) | [Youth](#)
 - [Social Theory of the 1950s](#)



In 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke about “Two Americas”. Many believe it continues in our time. Click the image to read his text.

Image Source: SIRS Discoverer, by subscription

3. Student Activity

Use these [Cornell Notes](#) to take notes on the Information Sources on Slide 2. You will be using your notes to complete the Assessment Activity on Slide 4.



Photo of a Chicago Segregation Protest around 1953.

Image Source: SIRS by subscription

4. Assessment Activity

How will the application of the sociological approach help you to understand the racial tensions in Chicago in the 1950s?

Now you will create a [one-pager](#) in order to answer the essential question:

How will the application of the sociological approach help you to understand the racial tensions in Chicago in the 1950s?

Be sure to use information from your Cornell Notes and carefully read the Scoring Guide at the bottom of the one-pager so that you know how you will be assessed.



Image Source: Library of Congress

5. Enrichment Activities

SLIDE NAVIGATION

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Image Source: Library of Congress

Extend your knowledge by reviewing these resources. After you have read *A Raisin in the Sun*, these resources can be used to help you apply the historical and biographical approaches to literary criticism.

- [Chicago Black Renaissance](#)
- [History of Fair Housing](#)
- [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Chicago Crusade \(video/article\)](#)
- [Lorraine Hansberry: Her Chicago Law Story](#)

6. Teacher Resources

Learning Standards Alignment

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

SLIDE NAVIGATION

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Grade 7 GT English Language Arts, Unit 3

Time Frame: Two 45-minute class periods

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in BCPS Digital Content found in the [Apps Portal](#). Refer to [Digital Content Snapshot/Support pages](#) as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Provide students with login information as needed to authenticate BCPS Digital Content. Login information is available on the **BCPS Digital Content** page found via the [Apps Portal](#)
- To speed up lesson pacing, one class period could be used for research and note-taking and then the One-Pager could be assigned for homework.
- The overview of the Sociological Approach (linked to image on Slide 1) could be read for homework prior to beginning the Slam Dunk.
- Inform students that some of the primary documents include vocabulary that would not be considered politically correct today. However, it is used in a historical context and reflects vocabulary used in the 1950's.
- Literary Criticism Approaches are addressed in the Grade 9 ELA Slam Dunk for House on Mango Street.
- After completing the reading of the novel, students can revisit this Slam Dunk to apply the historical and biographical approaches using the linked graphic organizers. The resources on Enrichment Slide 5 could be used with these approaches.

Last updated: July 2022 Report broken links to BCPS Library Media Programs using the [Library Media Broken Links Form](#).

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