



BLACKS IN PARIS: AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE IN EUROPE

Say What?

Studying history can mean learning a lot of new vocabulary. Find five words in this book that you've never heard before. Use a dictionary to find out what they mean. Then write the meanings in your own words, and use each word in a sentence.





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You Are There

Chapter One describes Langston Hughes's first trip to Paris. Imagine you were also visiting Paris for the first time in the 1920s. Write a letter home describing your experience to your friends. What places in Paris would you most want to visit?





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Take a Stand

This book discusses how black soldiers fought for the United States in World War I and World War II even though they were discriminated against in their home country. Millions of African Americans volunteered to fight. Do you think this was a good decision? Or do you think African Americans should have refused to fight? Why or why not?





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Another View

This book talks about writers who traveled to Paris throughout the 1900s. As you know, every source is different. Ask a librarian or another adult to help you find another source about this topic. Write a short essay comparing and contrasting the new source's point of view with that of this book's authors. What is the point of view of each source? How are they similar and why? How are they different and why?





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Why Do I Care?

Jazz is a uniquely African American style of music, but it is not only important to African Americans. Jazz has influenced musical styles around the world, from rock 'n' roll to pop. How do you think jazz relates to you? What do you think the world might be like if jazz music didn't exist?





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Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the service of African Americans in World War I and World War II did not help black people achieve equal rights at home?
- What is the legacy of African Americans in Paris? How do you think you could observe this legacy if you visited Paris today?





- Many French people held stereotypes of African American performers. How did performers such as Josephine Baker use these stereotypes to their advantage? Do you think these stereotypes still exist in France today?
- How do you think the history of African Americans in Paris could be taught in schools and in communities today? Why do you think it is important for people to learn this history?
- Some African Americans who lived in Paris went back to the United States to support the American civil rights movement. How do you think their perspectives on civil rights were shaped by their experiences in Paris?

