

The Harlem Renaissance DIGITAL ESCAPE ROOM



COLLABORATIVE BACKGROUND BUILDING





Four core activities introduce students to The Great Migration, the Cotton Club and Prohibition, famous figures, and works of the Harlem Renaissance



Not ready to do this yet? You can [head back to the main page](#)

Identify the person. (first names are fine)

Who heard bias from their own family?

Type your answer here.



When I was 15, I wanted to leave North Carolina for the North. My daddy was injured in a railroad accident and couldn't work no more and I heard about all these jobs in New York and Philadelphia. I had two friends go before me and I was scared because they turned up dead. Dead. And lots of girls were dying back then – they came North thinking they were getting a job cleaning house or cooking... but those were lies, and conditions were bad. And so when I came to Philadelphia, I started attending church here at Tindley Temple. It had 10,000 members back then, and Reverend Tindley would give services three times a day. There was always someone looking out for you there, and you could stay out of trouble.

–Louise Smith

Who heard bias from their own family?

Type your answer here.

Task #1: Students read journal entries based on "Goin' North," a series of oral histories of The Great Migration. Students use what they've learned to find clues for the Secret Code.



A defining feature of the 1920's is Prohibition, 'the Noble Experiment'. This law made any manufacture and sale of alcohol illegal. It aimed to decrease crime and poverty, which temperance groups (people who supported Prohibition) believed were on the rise due to the increase in immigrant and African American populations. However, **the law had other effects**. Gangsters got rich by selling bootleg alcohol. People didn't stop drinking—they simply found clever ways of hiding the illegal alcohol from police, like putting in their boots or pant legs. Neighborhoods found themselves with a new type of bar, a speakeasy, where patrons would have to give a password before entering. Also, men and women could go to the **same** bars and clubs for the first time. **More than ever, people wanted to go to nightclubs and concert halls and have fun.**



Task #2: Students complete a Close Reading about The Cotton Club and Prohibition that focuses on opposing viewpoints. They answer questions and get a hint for the Secret Code.




Identify which statements in this list are true, and write down the letter that corresponds with each true statement. These letters will spell out the name of the secret poem.

- R.** Only people born in the United States participated in the Harlem Renaissance.
- A.** Marcus Garvey believed that black and white people should separate.
- B.** Alain Leroy Locke has been called the "Father of the Harlem Renaissance."

TeachNouvelle All Titles

Langston Hughes











































Langston Hughes
Poet · Playwright · Activist
(1902-1967)

One of the most famous figures associated with the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes wrote about the middle class and advocated for a "distinct Negro art." He also innovated jazz poetry, poetry that has 'jazz-like' rhythms. Two of his most famous poems are "Harlem" ("What happens to a dream deferred?") and "The Negro Speaks of Rivers."

S. Josephine Baker got her start later in life at the Cotton Club.
E. Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington collaborated on several projects.

Task #3: Students read Biography Cards of several famous figures. They answer questions based on these cards and uncover more hints to the Secret Poem.

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Task #4 - Students use all of the correct answers from previous tasks to decode the Secret Poem. After the game, you can have them analyze this poem.

Decoding the Secret Poem

Escape Room

Teacher's Guide

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This activity is perfect for introducing your Harlem Renaissance unit. It requires students to complete four tasks and present "keys" to prove completion. To win, all **keys** will be correct. The four tasks are: 1. Great Migration, Prohibition & the Cotton Club, key figures of the Harlem Renaissance poem. You can extend the secret poem into a longer analysis activity.

This resource also includes two levels of the Prohibition & the Cotton Club article. You can use the article to answer the questions with either version. This article is also available in Spanish.

Task 1: Great Migration - Students complete 10 questions to solve the secret poem.

Task 2: Close Reading Article - Students complete 10 questions to solve the secret poem.

Task 3: Prohibition & the Cotton Club - Students complete 10 questions to solve the secret poem.

Includes a full Teacher's Guide to help you prepare this game with confidence!
Everything is laid out step-by-step.

Sources & Resources

THE GREAT MIGRATION

"The Great Migration" from Hist

"Go North" by West Chester
Philadelphians about the Great
#1 are inspired by this project

"In Motion: The African-Ame
Black Culture

PROHIBITION

"Speakeasies, Flappers, a
Riverwalk Jazz Program

"The Cotton Club of Harle
The Harlem Renaissance

"Prohibition" from Histor

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

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THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER Research & Discussion

Consider the following questions. Develop and support your answers with evidence from your Escape Room experience as well as further research.

THE GREAT MIGRATION

What are some reasons Black people

What kind of reception did they receive

Research another person who moved. What were their reasons for moving? What s

PROHIBITION

What were the social and economic effects

In what ways is Prohibition still in effect today

Research the connection between race,

"The Day-Breakers"

What does the speaker argue in the poem "The Day-Breakers"? Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not? Write your answer in a well-developed paragraph on the back of this paper.

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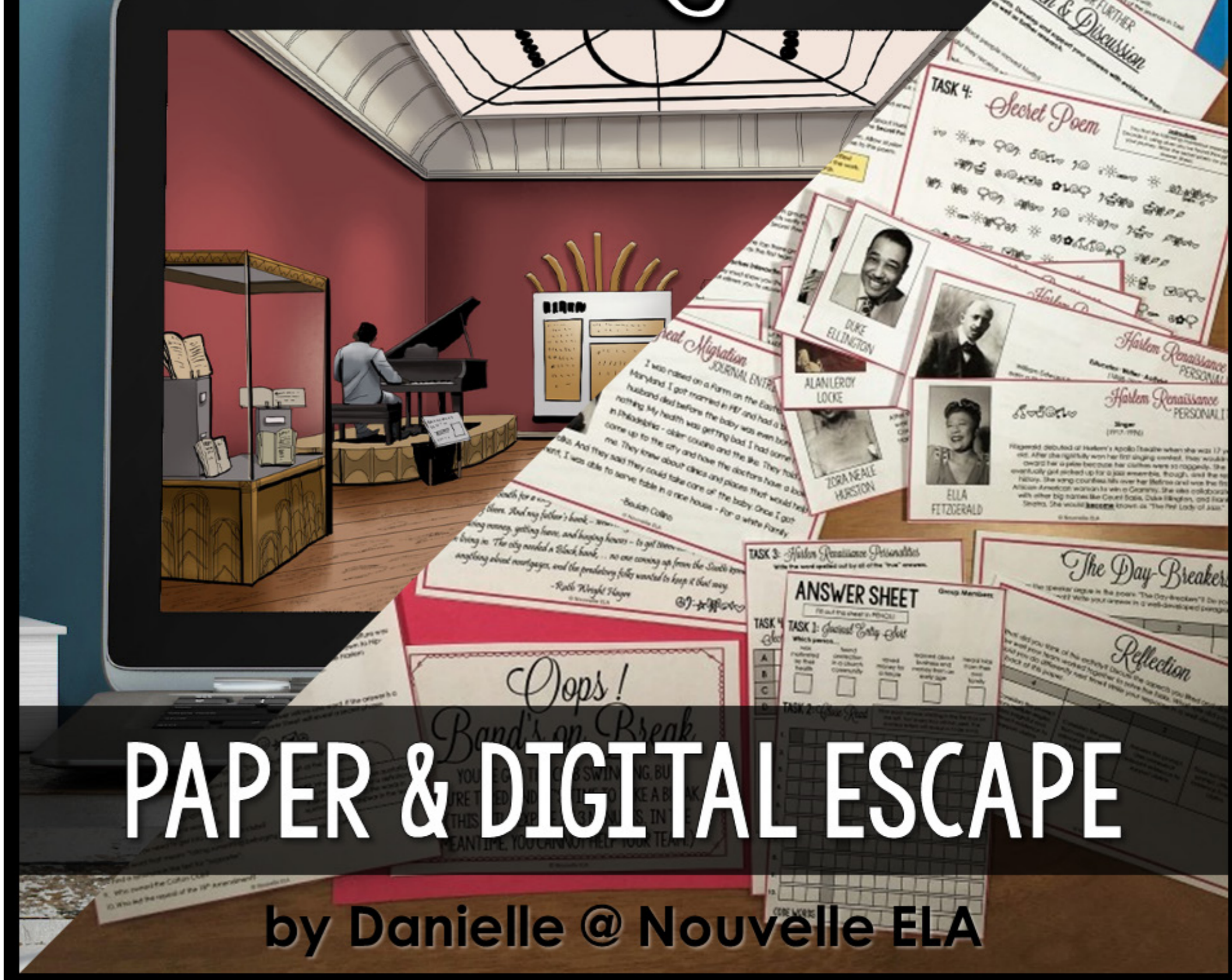
Notes:

What did you think of this activity? Discuss how well your team worked together. How would you do differently next time? Write your response on the back of this paper.

Reflection

Includes an optional analysis, reflection, and questions for further research.

Harlem Renaissance



PAPER & DIGITAL ESCAPE

by Danielle @ Nouvelle ELA



Harlem Renaissance ESCAPE ROOM

by Danielle @ Nouvelle ELA

(Paper Version also available)

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will this take students?

I generally estimate that on-level ninth graders can complete the digital version in 60 minutes and the paper version in 75 minutes. However, since this is a reading-heavy game, this could vary widely. It will also take longer if your students haven't done many escape rooms before. Some teachers like to split this game over two 45-minute class periods.

Can students work in groups?

Yes! If students are sharing a device, I recommend no more than 3 per group. Tasks #1-3 can be completed in any order. Groups can also choose a leader who will write down clues and keep their team on track. On many remote connectivity platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, you can create breakout rooms so that you can jump in and help teams who need it.

How can I adapt this for younger students?

It is a very reading-heavy game. For 5th-7th graders, you'll definitely want to spread the game out over two lessons. You can also decide to give hints. You know your students best, so I recommend you test the game first. You can also figure out if you want to give students hints at certain points.

Do I have to test the game first?

I strongly recommend you do. This will help you anticipate what your students may find tricky.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I make this more challenging?

At the end of Game Day, have students wind down by completing the included Written Analysis of the Secret Poem and the reflection on the escape room experience. Then, have students do more research using the included sources about people and topics they learned about during the game.

Can I add physical locks?

This game does not require physical locks. However, you can easily add physical locks to any of my paper escape rooms. [Here's a video showing you how.](#)

I'd like to make my own games. Can you teach me how?

Yes! Here are some resources I've created to help you make (and sell!) games for any text or topic:

[ELA Escape Room \(editable for any text\)](#)

[ELA Escape Room Template Kit](#)

If you have any other questions, you can email me at nouvelle.ela@gmail.com

Happy Teaching!