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STUDENT HANDOUT

RED LEVEL
GO DEEPER

Migration by Numbers

Grades 5–8 • Math

ADMIT ONE

NAME _____

DATE _____

CLASS _____

DATA

Black population in Northern cities (US Census)

CITY	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Chicago	44,103	109,458	233,903	277,731	492,265	812,637
New York	91,709	152,467	327,706	458,444	747,608	1,087,931
Detroit	5,741	40,838	120,066	149,119	300,506	482,223

ACTIVITY 1

Full percentage change analysis — three cities

DECADE	CHICAGO % CHANGE	NEW YORK % CHANGE	DETROIT % CHANGE
1910–1920			
1920–1930			
1930–1940			
1940–1950			
1950–1960			
Total 1910–1960			

ACTIVITY 2

Proportional vs absolute growth

Which city grew fastest proportionally (% change)? _____

Which city added the most people in absolute numbers? _____

Why do proportional and absolute growth tell different stories? When would each measure be more useful?

ACTIVITY 3

Statistical summary paragraph

Write a paragraph (5–7 sentences) summarizing what the data reveals about the Great Migration. Include: the city with the greatest proportional growth, the decade with the greatest absolute growth across all three cities, any anomalies you notice (e.g. the 1930s slowdown), and one limitation of using this data alone to understand the migration.

ACTIVITY 4

Rate of change — extension

If Chicago's Black population grew from 44,103 in 1910 to 812,637 in 1960, calculate the average annual rate of change in people per year over the full 50-year period:

Now calculate the average rate for just the 1910–1920 decade (per year). Compare the two rates — what does this tell you about when migration was most intense?

CRITICAL REFLECTION

A statistician and a historian might look at this same data and draw very different conclusions. The statistician sees growth rates and patterns. The historian asks: what caused each spike? What does the 1930s slowdown reveal? Choose one decade and write: what would each perspective say about it?

MINI MUSEUM CONNECTION

The Great Migration Map follows the journey north, to Chicago and to Harlem. Using your data: if 6 million people migrated total, and New York received roughly 1 million by 1960, what percentage of total migrants went to New York? What assumptions are you making in that calculation?

Research extension: find data on the total US Black population in 1910 and 1960. What percentage of all Black Americans had moved north by 1960? How does this change your understanding of the scale of the migration?

minimuseumproject.org/exhibitions/harlem-renaissance