



THE 45 MINUTES

5 min
HOOK

10 min
VOCABULARIO

25 min
ACTIVITY

5 min
CLOSING

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

What students will understand

Students will build Spanish vocabulary related to the Harlem Renaissance — art, music, culture, history, and human rights — while exploring the shared experience of the African diaspora across the Americas. They will practice vocabulary in context, discuss themes of cultural identity and expression in Spanish, and make connections between the Harlem Renaissance and Spanish-speaking Caribbean cultures (Afro-Cuban music, the Negrismo movement in Puerto Rico and Cuba).

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- **ACTFL Interpretive** — Interpret written and oral language on familiar and some unfamiliar topics with developing comprehension
- **ACTFL Interpersonal** — Participate in conversations on familiar topics using a variety of strategies; express and support opinions
- **ACTFL Presentational** — Present information and ideas on familiar topics with accuracy and detail appropriate to proficiency level

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Differentiated handouts (Green / Yellow / Red) — one per student
- Optional: audio clip of Afro-Cuban jazz (Machito and his Afro-Cubans, Tito Puente) to open the connection between Harlem jazz and Latin music
- Optional: short reading in Spanish about Nicolás Guillén (Cuban poet influenced by the Harlem Renaissance) for Red-level extension

HOOK · 5 MINUTES

La música conecta

“Antes de hablar del Renacimiento de Harlem, quiero que escuchen esto.” [Play 30 seconds of Afro-Cuban jazz or salsa.]

“¿Reconocen algo? Esta música tiene raíces cubanas — y comparte raíces africanas con el jazz de Harlem. Los músicos afrocubanos y los músicos afroamericanos de Harlem estaban creando algo nuevo al mismo tiempo, inspirados por las mismas tradiciones africanas. Hoy vamos a explorar estas conexiones.”

DIRECT INSTRUCTION · 10 MINUTES

Vocabulario clave

Introduce and practice the core vocabulary set with visual and contextual support. Use the images on handouts: *la silueta, el renacimiento, la dignidad, la migración, el jazz, la pintura, el poeta / la poeta, la identidad, la libertad, la resistencia, la herencia*. For each word: model pronunciation, ask students to use it in a sentence, then use it in the context of the Harlem Renaissance.

ACTIVITY · 25 MINUTES

GREEN LEVEL MORE SUPPORT

Vocabulary matching and fill-in with word bank (all words with English glosses provided). Describe Aaron Douglas's *Song of the Towers* in 3 Spanish sentences using the vocabulary. Answer 3 comprehension questions in Spanish.

YELLOW LEVEL GRADE LEVEL

Vocabulary in context (sentences and short paragraph). Write a 5-sentence description of the Harlem Renaissance in Spanish. Respond in Spanish to: *¿Por qué era importante el Renacimiento de Harlem?* Connect to a Spanish-speaking cultural figure or movement.

RED LEVEL GO DEEPER

Read a short paragraph in Spanish about Nicolás Guillén (Cuban Negrismo poet). Analyze: what connections can you find between Guillén's poetry and the Harlem Renaissance? Write a comparative paragraph in Spanish. Discussion question: *¿Puede el arte cambiar la sociedad?*

CLOSING · 5 MINUTES

"El Renacimiento de Harlem no fue sólo un movimiento americano — fue parte de un despertar cultural global de la diáspora africana. En Cuba, en Puerto Rico, en Brasil — artistas y poetas estaban haciendo lo mismo: afirmando la belleza y la dignidad de la cultura africana. Estas conversaciones cruzaron fronteras y océanos."

MINI MUSEUM CONNECTION

Option 1 — Visit the exhibition: Bring your class to experience the phonograph, the Great Migration Map, the Jazz Lab, and more. Ask your librarian to arrange a visit. **Option 2 — Virtual visit:**

minimuseumproject.org/exhibitions/harlem-renaissance

VOCABULARIO PRINCIPAL — TEACHER REFERENCE

SPANISH	ENGLISH	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
el renacimiento	the renaissance / rebirth	<i>El Renacimiento de Harlem fue un movimiento cultural.</i>
la silueta	the silhouette	<i>Aaron Douglas pintaba siluetas sin rasgos individuales.</i>
la dignidad	dignity	<i>Los artistas afirmaban la dignidad de la vida negra.</i>
la migración	migration	<i>La Gran Migración transformó las ciudades del norte.</i>
la herencia	heritage / inheritance	<i>El jazz celebraba la herencia africana.</i>
la identidad	identity	<i>Los poetas exploraban su identidad cultural.</i>
la resistencia	resistance	<i>El arte fue una forma de resistencia.</i>
la libertad	freedom / liberty	<i>La música expresaba el deseo de libertad.</i>
el orgullo	pride	<i>Había un nuevo orgullo en la cultura negra.</i>
afrocubano/a	Afro-Cuban	<i>La música afrocubana tenía raíces africanas similares.</i>

CARIBBEAN CONNECTION — TEACHER NOTES

Negrismo (Cuba/Puerto Rico, 1920s–30s): A literary movement parallel to the Harlem Renaissance, led by poets like Nicolás Guillén (Cuba) and Luis Palés Matos (Puerto Rico). Both movements celebrated African heritage, used African-influenced rhythms in poetry, and asserted the dignity of Afro-Caribbean identity. Guillén and Langston Hughes knew each other and corresponded — the movements were genuinely interconnected.

Afro-Cuban music: Rooted in the same African traditions as jazz (call-and-response, polyrhythm, improvisation), Afro-Cuban music developed simultaneously with Harlem jazz. By the 1940s, musicians like Dizzy Gillespie were fusing both traditions into what became known as Afro-Cuban jazz or Cubop.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- **Social Studies:** The African diaspora connects the Harlem Renaissance to Caribbean, Central American, and South American cultural movements — a global context for what students might think of as a “local” American story
- **Music:** The jazz/salsa/cumbia connection can be traced musically — same African rhythmic roots, different cultural expressions
- **Religion:** *La dignidad humana* is a key term in Catholic Social Teaching in Spanish — the vocabulary connects directly to CST Principle 1

Paintings to project (in copyright, so not printed; each title links to the museum's page): [Aspects of Negro Life: Song of the Towers \(1934\)](#)