

Name _____

Date _____

Harlem Renaissance - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. After slavery ended, millions of African-Americans moved from the rural south to large cities in the north. They were seeking better economic opportunities and an escape from racial terrorism and segregation. This movement was called the Great Migration. As demand for industrial labor increased, many African-Americans took factory jobs in cities like Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. With these jobs came a new black middle class.

During the Great Migration, many African-Americans settled in Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City. At the time, most landlords refused to rent to black people. But when an economic downturn in the 1890s led to high vacancy rates in the area, property owners started selling and renting to African-Americans. By 1930, the population of Harlem was more than 70% black.

Why did millions of African-Americans relocate during the Great Migration?

A. because the south had more factories than the north



B.

because job opportunities were better in the north than in the south

According to the passage, African-Americans moving north “were seeking better economic opportunities” and “took factory jobs in cities like Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York.”

C. because large northern cities were more dangerous than the rural south

D. because racial terrorism happened more frequently in the north than it did in the south

2. New political ideas that focused on the African-American experience greatly impacted the Harlem Renaissance. W.E.B. Du Bois was a sociologist who developed the theory of double consciousness. Du Bois described this as the split that many African-Americans felt between their black identity and their American identity. Even though most African-Americans had been born and raised in the US, the discrimination they faced made many feel like outcasts. Double consciousness was later explored by many black artists and writers. Du Bois was an early supporter of the Harlem Renaissance. However, he was also concerned that negative depictions of African-American life through art or literature could feed the racist views of whites.

Another influential figure was an activist named Marcus Garvey. He wanted African-Americans to take pride in their heritage and encouraged them to return to their ancestral homelands in Africa. Garvey's ideas were very controversial. Most African-Americans considered the US their home and did not want to move to an unfamiliar place. But the black pride that Garvey promoted remained an important part of the Harlem Renaissance.

Which statement would W.E.B. Du Bois most likely agree with?

- A. African-Americans should have avoided moving north.
- B. The Harlem Renaissance was bad for African-Americans.
- C. Many African-Americans felt conflicted about being both black and American.
- D. Black artists and writers should always have depicted their communities honestly, even if those depictions were negative.

According to the passage, W.E.B. Du Bois' theory of double consciousness described "the split that many African-Americans felt between their black identity and their American identity. Even though most African-Americans had been born and raised in the US, the discrimination they faced made many feel like outcasts."

3. When the Harlem Renaissance began, just after World War I, the economy was very strong. People were more liberal and spent more time and money on the arts and entertainment. Though racism was still widespread, art, music and literature created by African-Americans became popular among black and white communities alike. For the very first time in the US, black artists and intellectuals were able to flourish. Many made a living from their work and were acknowledged for their contributions.

Some say the Harlem Renaissance officially began with the 1921 musical *Shuffle Along*. The acclaimed show was written, produced and performed entirely by African-Americans. Many of the actors were veterans of the Vaudeville scene. *Shuffle Along* brought jazz to Broadway and kickstarted the careers of many of its stars. It also introduced white New Yorkers to black music and culture. The show was so popular that it was said to have caused traffic jams every night outside the theater.

The Harlem Renaissance was bolstered by

- A. the decreased popularity of musicals compared to dramas.
- B. a decrease in racism toward African-Americans.
- C. the end of segregation in the north.
- ☒ D. a strong post-war economy.

According to the passage, "When the Harlem Renaissance began, just after World War I, the economy was very strong." Because of this people "spent more time and money on the arts and entertainment," and many black artists of the Harlem Renaissance were able to make "a living from their work and were acknowledged for their contributions."

4. Literature was at the forefront of the Harlem Renaissance. Writers centered their work around black lives and experiences. Many works included commentary on race and racism. Langston Hughes, one of the most famous authors of the Harlem Renaissance, is best known for his poetry about working class African-American life. Music also informed Hughes' work. He wrote many poems influenced by the distinct styles of jazz and blues. Novelist Zora Neale Hurston found inspiration in African-American folklore and often used black vernacular in her dialogue. Others, like Claude McKay, stuck to more traditional literary styles like sonnets. McKay wrote extensively about life in Jamaica, which he contrasted with the pain and difficulty of being black in the United States.

There was not one single style or political ideal behind the Harlem Renaissance. The movement encompassed African-American expression of all kinds. As a result, many black authors rejected the pressures to appeal to white audiences.

Which of the following is **not** true about literature during the Harlem Renaissance?



- A.** All authors wrote in the same style.
According to the passage, "There was not one single style or political ideal behind the Harlem Renaissance. The movement encompassed African-American expression of all kinds."
- B.** Some works were influenced by black music and folklore.
- C.** Writers frequently discussed race and racism in their works.
- D.** Literature depicted many different African-American experiences.

5. Lots of musicians got their start during the Harlem Renaissance. Many people also refer to this era as the Jazz Age. Jazz and blues, invented by African-Americans in the south, became hugely popular during the Harlem Renaissance. These genres were new and exciting. Musicians like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong drew huge audiences at popular clubs every night of the week. Singers like Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday brought unique sounds to the music scene. Smith's strong, deep voice impressed both live audiences and radio listeners. She became known as the Empress of Blues. Holiday was a legendary improviser, and what she lacked in formal training, she made up for in her distinct, rough vocals and emotional performances.

Despite their popularity, black musicians were still treated poorly throughout the country. Many performed in clubs or theaters for exclusively white audiences. Entertainers who toured in the south were forced to stay in segregated hotels and eat at segregated restaurants. They did not receive any of the privileges that white celebrities enjoyed.

During the Harlem Renaissance,

- A. black entertainers no longer faced discrimination.
- C. white Americans stopped listening to jazz and blues.



B.

black performers pioneered new genres of music.

According to the passage, "jazz and blues, invented by African-Americans in the south, became hugely popular during the Harlem Renaissance. These genres were new and exciting."

- D. the south desegregated all schools and public places.