

Overview of the Colored Conventions

Women of Consequence

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This lesson explores the purpose of the Colored Conventions that occurred in the 19th century and asks students to interpret the historical significance of the organization through various shapes, actions, energies, and tempos of movement sequences.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

Grade 11 | 90 minutes

Common Core Standards	National Core Arts Standards	NCSS Themes
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	ANCHOR STANDARD #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.	V. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS: give examples of and explain group and institutional influences such as religious beliefs, laws, and peer pressure, on people, events, and elements of culture.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.	ANCHOR STANDARD #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.	VI. POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE recognize and give examples of the tensions between the wants and needs of individuals and groups, and concepts such as fairness, equity, and justice.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a deep understanding of what the Colored Conventions were and why they were created.
2. Encourage students to be comfortable with expressing concepts through dance.

3. Teach students how to interpret movement, and create movement sequences that communicate what they want to share.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. [Resource 1.1 - 1872 National Convention of Colored Citizens Held in New Orleans, Louisiana](#)
2. [Resource 1.2 - Address of the Colored Men's Border State Convention](#)
3. [Handout 1.1 A Call to the Colored Citizens of Maine and New Hampshire](#)
4. [Handout 1.2](#)
5. [Handout 1.3](#)

ACTIVITY

History Warm-Up/Think-Pair-Share

- The teacher will project **Resource 1.1 (1872 National Convention of Colored Citizens Held in New Orleans, Louisiana)** on the board and tell students to examine it closely.
- Individually, students are to write a 2-3 sentence explanation of what they believe is happening in the image based on both the visual and the captions.
- Students will then have the opportunity to share their ideas with a peer.
- The teacher will then ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the entire class.
- After a few students have shared their ideas, the teacher will explain that the image depicts the 1872 National Convention of Colored Citizens in New Orleans, LA. This was one of many Colored Conventions held in the 19th century.

Lesson Focus/Activation of Prior Knowledge

- The teacher will ask the students why they think Black people in the United States would be organizing and holding conventions at this moment in history.
 - After a few students have volunteered some ideas, the teacher will tell the class: "From 1830 until the 1890s, already free and once captive Black people came together in state and national conventions to strategize about how they might achieve... justice." (from

<http://coloredconventions.org/introduction-to-movement>)

- The teacher will tell the class that over the next several days, they will be looking into the numerous ways in which Black women were involved in the Colored Conventions - as educators, activists, and artists.

Movement Warm-Up and Mini-Lesson

- The teacher will tell students that, in the spirit of how important the arts were to this movement, they will be combining historical inquiry with artistic expression and creative movement.
- The teacher will instruct students to get up from their desks and find space in the room to move around.
- The teacher will lead students through a brief movement warm-up, explaining the following elements of dance:
 - Shape (curvy/straight, symmetrical/asymmetrical, centered/off-center)
 - Action (locomotor/non-locomotor)
- The teacher will write the definitions of each element on the board for the students to refer to throughout the lesson.
- Students may be seated after the movement warm-up.

Integrated Arts Activity #1

- The teacher will tell students that before they can explore the lives and contributions of these women to the Colored Conventions, they must gain an understanding of the Colored Conventions Movement first.
- Give each student a copy of **Handout 1.1 (A Call to the Colored Citizens of Maine and New Hampshire)**.
- Tell students that as they read the excerpt individually, they are to identify (highlight/underline) the purpose(s)/aim(s) of the Convention.
- They are also to summarize each paragraph of the excerpt in their own words in the space provided on **Handout 1.1**. The final question on **Handout 1.1** asks students to identify the top 3 or 4 purposes/aims.
- After students have finished reading, highlighting, and summarizing, students will be put in groups of 3 or 4. They will then share their findings on **Handout 1.1** with their peers.

- The teacher should monitor groups to ensure that students have interpreted the excerpt correctly and offer help when needed.
- Once all group members have shared their ideas, students will be told to choose one purpose/aim that stood out to them as a group.
- Students will then have five minutes to choreograph a short creative movement sequence depicting the purpose/aim they picked. This movement sequence should include 3 different shapes. Their goal is to make the purpose/aim clear to their classmates when they perform it, so peers can guess the intention after each performance. Each group should be prepared to briefly explain why they chose the shapes they did.
 - This is also a good time to discuss appropriate audience behavior and expectations.
- Groups will then perform their movement sequences. At the end of each group's performance, students are to guess what purpose/aim the group was depicting through movement. Groups will then explain their rationale behind their choreography.

History Mini-Lesson

- After all performances are completed, the teacher will verbally summarize the class's findings that were presented through movement.
- The teacher will tell the class that the major purposes/aims of the Colored Conventions Movement was to secure educational, legal, and labor justice for Black Americans.
- The teacher will then deliver a short lecture on the history of the Colored Conventions (see <http://coloredconventions.org/introduction-to-movement> for major points).
- Students are to take Cornell notes of the lecture on **Handout 1.2** and complete their summary for homework.

Integrated Arts Activity #2 / Assessment

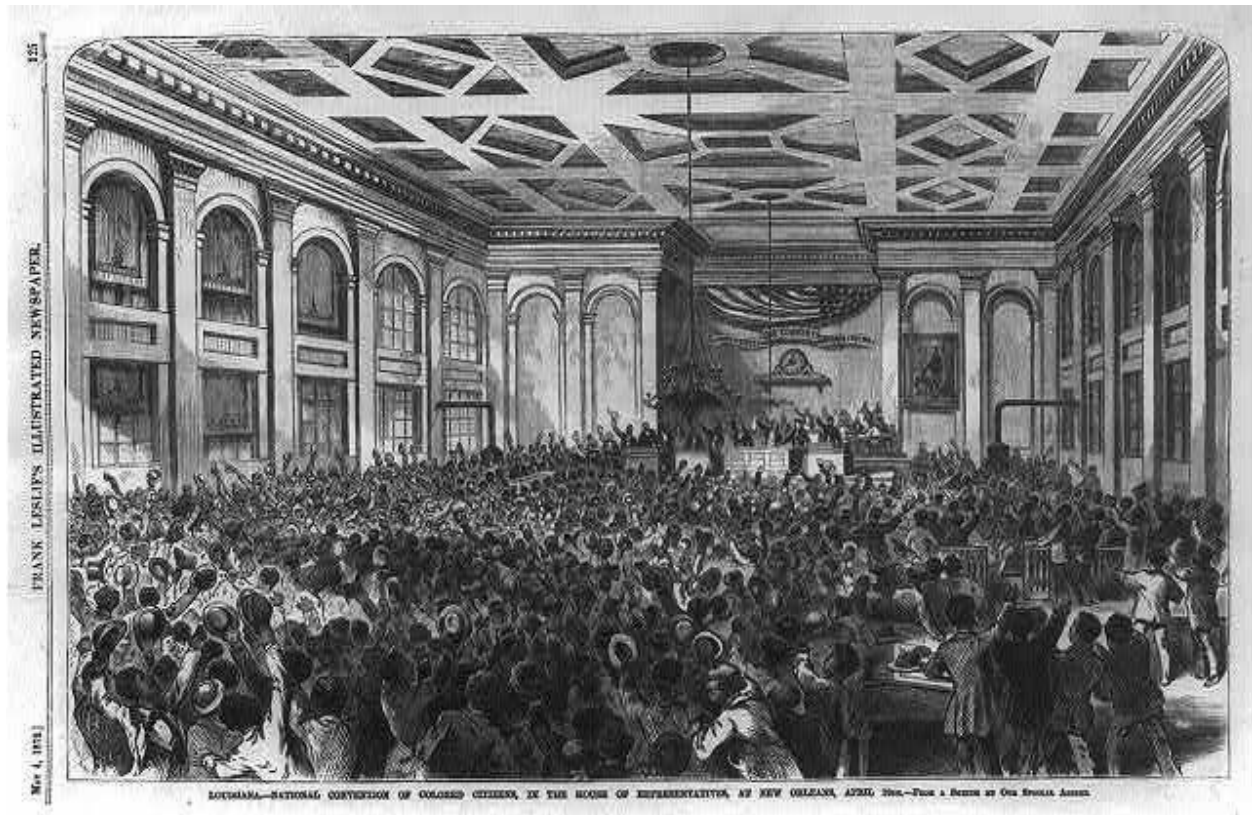
- Students will be put in different groups of 3 or 4.
- Each group will receive an excerpt from **Resource 1.2 (Address of the Colored Men's Border State Convention)**.

- Groups will have 15 minutes to plan a creative movement sequence depicting their assigned portion of **Resource 1.2**. The group's assigned excerpt should be read aloud as the students are performing. The sequence should include:
 - 4 shapes
 - 1 locomotor movement and 1 non-locomotor movement
- In addition to choreography, students should be prepared to describe their group's choices in shape and action.
- After the allotted planning time has ended, each group will perform their creative movement sequence for the class.
- As each group is performing, students will keep a journal of their responses/interpretation of the performances they saw (**Handout 1.3**).
- Once all groups have performed, all students will write about their own group's artistic decisions on **Handout 1.3**.
- The teacher will assess each student on their performance and written response using the rubric provided in **Resource 1.3**.

Exit Ticket

- Before leaving, students are to respond to the following questions:
 - What did you learn about the Colored Conventions Movement?
 - How did you feel about using movement to learn about this topic? What did you like about this approach? What didn't you like about it?

RESOURCE 1.1



Description: Image of the National Convention of Colored Citizens, in the house of Representatives, at New Orleans, April 10th

Source: Library of Congress

Date: 1872

HANDOUT 1.1

Directions: Below are excerpts from “A Call to the Colored Citizens of Maine and New Hampshire,” a primary source on the Colored Conventions. As you read, highlight or underline the parts of the text that reflect purposes or aims for the Colored Conventions Movement. You should also summarize each paragraph in the space provided in 1-2 sentences.

Primary Source Excerpt	1-2 Sentence Summary
<p>1. Our own, our native land demands, our posterity, our enslaved brethren, and our own interests for time and eternity, demand an immediate effort for our moral and intellectual elevation. The consideration and adoption of the means to these great ends we ought no longer to defer...</p>	
<p>2. A trodden down and peeled people ought not to rest. Oppression is not heaven-inherited by any one. Such a condition is not, cannot be consistent with our duties as moral beings. The largest liberty is essential to humanity. The means for our full emancipation are within our reach; and we cannot longer refuse to use them, and be innocent.</p>	
<p>3. Next to our personal relations to our Heavenly Father, the subject of Education should interest us. We cannot measure its importance, but we feel it in all our relations to man. And the power it has given to others, it offers to us. Through the goodness of God, knowledge is held to our lips, and we may drink even to that which is life eternal. It has no prejudices, but whosoever will, may come.</p>	
<p>4. We are identified with the poor, suffering, bleeding slave of the South. He is our brother. The claims of kin are added to the claims of humanity upon us, to labor directly and heartily with the philanthropist, to undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free. The condition of our enslaved brethren greatly affects our own. We cannot expect the full enjoyment of all our rights while the influence of slavery is felt in our land.</p>	

5. We would also ask your attention to the important subject of the future occupations of our offspring. The employment naturally affects the disposition and mind as well as the condition. Some corrupt the principles; others contract the mind; while others leave its powers stagnant. If such employments do not degrade, they cannot have an elevating tendency. Our aims require that their minds and hearts be guarded from all evil influences; that their occupations be favorable to the development and cultivation of the mind, and consistent with sound principles; such as generate enlarged views and generous sentiments; and such as will render them as useful as their talents will permit. Such desirable employments there are, and some of them are open to us.

FINAL QUESTION: Based on the excerpts you read, what were the major 3 or 4 aims of the Colored Conventions Movement? Write your answer in complete sentences in the box below.

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HANDOUT 1.2

Directions: During the short lecture on the history of the Colored Conventions, take (see <http://coloredconventions.org/introduction-to-movement> for major points).

<p><u>Key Points</u></p>	<p><u>Details</u></p>
<p><u>Summary</u></p>	

RESOURCE 1.2

Address of the Colored Men's Border State Convention to the People of the United States, Baltimore, August 5-6, 1868

THE undersigned, appointed a Committee by the Colored Men's Border State Convention , held in Baltimore, August 5 and 6, 1868, would, in their behalf, respectfully and in few words address you. That Convention was composed of delegates from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, Missouri, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and was called to consider the political condition of the colored men of the Border States, and of the colored people generally. That Convention adopted an address to the colored voters of the Southern States, and passed resolutions looking to the political and educational improvement of their brethren. To us was committed the duty of addressing a few considerations to the voters of the country. We do this by addressing their Representatives. This duty we purposely deferred until after the election for President, and now confidently entreat you to “hear us for our cause.”

Section A

New York, of the Middle States, gives a vote to each colored man who possesses \$250 worth of real estate; Ohio, of the Western States, notwithstanding her “Visible Admixture Bill,” allows a vote to men having fifty-one hundredths of so-called “white blood” in their veins, or—who are more than half white... [in many other states] colored men, as such, are not, by law, permitted to vote at all... So that by the just action of Congress and of individual States, three-fourths of the colored people of the nation are represented.

Section B

We respectfully but earnestly ask you to make the government action consistent with itself, and invest the unrepresented—one quarter—only of the colored men of the nation—with the elective franchise, and thus forever remove this source of contention from halls of legislation... it is the duty of Congress to affirm the same by law, and to declare that colored men being citizens, shall vote, at least, at all the elections for National and State officers... But we ask Congress to do something. If nothing better give us a Constitutional Amendment to secure the right of suffrage—and give it to us now.

Section C

This is due to us from our citizenship. But it is also due on account of our devotion to our common country, contributing, as we have done, to its wealth in peace, and standing for its defence in time of war. We have helped to fight the country's battles; we have stood shoulder to shoulder with white men, in every contest from 1776 to 1865... Will the nation cast off us who have been its defenders?

Section D

We ask no premium to be put on color, and no denial because of it. We ask simple justice . And we ask that this justice be awarded not merely without delay, but so awarded that individual States may not, like Pennsylvania and North Carolina of old, in obedience to blind prejudice, deprive us of rights which we may be exercising “conscientiously,” and with “good results to society.”

Section E

Our brief plea is before you. We have no reproaches for the past, but believing as we do, that the business of Government is to protect the rights of even the humblest of its citizens, we ask, while Amnesty is awarded to the men who rose in arms against the Nation, that justice be awarded to us, its friends, who fought under the nation's flag, and helped maintain its honor.

HANDOUT 1.3

Directions: As you watch each group's performance, record your observations on shape, energy, action, and tempo. In your own group's space, describe your own rationale for the decisions you used for each element.

Group A	Shape:	Energy:
	Action:	Tempo:
Group B	Shape:	Energy:
	Action:	Tempo:
Group C	Shape:	Energy:
	Action:	Tempo:
Group D	Shape:	Energy:
	Action:	Tempo:
Group E	Shape:	Energy:
	Action:	Tempo:

RESOURCE 1.3

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Execution/Use of Elements	Did not implement any required elements.	Several elements were missing in the movement sequence.	One element was missing in the movement sequence.	All required elements were present in the movement sequence (4 shapes, 1 locomotor movement, 1 non-locomotor movement)
Attitude/Participation	Student did not demonstrate a positive attitude and/or did not actively participate in the group.	Student sometimes maintained a positive attitude and actively participated in the group.	Student mostly maintained a positive attitude and actively participated in the group.	Student maintained a positive attitude and was an active participant in the group at all times.
Audience Behavior	Student did not demonstrate appropriate behavior as an audience member.	Student sometimes demonstrated appropriate behavior as an audience member.	Student usually demonstrated appropriate behavior as an audience member.	Student demonstrated appropriate behavior as an audience member at all times.
Response to Others	Journal is incomplete and/or includes irrelevant observations about peers' choices in elements of dance/movement.	Journal reflects mostly superficial thinking about peers' choices in elements of dance/movement.	Journal reflects some critical thinking about peers' choices in elements of dance/movement.	Journal reflects consistent critical thinking about peers' choices in elements of dance/movement.
Reflection	Journal is incomplete and/or reflects irrelevant reflections on own group's choices in elements of dance/movement. Student is not successful in connecting historical and artistic content.	Journal reflects mostly superficial thinking about own group's choices in elements of dance/movement. Student is able to connect historical and artistic content with some errors.	Journal reflects some critical thinking about own group's choices in elements of dance/movement. Student can successfully connect historical and artistic content.	Journal reflects critical and thinking about own group's choices in elements of dance/movement. Student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the connection between historical and artistic content.