

The Educators

Women of Consequence

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This lesson focuses on why education was so important to the Colored Conventions Movement, reflects on the contributions of Black women to this goal, and builds on the choreography basics taught in the last lesson.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

Grade 11 | 90 minutes

Common Core Standards	National Core Arts Standards	NCSS Themes
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2.B: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.	ANCHOR STANDARD #5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. ANCHOR STANDARD #9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.	II. TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE: identify and use various sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, and others. IV. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY: analyze a particular event to identify reasons individuals might respond to it in different ways.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.		

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide context and comprehension of the importance of education during that time period and why the Colored Conventions specifically wanted to achieve it.

2. Relate all of the provided resources with each other to enhance the understanding of the situation of Black people during the late 1800s.
3. Continue to develop and refine the ability to create movement sequences that communicate a message, and to analyze the works of others. .

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. [Resource 2.1 - Charlotte Forten Biography](#)
2. [Resource 2.2 - Boston Fugitive Slave Poster](#)
3. [Resource 2.3 - Excerpts from the Journals of Charlotte Forten](#)
4. [Resource 2.4 - Rubric](#)
5. [Handout 2.1](#)

ACTIVITY

History Warm-Up/Think-Pair-Share

- Students will have 10 minutes to free-write about the following questions:
 - Why would education be especially important to Black Americans in the late 1800s?
 - How can education be a form of social justice?
- After 10 minutes is over, the students will share their ideas with peers sitting near them.
- The teacher will then ask for a few volunteers to share their ideas aloud with the class.

Lesson Focus/Activation of Prior Knowledge

- Tell students that today they will be focusing on why education was so important to the Colored Conventions Movement and on the contributions of Black women to this goal. One of these women was Charlotte Forten, the first African-American teacher to teach formerly enslaved people in the South.
- The teacher will tell students that Charlotte Forten was active from the 1850s to the 1890s, which places her at the beginning of the timeline we are focusing on.
- Ask students to think of major events that occurred during this time frame.
- Remind students that the Civil War and Reconstruction occurred within this time,

and these would both significantly impact Forten's life and teaching career.

Movement Warm-Up and Mini-Lesson

- The teacher will instruct students to stand and find adequate space in the room to move.
- The teacher will lead students through a brief movement warm-up, introducing two additional elements of dance/movement:
 - Energy (smooth/sharp)
 - Tempo (fast/slow)
- The teacher should also review the elements of dance/movement covered in the previous lesson:
 - 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 class will read aloud **Resource 2.1 (Biography of Charlotte Forten)**. Students should take turns reading paragraphs.
- After the class has read **Resource 2.1**, students will be divided into groups of 3 or 4.
- Each group will be assigned one paragraph of **Resource 2.1** to create written choreography about.
- On **Handout 2.1**, students will individually describe one movement corresponding with each of the four elements of dance/movement covered to this point:
 - Shape
 - Energy
 - Action
 - Tempo
- After students have completed their written choreography, groups will determine their top choice for each of the four elements.
- Groups will combine these movements to create a creative movement sequence to

practice moving through space.

- The teacher should monitor groups as they put together their choreography.
- After groups have had time to practice their creative movement sequence (about 15 minutes), the teacher will tell the students to return to their seats.
- The teacher will then lead a class discussion on the choices students made for their four components of the choreography.

History Mini-Lesson

- Project **Resource 2.2 (Boston Fugitive Slave Poster)** on the board. Tell students to examine it closely and consider the following questions:
 - What is the message of this poster?
 - Who was the intended audience?
 - Where was this poster displayed?
 - What does this reveal about the time period?
- Have students discuss their thoughts with their peers. The teacher will then ask for a few students to volunteer their ideas to the entire class.
- Tell students that this poster was created in 1851 after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.
- Show students video clip on the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act (<http://www.pbs.org/video/american-experience-fugitive-slave-act/>).
- Ask students how they think the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act might have affected Charlotte Forten, her students, and education of African-Americans.

Integrated Arts Activity #2 / Assessment

- Students will work with a partner for this activity (may work in groups of 3 if necessary).
- Each pair will be assigned a portion of **Resource 2.3 (Journal of Charlotte Forten)**. Tell students that these journal entries all reflect the impact of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act on Forten's life and work.
 - There should be at least two pairs of students that have the same journal entry. Pairs with the same journal entry will work together later in this activity.

- Students will read their assigned journal entry individually and will identify key words/phrases that stand out the most to them. Students should identify 4 or 5 words/phrases.
- Students will then share their findings with their partner. After both partners have shared the words/phrases they identified, students will come to an agreement on 4 or 5 that they will use as the focus for a creative dance on their assigned entry.
- Students will have 15 minutes to prepare a dance depicting the key words/phrases of their assigned entry. They should be prepared to explain their choices in all four elements of dance/movement covered. The dance should (at least) include the following:
 - 1 distinct shape
 - 1 change in energy
 - 1 relevant action
 - 1 change in tempo
- Pairs of students assigned to the same journal entry will then get together. Each pair will perform their creative dance to the other.
- Students will evaluate each other's performances using the rubric (**Resource 2.4**).
- After receiving feedback from their peers, students will journal about how they can improve their performance.

Exit Ticket

- Students will return to their seats after receiving and reflecting on feedback.
- Students will respond to the following questions before leaving:
 - What are three things you learned today?
 - What are two things you would like more information on?
 - What is one question you still have?

RESOURCE 2.1

Charlotte Forten Biography

1. Charlotte Forten was the first northern African-American schoolteacher to go south to teach former slaves. A sensitive and genteel young woman, she brought intense idealism and fierce abolitionist zeal to her work. As a black woman, she hoped to find kinship with the freedmen, though her own education set her apart from the former slaves. She stayed on St. Helena Island for two years, then succumbed to ill health and had to return north. In 1864, she published "Life on the Sea Islands" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, which brought the work of the Port Royal Experiment to the attention of Northern readers.
2. Charlotte Forten was born in Philadelphia in 1837 into an influential and affluent family. Her grandfather had been an enormously successful businessman and significant voice in the abolitionist movement. The family moved in the same circles as William Lloyd Garrison and John Greenleaf Whittier: intellectual and political activity were part of the air Charlotte Forten breathed.
3. She attended Normal School in Salem, Massachusetts and began her teaching career in the Salem schools, the first African-American ever hired. But she longed to be part of a larger cause, and with the coming of the Civil War Forten found a way to act on her deepest beliefs. In 1862, she arrived on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, where she worked with Laura Towne. As she began teaching, she found that many of her pupils spoke only Gullah and were unfamiliar with the routines of school. Though she yearned to feel a bond with the islanders, her temperament, upbringing and education set her apart, and she found she had more in common with the white abolitionists there. Under physical and emotional stress, Forten, who was always frail, grew ill and left St. Helena after two years.
4. Today, Forten is best remembered for her diaries. From 1854-64 and 1885-92, she recorded the life of an intelligent, cultured, romantic woman who read and wrote poetry, attended lectures, worked, and took part in the largest social movement of her time. She was determined to embody the intellectual potential of all black people. She set a course of philosophical exploration, social sophistication, cultural achievement and spiritual improvement. She was, above all, dedicated to social justice.
5. In her later life, she lived in Washington D.C. and continued to support equal rights for African-Americans. She married the minister Francis Grimke, nephew of the crusading Grimke sisters. After many years as an invalid, she died in 1914, having been a voice for equality throughout her life.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/onlyateacher/charlotte.html>

HANDOUT 2.1

Directions: As you read your assigned paragraph of the Charlotte Forten Biography, think about how you could use movement to convey the story of her life. In the space provided, describe one movement corresponding to the elements of shape, energy, action, and tempo. Your descriptions should be 2-3 sentences long and be detailed enough so that your peers can visualize your ideas! You should also explain the historical connection between your choreography and the biography.

Element	2-3 Sentence Description of Choreography	1-2 Sentence Explanation of Historical Connection
Shape		
Energy		
Action		
Tempo		

RESOURCE 2.2

CAUTION!!

COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and
advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,
For since the recent **ORDER OF THE MAYOR &**
ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,
And they have already been actually employed in
KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING
SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your **LIBERTY,**
and the *Welfare of the Fugitives* among you, *Shun*
them in every possible manner, as so many **HOUNDS**
on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.
APRIL 24, 1851.

Source: National Humanities Center ♦ Journal of Charlotte Forten, Selections: 1854-1859.

RESOURCE 2.3

Excerpts from the Journals of Charlotte Forten

May 25, 1854. Did not intend to write this evening, but have just heard of something that is worth recording; — something which must ever rouse in the mind of every true friend of liberty and humanity, feelings of the deepest indignation and sorrow.³ Another fugitive from bondage has been arrested; a poor man, who for two short months has trod the soil and breathed the air of the “Old Bay State,” was arrested like a criminal in the streets of her capital, and is now kept strictly guarded, — a double police force is required, the military are in readiness; and all this done to prevent a man, whom God has created in his own image, from regaining that freedom with which, he, in common with every human being, is endowed. I can only hope and pray most earnestly that Boston will not again disgrace herself by sending him back to a bondage worse than death; or rather that she will redeem herself from the disgrace which his arrest alone has brought upon her. ...

Jan. 18, 1857. Dined with Mr. and Mrs. P[utnam]. We talked of the wrongs and sufferings on our race. Mr. P[utnam] thought me too sensitive. — But oh, how inexpressibly bitter and agonizing it is to feel oneself an outcast from the rest of mankind, as we are in this country! To me it is dreadful, dreadful. Were I to indulge in the thought I fear I should become insane. But I do not despair. I will not despair; though very often I can hardly help doing so. God help us! We are indeed a wretched people. Oh, that I could do much towards bettering our condition. I will do all, all the very little that lies in my power, while life and strength last! ...

April 4, 1859. Heard to-day that there has been another fugitive arrested.²⁰ There is to be a trial. God grant that the poor man may be released from the clutches of the slavehunters. Mr. P[urvis, Miss Forten’s uncle] has gone down. We wait anxiously to hear the result of the trial. How long, oh, how long shall such a state of things as this last?

April 8, 1859. Long, long to be remembered. This eve. attended a very large Anti-Slavery meeting at Sansom Hall celebrating Daniel’s release. A crowd of Southerners was present and ere the meeting had progressed far they created a great disturbance, stamping, hallooing, groaning etc. so that it was impossible to hear a word that the speakers were saying. In vain did the President strive to preserve order, — the tumult increased every moment, and at one time there was a precipitate rush forward. We thought we should be crushed, but I did not feel at all frightened; I was too excited to think of fear. The veterans in the cause said that it reminded them of the time when the new and beautiful Pennsylvania Hall, which was afterward burned to the ground — was mobbed. But at last the police arrived. Many of the disturbers were arrested, and order restored. Mr. P[urvis’] speech was fine; decidedly the most effective. A young Englishman spoke fearlessly and well. — The meeting was one of deep interest. I shall long remember it.

RESOURCE 2.4

Element	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Shape	Choice of shape is irrelevant and/or does not reflect consideration of historical content.	Choice of shape is somewhat relevant and reflects a superficial consideration of historical content.	Choice of shape is relevant and reflects consideration of historical content.	Choice of shape is relevant and reflects a clear connection with historical content.
Energy	Choice of energy is irrelevant and/or does not reflect consideration of historical content.	Choice of energy is somewhat relevant and reflects a superficial consideration of historical content.	Choice of energy is relevant and reflects consideration of historical content.	Choice of energy is relevant and reflects a clear connection with historical content.
Action	Choice of action is irrelevant and/or does not reflect consideration of historical content.	Choice of action is somewhat relevant and reflects a superficial consideration of historical content.	Choice of action is relevant and reflects consideration of historical content.	Choice of action is relevant and reflects a clear connection with historical content.
Tempo	Choice of tempo is irrelevant and/or does not reflect consideration of historical content.	Choice of tempo is somewhat relevant and reflects a superficial consideration of historical content.	Choice of tempo is relevant and reflects consideration of historical content.	Choice of tempo is relevant and reflects a clear connection with historical content.