

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: Black Excellence Sounds Like

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**Writer-in-Residence:** Jassmine Parks

**Grade Level:** 6th-12th

**Model Works Used:** Marcus Garvey Sits For A Bust

**Literary Learning objective(s):** Students will be able to explore strategies employed by the black power movement led by Marcus Garvey and utilize similes/metaphors and imagery to construct a poem.

**Themes:** Black power, history, empowerment, identity

**MDE/SEL Standards:** Self-Management, Social Awareness, Self Awareness, Responsible Decision Making; Knowledge of language and vocabulary acquisition and use regarding figurative language

**Materials Needed:** Access to the internet, paper and pen/pencil

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### Opening Activity

What does black pride mean to you?

Watch the short video on Marcus Garvey's contributions to the black power movement. You will find the video at the top of the page. Taking notes is encouraged. There are also facts on Marcus Garvey written under the video if you would like to learn more about the activist.

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/marcus-garvey>

### Pre-Discussion

Garvey wanted to ensure that black people had the ability to be financially independent, meaning that he believed that black people should own things such as businesses, land, media outlets, etc., that benefit black culture.

- If you could own a business, land, property, or anything else you can think of. what would it be and what would you use it for?

Because of the racism and the ill-treatment that black people have experienced in the U.S. and around the world, Marcus Garvey strongly encouraged black people to return to the continent of Africa to live.

- Do you believe that black people from all over the world returning to Africa was/is a good idea?
- What are the positives and negatives of returning to Africa? What about remaining in one's homeland?

### Model Poem Discussion:

Read and listen to: “*Marcus Garvey Sits For A Bust*” by Marilyn Nelson, then answer the questions below.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/151480/marcus-garvey-sits-for-a-bust>

A bust is a sculpture of someone’s head, shoulders and chest.

- Why do you think the poet, Marilyn, formatted her poem the way that she did?
- Though Marcus Garvey is no longer alive, Marilyn has a conversation with the activist throughout the poem. Why is it significant that she includes the dialogue?
- The line: “what we have become, even our language, our words, even our images, even our art, he says, is more theirs than ours.” What does this line mean to you?
- The author ends the poem with the line “Same time tomorrow?” Why do you think she did that?

### Prewriting:

Similes, Metaphors and Imagery

- A simile compares two things that are usually not related using the words “like” or “as”
  - example: My macaroni is like the sun.
- A metaphor compare two things that are usually not related without using “like” or “as”
  - example: My macaroni is the sun.
- Imagery engages the human senses using things that relate to:
  - sight
  - hearing
  - taste
  - smell
  - touch
    - example: My macaroni stretched across my taste buds and melted in my mouth, it became the sun.

Fill in the following blanks to create metaphors/similes/imagery, (be descriptive):

\*Black pride smells like \_\_\_\_\_.

- \*If other than black insert your race/culture/community

My home tastes of \_\_\_\_\_.

I become art, I look like \_\_\_\_\_.

Racism feels\* like \_\_\_\_\_. (\*name something that can be physically touched)

To own something sounds like \_\_\_\_\_.

### Writing Prompt

You only need to choose 1 prompt. Be sure to use similes/metaphors and imagery. Please title your poem(s).

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    -

If the U.S. government were to pay out reparations equal to what 40 acres and a mule would be in today’s economy, the National Legal and Policy Center estimates that it would be approximately \$500,000 per enslaved descendent. Write about the money that is owed to descendents of enslaved people in the US. How does it make you feel that reparations are being withheld? What could the money be used for?

OR

Choose one or multiple lines from the pre-write and craft a poem around it.

OR

You have been given new land to develop a country for people of your race/culture. What is the name of this new country? What are your plans for it?

## Share / Reflect

### Share via:

- If you have internet access and would like to share with fellow youth poets or myself use “Edublog”
  - <https://edublogs.org/?join-invite-code=7652089-insideoutpoetry>
    - you will be prompted to create an account and then your very own blog in which you can upload your work
    - I will check the blogs on Wednesdays and Fridays to provide feedback
    - If you have any questions please leave a comment
- If you prefer to keep your work more private, share your poem with friends, family and/or teachers
  - Ask for feedback or comments. What do they think/feel when they read your piece?

### Reflect:

- How did this poem shape your ideas about black identity? If you are not black, how did this make you feel about your own identity.
- What were you able to learn through reading or writing Marilyn’s poem and your poem?

**Supplemental Materials**

***Marcus Garvey Sits For A Bust***

by Marilyn Nelson

The United Negro Improvement Association,  
he says, his little bloodshot eyes looking out  
of the dark shadows of his overhanging black  
brow. His eyebrows quizzical, halfway to a smile.  
And over them, an uncreased expanse of dark brown  
brain-cover, broad enough to maybe mean genius.  
He talks and talks, a baritone that somehow lilts,  
the Jamaican vowels a soothing music, talks and  
talks, how we are Africans wherever we landed  
in the genocidal kidnap, we belong to each  
other as siblings, all Africa, all Africans, together  
as one nation. We will return, we shall return, the  
Motherland waits for us, she is calling to us in the drum-  
beats of our hearts, he says. Don't you hear it sometimes?  
I have to say yes, I sure do sometimes, remembering how  
sometimes I have smiled at insult and injustice, toed the  
yassuh-mister-charley line. Don't forget a whole continent  
hopes we will return with what we've learned, what we  
have become, even our language, our words, even our  
images, even our art, he says, is more theirs than ours. Light  
falls from the windows through the antique lace curtains onto  
a mahogany table set with his collection of antique porcelain.  
His cheeks are silk sleek, his thick lips talking, talking,  
the necessity of self-emancipation, only we can free our minds,  
think about going home, feeling our Ancestors welcoming  
you from the very soil. I smooth gray layers on the wire frame,  
watching his face, watching my fingers. He gives off  
black light, impossible to capture in my medium. Genius,  
genius, yes, and authority. Confidence. And there's some  
madness in there. I stroke the curves, the heavy jaw, the thick,  
soft lips speaking hymns of affirmation. Something deep inside  
me makes a little ding, like a tiny chime. My black pride  
has awakened. My cramped and crooked inner light  
creaks straight. Those little eyes. That grand ambition.  
I cover the bust with a damp cloth. Same time tomorrow?

Check/Highlight all that apply

- Text by a contemporary/diverse author
- Translated text
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Close reading or other analysis
- A step of the writing process
- Planning & Reflection Strategy
- New device, concept or theme
- Social-Emotional Learning
  - Self-Management
  - Social Awareness
  - Relationship Skills
  - Responsible-Decision Making
  - Self-Awareness