

# African American Voices Lesson Plans

**Lesson Plan:** Diversity Within the Black Community

**Subject:** United States History

**Grade:** 8

**NGSSS-SS:** **SS.8.G.2.1-** Understand physical and cultural characteristics of places.



**Description/  
Abstract of Lesson:** The students will engage in a comprehensive study of diverse Black immigrant populations that have made major cultural, political and economic contributions to Miami-Dade County. The students' final product will be a magazine/publication highlighting Miami-Dade's rich cultural diversity.

**Objective(s):**

- Describe the cultural and ethnic characteristics of Miami-Dade County's Black population.
- Develop an understanding of Miami-Dade County's Black immigrant population by reading literature, stories, myths and legends; listening to music; and examining art.
- Understand the impact of immigration on the local community.
- Discuss the changes that take place in communities whenever two or more cultures come into contact (e.g. the spread of ideas, values and behaviors).

**Materials:**

- Textbooks/workbook/handouts
- Library/Internet research materials

**Duration:** Several Class Sessions

**Lesson Lead In/  
Opening:**

Have the students understand diversity in the form of a "salad." Ask the students, "What makes a tasty salad?" Have the students understand that what makes a tasty salad is the different types of vegetables (or fruit), spices and dressing. Have the students understand that this also applies to human beings. Life is more exciting when we have diversity. Also, we tend to learn more about ourselves (culture and attitudes) when we interact with others who are different from us.

**Activity 1:**

1. Have the students break up into groups of five. Each group is to work on one immigrant Black population (pre-selected by the teacher). The following are suggested groups to study (other populations) may also be selected:

- Haitians
- Jamaicans
- Bahamians
- Trinidadians

2. Have the students compile newspaper, magazine and Internet-based articles on the major Black cultural and ethnic groups found in Miami-Dade County. The research and scope could be broken down in the following manner:

- Native language
- Religion
- Food
- Music
- Contributions to Miami-Dade County
- Local leaders and their accomplishments

3. Have the students produce a group report on their assigned Black population.

4. Have the groups present their findings to the class.

5. [Optional] Along with their presentations, have the groups bring in art, literature, stories, myths and/or music that is representative of the designated Black immigrant group researched.

6. Make sure to include discussion on the social, political, cultural and economic changes that have taken place as a result of different people and cultures living together in Miami-Dade County. The teacher should include discussion of such cultural festivals as:

- Miami Carnival
- Goombay
- Haitian Flag Day

The teacher should include discussion on the contributions of local leaders/politicians representative of the populations researched:

- Phillip Brutus
- Jacques Despinosse
- Yolie Roberson
- Fred Seraphin
- Dr. Carole Boyce-Davies
- Max Rameau

**Activity 2:**

1. Arrange for guest speakers representative of the researched Black immigrant groups to speak about their reasons for immigrating to Miami-Dade County and their experiences since living here.

2. Have students prepare questions before hand. Have students write notes on the guest speakers' discussions.

3. Have students write reports on the experience using their notes.

**Activity 3:**

1. Provide opportunities for students to interview persons in the community from different Black cultural backgrounds. (i.e. in the form of field trips, career fairs, etc.)

2. Have students write a standard Q&A interview (modeled before hand by the teacher).

**Activity 4:**

1. Arrange students in groups
2. Have the groups compete in a contest: Who can produce the best new logo for Miami-Dade County that reflects its multicultural composition.

**Activity 5:**

1. Arrange students in groups
2. Have the students produce a multicultural publication for Miami-Dade County, combining the reports, projects and interviews they took part in while researching diverse Black populations.
3. Be sure to use the winning logo(s) on the cover of the publication.

**Assessment:**

- Be sure to give individual and group (cooperation and creativity) grades whenever appropriate.
- Evaluate publications based on accuracy of information, originality, neatness, creativity and format.

**Higher Order****Thinking Questions:**

1. What makes a tasty salad?
2. Why is it important to learn about other cultures, even if you do not interact with them everyday?
3. It is said that "Variety is the spice of life." What do you think this means?

**Suggested Books:****In Lesson:**

- Dunn, M. (1997) Black Miami in the Twentieth Century, University Press of Florida
- Portes, A. & Stepick, A. (1993) City on the Edge: the Transformation of Miami, Kirkus Associates.

**Web Resources:**

[www.gmcvb.com/miami\\_goombay\\_festival.asp](http://www.gmcvb.com/miami_goombay_festival.asp)

[www.wowmiami.com](http://www.wowmiami.com)

[www.afrocubaweb.com](http://www.afrocubaweb.com)

[www.cariwave.com/Evolution\\_Afro\\_Caribbean\\_Music.htm](http://www.cariwave.com/Evolution_Afro_Caribbean_Music.htm)

[www.jamaicans.com](http://www.jamaicans.com)

<http://www.historymiami.org/research-miami/topics/black-history>

[www.miamiherald.com/haiti](http://www.miamiherald.com/haiti)

[www.haitibio.com](http://www.haitibio.com)