

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Title	Afrofuturism Then and Now
Unit Length	17+ Days
Grade Levels/Subjects	11th-12th grade U.S. History or Electives
Unit Overview	<p>Afrofuturism is a cultural movement that incorporates elements of science fiction, fantasy, and magical realism into art, literature, and other forms of media, with a particular focus on the experiences and perspectives of African Americans. It often explores the intersection of technology and the African diaspora, and incorporates themes of resistance and empowerment.</p> <p>Afrofuturism often challenges traditional narratives and stereotypes about Black people, and it offers alternative visions of the future that are inclusive and empowering. It can also be seen as a way of reclaiming and reimagining African cultural traditions and spirituality in a modern context.</p> <p>Greg Tate said, “Black people live the estrangement that science fiction writers imagine.” In this unit, we will explore how Afrofuturism combines elements of African mythology, science fiction, African Diaspora history, magic, realism, and political fantasy in Black expressive texts across multimedia and artistic forms. Considering a diverse array of practitioners, this unit analyzes how African diaspora cultural producers—writers, visual artists, musicians, and filmmakers—use Afrofuturism to critique racial asymmetries in the present (or past) and to imagine as yet unrealized free Black futures.</p> <p>By incorporating Afrofuturism into the study of Black History, we hope to promote diversity and inclusion. By exposing students to a wide range of perspectives and experiences, Afrofuturism can help to broaden their understanding of the world and to challenge traditional narratives and stereotypes. This can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment, and it can help to foster a greater sense of empathy and understanding among students.</p> <p>Another potential outcome is the promotion of critical thinking and creativity. Afrofuturist themes and imagery often challenge conventional ways of thinking and can inspire students to imagine alternative futures and possibilities. This can promote higher-level thinking skills and can encourage students to be innovative and imaginative in their thinking and problem-solving.</p>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>At the end, the students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Understand the motivations for Black people to create stories, art, and music and engage in political advocacy. → Explain how Afrofuturistic work can inform us about racial struggles and achievements in the United States.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Contextualize Afrofuturistic popular culture within its socioeconomic and historical framework, beginning in the U.S. and extending into the Caribbean and Africa. → Communicate reading and research effectively through oral presentations and discussion.
<p>Standards</p>	<p>Common Core Standards:</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.</p> <p>New Jersey State Standards:</p> <p>6.1.12.CivicsPD.1.a: Use multiple sources to analyze the factors that led to an increase in political rights and participation in government.</p> <p>6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.b: Analyze the impact and contributions of African American leaders and institutions in the development and activities of Black communities in the North and South before and after the Civil War.</p>
<p>Facilitation Resources</p>	<p>Resources from <i>The 1619 Project</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The 1619 Project: Born on the Water by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith (video read-aloud) → Poetry from The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1662: “Daughters of Azimuth” by Nikky Finney ◆ 1682: “Loving Me” by Vieve Francis ◆ 1740: “A Ghazalled Sentence After ‘My People ... Hold On’ by Eddie Kendricks ◆ 1740: “The Negro Act of 1740” by Terrance Hayes ◆ 1791: “Other Persons” by Reginald Dwayne Betts ◆ 1830: “We as People” by Cornelius Eady

- ◆ 1850: “A Letter to Harriet Hayden” by Lynn Nottage

Teacher-created Resources Used Throughout this Unit:

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Teacher-created Gameboards:

- [Gameboard for Exploring Proto-Afrofuturists #1: Arnold Gragston](#) [.pdf]
- [Gameboard for Exploring Proto-Afrofuturists #2: Harriet Tubman](#) [.pdf]

Afrofuturist and Proto-Afrofuturist Texts, Artworks, and Creations:

- [Olivetti Studio 46 Typewriter Used by Octavia Butler](#), object from the Anacostia Community Museum
- [Why should you read sci-fi superstar Octavia E. Butler?](#), video by Ayana Jamieson and Moya Bailey for TED-Ed
- [The Sound of Afrofuturism](#), Spotify playlist by Julian Chambliss
- [“Flying African Testimonials.”](#) handout from TeachRock
- [Various fine art](#) by Costanza Knight
- [High and Wide \(Carrying the Rats to the Man\)](#), multimedia web story by Thornton Dial
- [Red Spring Part I: Ancestral Memory](#), multimedia art exhibit by New York Live Arts
- [AstroSankofa](#), artwork by Quentin VerCetty with commentary
- [Afrofuturism Explained: Not Just Black Sci-fi](#), video from Inverse
- Quote from “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose” by Mark Dery
- [“Dr. Funkenstein.”](#) song performance by Parliament
- [“Moon Masque.”](#) art by Lois Mailou Jones
- [The Ooli Moves](#), animated video by Nicole Mitchell’s Black Earth Ensemble, based on Octavia Butler’s *Lilith’s Brood*
- [“The Comet.”](#) short story by W. E. B. Du Bois
- [Afrofuturism Mixes Sci-fi and Social Justice. Here’s How It Works.](#) video from Vox
- [“The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto.”](#) text by Martine Syms
- [The Mundane Afrofuturist](#), documentary from KCET (56:34)
- Essay in [“A Past Unremembered: The Transformative Legacy of the Black Speculative Imagination” Exhibition Catalog](#) (pages 1-11)

Texts and Resources Exploring African History and Geography:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The True Size website → “The Real Africa: Fight the Stereotype” → "The Nubian Kingdom of Kush," article from <i>National Geographic</i> → "The Kingdom of Aksum," article from <i>National Geographic</i> → "Mali: A Cultural Center," article from <i>Ancient Civilizations</i> → "Great Zimbabwe," article from <i>National Geographic</i> → "Unearthing the Truth," article from <i>The Economist</i> → Decolonizing History in Africa website <p>Texts and Resources Exploring the History of Enslavement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Slavery in the Medieval Mediterranean readings and worksheet (<i>Please note that some of these readings may be inappropriate for some readers. Please read through the sources to determine if they align with your course standards and the learning expectations of your school community.</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ .pdf handout ◆ .docx handout → Introductory video African American History from PBS Learning Media → Middle Passage Analysis slide worksheet [.pptx] → “Slavery in the American South” by the unit author <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ .pdf reading ◆ .docx reading <p>Resources for Teacher Prep:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. “Writing About Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help” community-sourced document, September 18, 2023. → See Learning for Justice website for suggestions on how to teach “hard history.”
<p>Performance Task</p>	<p>Essay Prompt: Afrofuturism is currently present in a variety of contexts, including music videos, academic texts, and museums. Martine Syms, a visual artist and writer, positions her 2015 <i>Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto</i> as a critical analysis, urging Black artists and activists to reshape, redefine, and recreate the dominant norms of Afrofuturism. Syms proposes an Afrofuturist perspective that downplays space adventures and otherworldly technological phenomena. Instead, she modifies Afrofuturism to include the more "mundane" advancements Black people are making on Earth in order to envision a more equitable space for future Black livelihood.</p> <p>Responding to Syms’ call, write a 1-2 page argumentative paper explaining why a writer, activist, and/or other individual of your choice from the 18th and 19th centuries should be considered a proto-Afrofuturist. In your paper, describe how your chosen individual incorporates both the mundane and fantastical aspects of Afrofuturism into their life and/or body of work.</p>

Afrofuturism Then and Now

Unit by Team NZINGA, part of the 2022 cohort
of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

Assessment	Argumentative Essay Writing Rubric and Student Feedback Worksheet → .pdf file → .docx file
------------	--

DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Day 1: Defining Afrofuturism

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The definition of Afrofuturism
- How short stories, art, lyrics, videos, and film clips may embody elements and tenets of Afrofuturism
- The names of some Afrofuturist thinkers and artists of the 20th and 21st centuries

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 1 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- Texts, art, audio, and video clips introducing Afrofuturism (embedded in slides)
 - ◆ [Olivetti Studio 46 Typewriter Used by Octavia Butler](#), object from the Anacostia Community Museum
 - ◆ [Why should you read sci-fi superstar Octavia E. Butler?](#), video by Ayana Jamieson and Moya Bailey for TED-Ed
 - ◆ [The Sound of Afrofuturism](#), Spotify playlist by Julian Chambliss
 - ◆ [“Flying African Testimonials.”](#) handout from TeachRock
 - ◆ [Various fine art](#) by Costanza Knight
 - ◆ [High and Wide \(Carrying the Rats to the Man\)](#), multimedia web story by Thornton Dial
 - ◆ [Red Spring Part I: Ancestral Memory](#), multimedia art exhibit by New York Live Arts
 - ◆ [AstroSankofa](#), artwork by Quentin VerCetty with commentary
- Chart paper or Google [Jamboard](#)
- Index cards
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Educator Notes Before Lesson:

- *Slides may help with the flow of the lesson.*
- *Before beginning this lesson, the teacher may review their classroom norms and protocols for discussing “hard history” or review the [Learning For Justice](#) website for suggestions.*

Warm-up:

1. Display the following on a projection/screen:
 - Have you ever heard the term Afrofuturist or Afrofuturism?
 - When you think of the word Afrofuturism, what comes to mind?
2. Ask students to write a definition of what they think Afrofuturism means on a piece of paper.
3. Once students have finished, the teacher should ask them to share their responses, first with a neighbor and then with the whole class.

Mini Lecture/Instructions:

Instruct students on the following:

- Today they will begin a new unit titled “Afrofuturism Then and Now.”
- Today’s task will be to define, as a class, and in their own words, Afrofuturism.
- Students will complete a station activity that looks at short stories, art, lyrics, videos, and film clips representing Afrofuturist work to help them formulate their definitions.

Activity: Station Activity:

1. Students will review the station activity introducing different Afrofuturist texts, art, audio, and videos. This activity and links to all resources are embedded in the Day 1 Slides. You can also find a list of all links embedded in the slides under Lesson Materials and Resources above.
2. Students note what they notice, think, and wonder for each station.
3. Once finished, students should take a mental inventory of all they saw:
 - What stood out to them and why?
 - How does what they saw/heard connect to the word Afrofuturism?

Debrief:

1. As a whole class, have students share out:
 - What stood out to them.
 - What Afrofuturism could mean by deconstructing the two words.
 - Ask aloud, “How does what you saw/heard connect to the word Afrofuturism’?”
2. Defining Afrofuturism brief group work:
 - Give students 1-2 minutes to write a simple definition of Afrofuturism. They should write this on an index card.
 - Next, give students 2-3 minutes to pair with another student and come up with one definition based on their shared understanding of Afrofuturism. They should write this on one index card.
 - Next, ask the two students to pair with another group of two to come up with one definition of

Afrofuturism that combines the two groups' ideas. They should complete this last definition on the class's shared Jamboard, whiteboard, chart paper, etc.

- Share out definitions if time permits.

Exit Ticket or Homework:

- Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)

- ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Day 2: Afrofuturism and Proto-Afrofuturism

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The definition of Afrofuturism and proto-Afrofuturism
- The defining characteristics of Afrofuturism
- The names of Afrofuturist thinkers and artists of the 20th and 21st centuries
- The idea that Afrofuturism is not a new concept, but rather a set of practices and ideas that have existed for centuries

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 2 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- Resources embedded in day 2 slides
 - ◆ [Afrofuturism Explained: Not Just Black Sci-fi](#), video from Inverse
 - ◆ Quote from “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose” by Mark Dery
- Envelope of Afrofuturism definitions
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- [Jamboard](#) or chart paper with class definitions of Afrofuturism from previous lesson
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Display Mark Dery’s definition of Afrofuturism (see day 2 slides, slide 2) and ask students how it compares to the one they wrote yesterday as a group of four. You may need to tell students to refer to the Jamboard or chart paper from the previous lesson.
2. Ask students, “Do you think Afrofuturism is a new concept? How new?”

Mini Lecture (Students should actively take notes):

1. Display the definitions of Afrofuturism from the previous lesson and working as a whole class, students

take 10 minutes to come up with a whole class definition of Afrofuturism.

2. Once students are finished, the teacher should show [this video](#) on Afrofuturism that describes the history of Afrofuturism. Students should be encouraged to take notes on the video using the note catcher or another method.
3. Teachers should debrief with students on the video and clear up questions students may have.

Activity:

1. Place students in a group of 3-5 (or their groups of 4) and give each group an envelope of [definitions](#) of Afrofuturism from leading Afrofuturist scholars.
2. Have student groups first read through each definition. There are 20, but the teacher can remove some if necessary to make them more manageable.
3. Have students revisit the stations from the previous lesson and have students assign a definition that best represents each. Students should justify their definitions verbally to one another and record their responses. *(Two more new stations will be added to the station for 8 Afrofuturist pieces of work to define. However, if teachers are in a crunch for time, they should continue with just the 6 stations they are already familiar with.)*
4. Once student groups have finished matching definitions to the stations, they should revisit the whole class definition and make suggestions for modifications if necessary.

Debrief:

1. If time permits, have each student group present their definition of each station.
2. As a whole class, the teacher will help students revisit class definitions of Afrofuturism they recorded and see if they want to modify the definition.

Exit Ticket or Homework:

1. Ask students to reflect on the stations and definitions and list any potential characteristics or elements of Afrofuturism they can think of. Tell students that a characteristic is “a feature or quality belonging typically to a person, place, or thing and serving to identify it,” and ask them if they can identify any themes, ideas, images, or messages common to the work we have examined. Teachers can use [Mentimeter](#) to generate a word cloud.

*If students struggle with this, the teacher can ask students:

- What elements did they see in the stations belonging to sci-fi?
- What elements did they see in the stations that are reminiscent of African culture and tradition?
- Did they see any elements in the stations that resemble/discuss present-day issues?

2. Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol

- [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Day 3: Characteristics of Afrofuturism & Proto-Afrofuturism Cont'd

Essential Questions

- What are the characteristics and forms of Afrofuturism?
- When and why might Afrofuturism have developed, and what is proto-Afrofuturism?

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 3 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- *Optional, depending on time constraints:* Texts, art, audio, and video clips introducing Afrofuturism (embedded in slides)
 - ◆ [“Dr. Funkenstein.”](#) song performance by Parliament
 - ◆ [“Moon Masque.”](#) art by Lois Mailou Jones
 - ◆ [The Ooli Moves](#), animated video by Nicole Mitchell’s Black Earth Ensemble, based on Octavia Butler’s *Lilith’s Brood*
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Project the following quote from the [day 3 slides](#) for students:

“When I began writing science fiction, when I began reading, heck, I wasn’t in any of this stuff I read,” Ms. Butler told the New York Times in 2000. “The only Black people you found were occasional characters or characters who were so feeble-witted that they couldn’t manage anything, anyway. I wrote myself in since I’m me and I’m here and writing.”

2. Ask students to jot down (on slides or notes or index cards) some thoughts on the quote and if there is any place in history, the present, or the future they may need to “write **themselves** in.” Remind students that they can interpret this question broadly and speak to any part of their identity.
3. Students will share their responses if comfortable.

Mini Lecture:

1. Explain to students that one characteristic of Afrofuturism is to see the possibilities of Black people in the

future and the past.

2. Review responses from the exit ticket from the previous lesson and display what students wrote or pass them back and have students list, on the board or chart paper, the characteristics or elements they noted as a class.
3. Once they have finished, see if students can “categorize” the characteristics or elements.
4. To help students learn more about the characteristics of Afrofuturism, show students [the video](#) of Parliament, the Mothership landing live, found in the day 3 slides. Play it once without saying anything.
5. Next, tell students the group's name and the year of the video (1976). Next, ask students to consider as they are watching (brainstorm on the board):
 - Where is the mothership going?
 - Where do the people want to go?
 - Why might Black people have wanted to go somewhere in 1976?
 - When the video stops, ask students to share their responses.
6. After students have answered the questions above, ask them:
 - Is this idea/symbol still relevant today (Black people wanting to go elsewhere), and have they seen any other examples of this idea in music, popular culture, their study of Black history, or other history courses?
7. Let students brainstorm this in their groups for a few minutes.
 - Teachers should try to get students to place the things they list on a timeline.
 - Teachers should remind students to identify the social, political, or economic reasons Black people have wanted to “leave.”
8. Students should share what their groups discussed and place on board with other characteristics if possible.
9. Teachers should be able to guide students into seeing a common theme of Black people wanting to escape/leave racism and racist systems behind and create or go places where more equitable opportunities exist. Hone in on the idea of escaping marginalization. Remind students of Mark Dery and how Black writers were excluded from the science fiction genre.
10. Teachers can next provide students with the 7 elements of Afrofuturism found in the slides and have students compare what they came up with on the board, or wait until the next class to provide it.
 - Teachers should note to students that this list is just a synthesis of the characteristics and that Afrofuturism is a body of work and philosophy that is still changing.

Activity:

1. Teacher will have students revisit the Afrofuturist stations they examined during the previous two days (see day 1/day 2 slides).
2. For each station, students will identify any of the Afrofuturist elements from the mini-lesson and try to discern any particular message the artist may be communicating. They can create another text box on the

slides, or they can write their findings in the notes section of the slides.

Two more stations will be added to the station for 10 Afrofuturist pieces of work to define. Station suggestions are included in the lesson 3 slides. However, if teachers are in a crunch for time, they can continue with just the 8 stations students are already familiar with.

Debrief:

Have students come back together for a whole class debrief on what characteristics/elements and themes they saw in the station activity.

Exit Ticket or Homework:

1. Some people have never heard of Afrofuturism, and others very little. If someone asked you to define Afrofuturism, what would you say? If they then asked **when** and **why** Afrofuturism developed, how would you respond? (See last slide on lesson 3.)

2. Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

→ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)

→ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Days 4-5: Proto-Afrofuturism

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The definition of Afrofuturism and proto-Afrofuturism
- The defining characteristics of Afrofuturism
- The names of Afrofuturist thinkers and artists of the 20th and 21st centuries
- The idea that Afrofuturism is not a new concept, but rather a set of practices and ideas that have existed for centuries

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 4 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- [“The Comet,”](#) short story by W. E. B. Du Bois
- Afrofuturism Semiotics worksheet
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Ask students to consider independently: If you could invent a piece of technology to help solve any social issue, what would it be? Tell students they should think carefully about this “prototype” they want to develop. They should identify the social issue they will address and how their technology will solve it.
2. Once students have thought about it, have them share in pairs and call on volunteers to share their responses.

Mini Lecture (Students should actively take notes):

1. Ask students to share out when and why they think Afrofuturism developed. To guide the discussion, draw a T chart on the board for When/Why and brainstorm as a whole class. Remind students to think back to what they have already learned about Afrofuturism during the previous lessons.
2. Once students are finished, the teacher should show the definition of Afrofuturism from the previous

lesson and let students know the history of the origins of the term, which was coined by cultural critic Mark Dery in 1993.

Let students know that scholars are beginning to investigate the idea that a prototype for Afrofuturism existed before the creation of the word.

3. Remind students of their warm-up and ask students to define proto-Afrofuturism. Teachers should then let students share their definitions and discuss their definitions of proto-Afrofuturism.

Activity:

1. Tell students you will read a short story titled "[The Comet.](#)" written in 1920. Tell students the objective is to determine whether or not the short story contains Afrofuturism elements and can be regarded as a proto-Afrofuturist text.

* *Do not* give students the author's name, W. E. B. Du Bois.

Before students start reading, remind students they are looking for evidence of Afrofuturism. They should put a * (star) next to any Afrofuturist elements as they read.

2. Read the story out loud with students or search for a recorded reading on Youtube and listen to the story.

3. Next, pass out the [Afrofuturism Semiotics worksheet](#) and give students a few minutes to individually complete parts of the worksheet.

Debrief:

After the read-aloud, the whole class should discuss the text and whether or not it can be viewed as an Afrofuturist or proto-Afrofuturist text.

Exit Ticket or Homework:

1. Students should answer the following question: To what extent is the short story "The Comet," written in 1920, an example of Afrofuturism? Why or why not? This can be found in the last text box of the [Afrofuturism Semiotics Worksheet](#)

2. Optional exit ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

→ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)

→ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Days 5-6: Mini-Project

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The definition of Afrofuturism and its characteristics
- How to represent the definition of Afrofuturism in words and images

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 5 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- [Afrofuturism Mixes Sci-fi and Social Justice. Here's How It Works.](#) video from Vox
- Visual Representation of Afrofuturism mini-project
 - ◆ [.pdf worksheet](#)
 - ◆ [.docx worksheet](#)
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Have students watch a video from Vox, [Afrofuturism Mixes Sci-fi and Social Justice. Here's How It Works.](#)

Students should take notes on:

- How Afrofuturism is defined
- Key names mentioned
- Examples of Afrofuturist works offered

Mini Lecture:

Teachers may want to do an acculturation or appreciation lesson here if they feel their students need it.

Activity:

1. Let students know that today they will work as a group to “define” Afrofuturism through a visual aesthetic of their choice.
2. Inform students that they can work individually or in groups to create a visual representation of their understanding of Afrofuturism. The teacher should pass out these guidelines for the [Visual Representation of](#)

[Afrofuturism mini-project.](#)

3. Pass out chart paper with the phrase “**Afrofuturism Is**” in the middle for students to use as a brainstorming template. Teachers can also use a Jamboard.
4. Instruct students to devise a visual interpretation of our class definition of Afrofuturism. The teacher should display the definition on the board for the class to view.
5. Let students work on their visual representation.
 - Tell students their visual representation of the definition should also include reference to some of the 7 elements of Afrofuturism and themes Afrofuturist works address. (Teachers can specify a minimum number of elements and themes that should be included if they prefer.)
 - Students can work on this on chart paper, canvas, Google Slides, Canva, or any other medium appropriate for school and students.
6. Students should work on this for the remainder of class and the following class if needed.

Debrief:

1. When students are finished, the class should be given at least 7 minutes to walk around the room and look at the other visual definitions of Afrofuturism.
2. Students should highlight the “glows” of others' work.

Exit Ticket:

Optional exit ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Days 6-7: Mundane Afrofuturism

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The definition of Afrofuturism and its characteristics
- The definition of mundane
- The definition of mundane Afrofuturism

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 6 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- Reading: [“The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto”](#) by Martine Syms
- Documentary: [The Mundane Afrofuturist](#) from KCET (56:34)
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Ask students if they have ever heard of the word “mundane.”
2. Have students look up the word, and write it in a sentence
3. Pair students and have them share and explain “mundane” to one another.
4. Once the teacher is sure students understand the definition of mundane, the teacher should ask students what they think a text called “The Mundane Afrofuturist” is. Discuss as a class.

Mini Lecture:

1. Have students read [“The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto”](#) by Martine Syms.
 - Read silently once
 - Read aloud to the class as students take notes to see if they can decipher the meaning of the text.
 - Read once more silently
2. Once you have read the text three times, ask students to share their interpretations.

Activity:

Once you have discussed possible meanings of the text, tell students they will watch a documentary of the same title., [The Mundane Afrofuturist](#) from KCET. *Please note this documentary is 56 minutes long and may take two or more days to complete.*

Inform students that this documentary and their notes will help them with their final project for the unit, which is an argumentative essay.

As they watch, students should take notes on definitions of and ideas about Afrofuturism and its purpose.

Debrief:

1. Have students share what they learned in the film.
2. Teacher should specifically ask, “How do the reading and film define the mundane Afrofuturist? How can we apply this to proto-Afrofuturism?”

Teacher can do this by

- leading a group discussion
- sharing on the board or chart paper
- Jamboard
- KWL Chart

Exit Ticket:

Optional exit ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Homework:

Students should go back and look at the Afrofuturist work from the previous lessons and jot down any specific examples of “mundane Afrofuturism” they can find.

Days 8-9: Intro to Africa

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The geography of present-day Africa
- Slavery in Afro-Eurasia and West Africa during the medieval period
- The trans-Atlantic slavery system and its impact on West Africa and North America
- How Afrofuturism as a framework is applicable to examining the enslavement of Black people fighting for liberation

Lesson Materials & Resources

- *Teacher note:* Teachers may want to review this sheet from P. Gabrielle Foreman et al. before discussing the enslavement of Africans and African Americans with students: [“Writing About Slavery/Teaching About Slavery.”](#)¹
- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Day 8 Slides
 - [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - [View-only Google Slides](#)
- [Jamboard](#)
- [The True Size](#) website
- [“The Real Africa: Fight the Stereotype”](#)
- [“The Nubian Kingdom of Kush,”](#) article from *National Geographic*
- [“The Kingdom of Aksum,”](#) article from *National Geographic*
- [“Mali: A Cultural Center,”](#) article from *Ancient Civilizations*
- [“Great Zimbabwe,”](#) article from *National Geographic*
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

“Can You Name Three?” activity

1. Display day 7 warm-up slides with following instructions:

¹ P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. “Writing about Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: This Might Help” community-sourced document, September 18, 2023.

- Draw a + on your group whiteboard to create four sections and write the numbers one to three in each quadrant.
- You will have ONE minute to work as a group to answer/list 3 examples of the displayed topic in each quadrant.
- None of your responses can be related to the United States.

2. Display each slide that says the following:

- Can you name three powerful civilizations in history, not including the U.S.?
- Can you name three important leaders in history or today outside the U.S.?
- Can you name three major geographical features outside of the U.S.?
- Can you name three major human-made innovations outside of the U.S.?

Students should jot down their responses after each question comes up.

4. Have students share their responses. Then display the slide that says:

- How many examples came from Africa?

Discuss why students may or may not have thought of examples from Africa.

Mini Lecture/Instructions:

1. The teacher should display the slide that highlights the size of Africa to demonstrate how diverse it is and has been throughout history (slide 11). *One way to have students do this is to go to [The True Size](#) website and show how many countries can “fit inside” of Africa.*

2. Optional: Teacher may clear up [myths or stereotypes](#) about Africa as well (slides 12-18).

3. Teacher will next walk students through a brief introduction to African history, discussing the “Cradle of Civilization,” birth of Homo Sapiens, and migration from Africa.

4. Teacher will next explain to students that over the next few lessons they will learn about the history of Africa and its connections to African Americans and the fight for freedom from enslavement. Inform students that the reason they are learning about this is because they are going to decide if they can classify 19th century African Americans as Afrofuturists, but first they need some background information on Africa and the development of the U.S. system of enslavement.

Activity - Painting African History:

1. Re-introduce students to W. E. B. Du Bois (“The Comet”) and have them read the brief slide on him.

2. Introduce students to African American artist Aaron Douglass (found on the slides). He was the “Father of African arts” and used modern art techniques to depict African ancestral images.

Show some of his art work and a brief video found on the slides.

3. Next, explain that students will create their own Aaron Douglas-inspired piece of art based on what they learn about African history over the next few days.

4. Instruct students to explore the following early African civilizations & geography. They should take notes

on the slides provided.

- [Kush](#)
- [Axum](#)
- [Mali](#)
- [Great Zimbabwe](#)

When students have gathered enough information on each civilization, they will create an Aaron Douglas-inspired painting in response to what they learned. Students will probably need a class period to work on their art.

Debrief:

1. As the lesson comes to a close, the teacher can ask students if they have any questions or comments.

The teacher should also ask students if they can make any connections with what students have learned about Africa and what they learned about Afrofuturism in the previous lessons.

2. Teachers should write connections on board, chart paper, or [Jamboard](#).

3. Teachers should clear up any misconceptions and instruct students to complete the exit ticket.

Exit Ticket:

Optional exit ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Homework:

Students should go back and look at the Afrofuturist work from the previous lessons and jot down any specific references to Africa that they learned about from this lesson.

Day 10: Slavery in Afro-Eurasia and West Africa

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The geography of present day Africa
- Slavery in Afro-Eurasia and West Africa during the medieval period
- The trans-Atlantic slavery system and its impact on West Africa and North America
- How Afrofuturism as a framework is applicable to examining the enslavement of Black people fighting for liberation

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- [Blank Map of Africa](#) [.pdf]
- Day 10 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- Slavery in the Medieval Mediterranean readings and worksheet (*Please note that some of these readings may be inappropriate for some readers. Please read through the sources to determine if they align with your course standards and the learning expectations of your school community.*)
 - ◆ [.pdf handout](#)
 - ◆ [.docx handout](#)
- Optional homework reading: "[Unearthing the Truth.](#)" article from *The Economist*
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

Ask students to name as many African countries as they can.

First, list them on a piece of paper. Next, put them on the [blank map of Africa](#).

Mini Lecture/Instructions:

1. Have students look at four sets of maps of Africa and ask them what they notice. (See Day 10 Slides.)
2. When students are done, the teacher should instruct students to stand up and share with someone who is not standing next to them: What do the maps tell you about Africa and the trans-Atlantic slave system?
3. Once students are finished sharing out, the teacher may want to have students share out as a whole class

what they noticed about map sets A-D.

4. The teacher can next go through the map sets and highlight important information students should know about the map sets.

5. Teacher will next ask what students know about the history of the trans-Atlantic slave system.²

6. Teacher should explain to students that the trans-Atlantic slave system developed in the context of various systems of slavery that existed at the time, but eventually developed into something quite different.

Teacher will tell students that today they will learn about this development. Remind students that the reason they are learning about this is because they are going to decide if they can classify 19th century African Americans as Afrofuturists, but first they need some background information on Africa and the development of the U.S. system of slavery.

Activity: The World of West Africa - Slavery in the Medieval Mediterranean

In the next part of the activity, students will read three excerpts about [slavery in the Medieval Mediterranean](#).

Teachers should follow along with the google slides to facilitate this reading and discussion activity. *Note: Students can work in pairs or the teacher can read this as a whole class.*

Teachers will first discuss the origins of the word “Slave” and then read [Reading 1](#) and discuss it. *Note: The teacher can project the readings as they are in the slides.*

The teacher can choose to have students map the places mentioned in the reading to get a better idea of how widespread the practice of slavery was.

Next, students will read [Reading 2](#) and discuss the main arguments.

The teacher should answer any questions the students have and clear up any misconceptions.

Next the teacher should refer students back to their discussion of the true size of Africa and explain that people living in one part of Africa rarely thought of themselves as “African,” but rather that the various ethnic groups found in Africa would have considered themselves distinct from one another.

The teacher should emphasize that prior to the arrival of Europeans, the idea of “African” did not exist in Africa.

Lastly, students should read [Reading 3](#) and discuss it. Students should gather from this reading that the way slavery was practiced in Africa prior to the arrival of Europeans does not correspond to the way it was practiced in the Americas.

² Note: I call it the Trans-Atlantic slave system because of recommendations from [Professor Kwasi Konadu](#) and his chapter “Naming and Framing a Crime Against Humanity: African Voices of the Transatlantic Slave System, ca. 1500-1900” in [African Voices of the Global Past](#). In addition [“Writing About Slavery/Teaching About Slavery”](#) makes it very clear that language matters when discussing the enslavement of Black people, and we should be mindful of what phrasing we use when discussing this time period. If teachers have not already discussed the use of language and changing nature of how Black enslavement is discussed, it might be useful to have this conversation with students at this point.

The teacher may want to inform students that some scholars are beginning to categorize and call “slavery” in West Africa *Western African Servitude*.

By the end of this reading, students should understand just how **ubiquitous** the practice of enslaving other people was in the Medieval Mediterranean world.

Exit Ticket:

Optional exit ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Homework:

1. Have students practice with their map of Africa. They should be able to name all the countries on the map by the end of the unit.

Have students read "[Unearthing the Truth](#)," an interactive article from *The Economist*, if you want to discuss how we can “reimagine” Africa in the next lesson.

Students should note:

- Three take-aways from the article (three main points)
- Three connections they made with something they already knew
- Three questions they have

Day 11: Decolonizing History of Africa

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of what decolonizing the history of Africa means and why it is important to do so.

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Decolonizing History of Africa worksheet
 - ◆ [.pdf worksheet](#)
 - ◆ [.docx worksheet](#)
- [Decolonizing History in Africa](#) website
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#) to complete daily or give to them one each day.

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Have students share new information they have learned about Africa. There is a warm-up section on their [worksheet for today](#). The teacher should read the instructions to students and then have them share if they are comfortable.

Students can start by saying “I used to believe _____ but now I know _____”

Mini Lecture/Instructions:

1. (Optional) If the article ["Unearthing the Truth"](#) was assigned, the teacher should take a moment to go over the article with the class. This would be a good opportunity to discuss how context impacts historical interpretations and how history/historiography changes over time.

2. Ask students if they know what “decolonizing” means. Walk students through the definition and then ask them what it means to decolonize history.

3. Read the following instructions to students regarding today’s activity:

Recently, more scholars have sought to reassess the histories of previously colonized regions like Africa and “decolonize” their histories by focusing on Indigenous knowledge and sources. Much of the history of Africa was written by European historians viewing Africa through the lens of colonialism, shaping a misguided view that Africa was backward or lacked true “civilization.” In this activity, you will look for evidence that refutes old, imperial assumptions about Africa.

Activity - Decolonizing Africa:

1. Have students open up [Decolonizing the History of Africa worksheet](#).

Students should complete the activity using the information found [here](#) (link is also on student worksheet).

Debrief:

Lead students in a whole class discussion of the following three questions. Encourage students to take notes or divide class in three and chart the answers. Clear up any misconceptions as needed.

- Why do you think the false assumptions about Africa persisted for so long (and sometimes still persist today)?
- Why is it important to “decolonize” old histories of Africa? How can including more Indigenous perspectives and histories help this process?
- To what extent did medieval African states demonstrate innovation, sophistication, and interactions in a wider network of global interaction?
- In what way can Afrofuturism as a genre decolonize African History?

Exit Ticket:

Optional exit ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Homework:

Students should go back and look at the Afrofuturist work from previous lessons and jot down any specific references to Africa that they learned about from this lesson.

Days 12-13: Slavery in the United States Analysis

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The Middle Passage
- Slavery in the United States

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Days 12-13 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- [Blank Map of Africa](#)
- Introductory video [African American History](#) from PBS Learning Media
- [The 1619 Project: Born on the Water](#) by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith (video read-aloud)
- [Middle Passage Analysis slide worksheet](#) [.pptx]
- Slavery Image Analysis slide worksheet
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- Optional reading: “Slavery in the American South” by the unit author
 - ◆ [.pdf reading](#)
 - ◆ [.docx reading](#)
- Homework readings: Poetry from [The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story](#)
 - ◆ 1662: “Daughters of Azimuth” by Nikky Finney
 - ◆ 1682: “Loving Me” by Vievee Francis
 - ◆ 1740: “A Ghazalled Sentence After ‘My People ... Hold On’ by Eddie Kendricks
 - ◆ 1740: “The Negro Act of 1740” by Terrance Hayes
 - ◆ 1791: “Other Persons” by Reginald Dwayne Betts
 - ◆ 1830: “We as People” by Cornelius Eady
 - ◆ 1850: “A Letter to Harriet Hayden” by Lynn Nottage
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

1. Ask students to name as many African countries as they can.

- First list them on a piece of paper
- Next put them on the map
 - [Blank Map of Africa](#)

2. Next, show this [introductory video](#) to put students in the mindset to study enslaved people's lives.

Activity 1 - Born on the Water Story

1. Teachers should ask students if they have ever heard of the Middle Passage. Next, tell students that today they will learn about the Middle Passage.

2. Teacher will read *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water* story out loud to students.

3. As the teacher reads the story, students should take notes or sketch notes about the story. To guide students note taking, have them consider the following questions:

- How does the girl feel about not being able to trace her ancestral roots?
- Where is West Central Africa? What did the land look like? What did the language sound like?
- What did the ship the White Lion look like to the Africans who were forced aboard? What did they feel like?
- If the year 1619 were an image, what would it look like to enslaved Africans and to those still in Africa?
- What might the Middle Passage have felt like?
- What might the resilience and survival of enslaved Africans in America have looked like?
- What does it look like to be proud of who you are? What does it look like to be proud of being a Black American?

4. After the story is over, the teacher will ask students if they have any questions and clarify any student misunderstandings.

5. Next the teacher should ask students what they learned about what life was like for enslaved Africans in the United States. Have students summarize/describe these four sections of the book:

- Life in Africa
- Middle Passage
- Enslavement in the U.S.
- After Enslavement

Activity 2 - Middle Passage Analysis:

1. Next students will complete the [Middle Passage Analysis](#).

- View the slides with students to explain how to complete them. Students should fill out the first two parts of the KWL chart before they begin.
- Once students are finished, ask if students need any clarification on any of the images and have them go back and complete the KWL chart.

Activity 3 - Slavery Analysis:

1. Next let students know they will do the same type of activity to learn about what slavery was like in the United States.
2. First, have students analyze a painting by Hale Woodruff together as a class.. Explain: “In 1938, Alabama’s Talladega College commissioned acclaimed African American artist Hale Woodruff to paint six large-scale murals portraying the Amistad mutiny and its aftermath, as well as the founding of Talladega College.” Ask students what this image tells them about slavery.
3. Explain that students will look at a series of images, similar to what they did for the middle passage activity, and try to determine what slavery was like in the United States based on the images they see. Images link to descriptions that students will be prompted to read. Again students should complete the KWL chart.
4. Once they have gone through the images, students should go back and finish the KWL chart.

Optional Reading: Another option is to read as a class the overview “Slavery in the American South” by the unit author and hold a class discussion. Students can take notes on the discussion on the reading.

Debrief:

1. Debrief with students about what they learned about the Middle Passage and slavery. Clear up any misunderstandings students may have.
2. Once the teacher has given students a brief overview of 18th and 19th century Black America, the teacher will introduce students to the key figures they will study and the unit argumentative essay topic: *To what extent do 18th and 19th century African Americans’ liberatory practices embody Afrofuturist tenets?*

Homework:

1. Students will read 3 out of 6 of the following poems from *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* and reflect on what it tells them about slavery and its legacies:

- 1662: “Daughters of Azimuth” by Nikky Finney
- 1682: “Loving Me” by Vievee Francis
- 1740: “A Ghazalled Sentence After ‘My People ... Hold On’ by Eddie Kendricks
- 1740: “The Negro Act of 1740” by Terrance Hayes
- 1791: “Other Persons” by Reginald Dwayne Betts
- 1830: “We as People” by Cornelius Eady
- 1850: “A Letter to Harriet Hayden” by Lynn Nottage

2. Students can use their [Unit Note Catcher](#) to record reflections.

Exit Ticket:

Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol [[Downloadable PowerPoint](#) | [View-only Google Slides](#)]

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Day 14: Arnold Gragston: Proto-Afrofuturist?

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- How enslaved and other Black people resisted being dehumanized
- The difficulties experienced by those enslaved
- Ways in which enslaved people remained resilient, despite the situation they were forced into and the difficulties they faced.

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Days 14-16 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- [Gameboard #1: Arnold Gragston](#) [.pdf]
- Proto-Afrofuturism Semiotics worksheet (embedded in the gameboard)
 - ◆ [.pdf worksheet](#)
 - ◆ [.docx worksheet](#)
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

Ask students to answer one of the following questions:

- What circumstances would inspire you to take great risks?
- What circumstances would inspire you to take risks for someone you love?
- What circumstances would inspire you to take risks for someone you did not know who was fleeing from injustice?
- What would you sacrifice for freedom?
- What would you sacrifice for the freedom of someone you love?
- What would you sacrifice for the freedom of someone you did not know who was fleeing from injustice?
- Are there people in the world today who are fleeing from injustice or war and need help? What can people do to help refugees? What might you do?

Activity:

1. Instruct students that over the course of the week they will conduct research on African Americans who fought for their rights in unique and innovative ways for the time they were living.

The goal of the research is to determine if their actions can be defined as proto-Afrofuturism, and why or why not.

Students will complete their research by individually working on a “gameboard” about two African American people who fought for freedom either in the 18th or 19th century.

2. Provide students with access to [gameboard #1: Arnold Gragston](#).

Debrief:

Discuss as a class:

- What did you learn about Arnold Gragston? In what ways does he embody proto-Afrofuturism? In what ways does he not?
- Can you think of anyone else during this time frame who may embody proto-Afrofuturism?

Exit Ticket:

Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

- [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Day 15: Harriet Tubman: Proto-Afrofuturist?

Lesson Objectives

Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of:

- The difficulties experienced by those enslaved
- The ways in which enslaved people remained resilient despite the situation they were forced into and the difficulties they faced

Lesson Materials & Resources

- Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)
 - ◆ [.pdf document](#)
 - ◆ [.docx document](#)
- Days 14-16 Slides
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)
- [Gameboard #2: Harriet Tubman](#) [.pdf]
- Exit Ticket (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)
 - ◆ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
 - ◆ [View-only Google Slides](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up:

Ask students to answer one of the following questions, they should answer a different question than the day before.

- What circumstances would inspire you to take great risks?
- What circumstances would inspire you to take risks for someone you love?
- What circumstances would inspire you to take risks for someone you did not know who was fleeing from injustice?
- What would you sacrifice for freedom?
- What would you sacrifice for the freedom of someone you love?
- What would you sacrifice for the freedom of someone you did not know who was fleeing from injustice?
- Are there people in the world today who are fleeing from injustice or war and need help? What can people do to help refugees? What might you do?

Activity:

1. Remind students that they are in the midst of conducting research on African Americans who fought for

their rights in unique and innovative ways for the time they were living.

The goal of the research is to determine if their actions can be defined as proto-afrofuturism, why or why not.

Students will complete their research by individually working on a “gameboard” about three African American people who fought for freedom either in the 18th or 19th century.

2. Provide students with access to [gameboard #2: Harriet Tubman](#).

Debrief:

Discuss as a class:

- What did you learn about Harriet Tubman? In what ways does she embody proto-Afrofuturism? In what ways does she not?
- Can you think of anyone else during this time frame that may embody proto-Afrofuturism?

Exit Ticket:

Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol *(Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.)*

- [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)
- [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Homework:

Choose one moment, scene, or person from Gragston or Tubman’s life story to represent visually. Choose an element of their life that most relates to an Afrofuturist aesthetic, theme, or figure that we've encountered in the beginning of this unit. Draw, paint, sketch, animate, or otherwise illustrate a piece of their life story. You can be as creative as you'd like.

Day 16: Revisiting Afrofuturism and the Mundane

Lesson Objective
Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of: Argumentative writing
Lesson Materials & Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ .pdf document ◆ .docx document → Day 16 Slides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Downloadable PowerPoint ◆ View-only Google Slides → Argumentative Essay Outline Guide handout [.pdf] → Essay in "A Past Unremembered: The Transformative Legacy of the Black Speculative Imagination" Exhibition Catalog (pages 1-11) → Exit Ticket (<i>Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Downloadable PowerPoint ◆ View-only Google Slides
Lesson Activities
<p><u>Warm-up:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students to recall their definition of Afrofuturism. If they cannot, have them take out their notes and share out the definition. 2. Once you have the definition of Afrofuturism, lead students into a discussion of W. E. B. Du Bois and proto-Afrofuturism. Ask students to provide a definition for this as well. <p><u>Mini Lesson:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead students in a discussion of the two 18th/19th century abolitionists they studied. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ask students if they found evidence of them being “proto-afrofuturist” → Have students compare their findings and discuss how they answered the essential questions. → Remind students of Martine Syms and the mundane Afrofuturist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Students should share the definition and the teacher should write it on the board. → Teacher should next ask students if they consider any of the abolitionists they studied “mundane Afrofuturists.” Why or why not? <p><u>Activity:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher will go over the prompt for the argumentative essay. The teacher can use the slides to help students understand how to craft a strong thesis and introduction paragraph or use their own techniques.

[This handout](#) may be helpful.

Afrofuturism is currently present in a variety of contexts, including music videos, academic texts, and museums. Martine Syms, a visual artist and writer, positions her 2015 *Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto* as a critical analysis, urging Black artists and activists to reshape, redefine, and recreate the dominant norms of Afrofuturism. Syms proposes an Afrofuturist perspective that downplays space adventures and otherworldly technological phenomena. Instead, she modifies Afrofuturism to include the more "mundane" advancements Black people are making on Earth in order to envision a more equitable space for future Black livelihood.

Task: Responding to Syms' call, write a 1-2 page argumentative paper explaining why a writer, activist, and/or other individual of your choice from the 18th and 19th centuries should be considered a proto-Afrofuturist. In your paper, describe how your chosen individual incorporates both the mundane and fantastical aspects of Afrofuturism into their life and/or body of work.

*The teacher may need to take the time to define "fantastical" for students.

2. The teacher should next tell the class they are going to read about a few more 18th-19th century African Americans who may have embodied Afrofuturist tenets. The teacher should instruct students to take notes, as these examples may help them with their paper.

3. Teacher will next have students read [this essay](#) (pages 1-11 only); The teacher should read the essay out loud (pgs 5-6) to point students to important parts of the text that point to a more expansive view of Afrofuturism and link its beginning to an earlier date than the 20th century.

4. There are nine 19th century African Americans featured in the readings (on their own pages). Teachers can jigsaw, gallery walk, or assign one reading to pairs to read. As students read the brief descriptions, they should consider how these people could be considered Afrofuturists. Students should take notes on the people they learn about. Students should share out their ideas with their classmates.

Exit Ticket:

Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (*Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.*)

→ [Downloadable PowerPoint](#)

→ [View-only Google Slides](#)

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)

Homework:

1. Students will complete the essay reading they did not finish in class.

2. Students should make a list of any artists, activists, writers, etc. they might consider "mundane Afrofuturists."

Day 17: Argumentative Essay Writing Workshop Summary of Lesson Themes

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
Students will demonstrate a developing knowledge of: How to write and revise an argumentative essay
Lesson Materials & Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Optional Afrofuturism Unit Note Catcher (Students can use this one document to take notes for the entire unit)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ .pdf document◆ .docx document→ Argumentative Essay Outline Guide handout [.pdf]→ Argumentative Essay Rubric and Student Feedback Worksheet<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ .pdf rubric◆ .docx rubric→ Exit Ticket (<i>Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.</i>)<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Downloadable PowerPoint◆ View-only Google Slides
Lesson Activities
<p><u>Warm-up:</u></p> <p>If students will write in class, consider having students do a mindful activity for at least a minute before they start. Alternatively, teachers may choose to make the essay-writing a take-home project.</p> <p><u>Mini Lesson:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review thesis writing with students.2. Go over the argumentative essay outline and rubric with students. <p><u>Activity:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The teacher can decide if the students should write the essay in class or if they should write a rough draft in class, and exchange essays for peer review and complete revisions. <p><u>Exit Ticket:</u></p> <p>Optional Exit Ticket: Heart + Head + Conscience + Wonder Protocol (<i>Please note this is a slideshow for all the exit tickets for a total of 14. You can assign all slides at once and remind students to complete them daily or give them one each day.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Downloadable PowerPoint→ View-only Google Slides

Afrofuturism Then and Now

Unit by Team NZINGA, part of the 2022 cohort
of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

1619 | Education Network

* This exit ticket protocol is adapted from the [Head, Heart, Conscience protocol from Facing History & Ourselves](#)