

# A Bronzeville Story

## Lesson 3: Conversation in the Round

### Focus Questions

Why did African Americans from the South choose to relocate in Chicago during the Great Migration? What challenges and opportunities did new migrants encounter in Chicago during the 1940s?

### Core Understandings

Students will understand why African Americans left the rural South during the Great Migration and what factors led them to relocate in Chicago. They will understand that new migrants faced challenges as well as opportunities here.

### Knowledge

Students will know how Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood evolved. They will know why over 500,000 African Americans chose to relocate in Chicago between 1916 and 1970. They will know how prejudice manifested itself in the North in the 1940s.

### Skills

Students will use their language arts skills to express their opinions and formulate questions for personal and collective inquiry.

### Common Core ELA Standards

CCSSR1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.  
CCSSR3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.  
CCSS.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### ISBE Social Science Standards

Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the US.  
Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the US, and other nations.  
Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the US.  
Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the US.

### In This Lesson

Through a group discussion, students will identify the circumstances and causes of prejudice posed in *A Bronzeville Story* and be challenged to evaluate the differing attitudes of the various characters. The story elements of dramatic tension and conflicts/problems are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Beatrice Quatroke.



## Activity

If possible have students arrange their chairs in a circle.

Read aloud to the class Chapter 3 of *A Bronzeville Story*. [http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/A\\_Bronzeville\\_Story\\_by\\_Pamela\\_Dell.pdf](http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/A_Bronzeville_Story_by_Pamela_Dell.pdf) Then review with the class the background information for the story. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/bronzeville/background.php>

Conduct a conversation in the round about race and prejudice in 1940s Chicago.

Discussion questions might include:

- 1) Why was Lurlene angry?
- 2) In what ways was the North not free for all citizens?
- 3) What was the covenant discussed in the story (page 10) and was it fair? What should determine where people are allowed to live?
- 4) What attitudes did the different characters have about the unfair circumstances they faced in Chicago?
- 5) How does a person's attitude affect their ability to cope with or perhaps change their circumstances?
- 6) Why was Lurlene unfriendly at first to her cousins from the South?
- 7) How did music bridge the gap between the cousins?
- 8) What positive things did Penny and her family find in the North?

## Materials & Resources

- *A Bronzeville Story*:  
[http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/A\\_Bronzeville\\_Story\\_by\\_Pamela\\_Dell.pdf](http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/A_Bronzeville_Story_by_Pamela_Dell.pdf)
- *A Bronzeville Story* background information:  
<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/bronzeville/background.php>

## Instructional Notes

Try to help students facilitate their own discussion as much as possible by allowing them think time to formulate their own questions. This can be done at the beginning of class or as a Home Connection before the lesson.

## Extension Activities

Play the music of blues and jazz artists who also migrated from the South to the North such as Louis Armstrong, Joseph “King” Oliver, Duke Ellington, Muddy Waters, and Nat King Cole.