

Educational resources for Race in America film series

In the winter and spring of 2018 KERA is airing several PBS documentaries dealing with the racial and social history of ethnic minorities in the United States. Three films are devoted to the lives and work of civil rights activists also known for other work: writers James Baldwin and Lorraine Hansberry and labor organizer Dolores Huerta.

This toolkit provides resources on three documentaries and background information on the lives of the bold Americans they portrayed and some historical context for their work. They also include teaching resources suitable for use in class or at home.

The three documentaries are:

I Am Not Your Negro

This film envisions a book the novelist and essayist James Baldwin never finished. That book was to be a revolutionary and personal account of the lives and successive assassinations of three men he admired: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. The film examines race in America through archival video of Baldwin's speeches and interviews and makes the case that the urgency of civil rights concerns can still be seen in movements like Black Lives Matter.

Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes | Feeling Heart

This film is the first in-depth presentation of playwright Lorraine Hansberry's complex life, using her personal papers and archives, including home movies and rare photos. The film explores the influences that shaped Hansberry's childhood, art and activism. Family, friends and colleagues share their personal memories of Hansberry, offering an intimate look at a woman who was, as Sidney Poitier says in the film, "reaching into the essence of who we were, who we are, and where we came from." The film title comes from Hansberry's view that "one cannot live with sighted eyes and feeling heart and not know or react to the miseries which afflict this world."

Dolores: The Story of Dolores Huerta

With intimate and unprecedented access, this film tells the story of Dolores Huerta, among the most important, yet least-known, activists in American history. Co-founder of the first farmworkers union with Cesar Chavez, she tirelessly led the fight for racial and labor justice, becoming one of the most defiant feminists of the 20th century.

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will become acquainted with the lives of James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry and Dolores Huerta and understand the importance of their civil rights advocacy.
- Students will understand the American historical context of their civil rights work.
- Students will appreciate the contributions of two great writers, Hansberry and Baldwin, in spite of professional challenges they faced. They also will learn about Huerta's contributions to workers' rights despite her gender in a movement led by men.

LORRAINE HANSBERRY

Playwright, Journalist, Activist
(1930 - 1965)

Lorraine Hansberry is best known as the author of the award-winning play *A Raisin in the Sun*, which opened on Broadway 1959 as the first play written by an African-American woman to appear on Broadway. With its black director and cast, it presented fully-drawn characters and dealt with frustrations of black Americans struggling to find their place in the American Dream. Hansberry grew up in a middle-class family in Chicago that attempted to move into a neighborhood with covenants to prevent black families from buying homes. The action led to a lawsuit, *Hansberry v. Lee*, which went to the U.S. Supreme Court.



[Lorraine Hansberry Literary Trust](#) website

Includes:

- Information on her life and work, including numerous quotes from Hansberry and an essay “Born Black and Female” by her ex-husband Robert Nemiroff after she died
- Secondary resources, including a list of books for young readers about Hansberry
- Links to research resources, including the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, the repository for Hansberry’s papers

[Lorraine Hansberry Biography](#) from the Chicago Public Library

Includes (in addition to the biography from the library in her hometown:

- Discussion questions for *A Raisin in the Sun*
- Background and criticism of the play
- Historical context of the play
- Information on housing and race in Chicago

[Lorraine Hansberry: Her Chicago law story](#), from the University of Chicago’s “Library News” newsletter

Includes:

- Detail about the case *Hansberry v. Lee* and its relationship to themes in *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Documentary website for [Sighted Eyes | Feeling Heart](#)

Includes:

- Trailer for the documentary
- Information about the cast and interviewees of the documentary
- Extensive timeline on events related to Hansberry’s life and family, *A Raisin in the Sun*’s production and enduring success and African-American history the 20th century

American Masters website on [Sighted Eyes | Feeling Heart](#)

Includes:

- Biography of Hansberry
- Video on the groundbreaking Broadway casting of *A Raisin in the Sun*, which provided a rare opportunity for black artists like actors Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee and director Lloyd Richards
- Quotes from Hansberry and her writing

Poetry Foundation site's [“Harlem,” By Langston Hughes](#), source of the title *A Raisin in the Sun*

Includes:

- Text of the poem from which the line “a raisin in the sun” is taken

PBS LearningMedia teaching resources for [Lorraine Hansberry: Sighted Eyes | Feeling Heart](#)

Includes:

- Video clips from the *Sighted Eyes | Feeling Heart* documentary on Hansberry’s writing process, the relationship between her writing and political activities, home ownership and the American Dream during Jim Crow, the American Dream deferred, and theater as protest.
- Teaching tips, student handout and discussion questions on the Hansberry family’s experience during the Jim Crow period in buying a home in a white neighborhood.

PBS LearningMedia site on [A Raisin in the Sun Revisited: The Raisin Cycle at CenterStage](#)

This collection of videos includes a full clip of *A Raisin in the Sun Revisited*, a documentary capturing the ways in which three potent plays, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), *Clybourne Park* (2010) and *Beneatha’s Place* (2013) all advance the discussion of race in America. *Clybourne Park* and *Beneatha’s Place*, both based on different characters in Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* were performed in repertory as The Raisin Cycle at Baltimore’s Center Stage in the spring of 2013. This documentary explores the history and legacy of *A Raisin in the Sun* and takes viewers behind the scenes of two major theatrical productions mounted simultaneously.

Digital Public Library of America’s [Primary Source Set on A Raisin in the Sun](#)

Includes:

- Teaching Guide: Exploring *A Raisin in the Sun*
- Succinct synopsis of the play
- Archival photos
- Link to a teaching guide from New York Times Learning Network that juxtaposes excerpts from *A Raisin in the Sun* with news stories about civil rights issues

National Endowment for the Humanities’ lesson plan [A Raisin in the Sun: The Quest for the American Dream](#)

Includes:

- Guiding questions
- Learning objectives
- Preparation instructions
- Assessment
- Lesson activities
- Activity worksheets
- Links to additional related resources

JAMES BALDWIN

Writer, Orator, Activist
(1924 - 1987)

James Baldwin was born in New York City and began his writing career there. He moved to Paris in his 20s after he became disillusioned with the treatment of black people in America, and he split the rest of his life between the United States and France, where he died in 1987. His writing and activism – for civil rights, including gay rights – were inextricable. His many well-known works include *Giovanni's Room*, which boldly explored homosexuality and bisexuality in the mid-1950s, and *The Fire Next Time*, a book of two essays about racial tensions and injustice. In the primary essay, which also became known as “The Fire Next Time,” Baldwin wrote:



Freedom is hard to bear. It can be objected that I am speaking of political freedom in spiritual terms, but the political institutions of any nation are always menaced and are ultimately controlled by the spiritual state of that nation. We are controlled here by our confusion, far more than we know, and the American dream has therefore become something much more closely resembling a nightmare, on the private, domestic, and international levels. Privately, we cannot stand our lives and dare not examine them; domestically, we take no responsibility for (and no pride in) what goes on in our country; and, internationally, for many millions of people, we are an unmitigated disaster.

[James Baldwin](#) entry on [britannica.com](#)

Includes:

- Links to related articles on American literature
- Links to articles on Baldwin's best-known works
- Suggested reading and links to sites external to [britannica.com](#)

[James Baldwin](#) entry on the website of African American Literature Book Club

Includes:

- Biographical information
- Links to information on books by and about James Baldwin

[About Baldwin](#) page on the James Baldwin Project website

Includes:

- Quick bites about his life and professional accomplishments
- Images of the Baldwin U.S. postage stamp and his face on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1963

[James Baldwin](#) on [Biography.com](#)

Includes:

- Accessible biographical information
- Video clips about Baldwin's life
- NOTE: The site includes ads in video and display formats

Documentary website for [I Am Not Your Negro](#)

Includes:

- Trailer and clip from the documentary
- Discussion question based on the documentary

Documentary website for [James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket](#), a film from American Masters on PBS that was broadcast in 1989 and 2013

Includes:

- Biography and timeline of Baldwin's life
- Video clips of Baldwin speaking
- Video on Baldwin's civil rights activism
- Video clip of the documentary

["Why James Baldwin's 'A Talk To Teachers' Remains Relevant 54 Years Later"](#) from WBUR public radio in Boston (October 2017)

Includes:

- Recording and transcript of the 2017 WBUR interview with writer and former teacher Clint Smith
- Link to Baldwin's 1963 essay "A Talk To Teachers," in *The Saturday Review*, on the responsibilities and difficulties of teaching unflinchingly about American history and its context for current events (which were the early days of the U.S. civil rights movement when Baldwin wrote the essay)

[Curriculum guide for *I Am Not Your Negro*](#)

Includes:

- Extensive biography of James Baldwin with hyperlinked footnotes
- 13 lesson plans on James Baldwin's life and work and their historical context
- Video lesson prompts related to the lesson plans
- Short biographies of Medgar Evers, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X with information on their relationships with and importance to James Baldwin
- An essay, "The Influence of Educators, Arts, and Culture on James Baldwin"
- An essay, "Baldwin and the Importance of Letters"
- An essay, "France as a Haven for African Americans"
- An essay, "Major Organizations during the Civil Rights Movement"
- An essay, "World Events during the Life of James Baldwin"
- An essay, "Where Do We Go From Here?"

PBS LearningMedia teaching resources with [James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket](#)

Includes:

- Video clips from the documentary *The Price of the Ticket*
- Support materials, including background essays, discussion questions and teaching tips
- Links to related LearningMedia resources on African American history

Digital Public Library of America's [Primary Source Set: *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin](#)

Includes:

- Teaching Guide: Exploring *The Fire Next Time*, which includes complex discussion questions, tips for primary source analysis and classroom activities
- Archival photos, news stories and video clips about Baldwin and events and issues in the U.S. civil rights movement

[I Am Not Your Negro film discussion guide](#)

Includes:

- Film summary and themes
- Discussion questions

DOLORES HUERTA

Civil Rights Activist, Labor Organizer, Advocate for women and children
(1930 -)

Dolores Huerta was raised in New Mexico and California by her single mother, although she kept in touch with her father, a farm worker and miner who became a labor leader and state legislator in New Mexico. After a brief stint as a teacher, she founded the Agricultural Workers Association and later co-founded the National Farm Workers Association with César Chávez and Gilbert Padilla. The NFWA later became the United Farm Workers, which made headlines in the mid-60s for organizing a boycott and workers' strike that led to an historic agreement with grape-growers that addressed working conditions and pay. Huerta also did groundwork toward passage of the 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. She is credited with coining the phrase, "Sí se puede."



[Dolores Huerta Foundation website](#)

Includes:

- Biography of Dolores Huerta
- Education programs on student advocacy
- Links to student advocacy and civil rights organizations

[Dolores Huerta](#) biography from the National Women's History Museum

Includes:

- Succinct biography
- Links to other sites on Huerta and her work

[Dolores Huerta](#) on the Makers website about accomplished women

Includes:

- 14 video clips of Dolores Huerta speaking about her life, work and inspirations for activism
- Brief biography

[Dolores Huerta](#) on Biography.com

Includes:

- Accessible biographical information
- Quick facts of her life
- NOTE: The site includes ads in video and display formats

Documentary website for [Dolores: The Story of Dolores Huerta](#)

Includes:

- Information on the film (which is coming in late March)

Filmmaker's website for [Dolores: The Story of Dolores Huerta](#)

Includes:

- Trailer from the documentary
- Press photos of Dolores Huerta

["Dolores Huerta: The Civil Rights Icon Who Showed Farmworkers 'Sí Se Puede',"](#) story from NPR

[“The new documentary ‘Dolores’ has a few lessons for the #resistance,”](#) story from the Washington Post

PBS LearningMedia site on [Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and Farm Workers' Rights](#)

Includes:

- Video about the farmworkers movement
- Links to related videos and other content

PBS LearningMedia collection of videos on [Prejudice and Pride | The Latino Americans](#)

Includes:

- An hour-long documentary about the civil rights struggles that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s for Latino Americans.
- Links to chapters within the documentary

PBS LearningMedia site on the PBS [Latino Americans](#) documentary series

Includes:

- Webinar for using the 2013 documentary in social studies classes
- A dozen full lesson plans on topics from “Who are Latinos?” to “Identity, Immigration and Economics: Involuntary Deportations of the 1930s” to “Stereotypes vs. Statistics” to “Organizing the Farm Worker Movement”
- Video clips on numerous topics, including the Mexican-American War, deportations, voter mobilization in Texas and historical figures like Juan Seguín to name a few.
- Link to the *Latino Americans* documentary website, which includes an education section