



Archibald J. Motley Jr.,  
*Street Scene Chicago*, 1936. Oil on canvas,  
36 x 42 inches (91.4 x 106.7 cm). Private Collection,  
New York, New York. © Valerie Gerrard Browne.

# THE ART OF ARCHIBALD MOTLEY

CONNECT,  
COLLABORATE  
& CREATE

## LESSON PLAN

by Catherine Yackee, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy,  
Chicago Public Schools

## Summary of lesson plan

This unit, “The Man, His Art and The Time: Archibald Motley and Segregated Chicago” for 9th and 10th grade social studies examines the Bronzeville paintings of Archibald Motley. Students will explore how he demonstrated the vibrancy of the neighborhood where he lived in during a time of intense segregation in Chicago. Students will also study the segregation policies that existed in Chicago during the 1920s through the 1940s.

## Big Idea

- Policies of the past can have implications on today.
- In order to understand the past and develop an informed opinion, one must look at multiple types of sources including photographs, artwork, and newspapers.
- Cities are complex regions with numerous models of settlement, which affects the placement of housing, industry and services.
- New developments such as “edge cities,” gentrification and slum renewal policies affect the settlement and population density of urban areas.

## Enduring Questions

- How did artists of the past depict their reality?
- How does this reality conflict with the attitudes of the day?
- What are the political implications for countries/states/cities facing migration?
- What factors and attitudes led to inequality in housing, education and employment in the United States?
- How have artists depicted migration? How do artists visualize the politics of inequality?
- How can artists influence public attitudes toward these concerns?

## Learning Objectives

- Students will understand the history of Chicago segregation policies.
- Students will examine the paintings of Archibald Motley.
- Students will explain how Motley attempted to cross segregation barriers through his artwork.
- Students will use their knowledge of Motley and the time period he painted in to write an essay examining segregation history in the city of Chicago.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Common Core State Standards</b>	<b>Objective-Students will . . .</b>
<p>College Board Standards <i>Explore models of migration and assess its impact on the economic and political climate of the world</i></p>	<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</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.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.</p>	<p>Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source</p> <p>Summarize the main idea of a primary or secondary source Assess the key details of a source and construct an argument based on the source</p> <p>Using context clues in readings, students will be able to extrapolate meaning of content specific vocabulary</p> <p>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science</p> <p>Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text</p>

## Lesson Plan Activities

**Length: The unit will encompass one block of classroom instruction (102 minutes).**

1) Students will take part of a “gallery walk” of two of Archibald Motley’s paintings- *Street Scene* (1936) and *The Picnic* (1936). During this time, they will record their impressions of the artwork on post it notes and attach them to the reproductions of the pictures.

They will use a variety of “close read” questions as they study the reproductions, including:

- What do you think about in your own life when you look at this picture?
- Where do you think this picture may have been painted? Why do you think that?
- What do you think about or wonder about when you look at this picture?
- What ideas do you have when you look at this picture?
- What big story could you tell about Archibald Motley’s world by looking at this picture?

2) After everyone has completed the walk, students in a group will discuss what themes they noticed in the work.

3) Students will construct a word map for segregation. They will define the word, come up with synonyms and illustrate what the word means to them.

4) Students will complete a short reading on the history of Bronzeville and its place during the era of segregation in Chicago. With partners, students will think/ pair/ share their comments and ideas about the article and its connection to the Motley works, particularly *Street Scene*. Teacher will circulate and listen to conversations to check for understanding.

5) Using the images from this era, students will make comparisons to Motley work and speculate on the following:

Students will conduct “Content Brainstorming,” guided by the following questions:

- How do these pictures relate to the reading about Bronzeville?
- Given the title of the picture, what is the main point the photographer is trying to get across?
- How might these pictures and Motley’s work tell the story of segregation in Chicago?

6) Compare your current “Street Scene” with Motley’s *Street Scene*. What are some images that represent your street scene? How does your street scene compare with Motley’s?

Students will be able to select how to showcase their scene:

- a) They can capture images from their own neighborhoods and create a collage with text to explain how these images affect their hopes, dreams and concerns.
- b) They can use the images to create an information power point with text explaining their images.

7) After viewing some statistics about the current state of segregation, students will write a final essay discussing the subject of segregation and come up with suggestions on how they can continue the work started on desegregating Chicago. They must have a thesis and at least three supporting details supporting their argument.

8) Students will create their own “Street Scene” from 2014. They will use images (taken from their own photographs, newspaper articles, magazines, etc.) and create a collage or power point representing their own current “Street Scene.” Students will present finished product to class.

## Assessments:

### (D)Diagnostic

Students will construct their own definition of segregation using a vocabulary word map. Students will create a word map using “Segregation.” They will define it in their own words and create an illustration demonstrating how the word could be visualized.

### (F)Formative-

Using the images from this era, students will make comparisons to Motley work and speculate on the following:

Students will conduct “Content Brainstorming” and compare Motley’s vision of Bronzeville with photographs taken in Bronzeville during the era of segregation.

### (S)Summative

Students will create a collage or power point constructing their own “Street Scene” from 2014, using their own photographs, newspaper articles, magazines, etc. Students will present finished product to class.

## Works of Art



Archibald J. Motley Jr., *Street Scene*, Chicago, 1936. Oil on canvas, 36 x 42 inches (91.4 x 106.7 cm). Private Collection, New York, New York. © Valerie Gerrard Browne.



Archibald J. Motley Jr., *The Picnic*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 30 x 36 inches (76.2 x 91.4 cm). Collection of the Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. © Valerie Gerrard Browne.

### Key information about the artist:

Students will be introduced to Archibald Motley through lecture. Students will discover that Motley was a painter who was particularly prolific during the Chicago Black Renaissance, a creative movement that blossomed out of the Chicago Black Belt on the city's South Side and spanned the 1930s and 1940s.

Teacher will discuss with students the inspiration behind some of his seminal works and his role in portraying the real "Bronzeville," which differed from the perception of people in other neighborhoods in the city of Chicago.

### Key information about the artist's context:

Students will be able to access the following facts about segregation in Chicago:

- There was a violent history of race relations in Chicago.
- Ethnicities were segregated in Chicago- African Americans were limited to living on the South and West Sides of Chicago.
- Despite the segregationist policies in Chicago, African Americans were able to create a vibrant culture in the city that included art, literature, dance, etc.

### Key information about the works of art:

*Street Scene*, 1936:

Students will read excerpts from *Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist* and discover that Motley was fascinated with the nightlife in the Bronzeville area (page 63). To Motley, the nighttime "Stroll," with its cabarets, restaurants, and theaters was an opportunity to observe and celebrate black life. This area of Chicago centered initially on 35th and State in the 1920s, then later 47th and South Parkway was awash with colorful people and neon signs that fascinated the artist (page 47).

*The Picnic*, 1936:

Students will read excerpts from *Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist* and discover that the mainstream press promoted the idea that even daytime pursuits in the Chicago Bronzeville area were laced with larceny and illicit behaviors (page 53). In *The Picnic*, the artist counters such assumptions by showcasing one type of recreation enjoyed by people in the Bronzeville area.

## List of resources for teachers and students:

- Bogira, Steve. "A Dream Unrealized for African-Americans in Chicago." Chicago Reader [Chicago] 21 Aug. 2013: n. pag. Print.
- Grossman, James R., Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2004. Print.
- "Housing Segregation in 1950's South Side of Chicago." (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 13 Dec. 2014. [http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/slamdunks/raisin/Housing\\_Segregation\\_1950s\\_Chicago.pdf](http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/slamdunks/raisin/Housing_Segregation_1950s_Chicago.pdf)
- Oral history interview with Archibald Motley, 1978 Jan. 23-1979 Mar. 1, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-archibald-motley-11466>.
- Powell, Richard J., ed. *Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist*. Durham: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke U, 2014. Print.
- Comparison of Motley's work with a series of photographs from the Library of Congress helps to further explain the Chicago's segregation. See the following:
- "African American Men in the Lobby of the Chicago Colored Y.M.C.A." 1915. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C. Library of Congress. Web. 13 Dec. 2014. <<http://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3c30000/3c37000/3c37800/3c37807r.jpg>>.
- Kubrick, Stanley. "An African American Woman and Several Children Sitting on a Bed in an Apartment." 1949. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C. Library of Congress. Web. 13 Dec. 2014. <<http://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3d00000/3d02000/3d02300/3d02362r.jpg>>.
- "Only Negro Store of Its Kind in the U.S., at 2933 State St., Chicago, Ill. 1899." Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C. Library of Congress. Web. 13 Dec. 2014. <<http://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3b00000/3b09000/3b09400/3b09401r.jpg>>.
- "Whites and Negroes Confronted One Another in Chicago's Northwest Side ... as Negroes Continued Their Drive for Open Occupancy." 1966. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C. Web. 13 Dec. 2014 <<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2005677032/>>

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