

PBS Lesson Series

# ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 17

## Teacher Packet

**How do the ideas in Lawrence's paintings  
of the Great Migration connect to the  
beliefs in the Harlem Renaissance?**

---

**African Americans migrated to have a better life in the North and although some things were better, they were still not treated equally and fairly. So, during the Harlem Renaissance many leaders believed it was time for African Americans to be more vocal and politically active to change the status quo so they could finally live the dreams and ideas depicted in Lawrence's paintings.**

---







Slide 4



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)



















Gist

Structure

Language

Theme

# **The Negro Speaks of Rivers**

**By Langston Hughes**

**I've known rivers:**

**I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of  
human blood in human veins.**

**My soul has grown deep like the rivers.**

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.**

**I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.**

**I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.**

**I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to  
New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all  
golden in the sunset.**

**I've known rivers:**

**Ancient, dusky rivers.**

**My soul has grown deep like the rivers.**

**I've known rivers:**

**I've known rivers ancient as the world  
and older than the flow of human  
blood in human veins.**



## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history

## Language

## Theme

**My soul has grown deep like the rivers.**

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom  
turn all golden in the sunset.**



## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers

## Theme

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy  
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.**

## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

- Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers
- “dawns were young”

## Theme

## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

- Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers
- “dawns were young” = beginning of civilization

## Theme

## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

- Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers
- “dawns were young” = beginning of civilization
- “bathed” = pure & clean

## Theme



**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy  
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.**

## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

- Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers
- “dawns were young” = beginning of civilization
- “bathed” = pure & clean
- “lulled me to sleep” = river is like a mother

## Theme

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy  
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.**

## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

- Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers
- “dawns were young” = beginning of civilization
- “bathed” = pure & clean
- “lulled me to sleep” = river is like a mother
- “raised the pyramids” = great achievement

## Theme

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy  
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.**



## Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

## Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

## Language

- Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers
- “dawns were young” = beginning of civilization
- “bathed” = pure & clean
- “lulled me to sleep” = river is like a mother
- “raised the pyramids” = great achievement
- “Lincoln went down to New Orleans” = Civil War ends slavery

## Theme

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.**

**I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.**

**I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.**

**I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all  
golden in the sunset.**

### Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

### Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people

### Language

Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers  
“dawns were young” = beginning of civilization  
“bathed” = pure & clean  
“lulled me to sleep” = river is like a mother  
“raised the pyramids” = great achievement  
“Lincoln went down to New Orleans” = Civil War ends slavery  
“singing of the Mississippi” = celebrating end of slavery

### Theme

**I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.**

**I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.**

**I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.**

**I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went  
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all  
golden in the sunset.**

**I've known rivers:**

**Ancient, dusky rivers.**

**My soul has grown deep like the rivers.**



### Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

### Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people
- Repetition of “I’ve known rivers” and “My soul has grown deep like the river at the end” conveys importance of relationship between African Americans and history

### Language

Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers  
“dawns were young” = beginning of civilization  
“bathed” = pure & clean  
“lulled me to sleep” = river is like a mother  
“raised the pyramids” = great achievement  
“Lincoln went down to New Orleans” = Civil War ends slavery  
“singing of the Mississippi” = celebrating end of slavery  
“muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset” = hope for greatness with end of slavery

### Theme

**My soul has grown deep like the rivers.**

### Gist

Speaker knows different rivers across the world and history

### Structure

- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- varied stanza lengths and indented lines – looks like a river flowing
- repetition: “I’ve known rivers” – connection to rivers & human history
- repetition: lines start with “I” – emphasizes connection to history
- timeline – history of African American people
- Repetition of “I’ve known rivers” and “My soul has grown deep like the river at the end” conveys importance of relationship between African Americans and history

### Language

Comparison: my soul = deep like the rivers  
“dawns were young” = beginning of civilization  
“bathed” = pure & clean  
“lulled me to sleep” = river is like a mother  
“raised the pyramids” = great achievement  
“Lincoln went down to New Orleans” = Civil War ends slavery  
“singing of the Mississippi” = celebrating end of slavery  
“muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset” = hope for greatness with end of slavery  
“soul...deep like a river” = wisdom and strength in African Americans’ history

### Theme

**For independent practice after this lesson, write a paragraph explaining how Langston Hughes uses structure and language to develop a theme in “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.”**