

Worksheet 2: Jacob Lawrence’s *Migration Series no. 57*

Student Name _____ Date _____

Removing the Mask

Re-read Paul Laurence Dunbar’s [“We Wear the Mask”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=173467) (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=173467>) and Helene Johnson’s [“Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem.”](http://www.aaregistry.com/pdetail.php?id=408) (<http://www.aaregistry.com/pdetail.php?id=408>) Then look again at Jacob Lawrence’s *Migration Series no. 57*. Respond to the questions below.

1. What does the mask symbolize in “We Wear the Mask”?

2. How does the speaker of Dunbar’s poem feel about the mask?

3. In “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem,” what does the man’s raised head suggest about him?

4. How would you compare and contrast the lives and roles of the subjects of Dunbar’s and Johnson’s poems?

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5. How would you compare the subjects of Dunbar’s and Johnson’s poems to the woman in Lawrence’s painting?

6. How can use Dunbar’s symbol of the mask to trace the history of the African-American experience from the late 1800s to 1940, as represented in Johnson’s poem and Lawrence’s painting?
