



## RISE UP! AN AMERICAN CURRICULUM INSPIRED BY HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL



# HURRICANE

By Marc Bamuthi Joseph

### THEME

Embodiment

### LENGTH

Ten 50 min Sessions

### GRADE LEVEL

9-11

### SUBJECT

Social Studies  
History  
Civics

Explore the ways that our bodies collect, hold, and disseminate knowledge as embodiment and social gestures lead to social outcomes.

These lessons are built on a dissection of pre-assigned readings, Hamilton-inspired free writes, and open discussions intended to make connections between historical phenomena and personal narratives. Over the course of the five lessons there is an emphasis on generating figurative language which then becomes the “word bank” for students to access as they move to a culminating assignment which is a personal essay that asks students to consider their own “personal” revolution.

SEE AUTHOR'S NOTE FOR MORE CONTEXT ►

# LESSON OBJECTIVES

## CREATIVE INQUIRIES

**What phenomenas inform revolutions?**

**What are the similarities between cultural and economic revolutions in the United States?**

**What are the conditions and characteristics necessary to initiate a 'personal revolution'?**

**What are our Collective Needs?**

## FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE

Students will know...

- Cotton Revolution
- The Birth of Jazz
- The New Deal
- The Rise of Hip Hop
- The American Revolution

## PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE

Students will be able to...

- Generate figurative language.
- Draw connections and parallels between American revolutions.

## CONCEPTUAL INQUIRY

Students will understand...

- The idea of personal revolution
- Historical phenomena
- Personal narrative
- The value of work.
- Collaboration, trust, and the genius of the freestyle.
- Collectivism: If one falls, we all fail.
- Creation: Creating something out of nothing.

## PERFORMANCES OF UNDERSTANDING

- Journal writings [Journaling for metacognition](#)
- Poems and Personal Essays

## OUTLINE

Session 1: How Much a Dollar Cost?

Session 2: In It Together

Session 3: Rising Up, Leadership in Despair, In It Together

Session 4: We all we got. Making something out of nothing. Can we design freedom?

Session 5: Pulling it all together. Write your way out. Liberty or Death. A Personal Revolution?

## HAMILTON HOOKS

For each lesson you will hook the learner through the following lyrics and songs from Hamilton, An American Musical.

Locate the following songs on Spotify, YouTube, iTunes or your choice platform for music.

**Lesson 1: Non-Stop**

**Lesson 2: Guns and Ships**

**Lesson 3: Right Hand Man**

**Lesson 4: Right Hand Man**

**Lesson 5: The World Was Wide Enough**

## DIFFERENTIATIONS/ CONSIDERATIONS

**American Sign Language versions of Hamilton: An American Musical**

Invite students to watch the ASL versions as a way to ignite a lesson or as a way to close a lesson out. Review ASL version of Ham for Ham before sharing with students.

[Ham 4 Ham NY Deaf Theatre-ASL Gesture version](#)

[Student ASL version](#)

## SESSION 1 OF 5

## HOW MUCH A DOLLAR COST?

“How much a dollar cost?” introduces the idea of revolution, systems and creation of the self. Students begin exploring the cotton revolution with the story of Hamilton linking our knowledge of systems and self.

SESSION  
OVERVIEW

LENGTH  
100 min

GRADE LEVEL  
9-11

SUBJECT  
Social Studies  
History  
Civics

## CREATIVE INQUIRIES

- What is the phenomena behind the Cotton Revolution?
- What are the conditions for personal revolution?
- What is the price of personhood?

## EQUIPMENT

- Projector/ monitor to screen video
- Audio player/ computer speakers to play digital recording of Hamilton Soundtrack

## MATERIALS

- Pre-Lesson Reading: [The Cotton Revolution from the American Yawp](#)
- Student Accordion Journals and Writing Utensils
- Art supplies: markers, drawing pencils, watercolors, washi tape, magazines, glue sticks, etc.

## OUTLINE

- Activity #1: Pre-Read: The Cotton Revolution 15 MIN  
 Activity #2: Today's Hot 16-responding to lyrics 15 MIN  
 Activity #3: Revolutionary Phenomena 15 MIN  
 Activity #4: What is the price of personhood? 30 MIN  
 Activity #5: Discussion Cypher 15 MIN  
 Activity #6: Reflection 15 MIN

## 1 READ & JOURNAL

15 MIN

READ  
The Cotton Revolution



*The reading assignment can be assigned for homework prior to this lesson or done in class*

1. Have students read [The Cotton Revolution from The American Yawp](#)
2. Allow students to free write about the text in their accordion journals.

## 2 RESPONDING TO LYRICS

15 MIN

### READ

Excerpt of Non-Stop  
from Hamilton



1. Have one student read the following aloud. After every line or two, ask another student to explain what they just heard in their own words.

*"Alexander joins forces to with James Madison and John Jay to write a series of essays defending the new U.S. constitution entitled "The Federalist Papers*

*The plan was to write a total of 25 essays, the work divided evenly among the three men.*

*In the end they wrote 85 essays in the span of 6 months.*

*John Jay got sick after writing 5*

*James Madison wrote 29*

*Hamilton wrote the other 51.*

*How do you write like you're running out of time?*

*Write day and night like you're running out of time*

*Every day you fight like you're running out of time*

*How do you write like tomorrow won't arrive?"*

### PLAY

Non-Stop from the  
Hamilton Soundtrack



2. Today's HOT 16: **Play the song "Non-Stop" 01:03-2:04** after students respond to the lyrics. Allow for students to journal (in their accordion journals) any shifts in their thinking.

## 3 REVOLUTIONARY PHENOMENA

15 MIN

### VIEW

Image of Egypt  
Burning



Share the following thoughts with students:

*The colonies have just won the war and Hamilton's practicing law, but he's already unsatisfied. Can you imagine a soldier coming back from the frontlines of a revolution and then having to sit in a courthouse? Boring. Can you imagine the same soldier returning from war and getting the opportunity to SHAPE the government according to the values that he fought for? That was Hamilton. He took the life or death energy of the military battlefield and decided that he was going to be soldier for democracy. He literally started writing and riding for his beliefs. Depending on where you sit, his behavior could be seen as either as heroic or insane.*

Introduce the **Egypt burning image** to support students in making connection between historical revolution and contemporary revolutions. Use a See, Think, Wonder protocol for looking at the following image and have students connect their thinking to the statement above.

**PLAY**  
Non-Stop from the  
Hamilton Soundtrack



### Mini-Writers Workshop

Play the entire version of “Non-Stop” at a legible volume while the students write, and tell them they have to the end of the song to finish the writing prompt/task (about 6 minutes.)

Ask students to write according to the following prompt:

*Write down 10 words from this song that describe you or your ambitions.*

After three minutes add:

*Turn these 10 words into four lines that rhyme.*

Prepare students for the next part of the lesson by asking them to draw an image of the hardest working person they know on the next page of their accordion journals.

## 4 WHAT IS THE PRICE OF PERSONHOOD?

30 MIN

Discussion prompt for critical reflection:

*What’s the name of the hardest working person you know. Does their labor generate dollars, dignity, or both?*

Have students hold this person in their thinking as they move into a deeper discussion on the cotton revolution.

In small groups or pairs have students discuss the reading that was assigned for homework or at the beginning of class:

*What are some things you recall from reading *The Cotton Revolution from The American Yawp*?*

Open the discussion to the whole group. Make sure students consider the REPERCUSSIONS of as many of the following ideas as possible. Bullet points can be used as discussion guideposts or as an attachment they can glue to their accordion journals:

**SHARE**  
Cotton points



- Cotton became so big because there was an opportunity, a willing buyer, the right technology (the cotton gin), and lenders willing to make an investment.
- Cotton production went from 7 bales to 5 million pounds to 500 million pounds in 40 years.
- Cotton represented 55% of the U.S. export market at one point.
- By the 1850’s nearly every dollar of CREDIT offered by Southern banks dealt with some aspect of the cotton market
- 2 BILLION pounds of cotton were produced by the start of the Civil War.
- It can literally be said that the financial wealth of this country was literally built on the cotton industry.
- The cost of that wealth was the removal of Native Americans

- Deforestation
- The rise of slavery from 1790 when there were 654,000 slaves to 1810 when there were 1.1 million slaves to 4 million in 1860, which is like if every single person in the city of Los Angeles were enslaved.
- A permanent warping of the value placed on the body AND labor

## 5 DISCUSSION CYPHER

15 MIN

### PEDAGOGICAL MOMENT

#### What is a Discussion Cypher?

A discussion cypher gathers students together in a circular form either standing or with chairs. Students should be close together, respectfully overlapping their personal space for proximity and connection. Students should lead this process. Teachers can guide the cypher by selecting a student to start the cypher off with a pre selected question or gather questions from students beforehand on the topic at hand. Students discuss interchangeably by beginning their thinking with a selected portion of the question. For example: If you ask the question: Is the cost of our morality truly worth it? The student would start their thinking by saying "the cost of our morality... or... Our morality is worth it..."

### Language generation: Historical Connection with Personal Critical Reflection

**Teacher as Scribe:** During the following discussion cypher, instructors should capture resonant words and phrases that the students use in a very visible way, either writing down spoken phrases verbatim on the board, or if equipped, using a computer and projector to reveal the instructor's dictation as it occurs.

#### Discussion cypher prompt

Select a student to begin the cypher off by reading the following:

*Earlier the question was put forth would you RATHER generate dollars or dignity. The cotton revolution would suggest you can't do both. What do you think? What would a compassionate cotton economy look like? What do you think was the ultimate cost of the cotton revolution? Do you think most Americans believe the price was worth it? Is the cost of our morality truly worth it?*

#### Break the cypher

Allow students to step away from the cypher for 1-2 mins of think and stretch time and reassemble when ready for the next discussion cypher.

#### Discussion cypher prompt 2

*Every revolution comes with a price, but you have to have a vision of what's on the other side. Let's think about this for Hamilton...*

#### Select a new student to begin cypher prompt 2

*What were the costs of his revolution? What did he think was on the other side? What would you sacrifice now to change yourself or your family for the better? What can you imagine for yourself on the other side of change?*

Have students congratulate each other on the cypher.

Next have them copy down from the board as many words and phrases as possible that describe **their** experience.

Verbal prompt to class:

*I've been taking notes for the last 15 minutes and there is a lot of great language here that describes your perspective on the cost of labor, the price of wealth, and the cost of change and revolution.*

Students should use accordion journals to record.

## 6 REFLECTION

15 MIN

### SET-UP 3 MIN

Have students use the next three pages of their accordion journals to make a visual response to the creative inquiries for this lesson. Make sure artistic supplies are out and easily accessible: markers, scissors, magazines, drawing pencils, watercolors, etc.

### PROMPT 20 MIN

*What is the phenomena behind the Cotton Revolution?*

*What are the conditions for personal revolution?*

*What is the price of personhood?*

### TASK 5-10 MIN

*Make a visual representation for each of the creative inquiries for How Much a Dollar Cost? (Drawing, collage, word collage, tracing, etc)*

## SESSION 2 OF 5

# IN IT TOGETHER

“In it Together” examines the birth of Jazz as a metaphor and marker for revolution.

### SESSION OVERVIEW

LENGTH  
90 min

GRADE LEVEL  
9-11

SUBJECT  
Social Studies  
History  
Civics

### CREATIVE INQUIRIES

- What conditions gave rise to the birth of jazz?
- How are the characteristics of jazz parallel to the ideas of revolution?

### EQUIPMENT

- Projector/ monitor to screen video
- Audio player/ computer speakers to play digital recording of Hamilton Soundtrack

### MATERIALS

- Article: [First Notes: New Orleans and the Early Roots of Jazz](#)
- Images: [Katherine G Johnson](#), [Dorothy Vaughn](#), and [Mary Jackson](#)
- Song: Max Roach’s solo “The Third Eye” [YouTube](#) | [Amazon Music](#)
- Student Accordion Journals and Writing Utensils
- Art supplies: markers, drawing pencils, watercolors, washi tape, magazines, glue sticks, etc.

### OUTLINE

Activity #1: Read and Journal: New Orleans and the Early Roots of Jazz 15MIN  
 Activity #2: Responding to Lyrics 15MIN  
 Activity #3: Revolutionary Phenomena: Jazz as Revolution 30MIN  
 Activity #4: Reflection 30MIN

## 1 READ & JOURNAL

15 MIN

**READ**  
First Notes: New Orleans and the Early Roots of Jazz



**PLAY**  
Max Roach’s “The Third Eye”



*The reading assignment can be assigned for homework prior to this lesson or done in class*

1. Have students read the online article: [First Notes: New Orleans and the Early Roots of Jazz](#)
2. Ask students to list 15 words they’d use to describe the person they trust most in the world. When they’re finished, ask them to circle all the words that they’d also use to describe themselves. Play [Max Roach’s solo “The Third Eye”](#) while students write. (This track can also be found on Spotify or itunes.)



## 2 RESPONDING TO LYRICS

15 MIN

### READ

Excerpt of Guns and Ships from Hamilton



Have one student read the following aloud. After every line or two, ask another student to explain what they just heard in their own words.

*"I'm taking this horse by the reins making redcoats redder with bloodstains and I'm never gonna stop until I make em drop and burn em up and scatter their remains I'm Lafayette watch me engaging em escaping em enragin em, I'm Lafayette..."*

*We can end this war at Yorktown, cut them off at sea, but  
For this to succeed, there is someone else we need...*

*Hamilton!*

*Sir he knows what to do in a trench  
ingenuitive and fluent in French I mean  
sir you're gonna have to use him eventually  
what's he gonna do on the bench, I mean...  
no one has more resilience or matches my practical tactical brilliance  
you wanna fight for your land back  
you need your right hand man back"*

### PLAY

Guns and Ships from Hamilton



Today's HOT 16: Play the song "Guns and Ships" 0:29-1:13 after students respond to the lyrics. Allow for students to journal (in their accordion journals) any shifts in their thinking.

Hold a brief discussion about the lyrics :

***How many of the words did you hear in "Guns and Ships"? Does it matter? Literal transcription is the ultimate arbiter of meaning, but the FEELING might be even more important. Could you use different words and have it mean the same thing? The revolutionary army delivers the final blow through a collision of strategy, luck, and innovation on the fly. These are the same characteristics that are present in jazz!***

## 3 REVOLUTIONARY PHENOMENA: JAZZ AS REVOLUTION

30 MIN

### VIEW

Katherine G Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn, and Mary Jackson.



Show the image of Katherine G Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn, and Mary Jackson.

Read the following statement to the class:

***If a tree falls in a forest and no one's there to hear it, it doesn't make a sound. If LeBron James lived in a rural village with one basketball hoop, he wouldn't be the world's best ball player. Genius in isolation is inert. What gives brilliance its agency is a connection to other beings. Skill is rendered meaningless unless activated through strategic collaboration.***

Ask students to keep this quote and the image in their thinking as they transition into a whole group discussion:

1. Invite students to use their accordion journals to support their thinking during the class discussion.

2. Using a thinking wall, show the succession of learning by asking students to bring back the article they read, their thoughts on Guns and Ships Lyrics, the quote above and the image of Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn and Mary Jackson. Explain that these particular lens are to be used as supports for the understanding the birth of Jazz and the idea of Jazz as a Revolution.

3. Open up the discussion by asking the following:

*What about New Orleans made jazz possible?*

*What about the birth of jazz could you describe as revolutionary?*

4. Continue to encourage a range of voices in the room to address and include the following aspects critical to understanding jazz as a revolution:

- Jazz as among the first American integrations between racial groups.
- Jazz as the first American music.
- Jazz as a social revolution.
- Jazz as an artistic revolution.
- The skills required to make jazz work: Trust, Variation, Aptitude and A sense of freedom

5. Create your Jazz Band: This can be done as diads in conversation or as a visual collage piece or as a physical expressive art piece. This can also be homework for students to explore deeply. There is possibility for students to actually create a jazz band. If they are not musicians they can identify what it is that they create through collaboration and improvisation (Poems? Raps? Comics? Visuals? etc)

*Who would you put in YOUR jazz band? In other words, who in your inner do you feel most comfortable collaborating and improvising with. Write down the additional qualities they possess that would make them a great fit.*

## 4 REFLECTION

30 MIN

### SET-UP <sup>3 MIN</sup>

Have students use the next three pages of their accordion journals to make a visual response to the creative inquiries for this lesson. Make sure artistic supplies are out and easily accessible: markers, scissors, magazines, drawing pencils, watercolors, etc.

### PROMPT <sup>20 MIN</sup>

*Where/when in your life have you felt the most FREE?*

*Is there Jazz in you? What conditions gave rise to the birth of jazz?*

*How are the characteristics of jazz parallel to the ideas of revolution?*

### TASK <sup>5-10 MIN</sup>

1. Reflect and respond accordingly.
2. Have students underline the word, line, or phrase of their writing/drawings that are "most true".
3. If time remains, give students the opportunity to read these highlighted pieces of their writing aloud.

## SESSION 3 OF 5

# RISING UP. LEADERSHIP IN DESPAIR. IN IT TOGETHER

This lesson examines The New Deal through the intersections of Hamilton's life experiences. By the end of this lesson, students are encouraged to respond to the following "how is love a revolutionary act? Is it possible to weaponize love?"-Marc Bamuthi Joseph

## SESSION OVERVIEW

### LENGTH

100 min

### GRADE LEVEL

9-11

### SUBJECT

Social Studies  
History  
Civics

### CREATIVE INQUIRIES

- What are the purposes and outcomes of the New Deal?
- How is Love a revolutionary act?
- Is it possible to weaponize love?

### EQUIPMENT

- Projector/ monitor to screen video
- Audio player/ computer speakers to play digital recording of Hamilton Soundtrack

### MATERIALS

- Student Accordion Journals and Writing Utensils
- Art supplies: markers, drawing pencils, watercolors, washi tape, magazines, glue sticks, etc.
- Article: *Great Depression Leads to a New Deal for the American People*
- Image of Ferguson riots

### OUTLINE

Activity #1: Read and Journal: The Great Depression 15MIN

Activity #2: Responding to Lyrics 15MIN

Activity #3: Revolutionary Phenomena: Today's Revolution 30MIN

Activity #4: Discussion Cypher 20MIN

Activity #5: Reflection 20MIN

## 1 READ & JOURNAL

15 MIN

### READ

Great Depression Leads to a New Deal for the American People



*The reading assignment can be assigned for homework prior to this lesson or done in class*

1. Have students read the online article: *Great Depression Leads to a New Deal for the American People*
2. Allow students to free write about the text in their accordion journals.

## 2 RESPONDING TO LYRICS

15 MIN

### READ

Excerpt of "Right Hand Man" from Hamilton



1. Have one student read the following aloud. After every line or two, ask another student to explain what they just heard in their own words.

*"Any hope of success is fleeting  
How can I keep leading when the people I'm leading keep retreating?  
We put a stop to the bleeding  
As the British take Brooklyn  
Knight takes Rook, but look...*

*we're outgunned...  
outmanned...  
outnumbered...  
Outplanned..."*

### PLAY

Hamilton Soundtrack:  
"Right Hand Man"



2. Today's HOT 16: Play the song "Right Hand Man" 01:19-2:20, after students respond to the lyrics. Allow for students to journal (in their accordion journals) any shifts in their thinking.

## 3 REVOLUTIONARY PHENOMENA: TODAY'S REVOLUTION

30 MIN

### VIEW

Image of Ferguson Riots



1. Show the image of Ferguson riots.
2. Read the following statement to the class:  
*Washington has a reputation for being this incredible leader, but the truth is he's losing and it doesn't look promising. Him against the British basically looked like the protesters in the streets against the Ferguson Police*
3. Ask students to keep this quote and the image in their thinking as they listen to the full track of "Right Hand Man" while writing to following prompt:  
*What are 5 instances when you had your back against the wall and surprised yourself by making it through?*
4. To extend their thinking add the following prompt after they've explored the question above: Write down 2 or 3 instances from history, sports, politics or culture where you were inspired by a person or group that had to overcome the odds.
5. In small groups, have students share out their writing. 1 minute for each person to share.
6. Ask students to use their writing to support their collective knowledge building on the following question:  
*What were some of the landmark pieces of legislation of the New Deal?*
7. Have groups record their knowledge on a large chart paper. Make sure stu-

dents consider as many of the following terms as possible:

- Tennessee Valley Authority Act
- The 21st Amendment
- The National Industrial Recovery Act
- The Public Works Administration
- The WPA
- The National Labor Relations Act
- Social Security

**8. Create:** Have each group create an artistic response\* to the following three questions:

*What did these laws do individually?*

*What crisis were they responding to?*

*Why could these acts be considered revolutionary?*

\*Artistic responses can be anything that can be completed within the allotted time frame: a collage piece, a tableaux, a dance, a rap, a poem, a skit, etc.

## 4 DISCUSSION CYPHER

20 MIN

### PEDAGOGICAL MOMENT

#### What is a Discussion Cypher?

A discussion cypher gathers students together in a circular form either standing or with chairs. Students should be close together, respectfully overlapping their personal space for proximity and connection. Students should lead this process. Teachers can guide the cypher by selecting a student to start the cypher off with a pre selected question or gather questions from students beforehand on the topic at hand. Students discuss interchangeably by beginning their thinking with a selected portion of the question. For example: If you ask the question: Is the cost of our morality truly worth it? The student would start their thinking by saying "the cost of our morality... or... Our morality is worth it..."

### Language generation: Historical Connection with Personal Critical Reflection

**Teacher as Scribe:** During the following discussion cypher, instructors should capture resonant words and phrases that the students use in a very visible way, either writing down spoken phrases verbatim on the board, or if equipped, using a computer and projector to reveal the instructor's dictation as it occurs.

**Discussion cypher prompt:** Select a student to begin the cypher off by responding to the following question:

*What are the critical take-away's as we make sense of the New Deal, Ferguson, and Jazz, and the Cotton Revolution?*

**Break the cypher:** Allow students to step away from the cypher for 1-2 mins of think and stretch time and reassemble when ready for the next discussion cypher.

**Discussion cypher prompt 2:**

*Every revolution comes with a price, but you have to have a vision of what's on the other side.*

Students should use accordion journals to record.

## 5 REFLECTION

20 MIN

### SET-UP 3 MIN

Have students use the next three pages of their accordion journals to make a visual response to the creative inquiries for this lesson. Make sure artistic supplies are out and easily accessible: markers, scissors, magazines, drawing pencils, watercolors, etc.

### PROMPT 20 MIN

1. Write down the names of the people for whom you're most responsible.

2. When you're done, try your best to categorize them in three columns: At the top of one column write the word "intertwined". At the top of the second column write the word "engaged". At the top of the third column write the words "not close".

3. Further explain to students that:

*Each of these columns represents a different level of closeness between you and the people you feel responsible for. In column one, you're putting down the names of people that you feel most tied to, almost like if they're safe, you're safe. Maybe you write down the name of a parent or a brother or a best friend. In column two, you're naming folks that you care about, though you don't provide for their safety. Maybe here, you feel responsible towards a bandmate, or a teammate, or a co-worker and name them here. In the third column, name people you may not be close to at all, but for whom you still feel a responsibility. Maybe you name a great-grandmother who risked everything to migrate here. Or a kid on your block who just lost a sibling.*

### TASK 20 MIN

Discussion Cypher:

*Can you think of a time when someone took responsibility for YOU when you may have been in need? How did that act of compassion change you, them, or the relationship between the two of you?*

## SESSION 4 OF 5

# WE ALL WE GOT. MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING. CAN WE DESIGN FREEDOM?

Students continue the exploration of personal and societal revolution through the works of Jeff Chang and June Jordan. Students make comparisons of the personal revolutions of Tupac and Alexander Hamilton.

## SESSION OVERVIEW

LENGTH  
90 min

GRADE LEVEL  
9-11

SUBJECT  
Social Studies  
History

### CREATIVE INQUIRIES

- What is the shape and impact of personal revolution?

### EQUIPMENT

- Projector/ monitor to screen video
- Audio player/ computer speakers to play digital recording of Hamilton Soundtrack

### MATERIALS

- Student Accordion Journals and Utensils
- Art supplies: markers, drawing pencils, watercolors, washi tape, magazines, glue sticks, etc.
- Article: [June Jordan and a Black Feminist Poetics](#)
- Excerpt of [Jeff Chang's: Can't Stop Won't Stop](#).
- [Tupac's Bio](#)
- [Tupac's Image](#)

### OUTLINE

Activity #1: Read and Journal: June Jordan and Jeff Chang

Activity #2: Responding to Lyrics

Activity #3: Revolutionary Phenomena: The Self as Revolution

Activity #4: Discussion Cypher

Activity #5: Reflection

## 1 READ & JOURNAL

15 MIN

**READ**  
June Jordan and a Black  
Feminist Poetics



Have students read the online article: [June Jordan and a Black Feminist Poetics](#) and [Jeff Chang's: Can't Stop Won't Stop](#). Pps 21-31

**READ**  
Jeff Chang's: Can't Stop  
Won't Stop



Allow students to free write about the text in their accordion journals.

## 2 RESPONDING TO LYRICS

15 MIN

### READ

Excerpt of “Right Hand Man” from Hamilton



1. Have one student read the following aloud. After every line or two, ask another student to explain what they just heard in their own words.

*“How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore and a Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean  
By providence, impoverished, in squalor  
Grow up to be a hero and a scholar?”*

*The ten-dollar Founding Father without a father  
Got a lot farther by working a lot harder  
By being a lot smarter  
By being a self-starter  
By fourteen, they placed him in charge of a trading charter*

*And every day while slaves were being slaughtered and carted  
Away across the waves, he struggled and kept his guard up  
Inside, he was longing for something to be a part of  
The brother was ready to beg, steal, borrow, or barter*

*Then a hurricane came, and devastation reigned  
Our man saw his future drip dripping down the drain  
Put a pencil on his temple, connected it to his brain  
And he wrote his first refrain a testament to his pain  
Well, the word got around, they said, “This kid’s insane man”  
Took up a collection just to send him to the mainland  
“Get your education, don’t forget from whence you came, and  
the world’s gonna know your name, what’s your name man?”*

*Alexander Hamilton  
My name is Alexander Hamilton  
And there’s a million things I haven’t done  
But just you wait...just you wait...”*

### PLAY

Hamilton Soundtrack:  
“Right Hand Man”



2. Today’s HOT 16: **Play the song “Right Hand Man,”** from beginning to 1:32, after students respond to the lyrics. Allow for students to journal (in their accordion journals) any shifts in their thinking.

## 3 REVOLUTIONARY PHENOMENA: TODAY’S REVOLUTION

30 MIN

1. Read the following statement to the class:

***Hamilton’s biography sounds like it could’ve been the inspiration for a Tupac song, or it could have been ripped from Tupac’s biography itself. Hamilton was a rose that grew from concrete. For many people, the struggle that others endured in the past fuels the work they feel they must do in the present. Hamilton was fueled by something***



**SHOW**  
Tupac's Image



**READ**  
Tupac's Bio



### PEDAGOGICAL MOMENT

#### What is a Discussion Cypher?

A discussion cypher gathers students together in a circular form either standing or with chairs. Students should be close together, respectfully overlapping their personal space for proximity and connection. Students should lead this process. Teachers can guide the cypher by selecting a student to start the cypher off with a pre selected question or gather questions from students beforehand on the topic at hand. Students discuss interchangeably by beginning their thinking with a selected portion of the question. For example: If you ask the question: Is the cost of our morality truly worth it? The student would start their thinking by saying "the cost of our morality... or... Our morality is worth it..."

*else. Without a past to connect to or a family to stand with, Hamilton's fuel came from the desire to survive the current moment and to use it to build a future where he broke his own cycle of destitution.*

**2. Show the image of Tupac.** Distribute his bio so students can read up on Tupac's life experience. Allow time for students to **read through his bio** and follow up on with additional resources.

**3. Use the following protocol to unpack the personal revolution of Tupac.** Facilitate thinking through whole group discussion, small groups, or diads.

Motivation:

*What were the motivations for internal revolution?*

Force:

*What forces are at play, physical, social, spiritual and emotional?*

*Change: What changes occurred due to the motivations and forces at play?*

Comparison: Alexander and Tupac

*What are the stakes for Alexander as he's introduced to us? We're aware of all the things he did...what were the stakes of inaction? What are the stakes for Tupac as he's introduced to us? We're aware of the things he did...what were the stakes of inaction?*

**5. Reflective writing.** In accordion journals have students respond\* to the following questions:

*What do you think the 7 most pivotal moments of your life have been thus far. Can you assign a song that was playing or that reminds you of those moments? What is the soundtrack of your life?*

\*Students can respond with writing, poetry, imagery, collage, etc.

**Discussion Cypher:** June Jordan and Today's Revolution

**Teacher as Scribe:** During the following discussion cypher, instructors should capture resonant words and phrases that the students use in a very visible way, either writing down spoken phrases verbatim on the board, or if equipped, using a computer and projector to reveal the instructor's dictation as it occurs.

**Discussion cypher prompt:** Select a student to begin the cypher off by responding to the following questions/statements:

- Hip hop is birthed as much out of ingenuity as organic response to systemic forces.
- June Jordan's ambition of eradicating the intersection.
- Discovery on every corner.
- The idea that LOVE could be an organic response to the architecture around us

Students should use accordion journals to record and reflect after the cypher.

## 4 CRITICAL REFLECTION

30 MIN

### SET-UP 3 MIN

Allow for students to use their accordion journals and articles to support the thematic synthesis of the learning that is taking place.

### PROMPT 20 MIN

*Part 1: What are 10 things we know about the Bronx in 1973.*

*Part 2: What's at stake for people at the edge who DON'T respond with culture? Can it be that living in alignment with your imagination and creativity is a revolutionary act? What does the birth of hip hop have in common with Alexander Hamilton's early years?*

### TASK 20 MIN

*Develop a personal theory of action that supports your personal development inclusive of your hopes, dreams and steps to get there.*

*Theory of Action Template*

### TEMPLATE

Theory of Action



## SESSION 5 OF 5

# PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER. WRITE YOUR WAY OUT. LIBERTY OR DEATH. A PERSONAL REVOLUTION?

In this final lesson in the series called Hurricane, students synthesize their learnings about historical revolutions and personal revolutions. Students critique their own reflections to build out and name the trajectory of their personal revolution.

## SESSION OVERVIEW

### LENGTH

75 min

### GRADE LEVEL

9-11

### SUBJECT

Social Studies

History

Civics

## CREATIVE INQUIRIES

- What understanding do we come to when we synthesize the study of revolutions?
- What would you consider a life WELL lived?

## EQUIPMENT

- Projector/ monitor to screen video
- Audio player/ computer speakers to play digital recording of Hamilton Soundtrack

## MATERIALS

- Student Accordion Journals and Writing Utensils
- Art supplies: markers, drawing pencils, watercolors, washi tape, magazines, glue sticks, etc.

## OUTLINE

Activity #1: Responding to Lyrics 15MIN

Activity #2: Revolutionary Phenomena: Revolutionary Synthesis 30MIN

Activity #3: Critical Reflection 30MIN

## 1 RESPONDING TO LYRICS

15 MIN

### READ

Excerpt of "The World Was Wide Enough" from Hamilton



1. Have one student read the following aloud. After every stanza ask another student to explain what they just heard in their own words.

*I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory  
Is this where it gets me, on my feet, sev'ral feet ahead of me?  
I see it coming, do I run or fire my gun or let it be?*

*There is no beat, no melody  
Burr, my first friend, my enemy  
Maybe the last face I ever see  
If I throw away my shot, is this how you'll remember me?  
What if this bullet is my legacy?*

*Legacy. What is a legacy?*

*It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see  
I wrote some notes at the beginning of a song someone will sing for me  
America, you great unfinished symphony, you sent for me  
You let me make a difference  
A place where even orphan immigrants  
Can leave their fingerprints and rise up  
I'm running out of time. I'm running, and my time's up  
Wise up. Eyes up*

*I catch a glimpse of the other side  
Laurens leads a soldiers' chorus on the other side  
My son is on the other side  
He's with my mother on the other side  
Washington is watching from the other side*

*Teach me how to say goodbye*

*Rise up, rise up, rise up  
Eliza*

*My love, take your time  
I'll see you on the other side  
Raise a glass to freedom...*

**PLAY**

Hamilton Soundtrack:  
"The World Was Wide  
Enough"



**2.** Today's HOT 16: Play the song "The World Was Wide Enough" 1:42-3:49.

**3.** In diads, small groups or whole group lead students to discuss the following:

*Do you think Hamilton has any regrets?*

*What would you consider a life WELL lived?*

*What do you think you'd need to have happened for you to die in peace?*

## 2 REVOLUTIONARY PHENOMENA: REVOLUTIONARY SYNTHESIS

30 MIN

**SHARE**

Circle Chart



**1.** Distribute the circle chart to students. Have them glue or attach to their accordion journals.

**2.** Prompt to fill out this chart:

*What are the characteristics about each of these historical moments that you would consider revolutionary?*

Students should first try to fill out chart individually, and then after about five minutes, Teacher should open the floor and students can raise their hands to offer some of their responses to the prompt.

**3.** In diads have students identify some common traits between the five revolutions. Prompt: Can you identify any of these characteristics within yourself?

**4.** Teacher Summation and context

*Paraphrase the following in your own language*

*Let's examine the writing you've done. Over the last several class periods you've made rhymes, written paragraphs, and free writes, and wrote down new vocabulary words to describe your experiences of these pivotal and revolutionary moments in American history. The order of our examinations and writing could form the basis of a personal essay about your own personal revolutions*

- 1 - a creative refrain about who you are
- 2 - an exploration of what makes you feel most alive or most free and WHO you want around when you're experiencing that feeling
- 3 - how you behaved when your back was against the wall. WHO did you take account for and who took account for you when the chips were down
- 4 - an account of what's at stake if you DON'T act. What would you make if you had EVERYTHING to lose?

**5. Synthesis Writing:** Give the students 15-20 minutes to complete an in-class writing. Instruct them review their journals to access all of the language that they've developed during this unit as a palate of words as they answer the following questions:

*How have you been personally changed by critical, tense filled moments in your life.*

*How did you respond when the stakes were high?*

*What can these other revolutions in American history reveal for us about what it takes to get to the other side?*

**6.** Begin to tell the story of your PERSONAL revolution. Continue to support students to write our their personal revolutions.

## 4 CRITICAL REFLECTION

30 MIN

### SET-UP 3 MIN

- Students will be sharing their accordion journals via gallery style.
- Arrange classroom furniture to create a u-shape or circle.
- Prompt students to share in order to contribute to the ongoing learning of the collective group and to appreciate the hard thinking and creation of their journals.
- Prepare them to share their accordion journals publically by using post-it notes to cover up any parts of their journal that they'd like to keep private.
- If a student opts out of sharing entirely, please respect their wishes.

### PROMPT 20 MIN

Provide each student with a stack of post-it notes to respond to the work of their peers. Encourage students to write affirmations for what they are viewing.

Example:

*I like your use of poetry-*

*I appreciate how you structured your thoughts with images-*

*You have an incredible way of connecting ideas-*

### TASK 20 MIN

Invite students to take time to view each other's work.

## Excerpt from the Hamilton Soundtrack

### ■ NON-STOP

*“Alexander joins forces to with James Madison and John Jay to write a series of essays defending the new U.S. constitution entitled “The Federalist Papers*

*The plan was to write a total of 25 essays, the work divided evenly among the three men.*

*In the end they wrote 85 essays in the span of 6 months.*

*John Jay got sick after writing 5  
James Madison wrote 29  
Hamilton wrote the other 51.*

*How do you write like you’re running out of time?  
Write day and night like you’re running out of time  
Every day you fight like you’re running out of time*

*How do you write like tomorrow won’t arrive?”*

Excerpt from the Hamilton Soundtrack

■ GUNS N' SHIPS

*"I'm taking this horse by the reins making redcoats redder with bloodstains  
and I'm never gonna stop until I make em drop and burn em up and scatter  
their remains I'm Lafayette watch me engaging em escaping em enragin  
em, I'm Lafayette..."*

*We can end this war at Yorktown, cut them off at sea, but  
For this to succeed, there is someone else we need...*

*Hamilton!*

*Sir he knows what to do in a trench  
ingenuitive and fluent in French I mean  
sir you're gonna have to use him eventually  
what's he gonna do on the bench, I mean...  
no one has more resilience or matches my practical tactical brilliance  
you wanna fight for your land back  
you need your right hand man back"*

Excerpt from the Hamilton Soundtrack

■ **RIGHT HAND MAN**

*“Any hope of success is fleeting  
How can I keep leading when the people I’m leading keep retreating?  
We put a stop to the bleeding  
As the British take Brooklyn  
Knight takes Rook, but look...*

*we’re outgunned...  
outmanned...  
outnumbered...  
Outplanned...”*



## Excerpt from the Hamilton Soundtrack

### ■ RIGHT HAND MAN

*“How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore and a  
Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean  
By providence, impoverished, in squalor  
Grow up to be a hero and a scholar?*

*The ten-dollar Founding Father without a father  
Got a lot farther by working a lot harder  
By being a lot smarter  
By being a self-starter  
By fourteen, they placed him in charge of a trading charter*

*And every day while slaves were being slaughtered and carted  
Away across the waves, he struggled and kept his guard up  
Inside, he was longing for something to be a part of  
The brother was ready to beg, steal, borrow, or barter*

*Then a hurricane came, and devastation reigned  
Our man saw his future drip dripping down the drain  
Put a pencil on his temple, connected it to his brain  
And he wrote his first refrain a testament to his pain  
Well, the word got around, they said, “This kid’s insane man”  
Took up a collection just to send him to the mainland  
“Get your education, don’t forget from whence you came, and  
the world’s gonna know your name, what’s your name man?”*

*Alexander Hamilton  
My name is Alexander Hamilton  
And there’s a million things I haven’t done  
But just you wait...just you wait...”*

**HURRICANE SESSION 5 OF 5**

**PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER. WRITE YOUR WAY OUT.  
LIBERTY OR DEATH. A PERSONAL REVOLUTION?**

**Excerpt from the Hamilton Soundtrack**

**THE WORLD WAS WIDE ENOUGH**

*I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory  
Is this where it gets me, on my feet, sev'ral feet ahead of me?  
I see it coming, do I run or fire my gun or let it be?*

*There is no beat, no melody  
Burr, my first friend, my enemy  
Maybe the last face I ever see  
If I throw away my shot, is this how you'll remember me?  
What if this bullet is my legacy?*

*Legacy. What is a legacy?  
It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see  
I wrote some notes at the beginning of a song someone will sing for me  
America, you great unfinished symphony, you sent for me  
You let me make a difference  
A place where even orphan immigrants  
Can leave their fingerprints and rise up  
I'm running out of time. I'm running, and my time's up  
Wise up. Eyes up*

*I catch a glimpse of the other side  
Laurens leads a soldiers' chorus on the other side  
My son is on the other side  
He's with my mother on the other side  
Washington is watching from the other side*

*Teach me how to say goodbye*

# AMERICAN REVOLUTION(S)

By Marc Bamuthi Joseph

The violence of war leads to the temperance of government. The revolutionary act is a tactical measure, but a **revolution** is a disciplined adherence to a **new system** of living. We might argue that this is the difference between the Revolutionary War, which lasted from 1775 to 1783, and what we might alternately call the American “revolution”, the ongoing and tumultuous attempt at implementing a rule of law and justice for all. Within the span of 200 and two score years since the end of the colonies’ war with the British, Americans have employed the term revolution to invoke an impending radical shift in **who** occupies power, but less often is the term colloquially used to imply a radical shift in the power **structure** itself.

Within the scope of *Hamilton’s* journey is the illumination of the human imagination, hustle, and perseverance it takes to carry out the bloody promissory note of war. Implicitly, the musical follows the line of inquiry of all great fiction in that it reveals in its protagonists what it takes to undergo a **personal** revolution. What are the set of conditions, character traits, and sacrifices necessary for an individual to experience a personal transformation? And how does one’s personal revolution echo the radical shifts that a nation must make in its institutional character to truly serve ALL of its people? What are the parallels between several American revolutions outside of the military realm: the cotton revolution, the birth of jazz, Roosevelt’s New Deal, and the rise of hip hop?

These are complex questions to be sure, but *Hamilton’s* narrative affords us the opportunity to investigate a man experiencing radical shifts in his own life while his country initiates the process of revolutionizing itself. Our students might similarly take a moment to address life-altering moments of their own. Perhaps they might even envision **how** or **what** a personal revolution might look like if they could summon the courage or felt the need to reach towards one. By cataloging some common traits in five different revolutionary movements in American history, we invite students to explore new connections between *Hamilton* and hip hop, and between the Revolutionary War and the inner battles one must engage to achieve personal growth.

## HURRICANE SESSION 1 OF 5

### ACTIVITY 4

#### WHAT IS THE PRICE OF PERSONHOOD?

- Cotton became so big because there was an opportunity, a willing buyer, the right technology (the cotton gin), and lenders willing to make an investment.
- Cotton production went from 7 bales to 5 million pounds to 500 million pounds in 40 years.
- Cotton represented 55% of the U.S. export market at one point.
- By the 1850's nearly every dollar of CREDIT offered by Southern banks dealt with some aspect of the cotton market
- 2 BILLION pounds of cotton were produced by the start of the Civil War.
- It can literally be said that the financial wealth of this country was literally built on the cotton industry.
- The cost of that wealth was the removal of Native Americans
- Deforestation
- The rise of slavery from 1790 when there were 654,000 slaves to 1810 when there were 1.1 million slaves to 4 million in 1860, which is like if every single person in the city of Los Angeles were enslaved.
- A permanent warping of the value placed on the body AND labor