From Langston Hughes to Alice Walker to Sonia Sanchez African American writers have captured black experience in novels, poems, plays, essays and short stories. The Newspaper In Education supplement “Words of Heritage … Writing Black History” explores these achievements of African American writers.

This Teacher Guide is designed to help you introduce the newspaper to your students and to use additional deliveries of the newspaper to extend the lessons of the supplement.

The Teacher Guide contains suggested activities for using the newspaper, as well as several 8½ x 11-inch activity sheets that you may photocopy for students to complete.

All the materials in this comprehensive unit are made available for your classroom through the contributions of Ford Motor Company Fund.

Please take a few minutes to thank Ford Motor Company Fund and to ask your students to send a thank-you note. Your positive feedback will be appreciated by the individuals who made this all possible. Please send your messages to: “Words of Heritage,” Ford Motor Company Fund, c/c PCG Campbell, 3200 Greenfield Road, Suite 280, Dearborn, MI 48120.

Your Newspapers in Education program also would like to hear your comments about this program, as well as your feelings about any of the other programs we offer throughout the year. Please complete and return the evaluation form found on the back page of this Teacher Guide. Directions for submitting your comments are on the form.
1. Community News
African American writers describe activities in their communities and give voice to emotions about those activities. Have students look through the newspaper for stories and photos about African Americans in your city or state. On a chalkboard, create a master list of ways these stories show what life is like for African Americans in your city or state. Challenge students to write a two- or three-paragraph description of the African American community based on the stories.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Locating and describing the diverse cultures and communities of regions or nations; explaining how issues and events affect various people and societies in different ways.

2. Get Connected *
The mark of a good writer is the ability to get readers to connect with the people in stories. Ask students to read a story about an African American in the newspaper. On the "Get Connected" activity sheet, have each student write out five things learned about the newsmaker from the story. Next to each, have students write a similar activity or experience they have had. Finish by having them write how their response was similar or different from the newsmaker's.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Responding to a variety of oral, visual, written and electronic texts by making connections to students' personal lives and the lives of others.

3. TV Culture
Television shows can provide a good way to get students thinking about the diversity of American culture. Have students turn to the TV listings in today's paper. Direct them to count the number of shows in the prime time hours of 8-11 p.m. that have African American casts, the number that have white casts, and the number that have mixed casts. Ask them to show this information as a graph and write a summary of what the information says about television diversity.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Acquiring information from multiple sources and then evaluating it; understanding our diverse cultural heritage.

4. Youth News Watch *
Newspapers might be quite different if your students picked the stories and photos that appear in them. Divide students into teams and have them scan today's newspaper. Then with the "Youth News Watch" activity sheet, have them design a front page, using six stories or columns and two photos that would be most interesting or important to students. Compare front pages with the actual front page of the daily paper. Have students repeat the activity as though they were designing a front page for a strictly African American community. How does that compare with the actual front page?

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Using written and visual texts to identify and research issues of importance that confront adolescents and their community.

5. Ad Culture
Newspapers convey information about the diversity of the community in stories and photos. They also convey information about diversity through advertising. In pairs or individually, have students look through the display ads in today's newspaper. Challenge them to find 10 businesses, restaurants or entertainment facilities that are owned by African Americans, that sell products or foods that reflect African American culture or that target an African American audience. Have them write a paragraph about one of the businesses describing how it serves the African American community.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Locating information about local and state cultures and communities from a variety of sources; comparing characteristics of cultures and communities.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
**GET CONNECTED**

The mark of a good writer is the ability to get readers to connect with the people in stories. The newspaper is a good way to examine the connections created by writing. Find a story about an African American in the newspaper. The person can be a politician, a sports figure, an entertainer or a citizen getting involved. In the spaces below, write out five experiences or qualities learned about the newsmaker from the story. Next to each, write a similar experience or quality you have. Finish by writing how your response or action was similar or different from the newsmaker’s.

**African American Newsmaker:**

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<td>How my response was similar or different</td>
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YOUTH NEWS WATCH

What newspapers report reflects an effort to serve the interests of the community. But newspapers might be quite different if teens or pre-teens picked the stories and photos. Divide into teams and scan today’s newspaper. Then design a new front page, using six stories or columns and two photos that you think would be most interesting or important to students. Compare front pages with the actual front page of the newspaper. Were the differences based on content of the stories, the way they were written, or both? Answer on the back of this activity sheet.
EXPRESSING HERITAGE
From earliest times through today, the experience of African Americans has been a story of emotion and strength, families and communities. How have African American writers used the techniques of writing to express this experience? The activities this week use the newspaper to explore how writers’ techniques reveal the dynamics of setting, characters, relationships and universal themes.

1. Picture This *
Writers use words to paint pictures that tell readers what things look like or places feel like. Have students find a news or feature story that contains details describing a setting, institution or activity of your city’s African American community, or another community. Ask them to circle every word or phrase that gives them a picture of what the place is like. On the “Picture This” activity sheet, have them put these words into categories: Adjective, Adverb, Verb, Noun. Which kind of words appeared most? Discuss why that is the case.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and using the craft of the writer to formulate and express ideas artistically, including, color, setting and use of strong details.

2. Themes in the News
The themes that inspire great writers can be found every day in the newspaper. Have students scan the local paper for a story involving a young person growing up or “coming of age,” or a case of rights and responsibilities, or a story of conflict or cooperation. Have them summarize the 5 Ws of the story—Who, What, When, Where and Why. Then challenge them to write a paragraph summarizing the larger “theme” of the story that could apply to other people or teach a larger lesson.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Exploring and reflecting on universal themes from visual and written texts, including coming of age, rights and responsibilities, conflict and cooperation.

3. Describe It
The best writers have a talent for describing places so that readers feel they are there, or that they feel what characters are feeling. Have students pick a photo of an outdoor or indoor scene involving African Americans in the newspaper. Ask them to write a paragraph describing the scene as vividly as possible from what they see in the photo. Then have them write a second paragraph describing the scene from the point of view of one of the people in the photo. Ask them to compare the descriptions and share with the class.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Recognizing and using varied techniques to construct text, convey meaning and express feelings, including different points of view and rich descriptions.

4. Heroes in the News *
Writers usually build a story around a protagonist, or hero. Heroes often have strong personalities and are examples of good behavior and good character. Such people are in the news every day as well. Direct students to scan the stories and photos in the paper and pick an African American in the news today whom they admire. On the “Heroes in the News” activity sheet, have them write a list of qualities they admire in the person each selected. At the bottom, have them create a title for a short story that would feature this person.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Recognizing and using varied techniques to express feelings to influence an audience, including identification with characters; explaining how individuals demonstrate good character and personal virtue.

5. Dialog
In plays and novels, dialog is the written version of conversations between people. In newspapers direct quotations are used to show how people speak, or how they speak with each other. Challenge students to find a story in the paper that uses direct quotes. From the quotes in the story, have them create a dialog about the issue involved. Then ask them to write the next stage of the conversation, as they think it might unfold.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and using the craft of the writer to formulate and express ideas artistically, including dialog and use of strong verbs.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
PICTURE THIS

Writers use words to paint pictures that tell readers what things look like or places feel like. Find a news or feature story that contains details describing a setting, institution or activity of your city’s African American community, or another community. Circle every word or phrase that gives you a picture of what the place is like. In the spaces below, put these words into categories: Adjective, Adverb, Verb, Noun. Which kind of words appeared most? Discuss why that is the case.

Adjective

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Adverb

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Verb

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Noun

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INTRODUCTION TO THE NEWSPAPER

HEROES IN THE NEWS

Writers usually build a story around a hero or heroine called a “protagonist.” Heroes often have strong personalities and are examples of good behavior and good character. Such people can also be found in the news every day. Scan the stories and photos in the newspaper and pick an African American in the news whom you admire. In the spaces below, write a list of qualities you admire in the person you selected. At the bottom, create a title for a short story that would feature this person.

Newsmaker I Chose: ____________________________

Qualities I Admire:

1. _________________________________________

2. _________________________________________

3. _________________________________________

4. _________________________________________

5. _________________________________________

Title for Short Story: ____________________________
MEETING CHALLENGES

The struggles to achieve equality and end discrimination have been at the core of the African American experience. African American writers have explored this in poems, novels, plays, songs, screenplays and raps. The activities this week use the newspaper to examine how writers respond to political and social issues.

1. Columnists Speak Out
The role of newspaper columnists is to speak out, express opinions, and shed light on lives and issues in the community. African American columnists have a special role in newspaper history because there once were very few black columnists at U.S. papers. Have students find a column in the paper by an African American columnist. Is the columnist writing about a general issue today, or an issue of particular concern to African American readers? Ask students to circle all the “opinion words” in the column and summarize the columnist’s view of the issue addressed in the column.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Exploring and reflecting on universal themes and substantive issues, including conflict and change, relationships with others and self-discovery, using varied techniques to influence an audience.

2. African American Issues
One of the key roles played by African American writers has been to spotlight issues important to the black community. Have students search the stories, editorials and columns in the newspaper and list three top issues important to African Americans. Ask them to write a sentence for each explaining why the issue is especially important to black residents of your state.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Describing how issues and events affect various people and cultures in different ways; locating and describing diverse kinds of communities and explaining their characteristics.

3. Rights and Dignity *
The civil rights movement drew its strength from people who wanted to end discrimination, persecution and violations of human dignity. Discuss these issues as a class, and how the civil rights movement has changed society. Then direct students to pick an African American newsmaker from the newspaper. With the “Rights and Dignity” activity sheet, have them plan an interview with this person for a Black History news report. Ask them to write out five questions they would ask about civil rights or discrimination issues of the past and present. As a class, discuss what questions would be asked, and why.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying the different responses of individuals to historic violations of human dignity, discrimination and persecution.

4. Story Boards
Film and TV directors sometimes sketch out their stories on what is called a “story board.” This is something like a comic strip that shows what kinds of action would take place at different points. Have students pick an issue from the newspaper that involves African Americans or another ethnic group. Direct them to read the story. Then challenge them to draw a story board for a TV special examining the issue they selected. Share story boards as a class.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and using the craft of the illustrator to formulate and express ideas artistically; using varied techniques to influence an audience.

5. Editorials
The editorial page of the newspaper comments on issues important to the community and offers solutions to problems. Often the issues involve injustice or unequal treatment of individuals or groups. This is an important concern in America, where the goal stated in the U.S. Constitution is equal treatment for all. In teams, have students pick an issue that involves unequal treatment from today’s newspaper. Ask them to craft an editorial that would clearly state the problem and offer solutions to it. Make sure they state whose job it will be to solve the problem.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying disparities between American ideals and realities and proposing ways to reduce them.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
The civil rights movement drew its strength from people who wanted to end discrimination, persecution and violations of human dignity. Discuss these issues as a class, and how the civil rights movement has changed society. Then pick an African American newsmaker from the newspaper. On the lines below, plan an interview with this person for a Black History news report. Write out five questions you would ask about civil rights or discrimination issues of the past and present. As a class, discuss what questions would be asked, and why.

Newsmaker:  

Question 1:  

Question 2:  

Question 3:  

Question 4:  

Question 5:  

1. Too Tense Poem *

Tensions between people and communities have been explored by African American novelists and poets, and they are explored by newspaper reporters and columnists. Have students pick a newspaper story that involves tensions or conflicts between individuals, groups or values. Ask them to read the story carefully and to think about the effect of the tension on those involved. With the “Too Tense Poem” activity sheet, have them write a poem about that effect. Encourage students to read poems aloud, or illustrate them for display.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and discussing how tensions among characters, communities, themes and issues in literature and other texts are related to students’ own experiences.

2. Heritage Watch

The culture that develops in a community influences life and attitudes in the community. And the heritage of the past influences attitudes in the present. This is especially true in the African American community, where past experiences often restricted growth and equality. Have students pick a news story from the newspaper and read it to understand the issues. Then challenge them to write a letter to the editor summarizing how heritage, culture and history are reflected in the concerns expressed today. Alert them that the connections may be indirect, not direct.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Investigating and understanding how heritage, culture and history are reflected in the concerns expressed today.

3. Good Writing

What makes writing good? Is it the description of places? The way characters are drawn? Or the way the readers respond emotionally? Divide students into teams, with each team having the same number of students as there are sections in today’s newspaper. Direct each student to read through the stories, columns and features of his/her section and pick the best written. Have each write a short paragraph explaining why the writing sample was ranked as best. Then ask each team to review all the choices and select the best written overall. Compare results as a class and give reasons. Contact the author of the top ranked piece of writing and see if he/she will visit your class.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Selecting, reading, and responding thoughtfully to both classic and contemporary texts for quality and literary merit.

4. Stereotypes

Most people feel stereotypes of what people are like should be eliminated wherever possible. But some forms of advertising oversimplify images to the point that some people feel they represent a kind of stereotype or distortion. Challenge students to look through the ads in today’s newspaper, or to view TV ads at home. Have them list any that use stereotypes or distortions. Do these distortions involve race, gender, culture or something else? Ask them to pick one and explain their selection in a paragraph.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Investigating various texts for examples of distortion and stereotypes, including those associated with race, gender, culture, age, class, religion or handicapping conditions.

5. Hear the Voices

Different writers express themselves in different styles. The result is often described as the writer’s “voice.” Newspaper writers also have different voices. Have students pair up and scan stories in different sections of today’s newspaper. Challenge them to pick two pieces they believe have different voices. On a sheet of paper have them draw up a list of differences between the voices of the writers. Discuss choices as a class. Are the different voices tied to the different roles of the writers? Do they reflect ethnic or racial background? Do they reflect the subjects being written about?

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Recognizing different voices in oral and written communication that persuade, inform, entertain and inspire audiences.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
T O O T E N S E P O E M

Tensions between people and communities are in the news almost every day. These tensions have been explored by African American novelists and poets, and they are explored by newspaper reporters and columnists. Pick a newspaper story that involves tensions or conflicts between individuals, groups or values. Read the story carefully and think about the effect of the tension on those involved. On the lines below, write a poem about that effect, using the letters of the word “Tension” to begin each line. Read poems aloud, or illustrate them for display on a bulletin board.

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RATE THE PROGRAM
The "Words of Heritage" supplement and its Teacher Guide are designed to assist teachers in the classroom. To enable us to serve you as effectively as possible, we would like to hear your comments. Please complete the following questionnaire and return to the Newspaper in Education department of this newspaper.

1. Please grade the overall quality of the "Words of Heritage" program.

   + A + - B - + C - + D - F

   EXAMPLE: (B+ evaluation)

   + A + - B - + C - + D - F

2. Do you feel that your students are more knowledgeable regarding black history and writing as a result of this program?

   ( ) yes   ( ) no

3. Did "Words of Heritage" meet your overall expectations?

   ( ) yes   ( ) no

   If no, were expectations not met due to any of the following reasons:

   ( ) content of program materials
   ( ) delayed receipt of this guide
   ( ) missed/late delivery of student sections
   ( ) missed/late newspaper delivery
   ( ) difficulty incorporating materials into curriculum

   ( ) Other ____________________________

4. What changes would improve this program?

   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

5. What new program(s) would be most useful for you?

   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

6. Circle the grade(s) you teach:

   K   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12

7. The subject(s) you teach:

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8. Your school district:

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9. Optional information:

   Your Name:

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   School:

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   Phone:

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   Email:

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Thank you for helping us improve our educational services!