

The Great Migration Readers Theatre Script

Based on the book by Jacob Lawrence

Developed by Dr. Rosalind M. Flynn with Ms. VanGelder's Class

Milton Somers Middle School

LaPlata, Maryland

1	The Great Migration!	11	because many left to fight in the First World War.
2	What's migration?		
All	Migration means that a large group moves a long distance from one place to live in another.	12	People from the North recruited workers from the South to come work with them.
3	Between 1916 and 1919, African Americans migrated from the South to	13	Up north, you'll make lots of money!
4	Pittsburgh,	14	Move north where there's better education for your children!
1-4	New York,	1	Migrate to the north for a better life!
1-8	Chicago,	8	Back then, not many people had cars.
1-10	Detroit,		
1-15	Cleveland,	2	So many migrants traveled by foot
All	and St. Louis.	3	Or train. [sound effect]
3	I thought the South was a great place to live.	4	Railroad stations were crowded with so many migrants that guards were called to keep order [sound effect].
4	Not for African Americans.	5	Everybody! Get in lines!
5	Back then, African Americans weren't treated as fairly as white people.	6	You—over there! You! This line here!
6	Segregation was going on.	7	What happened when so many migrants left for the North?
7	What's segregation?	8	Nature ravaged the South.
All	Segregation is the separation of two groups of people based on differences like color.	9	Farms were ruined by floods [sound effect].
8	African Americans were segregated in restaurants,	10	Cotton crops were destroyed by the boll weevil [sound effect].
9	In movie theatres,	11	Many crops became dry and soiled.
10	On buses,	12	Because of the war, food costs doubled.
11	And in the separate schools they were forced to attend.	All	Life became harder for the poor.
12	They even had separate drinking fountains.	13	Was life in the North better for the migrants?
13	Rich white southerners made them do jobs that paid little money.	14	In some ways.
14	Their kids didn't get a lot of education.	All	They got to vote.
9	They had to work in the fields.	1	There were better schools for their kids.
10	Back then, in the North, there was a shortage of workers		

2 Housing was better, but
overcrowded and unhealthy.
12 But even up North there was
segregation.
All Still?
13 Still.
14 Northerners were mad because they
were losing their jobs.
1 African Americans were not
welcomed by everyone.

2 So they had to rely on each other.
3 And they did—in their churches
and their communities.
4 And even though their new lives
were not as ideal as promised
All They kept on coming and coming.
5 Why?
All Because people all over the world
continue to move in search of better lives
for themselves and their families.