



EXPLORING THE GREAT MIGRATION – 1910-1970

TEACHER VERSION

Subject Level:

High School History

Grade Level:

11-12

Approx. Time Required:

45-60 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to read and interpret a data visualization depicting percentage-point changes in the black population in cities during two major waves of migration.
- Students will be able to make correlations between symbols on a graphic and percentage-point increases and decreases of the black population.
- Students will be able to use data from a graphic to draw conclusions about migration patterns of the black population during two major waves of migration, connecting those patterns to the larger issues of the period and comparing them with more recent migration data.

Activity Description

Students will study a graphic comparing an early wave of black population migration (1910–1940) — sometimes referred to as the First Great Migration — with a later wave of black population migration (1940–1970) — also known as the Second Great Migration. They will consider the causes and effects of both waves of migration and compare the historical data with more recent data on migration overall. This activity would be best placed in the middle or toward the end of a lesson or unit on the Great Migration, a period that spanned both waves, occurring from 1910 to 1970.

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Topics:

- The Great Migration during the 20th century
- Population

Skills Taught:

- Analyzing visual data
 - Drawing conclusions
 - Identifying cause and effect
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Materials Required:

- The student version of this activity, 7 pages; it contains images that should be printed in color.
- A computer with Internet access for each student is optional.

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity. Items, their sources, and any relevant instructions for viewing them online appear at the end of this teacher version.

- Item 1: Data Visualization of the Great Migration, 1910-1970
- Item 2: Collapsed Reason for Move, 1999-2015
- Item 3: Top State-to-State Migration Flows, 2010-2011

For more information to help you introduce your students to the Census Bureau, read "[*Census Bureau 101 for Students*](#)." This information sheet can be printed and passed out to your students as well.

Standards Addressed

See charts below. For more information about the standards, read "[*Overview of Education Standards and Guidelines Addressed in Statistics in Schools Activities*](#)."

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Standard	Strand	Cluster
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7</p> <p>Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p>	<p>RH 11-12 - History/ Social Studies</p>	<p>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</p>

UCLA National Standards for History: U.S. History Content Standards

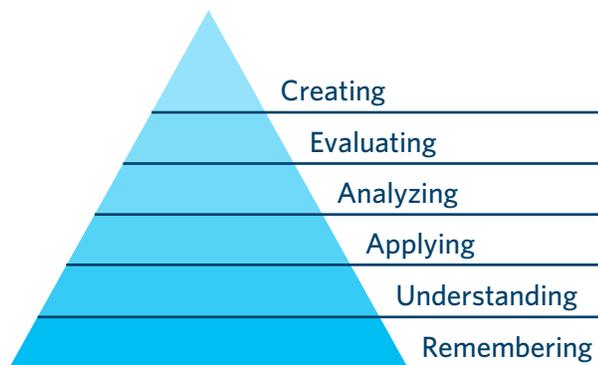
Era	Standard
7 - The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)	Standard 3: How the United States changed from the end of World War I to the eve of the Great Depression.
9 - Postwar United States (1945 to Early 1970s)	Standard 1: The economic boom and social transformation of postwar United States.

UCLA National Standards for History: Historical Thinking Standards

Era	Description
2 - Historical Comprehension	Utilize visual and mathematical data. The student will review census data visualizations to understand the causes and effects of migration patterns between 1910 and 1970.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Students will **analyze** data visualizations to understand the impact of migration.



Teacher Notes

Before the Activity

Students should have a basic understanding of the following ideas and concepts:

- Jim Crow laws and the Jim Crow South
- The relationship between migration and immigration

During the Activity

Teachers should first show the class how to investigate the data. Teachers should use a think-aloud strategy, demonstrating how they are interacting with the data by making observations and asking questions. The teacher might say, "I notice that during the First Great Migration the black population in southern cities decreased. I wonder if this is related to the Jim Crow laws that were passed around this time." He or she could also say, "If there was an overall shift in migration to the North in the Second Great Migration, why did certain cities in the South see an increase in black population?"

After the Activity

Teachers should lead a class discussion or allow time for an informal, independent writing assignment on the essential questions: What were the causes and effects of the Great Migration? How has migration affected the United States?

Extension Ideas

- Teachers could connect this activity to art. Visit tinyurl.com/jd5dc2l to see "The Migration Series" by Jacob Lawrence — an artist's portrayal of the causes and effects of the Great Migration.
- Teachers could take excerpts from "The Warmth of Other Suns" by Isabel Wilkerson and use them with students as first-person accounts of the causes and effects of the Great Migration. Teachers can find excerpts here: tinyurl.com/h6fjwee.
- Teachers could instruct students to write a letter or journal entry from the perspective of someone who is considering migrating, describing the possible advantages and disadvantages; students could write about the First or Second Great Migrations, or about migration today. Alternatively, students could write from the perspective of a person whose city is the destination of migrants, describing the possible advantages and disadvantages of the migration.

Student Activity

Printable student versions are available [here](#).

Student Learning Objectives:

- I will be able to read and interpret a data visualization depicting percentage-point changes in the black population in cities during two major waves of migration.
- I will be able to make correlations between symbols on a graphic and percentage-point increases and decreases of the black population.
- I will be able to use data from a graphic to draw conclusions about migration patterns of the black population during two major waves of migration, connecting those patterns to the larger issues of the period and comparing them with more recent migration data.

Warmup: Why do people move? Brainstorm as many possible reasons as you can. When you're done, review your list. Do you think these reasons are constant across history? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary.

The Great Migration generally refers to the movement of about 6 million black people from the South to urban centers in other parts of the country between 1910 and 1970. **Item 1: Data Visualization of the Great Migration, 1910-1970** compares the early migration (1910-1940) — sometimes referred to as the First Great Migration — with the later migration (1940-1970) — also known as the Second Great Migration.

In the early 20th century, strict legislation limited immigration to the United States, which resulted in a workforce shortage in many industrial centers in the Northeast and Midwest that relied on European immigrants for labor. These cities became common destinations for black migrants from the South. Cities that experienced substantial changes in racial composition between 1910 and 1940, before World War II, include Chicago, Detroit, New York City, and Philadelphia. During and after World War II, black migrants flooded many of the cities that were destinations before the war, following friends and relatives who had already made the journey. Poor economic conditions in the Jim Crow South spurred more migration from 1940 to 1970 than from 1910 to 1940, resulting in larger black populations in many cities across the Northeast, Midwest, and West.

1. Look closely at **Item 1: Data Visualization of the Great Migration, 1910-1970**. What do the circles represent? What do the sizes of the circles represent? What do warm-colored circles (yellow and orange) represent? What do cool-colored circles (blue and purple) represent?

Teachers will likely need to help students answer these questions:

- **Each circle represents a city whose black population increased or decreased significantly during this time period.**
 - **The size of each circle represents the population of that city between 1910 and 1970. The larger the circle, the larger the city population (and vice versa).**
 - **Warm-colored circles (yellow, orange, and red tones) represent population growth and correspond to the percentage-point increase in the black population during the First Great Migration and the Second.**
 - **Cool-colored circles (gray, blue, and purple tones) represent population decline and correspond to the percentage-point decrease in the black population during the First Great Migration and the Second.**
2. Record at least three different observations about **Item 1: Data Visualization of the Great Migration, 1910-1970**.

Student answers will vary but may include the following:

- **The Second Great Migration caused more black population growth in cities all over the United States than did the First Great Migration.**
 - **From 1910 to 1940, the black population's movement to the West was minimal; however, from 1940 to 1970, cities in California, Oregon, and Washington saw significant increases in their black populations.**
3. Focus on the First Great Migration part of the data visualization to answer the following questions: Which area of the country saw the largest decrease in its black population from 1910 to 1940, and which area saw the largest increase in its black population in the same period? How do you know?
 - **During the First Great Migration, the southern part of the country saw the largest percentage-point decreases in its black population. This is shown by multiple cool-colored circles (gray, blue, and purple tones), which represent losses in the black population.**
 - **The northeastern part of the country saw the largest percentage-point increases in its black population. This is shown by multiple warm-colored circles (yellow and orange tones), which represent gains in the black population.**

4. What were some of the factors that may have affected black migrants' decisions to move between 1910 and 1940? What role did World War I play during the First Great Migration?

Black migrants could have decided to move to different parts of the country for various reasons, but some possibilities include:

- **Economic opportunities in many industrial centers in the Northeast and Midwest**
- **Jim Crow practices of discrimination and harassment in the South**
- **The desire to follow friends and relatives who had made the journey earlier**

World War I brought about a workforce shortage in many industrial centers in the Northeast and Midwest. Many men who normally would have been working in the factories were serving in the military. Therefore, these cities, which included Chicago, Detroit, New York City, and Philadelphia, became common destinations for black migrants looking for jobs.

5. Now, looking back at the data visualization, compare the First Great Migration with the Second Great Migration. Observe the patterns of migration during these two periods. What similarities and differences do you notice?

Migration seemed to be more spread out during the Second Great Migration than during the First Great Migration.

In the First Great Migration, the majority of cities that saw decreases in their black populations were in the South and West, while the majority of cities that saw increases in their black populations were in the North and Midwest. However, during the Second Great Migration, the South saw both increases and decreases in its black population. Furthermore, several cities along the West Coast, specifically in California, saw large increases in their black populations during the Second Great Migration.

In addition, it appears that the percentage-point increases in the black population in the Northeast and Midwest during the Second Great Migration were larger than during the First Great Migration, as indicated by the number of dark-orange circles (representing a percentage-point increase of 10 or more).

6. Look at **Item 2: Collapsed Reason for Move, 1999–2015**, and **Item 3: Top State-to-State Migration Flows, 2010–2011**. Record your observations about the more recent migration data for the entire U.S. population.

Student observations for Item 2 will vary but may include the following:

- **The most common reasons for moving from 1999 to 2015 were housing-related, followed by family- and employment-related.**
- **There were more family-related reasons for moving in 2015 than in 1999.**

Student observations for Item 3 will vary but may include the following:

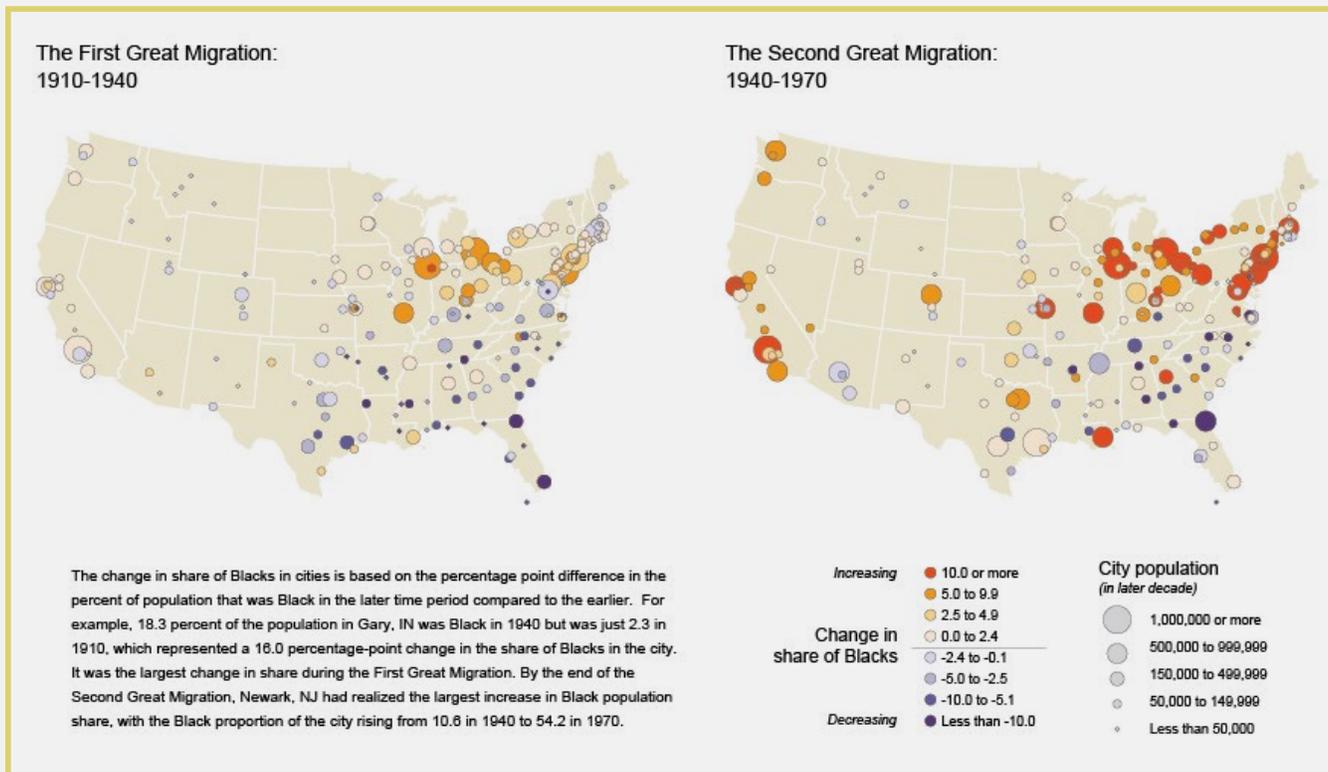
- **From 2010 to 2011, the most people migrated from New York to Florida.**
- **In the same period, the second-largest number of people migrated from California to Texas.**
- **From 2010 and 2011, it was common for people to migrate from Texas to California as well.**
- **Of the top 10 migrations from 2010 to 2011, none happened in the Midwest.**

7. Now compare **Items 2 and 3**, which pertain to U.S. population movement in general, with **Item 1**, which is about black population movement. Describe any overall patterns, similarities, or differences that you notice.

Student answers will vary but may include the following:

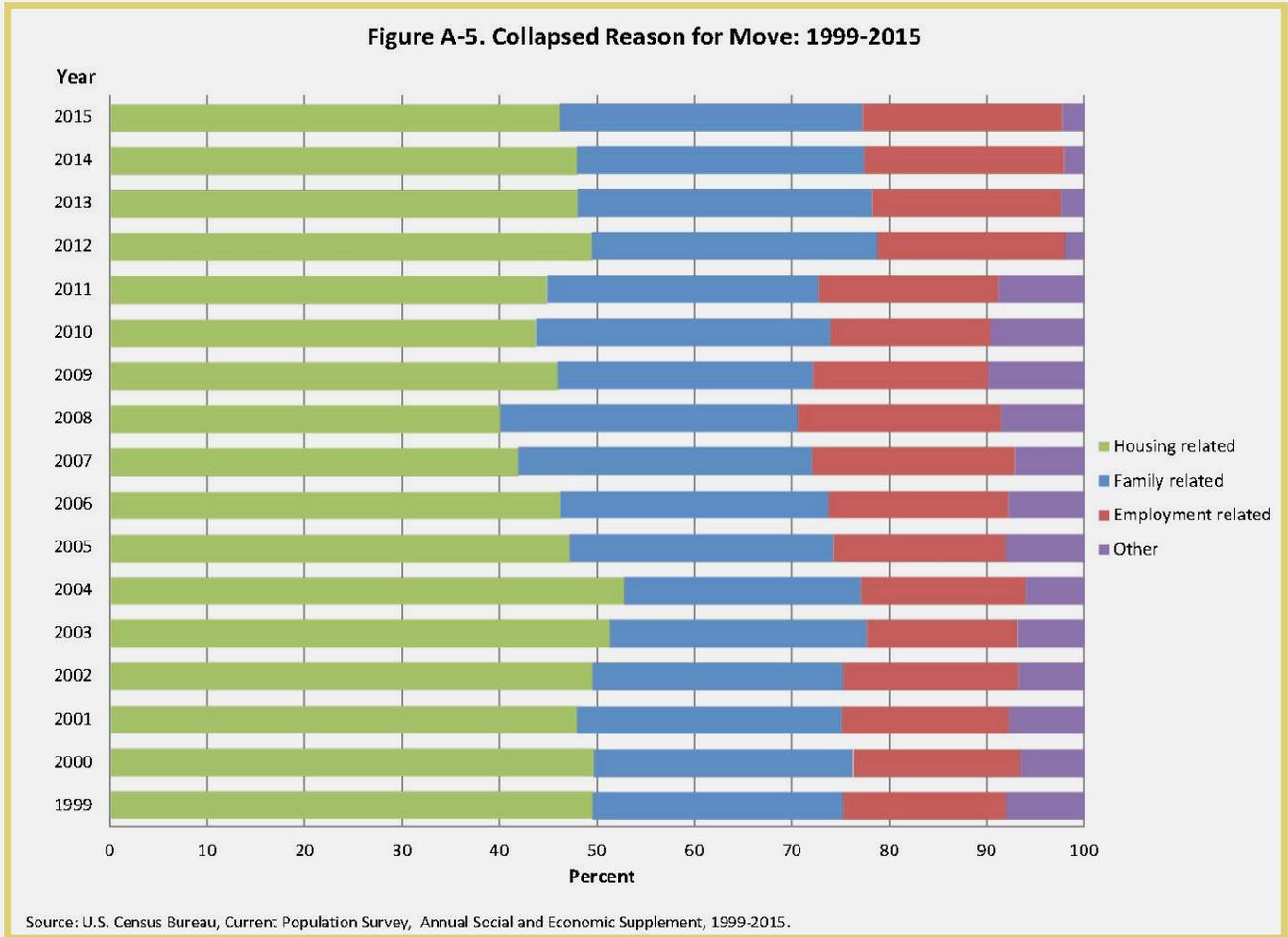
- **For many years, population movement on the East and West coasts has been more common than in the central U.S.**
- **During the Great Migration, many people moved to the Northeast; in 2010 and 2011, many people moved away from the Northeast, with a New York-to-Florida migration being the most common.**

Item 1: Data Visualization of the Great Migration, 1910-1970



www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2012/comm/great-migration_020.html

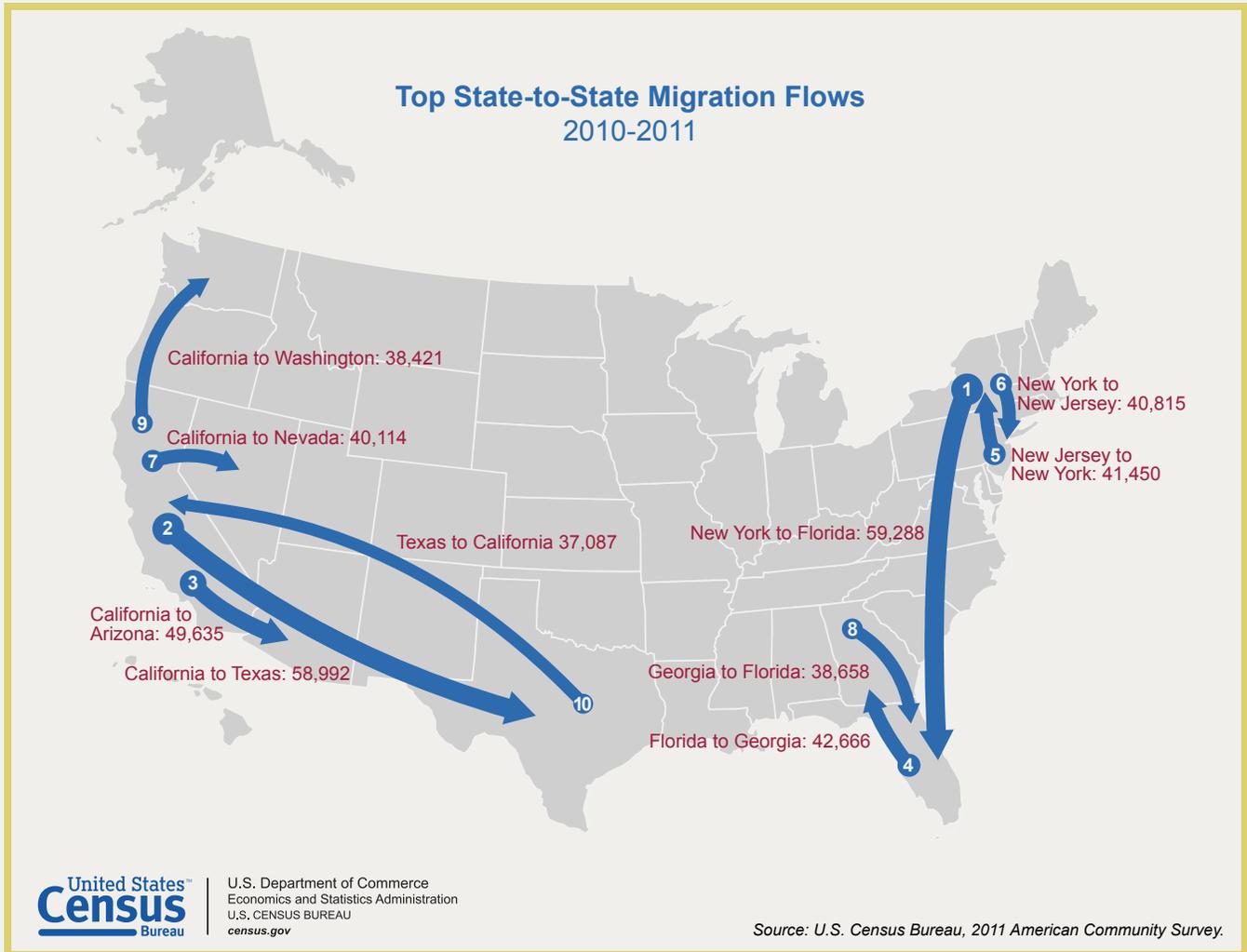
Item 2: Collapsed Reason for Move, 1999-2015



www.census.gov/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/historic.html

To view the graph electronically, click on the link above, scroll down to Table A-5, and click on the small image of the graph. To see the complete set of data (the graph shows only some of the data), download an Excel spreadsheet by clicking on the "XLS" link.

Item 3: Top State-to-State Migration Flows, 2010-2011



www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/us_migration_map_v6.pdf