

Dance History

This activity accompanies chapter 5 from *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson, record number 1755.

Activity Title: Dance History

Description: The students will explain the historical role of dance in social situations.

Subject: Reading/Language Arts and Dance

Skill: Research process

Behavioral Objective:

- The student will use a systematic process for the collection, processing, and presentation of information about the historical role of dance during the Reconstruction period.

Materials:

- *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* chapter 5, available in audio and print form at <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/>
- Paper and pencil
- Internet access and/or history books

Procedures:

Read the chapter with the class, or have the students read it on their own. Discuss with the students Johnson's mention of the cake-walk in this chapter. Next, break the students into four groups. Have each group use what they learned in the chapter, and outside information gathered through research, to create a presentation about the cake-walk. You may wish to have each group research different aspects of the cake-walk. For example, the history of the cake-walk, how the cake-walk influenced people during the time period, where the cake-walk is seen today, and dances that evolved from the cake-walk.

Allow each group to decide how they will present their information. During the student presentations make sure that each group member presents something, they include facts from research, and they use creativity.

