

The Avenue: Baltimore's Black Arts District Then and Now

Black Lives Matter Week of Action in Schools - February 2021

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Unit Description and Overview:

Welcome,

My name is Matthew Cipollone, and I am a History teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools. I want to welcome you to *The Avenue*, a Black Lives Matter Week of Action in Schools unit plan meant to give students the opportunity to experience the rich history of Baltimore's Pennsylvania Avenue and how it continues to be a source for Black culture and business still today. In this unit, students will analyze primary and secondary topics to understand: how Pennsylvania Avenue was a national center of Black culture and economics in America in the early 1900s; how the success of Pennsylvania Avenue was torn down by outside factors such as "the Highway to Nowhere" and Blockbusting in the mid to late 1900s; and how community members such as Lady Brion have worked to create Maryland's first Black Arts District, investing in and creating art spaces and Black owned businesses along Pennsylvania Avenue today. At the end of this unit, students will be able to construct historical arguments (and creative products) that answer the unit's

Essential/Historical Question:

How is the history and future of "The Avenue" a symbol of Black celebration and resilience in Baltimore?

Before implementing this unit, please review the below **Caveats and Notes**:

1. Below you will find a lesson plan outline and resources/ materials page; however you are encouraged to change, edit, adapt, and supplement any materials needed to make this unit successful for your students and classroom.
2. All provided materials can be found in appendices 1-4 organized by Lesson#.Material#.
3. Intentional Framing and Teacher notes are indicated in red. The way in which we understand, frame, and present history, especially when that history consists of real violence and trauma for Black communities, is essential for us teachers and we must be purposeful and intentional in both our language and presentation of topics to all students. As a result, in order to ensure the fidelity of the framing of this historical unit, it is asked that teachers pay additional attention to these red sections, and never hesitate to reach out to me, Matt Cipollone (mwcipollone@bcps.k12.md.us) with any questions, comments, reservations, suggestions, and/or critiques.
4. The below unit is designed for in-person learning, but most, if not all, of the activities below can be adapted to meet the needs and limitations of the Zoom classroom. Virtual Adjustments are suggested throughout under the VL: (Virtual Learning) notes.

I hope this unit brings your students true joy and empowerment throughout this week, and please never hesitate to provide any and all feedback on how your students enjoyed this unit.

Best,

Matthew Cipollone - mwcipollone@bcps.k12.md.us

Lesson 1: Introduction and Prior Knowledge

Standards:

CCSS 9-10 R 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS 9-10 R 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the [poem].

BLM Principles:

Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Intergenerational: We are committed to fostering an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, show up with the capacity to lead and learn.

Objective:

SWBAT discuss how we celebrate Blackness in Baltimore in order to introduce this unit on the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts District.

Materials:

- Sensory Activity Worksheet (1.1)
- Pictures of Pennsylvania Avenue (suggested)
- Lady Brion, *I talk Black* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5SKSZ6T3NI>
- *I talk Black* graphic organizer (1.2)
- Suggested PPT slides or chart paper with discussion questions, and unit overview

Learning Activities:

1. SMART START/Warm-up
 - a. Sensory Activity: Students will have time to independently complete a sensory activity. Students close their eyes and imagine they are standing on Pennsylvania Avenue, and will list things that they are: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Feeling, and Tasting.
 - b. Teacher can post a few random images of Pennsylvania Avenue to help induce brainstorming.
 - c. Students should have the opportunity to share out their responses (turn and talk, popcorn, musical partners, class wide share out, etc) and the teacher should facilitate a brief discussion identifying the patterns in students' response.
 - d. **VL:** Individually completed on a google form or class wide brainstorm on ideaboardz.
2. Spoken Word Discussion: What does it mean to celebrate Blackness?
 - a. Teacher will show the following Spoken Word Poem, [I talk Black, by Lady Brion](#)
 - b. Students will use a basic graphic organizer to help facilitate their analysis of this poem focusing them to capture:
 - i. **Initial Takeaways:** Freewriting space to jot down ideas while watching
 - ii. **Source:** Lady Brion is a Baltimore artist and activist, how does being from Baltimore come out in her poem?
 - iii. **Claim:** What is the claim, or main argument, within this poem

- iv. **Evidence:** How does Lady Brion celebrate her Blackness in this poem?
- c. Teacher will facilitate a class discussion (full class, fishbowl, small/large group, etc) along the following discussion questions:
 1. How do we celebrate Blackness in Baltimore?
 2. Where in Baltimore does this happen? Where is this not happening in Baltimore?
 3. How can we better, and more visibly, celebrate Blackness in our city?
 4. If you could create something in Baltimore to celebrate Blackness, what would it be? Why?
- d. **VL:** Discussion groups can be facilitated through Breakout Rooms or padlet.

3. Unit Overview

- a. Teacher will then overview the unit for students including:
 - i. Essential/Historical Question: How is the history and future of “The Avenue” a symbol of Black excellence and resilience in Baltimore?
 - ii. Topic: This unit will allow students to explore the incredible cultural and economic role Pennsylvania Avenue had in the early 1900s, evaluate the external forces that worked to breakdown this community, and how The Black Arts District, led by Lady Brion (Founder and Executive Director), are working to bring this community back today.
(Teachers, review information on the Black Arts District [here](#) and [here](#))
 - iii. Lesson Outlines: Provide a brief overview of the unit ahead L2) “On the Avenue, you were somebody:” a look at the Avenue then, when it was a national cultural and economic center of Blackness; L3) “How to disrupt a community:” a myth busting lesson where we will take a look at the ways outside forces work to disrupt Black communities; and L4) “Welcome to the Black Arts District:” a look at the efforts happening today, led by the work of Lady Brion, to return Pennsylvania Avenue to the Black cultural and economic center it once was.
 - iv. Student Outcomes: On the fifth day of this lesson, students will have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding of the history of Pennsylvania Avenue to construct a creative student choice project.
- b. **VL:** This can be facilitated via screen sharing mode.

4. “Homework”

- a. Students will have the following informal homework (feel free to make this work through any and all homework/classwork systems you currently have):

Tonight, try to talk to at least one trusted elderly family member, neighbor, or friend about what they remember Pennsylvania Avenue being like when they were younger. Do your best to talk to someone from an older generation.

Checks for Understanding:

While this is a fairly informal introductory lesson meant to induce prior knowledge and build student buy-in, teachers can implement the following checks for understanding:

- SMART START - responses identify students with high-low prior knowledge about Pennsylvania Avenue
- *I talk Black* graphic organizer - assessment for ability to identify parts of an argument (source, claim, evidence)

Lesson 2: “On the Avenue, you were somebody”

TEACHER NOTE: If time allows, teachers can easily stretch this lesson into two separate days to allow additional time for students to conduct online research on their landmark, create more involved posters, and have more time for a full gallery walk experience. However, these activities can be kept limited in order to

remain on the five day pacing and still allow students to experience some of the major landmarks of the Avenue then.

Standards:

CCSS 9-10 R 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS 9-10 R 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS 9-10 R 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

BLM Principles:

Queer Affirming: We are committed to fostering a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking or, rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual unless s/he or they disclose otherwise.

Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Black Villages: We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, and especially “our” children to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.

Objective:

SWBAT experience how Blackness was celebrated on The Avenue in the early 20th Century through a gallery walk activity.

Materials:

- The Avenue Jigsaw Readings 2.1
- Gallery Walk Note-tracker 2.2
- Chart Paper, markers, and/or other materials to create posters.
 - **VL:** Shared PowerPoint slides (w/ or w/o templates to scaffold student work)
- *Courageous Conversations Compass* - student reflection tool 2.3

Learning Activities:

1. SMART START/Warm-up
 - a. Students will have an opportunity to share out their family discussions from the previous day’s “homework?”
 - b. Teacher will facilitate a brief discussion about the patterns (similarities and differences) between what was shared about Pennsylvania Avenue.
 - i. What do these differences mean? How could it be so many different things? How could differences in age/generation affect how one sees this major road in Baltimore?
 - c. **VL:** Google form responses, padlet, ideaboardz
2. “Buy Where You Can Work” Campaign and Segregation - Intro to New Material

- a. Teacher will lead a brief introduction to the historical context of the early 20th Century (early 1900s) in Baltimore.
 - i. Jim Crow Segregation through a different lens: Push students to consider segregation through the benefits it had for the ability to create all Black spaces and fully self-sufficient Black communities (ie: to celebrate Blackness). **(NOTE: Teachers must check our own assumptions and biases here. Jim Crow Segregation was harmful due to lack of equitable resources and state-sponsored violence, not because Black people need proximity to white people. Over and over again we can see successful Black communities formed during this time (Pennsylvania Avenue in Baltimore, MD; “Black Wall Street” in Tulsa, OK; Wilmington, NC; Houston, TX) only to be disrupted by white mob violence and/or damaging integration efforts (ie: Block-Busting, Red-lining, etc).**
 - ii. “Buy Where You Can Work” Campaign: Mass boycott of White owned and operated businesses in Baltimore, and other Northern Cities, during the 1930-40s, that organized Black patrons to leverage their buying power by only shopping in places they could also be hired. This helped elevate Black economic sectors such as Pennsylvania Avenue, and served as a blueprint for more well-known boycott demonstrations carried out in the 1960s. (more information: [academic article \(paywall\)](#) and [overview](#))
 - iii. Impacts on strong Black communities like Pennsylvania Avenue: Transition the conversation to ask students to predict how these social and economic factors impacted the growth of Pennsylvania Avenue, where celebrating and prioritizing Black Art and Business meant that “on the Avenue, you were somebody.”

b. VL: Share Screen, posting PPT slides to shared space (google classroom)

3. The Avenue Jigsaw Posters

- a. Students will be put into small groups and assigned a specific landmark that was once a pillar of the Pennsylvania Avenue community.
- b. In their groups, they will conduct a secondary document reading and complete a gallery walk poster with a focus on how this landmark celebrated Blackness in Baltimore at the time.
- c. Pennsylvania Avenue Landmark include:
 - i. The Royal (Douglass) Theatre (and the Chitlin Circuit with focus on LGBTQ performers like Bessie Smith and Moms Mabley)
 - ii. The Arch Social Club
 - iii. The Sphinx Club
 - iv. Frederick Douglass High School
 - v. The Penn Hotel and other Black-owned businesses
- d. VL:** Breakout room groups with jigsaw assigned readings. Additionally, physical posters can be replaced with digital posters or PPT presentations.

4. Gallery Walk

- a. Students conduct a gallery walk where they can experience each aspect that made the Avenue so incredible. Teachers can manage gallery walk however best fits the norms and expectations within their class.
- b. Students will have a graphic organizer to help scaffold noticing on the significance of these landmarks and how they celebrated Blackness.
- c. VL:** Post group PPT presentations or digital posters to central space (google classroom)

5. Student Reflection

- a. Students will use the *Courageous Conversations Compass* to facilitate a silent write on what they are thinking, feeling, believing, or doing based on the gallery walk experience
 - i. Teacher explanation of Compass can be found [here](#).

- b. If time allows, students can share out either with partners, small group, or whole class.
- c. **VL:** Completed in google doc (one per each student) or google form.

Checks for Understanding:

The following opportunities can be used as checks for understanding:

- Interactive Lecture - implement evidence-based questioning (blooms), cold calls, and informal full class checks for understanding (ie: fist to five or human thermometer) during the brief intro to new material. Additionally, the last slide calling for students to predict the impact on Black communities in Baltimore, is a time to observe and assess students' abilities to apply the information.
- Jigsaw Group Observations - Teachers should monitor student work within their Jigsaw groups, and have go-to checks for understanding questions they pose to each group before allowing them to begin their poster.
- Student Reflection - Students can be prompted to reference at least one specific landmark of Pennsylvania Avenue within their reflection, thus allowing the teacher to assess evidence-based writing.

Lesson 3: How to disrupt a community...

Standards:

CCSS 9-10 R 7: . Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS 9-10 R 8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS 9-10 W 1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

BLM Principles:

Black Villages: We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and "villages" that collectively care for one another, and especially "our" children to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.

Objective:

SWBAT apply primary and secondary document and data analysis to prove widely held misconceptions about urban neighborhoods wrong in order to understand the late 20th century decline of the Avenue

Materials:

- *What disrupted the Avenue?* Primary Document Sets 3.1
- Document Graphic Organizer 3.5

Learning Activities:

1. SMART START/Warm-up
 - a. Students will conduct a think-pair-share (or any other brainstorming and discussion practice) on the following warm-up question: *Why are people poor in America, the wealthiest nation in human history?*

- b. The teacher will facilitate a short discussion identifying patterns in responses and how much these responses place the blame on individuals suffering from poverty vs the outside forces that lead to poverty (ie: Spending money on things that do not matter vs. unrealistically low minimum wage compared to living costs).
 - c. **VR:** Zoom (breakout room) discussion, google form, padlet, ideaboardz
2. Teacher led review and predictions
- a. Teacher will lead an interactive, popcorn style, review of the previous day’s lesson “On the Avenue you were somebody…” and allow for students to revisit their reflections from the previous exit ticket.
 - i. It is suggested to leave student posters up on walls from previous lessons to allow for quick reference and support student retention.
 - b. Teacher will then pivot to an open discussion question: “*So what happened to the Avenue?*”
 - i. Teacher can prompt students to consider their own experiences in Baltimore to predict what may have happened to this once thriving Black community.
 - c. Teacher will then pivot to the focus and perspective of this lesson:
 - i. *Reference (or read verbatim) for framing: In our society, we tend to blame those who suffer from issues in our society (poverty, crime, education gaps, etc) rather than examining the policies that lead to these conditions. What are some ways that we blame people for their circumstances? Often, this means we blame Blackness for the harm done to Black Communities by government policies and decisions. For example, we blame people’s culture or financial decisions for their poverty, rather than asking why the most wealthy nation in human history allows for 18% of all children to grow up in poverty. Today, we will push back against held myths (incorrect assumptions about our world) that try to blame Black Baltimoreans for the downturn of Pennsylvania Avenue; myths that are still used to blame Black Americans for poverty, education rates, crime, etc still today. We will do this by analyzing primary and secondary documents and evaluating quantitative data in order to prove that outside sources were at play for destroying the Pennsylvania Avenue community. In this, we will identify the historical policies that acted to destroy the Pennsylvania Avenue community that was such an important source of Black culture and economic success in the early 1900s.*
 - d. **VR:** Main zoom room with shared screen function to review material.
3. Mythbusting - What happened to Pennsylvania Avenue?
- a. Teacher will facilitate the following primary and secondary document analysis rounds however best fits the need of their class; however, a traditional “I do (teacher led with think-aloud modeling), we do (classwide or small group where students work collaboratively), you do (independent practice where students apply same approach to a document set on their own)” is suggested.
 - b. Document Rounds:
 - i. The Highway to Nowhere Destroyed Businesses and Displaced Residents (Myth: The 1968 MLK “Riots” and other social uprisings disrupted the community)
 - ii. Money Drained out of Black Businesses - (Myth: Upper-class Black flight out of the community and into white economic spaces is the primary reason for the Avenue’s demise)
 - iii. Blockbusting and Building Generational Wealth - (Myth: Black families do not know how to build and hold wealth)

- c. Each document round will follow the below structure:
 - i. Myth is read aloud (**Teacher must ALWAYS, and REPETITIVELY, stress these are untrue and inaccurate myths we are proving wrong**)
 - ii. Brief discussion on the following questions:
 1. *Why do you think people believe this myth?*
 2. *How does believing this myth do harm? To whom?*
 3. *Predict, what do you expect to be incorrect about this myth?*
 - iii. Conduct document analysis where documents are read, annotated, and students update their graphic organizer.
 - iv. Class debrief where students share their major findings and evidence.
 - v. Students write a 1-sentence evidence-based claim to: *What disrupted the Avenue?*
(Sentence starter: _____ *disrupted the Avenue because....*)
 - d. Teacher will provide space and time for students to review findings and discuss major takeaways from the document analysis by returning to the prediction discussion held earlier in this lesson (Item 2.b above).
 - e. **VR:** Breakout rooms with shared document sets, screencastify to record “I do” section.
4. Evidence-Based Exit Ticket:
- a. Students will apply the day’s lesson to create a 1-paragraph evidence based argument (can assess using EBAS or other class normed rubric) to the following prompt: *What disrupted the Avenue?*
 - b. **VR:** Google document made for each individual student

Checks for Understanding:

The following opportunities can be used as checks for understanding:

- Teacher review of yesterday’s lesson - Teacher can implement several techniques such as “fist to five,” or “human thermometer” to assess student understanding of the previous lesson.
- Key check-ins during I do - we do - you do transitions - Similarly, the teacher should make use of classwide checks for understanding, cold calls, and teacher observation before moving from the I do to we do and so on.
- Written Exit Ticket - This can serve as traditional formative assessments, in which students can be assessed in both their content understanding of lesson topics as well as evidence-based writing making use of the MSDE/BCPSS EBAS rubric.

Lesson 4: The Black Arts District and Pennsylvania Avenue Today

Standards:

CCSS 9-10 R 2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS 9-10 R 4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

CCSS 9-10 R 6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS 9-10 R 9: Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS 9-10 W 1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

BLM Principles:

Restorative Justice: We are committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension all people. As we forge our path, we intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.

Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Black Villages: We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, and especially “our” children to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.

Objective:

SWBAT explore the current efforts to create a Black Arts District on Pennsylvania Avenue today, led by the work of Lady Brion, Arch Social Club, The Avenue Bakery, Everyone’s Place, and other Black leaders in the community, in order to propose their own ideas for the new Black Arts District in Baltimore.

Materials:

- If possible, secure access to class computers/devices (students can work individually or in groups on computer device)
- Black Arts District Partners - Webquest Links 4.1
- Black Arts District Graphic Organizer 4.2

Learning Activities:

1. SMART START/Warm-up
 - a. Students will brainstorm ideas to the question: *What is needed on Pennsylvania Avenue to bring it back to the cultural and economic center it once was?* (Teachers can provide examples as needed to help promote brainstorming)
 - b. Students will complete this through a snowball activity: write their answer on a post-it note, crumple it into a ball, and when the teacher says “go” throw them around having a “snowball fight” with the paper balls for a minute, once the minute is up students pick up the post-it closest to them and teacher asks anyone who picked up an idea they felt was interesting, surprising, or significant to share. (Any other silent brainstorm activity would work as well).
 - c. Teacher will then transition to today’s objective of focusing on taking a look at ALL of the incredible efforts and work being done on Pennsylvania Avenue so far; and teacher will encourage students to continue to brainstorm their own ideas of lifting up Pennsylvania Avenue as we do our work today, as tomorrow students will have the opportunity to come up with their own creative ideas to help support the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts District.
 - d. **VR:** Padlet, Ideaboardz, breakout rooms
2. Black Arts District [Video](#) and [Welcome Letter](#)
 - a. Teacher will remind students of the Lady Brion (Brion Gill in the videos) spoken word poem from day 1, and reintroduce the current work being done to create a Black Arts District on

Pennsylvania Avenue. (NOTE: Teachers can review any/all of the materials below, based on time and classroom specific needs)

- i. Teacher can show Lady Brion announcing the Black Arts District and sharing its goals [here](#).
- ii. If above link does not work (from facebook), teacher can show the WBAL News report [here](#).
- iii. Students can read (independently, small group, or whole class) the Black Arts District Welcome letter written by Lady Brion [here](#)
- iv. Questions to consider/discuss while watching/reading:
 1. What is the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts District?
 2. What are the goals of the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts District?
 3. How can turning Pennsylvania Avenue into a Black Arts District impact the community?
 4. What ideas from our SMART START/Warm-up brainstorming align with the goals of the Black Arts District?
 5. What additional ideas do you now have after watching/reading?

3. Web Quest of Black Arts [District Partners](#)

- a. Students will conduct a webquest activity where they have time to explore the many different partners working and investing in Pennsylvania Avenue.
- b. Teachers can structure this however best fits their classroom and resources (independent vs. small group work); however, it is suggested to prioritize both student choice and maximum exposure, as students may find more interest in the art side of these efforts or in the economic business building side, or even a little bit of both.
- c. Students will complete the Black Arts District graphic organizer to help induce noticing and focusing on the impact that each partner has on the Black community in Baltimore.
- d. Students can explore the below partners through the Webquest Resource (4.1):
 - i. The Avenue Bakery and James Hamlin's (Owner) Interview
 - ii. The Arch Social Club and their ASCN Youth Program
 - iii. Jubilee Arts, their Youth in Business Program and their arts/dance classes
 - iv. The Avenue Market
 - v. Everyone's Place
 - vi. Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle
 - vii. Black Arts District Artist Registry

4. Evidence Based Exit Ticket

- a. Students will apply the day's lesson to create a 1-paragraph evidence based argument (can assess using EBAS or other class normed rubric) to the following prompt: ***How are different community members and partners working together to celebrate Blackness in the new Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts District?***
- b. Teacher will clarify that students must reference at least two different partners happening in the Pennsylvania Arts District, and argue how both are working toward the shared goal of celebrating Black
- c. **VR:** Google document made for each individual student

Checks for Understanding:

The following opportunities can be used as checks for understanding:

- Black Arts District Discussion - Teacher should make use of informal checks for understanding (ie: fist to five, human thermometer) to check whole group understanding of the goals for the Pennsylvania Black Arts District. This can also be an opportunity to ask review questions tying in the historic Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Webquest Teacher Observation - Teacher should monitor student work during the webquest using proximity and 1-on-1 check ins. While doing this, teacher should leverage strategic questioning to scaffold student noticing of objective - *“how does this partner/artist/business work to celebrate Blackness in Baltimore today?”*
- Evidence Based Exit Ticket - This can serve as traditional formative assessments, in which students can be assessed in both their content understanding of lesson topics as well as evidence-based writing making use of the MSDE/BCPSS EBAS rubric.

Lesson 5: Student Choice Application Project

TEACHER NOTE: Depending on time and assessment needs, the Evidence-based argument described below can be made mandatory and thus separate from the student choice project, or can be made to be one of the options along with the more creative student products; however, the standards and lesson below will be based on assigning the evidence based argument first, and then having students complete a more creative student choice project.

Standards:

CCSS 9-10 R 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS 9-10 W 1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

CCSS 9-10 W 2: Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS 9-10 W 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS 9-10 W 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

BLM Principles:

Restorative Justice: We are committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension all people. As we forge our path, we intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.

Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Black Villages: We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, and especially “our” children to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.

Objective:

SWBAT apply their understanding of the Avenue, past and present, through a student choice creative project and an evidence-based argument (EBA).

Materials:

- [EBAS Writing Rubric](#)
- Teacher created expectations and rubric for student choice project (depending on time and resources)

Learning Activities:

1. SMART START/Warm-up
 - a. Students will have the opportunity to share out something they learned this past week that has stayed on their mind, either in a good, bad, or neutral way.
 - b. Teacher will encourage students to continue thinking about these specific events (Pennsylvania Avenue) as well as deeper themes (how we celebrate Blackness in Baltimore) stressing that students have agency and power here to take on leadership roles in celebrating Blackness in their own city and communities.
2. Evidence Based Argument
 - a. Students will write a formal evidence based response to the unit's essential question: ***How is the history and future of "The Avenue" a symbol of Black celebration and resilience in Baltimore?***
 - b. Depending on grade level and student needs, this can be differentiated between one paragraph responses to multi-paragraph essays.
 - c. Students will be assessed using the [BCPSS/MSDE Evidence Based Argument Sets rubric](#) that emphasizes use of textual evidence in supporting claims.
3. Student Choice Project:
 - a. Students will complete a creative end of unit project where they can choose from one of the below options:
 - i. **Write Baltimore Sun article** introducing Black Arts District through the history of The Avenue
 - ii. **Design a Mural** (drawing/painting/digital) and plaque (paragraph) to be commissioned in the Black Arts District to celebrate the history of the Avenue.
 - iii. **Create, and film, a spoken word poem** educating city on the history and future of the Avenue and celebrating Blackness in Baltimore
 - iv. **Create a business plan** to open on the new Pennsylvania Avenue with an emphasis on serving and celebrating the Black community
 - v. **Create a social media campaign** by designing engaging and informative posts (for instagram, twitter, or tiktok) aimed at educating about and building support for the Black Arts District
 - vi. **Design Merchandise** (clothing apparel, accessories, etc) educating about and building support for the Black Arts District
 - b. While this is likely not feasible to complete in a single day, students should have the opportunity to present, and see their peers' projects given the level of creativity and care that will be put into them.
 - c. Teacher should design rubric criteria and clear expectations based on the time restraints and needs of the class.
 - i. **Idea for extension:** Based on student interest and time, this can be extended into a more expansive creative project idea for Black History Month. In this idea, students can create

a “Future Pennsylvania Avenue” gallery walk (similar to the historic gallery walk made in lesson 2), where they can construct their vision of Pennsylvania Avenue (posters with their business ideas, paintings of the murals they would create, articles about the importance of celebrating Blackness on the Avenue, performances of songs or poems that would be heard on the future Avenue, and so much more) to the rest of the school as a school-wide Black History Month Celebration activity.

Checks for Understanding:

The following opportunities can be used as checks for understanding:

- Evidence-based Argument - Students will be assessed using the BCPSS/MSDE Evidence Based Argument Sets rubric that emphasizes use of textual evidence in supporting claims.
 - Student Choice Project - These can be assessed as traditional projects; however, it is suggested to allow students as much autonomy and freedom in completing these projects based on their own passions, goals, and understandings of what it means to celebrate Blackness.
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Appendix 1.1 - Sensory Activity Worksheet

I am standing on Pennsylvania Avenue and...

I see

I hear

I smell

I feel

I taste

I am standing on Pennsylvania Avenue and...

I see

I hear

I smell

I feel

I taste

Appendix 1.2 - I talk Black Graphic Organizer

Lady Brion, I talk Black - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5SKSZ6T3NI>

<p>Initial Takeaways: <i>Free write notes while watching</i></p>	<p>Source:</p> <p>Who:</p> <p>When:</p> <p>Where:</p> <p>Importance:</p>
<p>Claim/Argument: <i>What is Lady Brion's claim?</i></p>	<p>Evidence (examples): <i>What examples does Lady Brion give to support her claim?</i></p>

Appendix 2.1 - The Avenue Jigsaw Readings
The Royal Theatre - 1329 Pennsylvania Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217



Opened as the 1,349-seat Douglass Theatre on February 15, 1922. It was renamed Royal Theatre from November 30, 1925 with vaudeville (music and dance shows) & movies, catering for an African-American audience. It was demolished in 1971.

At its peak, the Royal Theatre was a member of the Chitlin' Circuit, a group of American venues that served as meccas for African-American performers in the Jim Crow era (others included the Apollo in New York, Howard in D.C., Regal in Chicago and Earl in Philadelphia). The Royal hosted legendary musicians like Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole and other major Black entertainers at the time, including LGBTQ+ entertainers like one of the first major female comedians in the country, Moms Mable.

The entirety of Pennsylvania Avenue, in fact, was an entertainment destination for Baltimore's African-American community and beyond. But even with movie theaters, nightclubs and restaurants lining the street, the Royal was its crown jewel. When you look back at a busy Pennsylvania Avenue in the late-1960's the Royal Theatre was operating as a movie theatre and just behind it the New Carver Theatre (a.k.a. Diane Theatre) as well. Further up the block the Regent Theatre stood.

The entire area has been razed and nothing survives today as far as the Royal. In a vacant lot where the Royal Theatre once stood there is a sign declaring the Royal Theatre Memorial Park. To this day nothing has come about to make it a park, just a fenced-in area.

Source: <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/5586>

The Sphinx Club



Light and music once poured out the windows and door of the Sphinx Club on Pennsylvania Avenue but only club members (and musicians) could get inside to enjoy the drinks and entertainment. Today, the building sits boarded-up and waiting on a planned redevelopment by the Druid Heights CDC to bring back music and life to the block, but today's abandoned storefront says nothing to what this elite club was for Black Baltimoreans at the time.

In 1946, Charles Phillip Tilghman opened the elegant and sophisticated Sphinx Club on Pennsylvania Avenue, making it perhaps one of the first Black owned nightclubs in the country. In December 2002, Seventy-three-year-old jazz singer and educator Ruby Glover gave a tour of the Avenue to a Baltimore Sun reporter, she lamented the sight of the Sphinx Club sitting vacant:

There's nothing there that even gives you the image. It was always so pretty, so lit up. It really was a private club. And my impression was that it was for elite Blacks. That was where they hung out. And you could always sing when you went in because they kept a house band, Chico Johnson and his organ trio and Earlene Reed, singing in there.

Ruby Glover recalled how musicians always went to the Sphinx Club right after nearby jazz venues, including Club Tijuana on Clifton Avenue, Red Fox on Fulton Avenue, and The Comedy Club and The Ubangi Club on Pennsylvania Avenue, closed for the night. She explained:

And whomever was down The Avenue performing, after the clubs closed that's where you went. Put on a good show in there. If you were a musician all you had to do is ring the bell. They'd tell you, 'Hey, come on in here, give us a little song.'

But four years after Charles Tilghman's death the "old Sphinx Club" shut down. By 2002, the Baltimore Sun described it as "dreary." The building continued to remain vacant and boarded for over two decades.

Fortunately, the Druid Heights Community Development Corporation is seeking to change that. In 2011, the Druid Heights CDC announced their plans to turn the building and an adjoining property into the Negro Baseball Museum and Restaurant—bringing new jobs and visitors to Avenue again.

Source: <https://explore.baltimoreheritage.org/items/show/578>

The Arch Social Club



Founded in 1905, the Arch Social Club is one of the oldest Black social and civic organizations in Baltimore and the second oldest secular African American men’s club in the United States. The club is an example of cooperative economic action among Black Baltimoreans at the same time the patterns of exclusion and racial segregation became fixed in place through policies such as Baltimore’s 1910 housing segregation law. The club is notable as both a social venue and a mutual benefit organization, as the club also provided forms of medical and life insurance to members. Historian Jessica Gordon Nembhard notes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there were "many forms" of cooperative economic action including mutual insurance organizations, fraternal groups and secret societies, and buying clubs.¹ These varied groups all offered opportunities for black Baltimoreans to “acquire and exercise organizational skills”—and often encouraged them to apply these skills to politics and civil rights activism.²

Source: <https://baltimoreheritage.github.io/civil-rights-heritage/places/arch-social-club/>

¹ Jessica Gordon Nembhard, *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*, Philadelphia, PA: Penn State University Press, 2014, 32. ↵

² “African American Fraternalism as Schools for Democracy.” In *What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality*. Princeton University Press, 2006. 61. ↵

Frederick Douglass High School



Frederick Douglass High School, established in 1883, is an American public high school in the Baltimore City Public Schools district. Originally named the Colored High and Training School, Douglass is the second-oldest U.S. high school created specifically for African American students. Prior to desegregation, Douglass and Paul Laurence Dunbar High School were the only two high schools in Baltimore that admitted African-American students, with Douglass serving students from West Baltimore and Dunbar serving students from East Baltimore.

The Frederick Douglass High School stands as a monument to the educational aspirations and activism of African American residents in the city of Baltimore and the state of Maryland. The building is also symbolic because it continues to represent for all citizens of Baltimore and the state that facility which served as the fertile ground from which many of Baltimore's and the state's black leadership emerged.

Former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall (1908–1993) is one of Douglass's most notable alumni.[3] After graduating from Douglass in 1926, Marshall went on to college and law school, passing the bar and becoming a lawyer. Representing the NAACP, he successfully challenged school segregation in the landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass_High_School_\(Baltimore,_Maryland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass_High_School_(Baltimore,_Maryland))
<http://places.baltimoreheritage.org/old-douglass-high-school/>

The Penn Hotel and other Black-owned Businesses



The Penn Hotel, the first black-owned hotel in Baltimore when it opened in 1921, was actually a complex of bars and dining rooms and not a hotel at all. It was a favorite stomping ground of Black politicians, judges, lawyers and businessmen until it closed in 1974. In a time when Jim Crow laws prevented Black Baltimoreans from accessing social spaces in Downtown Baltimore, the Penn Hotel served as a safe, and Black-owned, space for Baltimore's Black community to socialize and build community.

In this community, African Americans gained political power, established social and religious institutions, and started businesses. For instance, Metropolitan Theatre, which stood on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and North Avenue, was a Black-owned movie theatre that catered to a Black only audience. Further, individual businesses such as Mrs. Betty's Salon, which stood in the 1500 block (opened in 1918 and in operation until 1972), offered retail spaces and collective economic power for the thriving Black community of Baltimore in the mid-twentieth century.

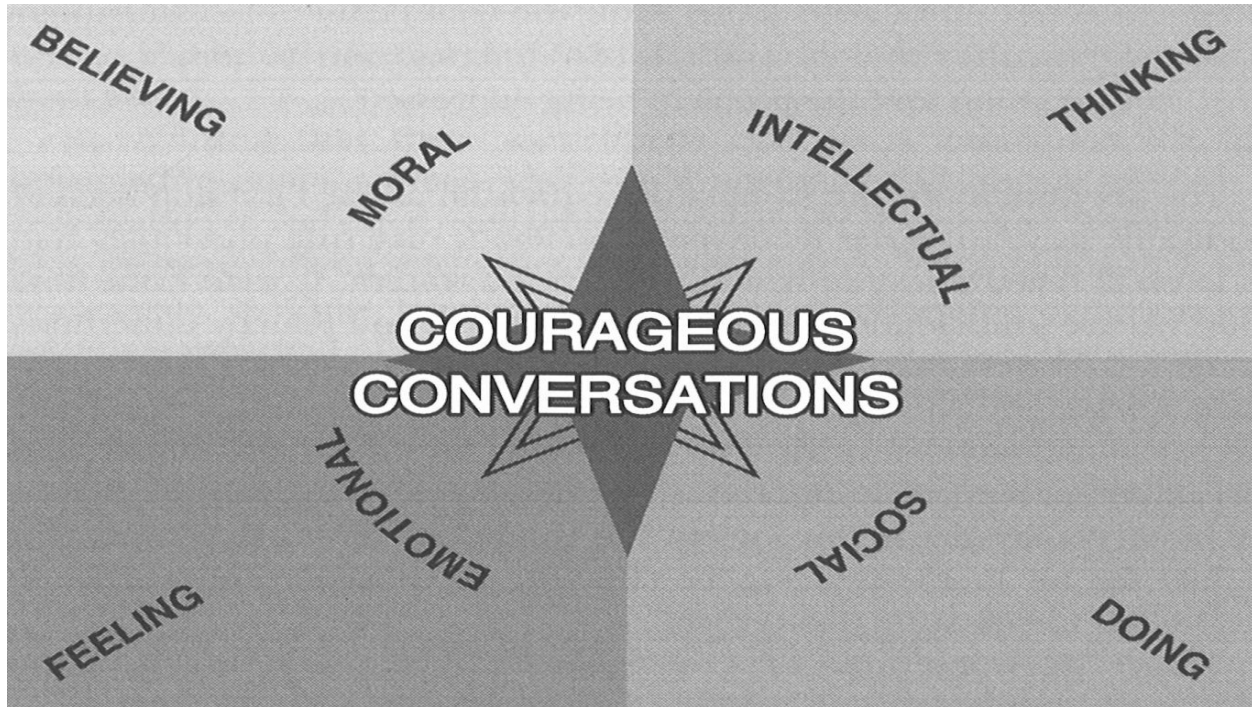
Additionally, Black churches served to not only guide spiritual life but to spearhead social progress. Many were deeply associated with civil rights movements throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By 1900, more than 12 African American churches resided in Old West Baltimore including Union Baptist, Sharp Street Memorial, Bethel AME, Douglas Memorial, and Saint Peter Claver. They helped create almost every important civic institution in the community, including Morgan State University, the YMCA and YWCA, and the Baltimore Branch of the NAACP.

Source: <https://baltimoreheritage.github.io/civil-rights-heritage/places/arch-social-club/>

Appendix 2.3 - The Avenue Gallery Walk Note-tracker

Name	Description	Significance to Black Community then	How did this celebrate Blackness?

After spending time on our historic Pennsylvania Ave, what are you...(believing, thinking, feeling, or doing)?



The Four Points are:

- **Emotional (heart):** responding to information through feelings (when racial issues strike us at a physical level and causes an internal sensation such as anger, sadness, joy, or embarrassment).
- **Intellectual (mind):** response to a racial issue or information may be characterized by personal disconnect with subject or to search for more information or data. Our intellectual response is often verbal and based in our best thinking.
- **Moral (soul):** responding from a deep-seated belief that relates to the racial information or event. Justifications of one's moral views may be seated in the "gut" and may not be verbally articulated.
- **Relational (hands/feet):** connecting and responding to racial information through actions and behaviors.

Adapted from Glenn Singleton's *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*, 2nd Edition (2015).

What disrupted the Avenue?

Topic: The Highway to Nowhere Destroyed Businesses and Displaced Residents.

Myth: The 1968 MLK “Riots” and other social uprisings disrupted the community.

Document:

Source: Jesse Walker, “The Wound in West Baltimore: how city planners killed a community,” *Reason* 5/8/2015.

A six-lane ditch of a highway runs through West Baltimore. You can enter it heading east on Mulberry Street or going west on Franklin; then you drive a little less than a mile and a half before you have to get off again. You end up on the same street you entered from, just a bit farther up the road. People call it the Highway to Nowhere.

Before that scrap of a freeway was built, the Franklin-Mulberry corridor contained a stable and vibrant black neighborhood. But in the 1960s and '70s, the government made room for the road by destroying 971 homes and 62 businesses. In the process, it displaced around 1,500 people—and destroyed far more property than was burned in Baltimore's riot of 1968.

The immediately defaced area was largely in the neighborhood called Harlem Park, but the effects radiated out much further. The nearby district of Rosemont managed to fend off the wrecking ball, but the fight still inflicted permanent damage: Officials encouraged residents to move, people became unwilling to invest in a place with an uncertain future, neglect settled in, and over the course of the '60s a cohesive black community became, in the historian Emily Lieb's words, "exactly the kind of blighted neighborhood that the roads were supposed to be eliminating." (In 1969, one Rosemont resident wrote to the head of Baltimore's Interstate Division calling the highway "a proverbial pimple on the a** of progress.") "The effects of that little underpass didn't just go into the 300 or 500 block," former resident Alton West told interviewer Andrew Giguere in 2009. "It just spread its wings either way. I guess just call it the domino effect or whatever you want...If the 400 block was affected, now the 3 and the 5 are...and after a while the 600 or the 100....It was like the spread of cancer."

It's certainly possible that these neighborhoods would have undergone a gradual economic decline anyway, given the city's deindustrialization and given that the black middle class soon found it easier to move away. But they would not have undergone such a sudden, severe, and destructive drop. And they would not have been replaced by that trench for cars in the Franklin-Mulberry corridor. The highway has been around for decades now, and it's still doing damage, by severing one section of the city from another and by discouraging any development near it.

What disrupted the Avenue?

Topic: Economic power drained out of Black Businesses

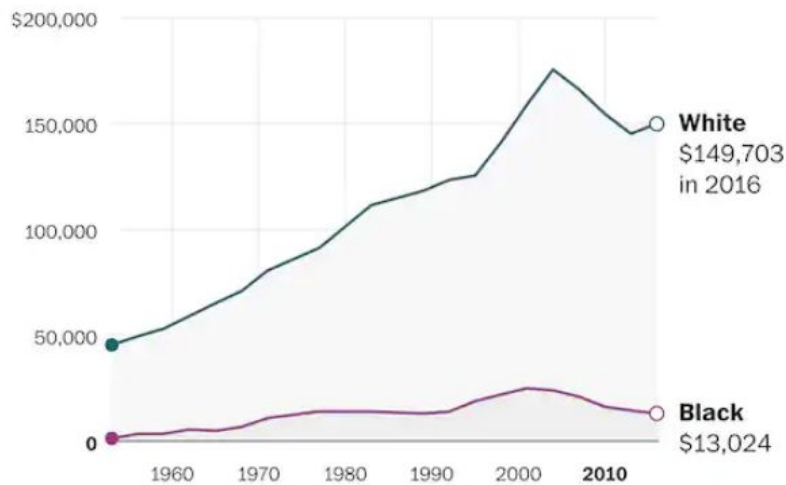
Myth: Upper-class Black flight out of the community and into white economic spaces is the primary reason for the Avenue's demise.

Document:

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/06/04/economic-divide-black-households/>

White wealth surges; black wealth stagnates

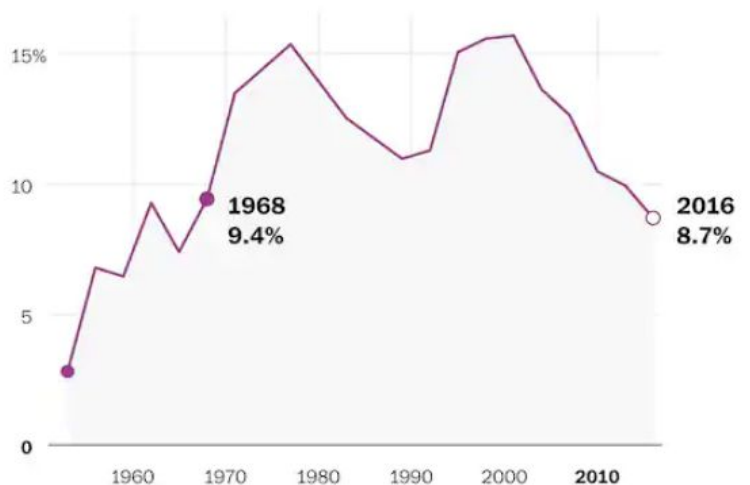
Median household wealth, adjusted for inflation



Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins
THE WASHINGTON POST

The black-white wealth gap is as wide as in the 1960s

Median black household wealth as a percentage of median white household wealth



Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Minneapolis Fed and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins
THE WASHINGTON POST

Source: When Affirmative Action was White, By Ira Katznelson, Book Review by Nick Kotz.

The federal government discriminated against Black citizens as it created and administered the sweeping social programs that provided the vital framework for a vibrant and secure American middle class...Katznelson (professor of history and political science at Columbia University) reserves his harshest criticism for the unfair application of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known as the G.I. Bill of Rights, a series of programs that poured \$95 billion into expanding opportunity for soldiers returning from World War II... "Written under Southern auspices," he reports, "the law was deliberately designed to accommodate Jim Crow." He cites one 1940's study that concluded it was "as though the G.I. Bill had been earmarked 'For White Veterans Only...'" As a result, thousands of Black veterans in the South - and the North as well - were denied housing and business loans, as well as admission to whites-only colleges and universities. They were also excluded from job-training programs for careers in promising fields like radio and electrical work, commercial photography and mechanics.

What disrupted the Avenue?

Topic: Blockbusting and Building generational wealth

Myth: Black families do not know how to build and hold wealth.

Document:

Source: Roland Nicholson Jr (Baltimore native), "Baltimore has long, sad history of housing bias," *Baltimore Sun - Opinion*, 2/13/2019.

Early in the 20th century, the Baltimore City Council passed a local law which effectively barred black people from living on any block which was occupied by whites. The federal government one-upped the city of Baltimore years later. One of the most heinous of these policies made home ownership accessible to white people by guaranteeing their loans, with the FHA explicitly refusing to back loans to black people or even other people who lived near black people.

I grew up in Northwest Baltimore. My father, a World War II veteran who had started his own dry cleaning and real estate businesses when he came home from Europe, purchased a home in a Northwest Baltimore neighborhood now called Ashburton. We were the first African-American family on our block. One of my first "duties" in life was to be a Sabbath goy for our Jewish neighbors. One by one, they moved out. They were replaced by black professionals. Years later, we learned that the broker who sold the house to my dad had actually created a panic among the white homeowners, telling them that if more blacks moved in, the value of their homes would drop and he advised them to sell quickly. The broker then used a "straw man" purchaser to buy the houses at a low panic price and subsequently sold the house to a black doctor, lawyer or entrepreneur, who paid a premium price to move into a "newly opened" neighborhood.

The scheme, known as blockbusting, was uncovered years after it happened. Even more disturbing than the blockbusting scheme that allowed me to grow up in a great neighborhood was the effect of the federal government's policy of allowing "redlining," the policy that allowed lenders, builders, developers and sellers to discriminate against buyers of color. Deeds included a restrictive covenant that limited to whom you could sell a house. They typically read, "This property could not be conveyed to any persons of the Negro race."

The greatest intergenerational transfer of wealth in the history of America took place in the 20th century (fueled by home ownership), and African-American families in Baltimore were forced to the sidelines. A vet like my dad, or an African-American steelworker at Sparrows Point like my Uncle Percy, did well with respect to earning power, but they were limited in where they could purchase homes. A white vet or steel worker with the same earning power may have purchased a home on York Road. An African-American with the same income was limited to certain neighborhoods like Walbrook or Sandtown. The York Road house appreciated in value tremendously. The house in Walbrook or Sandtown is boarded up like most of the houses on the same block.

Blacks were waging a Sisyphean fight (endless and futile) against laws that handicapped them nearly as much as the institution of slavery itself.

Appendix 3.2 - Primary Document Graphic Organizer

Myth	Source: <i>Is this credible?</i>	Argument and Textual Evidence	Claim: <i>What disrupted the Avenue?</i>
<p>Myth: The 1968 MLK “Riots” and other social uprisings disrupted the community.</p>			
<p>Myth: Upper-class Black flight out of the community and into white economic spaces is the primary reason for the Avenue’s demise.</p>			
<p>Myth: Black families do not know how to build and hold wealth</p>			

Appendix 4.1 - Black Arts District Partners - Webquest Links

Baltimore Black Arts District Partners

[The Avenue Bakery](#) and [James Hamlin's \(Owner\) Interview](#)

[The Arch Social Club](#) and their [ASCN Youth Program](#)

[Jubilee Arts](#), their [Youth in Business Program](#) and [their arts/dance classes](#)

[The Avenue Market](#)

[Everyone's Place](#)

[Black Arts District Artist Registry](#)

[Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle](#)

Appendix 4.2 - Black Arts District Graphic Organizer

Partner	Description	Impact on Black community in Baltimore	How does their work celebrate Blackness?