

# Lesson Plans: “Affrilachia” by Frank X. Walker

Content Areas: History, Sociology, Geography, Language Arts, Poetry

Grade Levels: 7–12

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## Notes

- I wrote the lesson plans to allow for flexibility (in-person vs. online, electronic vs. paper, group vs. individual work). Some instructions are intentionally left open to interpretation.
- Lesson 2 is based on the poem “Affrilachia” by Frank X Walker. The poem is from Walker’s book titled *Affrilachia* (ISBN-10 0967542405). Note that the book contains strong language that may not be appropriate for every teaching situation. The poem “Affrilachia” is posted on various websites. Out of consideration for copyright, I have not included the full text of the poem in this document.

## Lesson 1: What is Appalachia?

### Objectives

- The learners will locate the Appalachian Region (as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission) on a map of the United States.
- The learners will analyze a 1940 photograph of mountain homes in Eastern Kentucky.
- The learners will discuss the portrayal of Appalachia in the “yellow press” of the early 20th century.

### Introduction

Give the students paper copies of a [map of the United States](#). Ask them to use a pencil to shade in the area of the country they consider to be Appalachia.

Display the [map of Appalachia](#) as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Ask the students to correct their paper maps based on the ARC Map of Appalachia.

Present this brief history of the Appalachian Regional Commission: [ARC’s History and Work in Appalachia - Appalachian Regional Commission](#)

### Primary Source Analysis

Present this 1940 photo of mountain homes in Eastern Kentucky: [Mountain homes along creek showing tobacco patch and corn field in Eastern Kentucky | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

Ask the students to list everything they see in the photo.

### Group Discussion

Prompt: What can this photo tell us about life in rural Eastern Kentucky in 1940?

### Reading Across the Curriculum

Present this information about the origin and characteristics of yellow journalism: [Yellow Journalism | The First Amendment Encyclopedia \(mtsu.edu\)](#)

Distribute the article “On the Inside in the Heart of Moonshine Country” from the New York Sun (1919). If students have computers or tablets, the web version of the article is preferable, as it will allow the students to zoom-in on the contents.

“On the Inside in the Heart of Moonshine Country” Web Version: [The sun. \[volume\] \(New York \[N.Y.\] 1916-1920, June 01, 1919, Section 7 Magazine Section, Image 67 « Chronicling America « Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

Printable PDF: [0657.pdf \(loc.gov\)](#)

### Writing Across the Curriculum

Prompt: How are the mountain people of Kentucky portrayed in the newspaper article? How could an article like this contribute to the stereotyping of people from Appalachia?

## Lesson 2: Frank X. Walker’s Kentucky

### Objectives

- The learners will use inquiry strategies to analyze primary sources.
- The learners will use a close reading strategy to analyze a poem.
- The learners will recognize the diversity of the Appalachian experience.

### Introduction: Activate Prior Knowledge

Term	I have heard this term. (Yes or No)	I can define this term. (Yes or No)	Definition
Thoroughbred			
Housing Projects			
Kinfolk			
Sidesaddle			
Bluegrass			

Note: Depending on your teaching situation, you may need to explain some of the pop-culture references used in the poem (Hee Haw, The Dukes of Hazzard).

### Primary Source Analysis

Lead the students in using the [See-Think-Wonder](#) strategy to analyze the four primary sources linked below.

[The Moonshine Man of Kentucky](#)

[Pioneer Tobacco](#)

[Kentucky Derby](#)

[Mountain Family on Porch](#)

## Reading Across the Curriculum

Share the poem “Affrilachia” with the students.

Guide the students through a [six step analysis](#) of the poem.

## Group Discussion

Prompt: Compare and contrast the speaker’s experiences growing up in Kentucky with the photographs of Kentucky you viewed and analyzed.

## Writing Across the Curriculum

Prompt: Based on what you have learned about Appalachia and Frank X. Walker, how would you define *Affrilachia*? Revisit the last stanza of the poem. Why might it be particularly difficult to be an “affrilachian poet”?

## Additional Resources

[“Affrilachia: Finding the Path” by Appalachian State University](#)

[Poet Frank X. Walker Speaks to Affrilachia Class by Eastern Kentucky University](#)

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