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The Harlem Renaissance was an African-American artistic and intellectual movement that flourished throughout the 1920s. The Harlem Renaissance marked a cultural period during the 1920's when African-Americans celebrated their heritage through music, art, literature, politics and social movements.

Harlem in the 1920s was like nowhere else on Earth. During World War I (1914-18), a mass movement called the Great Migration, an exodus of 6 million blacks from the South to Northern cities like New York, Chicago, and Detroit (1916-70), began bringing African-Americans by the tens of thousands from the rural South to Northern cities.

The movement was based in Harlem, New York, but its influence extended throughout the nation and even the world. Following the Civil War, large numbers of African-Americans migrated to northern urban areas, like New York and Chicago. Harlem was one of the prime destinations for many black Americans, and there, a distinct way of life developed.

'The New Negro Movement,' as it was called during its time, the Harlem Renaissance was essentially the flowering of a unique African-American culture. African-American writers, poets, artists, musicians and intellectuals found new ways to express pride in their race and culture. Central to the Harlem Renaissance was the concept that the time had come for African-Americans to take their rightful place in society and contribute to culture in meaningful ways.

Although the movement peaked throughout the late 1920s, its impact continued into the 1930s and beyond. Among the new arrivals was a whole generation of young writers and thinkers. "Harlem was like a great magnet for the Negro intellectual, pulling him from everywhere," Langston Hughes wrote. As a group, they began writing with a bold new voice about what it meant to be a black American.
