In our brief introduction to Modernism (which we will continue to study through our reading of *The Great Gatsby*), we read a short story (“A Rose for Emily”), an essay (“How It Feels to Be Colored Me”), and several poems from the era of The Harlem Renaissance, attached.

In the chart below, carefully consider each characteristic of Modernism in the left column, and then identify a specific example (a specific summary or a direct quote) either from the time period or from at least one of the texts we read in which that characteristic is represented.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Characteristics of Modernism** | **Examples from the literary time period or from the texts we read** |
| An intentional break with tradition, including a strong reaction against established moral, religious, political, and social views. | *Ex: Women gained the right to vote. They immediately began pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior (smoking, drinking, and dancing in public), fashion (shortened dresses, makeup, bobbed hair, and costume jewelry), and opportunities (more women joined the workforce and sought college degrees).* |
| Alienation, loss, and despair. |  |
| Individualism and inner strength. |  |
| Life is unordered and often messy. |  |
| There is a concern with the sub-conscious (What makes me who I am?). |  |
| Questions of what constitutes the nature of being (What is my purpose?) |  |
| A gradual decline in faith in the American Dream. |  |

“A Rose for Emily”

The narrator in “A Rose for Emily” notes a change in the character of his town when Jefferson’s Board of Aldermen attempts to collect Emily’s taxes. Originally, the town was governed by men of the Old South like Colonel Sartoris and Judge Stevens. Men like this operated under a code of chivalry that was extremely protective of white women. Thus, Colonel Sartoris is unable to allow the town to tax a poor spinster, and Judge Stevens is unable to confront Emily about the smell coming from her house. As each generation passes, however, the newer generations are further and further away from those antiquated views. The men who try to collect Emily’s taxes don’t operate under the same code of conduct as their grandfathers and great-grandfathers did. Emily is not a “damsel in distress” to these men; she is a hindrance to progress.

Faulkner was very interested in this still-present conflict between the Old South and the New South – between the once rigid rules that governed all aspects of gentle behavior in the Victorian era and the less-chivalrous, far more progressive views of the younger generations in the 1900’s. In “A Rose for Emily,” Emily Grierson is certainly a character trapped in her genteel past, although she literally has a “skeleton in the closet.”

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**Directions**: William Faulkner’s stories often follow a non-chronological structure, and “A Rose for Emily” is no exception. Using your text (and clues) as a guide, see if you can put these events in chronological order, as they would have actually happened. Use the following details to help, as needed: “A Rose for Emily,” in a few pages, covers approximately three-quarters of a century. Emily Grierson was probably born just before or right at the start of the Civil War. Her death takes place sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s — that is, sometime around the year Faulkner wrote the story. Emily’s father died when she was approximately 30 years old.

# \_\_11\_\_ Miss Emily dies

\_\_2\_\_\_ Colonel Sartoris remits Miss Emily’s taxes

\_\_9\_\_\_ Miss Emily gives china painting lessons

\_\_10\_\_ City officials visit Miss Emily to collect taxes

\_\_1\_\_\_ Miss Emily’s father dies

\_\_7\_\_\_ After a quick trip out of town, Homer Barron returns and is never seen again

\_\_3\_\_\_ Homer Barron arrives to pave the streets

\_\_4\_\_\_ Homer and Miss Emily go for buggy rides

\_\_5\_\_\_ Miss Emily buys arsenic “for rats”

\_\_6\_\_\_ Miss Emily orders an engraved silver grooming set and men’s clothing

\_\_12\_\_ A body is discovered in Miss Emily’s house

\_\_8\_\_\_ Town officials spread lime to get rid of the “smell”

Faulkner experimented with disjointed timelines in this story to great effect. What purpose does the disjointed timeline serve? How would the story have been less effective without the innovation?

Emily - aging, arrogant, intolerant, old-fashioned, and desperate to cling to her past - might be seen as a metaphor for the Old South. How so?

“How it Feels to Be Colored Me” by Zora Neale Hurston

Explain how the Harlem Renaissance themes are illustrated in the essay.

The notion of “twoness.” A divided awareness of one’s identity: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Alienation and marginality:

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Racial Awareness:

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Equal Rights/Integration:

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African Roots:

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**Harlem Renaissance Poems:** Write a brief summary of each of the following poems. We have read and discussed each of these in class, so you should not have to think too hard about the summary – unless you didn’t listen. ☹

**The Negro Speaks of Rivers**

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stanza** | **Summary** |
| I’ve known rivers. |  |
| I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.  My soul has grown deep like the rivers.  I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans,  and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset. |  |
| I’ve known rivers:  Ancient, dusky rivers. |  |
| My soul has grown deep like the rivers |  |

**I, too**

Langston Hughes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stanza** | **Summary** |
| I, too, sing America. |  |
| I am the darker brother.  They send me to eat in the kitchen  When company comes,  But I laugh,  And eat well,  And grow strong. |  |
| Tomorrow,  I’ll be at the table  When company comes. |  |
| Nobody’ll dare  Say to me,  “Eat in the kitchen,”  Then. |  |
| Besides,  They’ll see how beautiful I am  And be ashamed— |  |
| I, too, am America. |  |

**Harlem**

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stanza** | **Summary** |
| What happens to a dream deferred? |  |
| Does it dry up  like a raisin in the sun?  Or fester like a sore—  And then run? |  |
| Does it stink like rotten meat?  Or crust and sugar over—  like a syrupy sweet?  Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. |  |
| Or does it explode? |  |

**Theme for English B**

BY [LANGSTON HUGHES](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/langston-hughes)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stanza** | **Summary** |
| The instructor said,        Go home and write        a page tonight.        And let that page come out of you—        Then, it will be true. |  |
| I wonder if it’s that simple?  I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.  I went to school there, then Durham, then here  to this college on the hill above Harlem.  I am the only colored student in my class.  The steps from the hill lead down into Harlem,  through a park, then I cross St. Nicholas,  Eighth Avenue, Seventh, and I come to the Y,  the Harlem Branch Y, where I take the elevator  up to my room, sit down, and write this page: |  |
| It’s not easy to know what is true for you or me  at twenty-two, my age. But I guess I’m what  I feel and see and hear, Harlem, I hear you.  hear you, hear me—we two—you, me, talk on this page.  (I hear New York, too.) Me—who? |  |
| Well, I like to eat, sleep, drink, and be in love.  I like to work, read, learn, and understand life.  I like a pipe for a Christmas present,  or records—Bessie, bop, or Bach.  I guess being colored doesn’t make me not like  the same things other folks like who are other races.  So will my page be colored that I write?  Being me, it will not be white.  But it will be  a part of you, instructor.  You are white—  yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.  That’s American.  Sometimes perhaps you don’t want to be a part of me.  Nor do I often want to be a part of you.  But we are, that’s true!  As I learn from you,  I guess you learn from me—  although you’re older—and white—  and somewhat more free. |  |
| This is my page for English B. |  |