Zora Neale Hurston
Born Storyteller

Grade Level: 9-12
Subject Area: US History

**Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standard:**
SS.912.A.5 Analyze the effects of the changing social, political, and economic conditions of the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression

**Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Benchmark:**
SS.912.A.5.12 Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to US history

This lesson may well be suited to two to three class periods.

**Objective**

Using the Project Mosaic website, a selection of Hurston writings, and a small group street conversation format, each student will report on at least one aspect of Zora’s life that impacted African American culture, and raise at least one higher level question related to Zora’s unique personality.

**Set**

Students will view the Project Mosaic website long enough to understand how to navigate it. They will also be provided with a variety of hard copies of Zora’s poetry, short stories, children’s books, and novels, enough to permit them to read her work individually. Students will be told that they will, in groups of three, conduct a simulated street conversation in which each student will, in animated conversation with the others in her/his group, proclaim at least one striking influential aspect of Zora’s life, and raise at least one complex question related to her unique approach to life.

**Presentation of Information**

Students will individually navigate the different links on the Project Mosaic website and read samples of her work provided in hard copy. Students will know that the purpose of this study is to prepare small group “street conversations.” Students should be taking notes as needed. As a whole class, students will also view a model of a street conversation that might have taken place during the Great Depression.
Guided Practice

In groups of three, students will prepare (script), a street conversation that will last approximately five minutes. During this conversation, they will simulate how a conversation might have taken place during the Great Depression, in Eatonville, one someone’s front porch, or in front of the local store. Each student will, in animated fashion, bring up at least one aspect of Zora’s life that has impacted African American culture, and raise at least one question that relates to her personality and her influence. Students are encouraged to rehearse this street conversation, and may be given a block of time to use the hallway or a vacant space nearby the classroom.

Independent Practice

Each group will perform their street conversation, lasting no more than five minutes. Each student will proclaim with enthusiasm one aspect of Zora’s life that has impacted African American culture, and raise a question about Zora’s approach to life as well. Students will also be given credit for specific evidence of rehearsal and animation.

Closure

As a class, students will volunteer what conversations were most interesting to witness, and why. Students will then write one paragraph summarizing the most influential aspect of Zora Neale Hurston’s work.