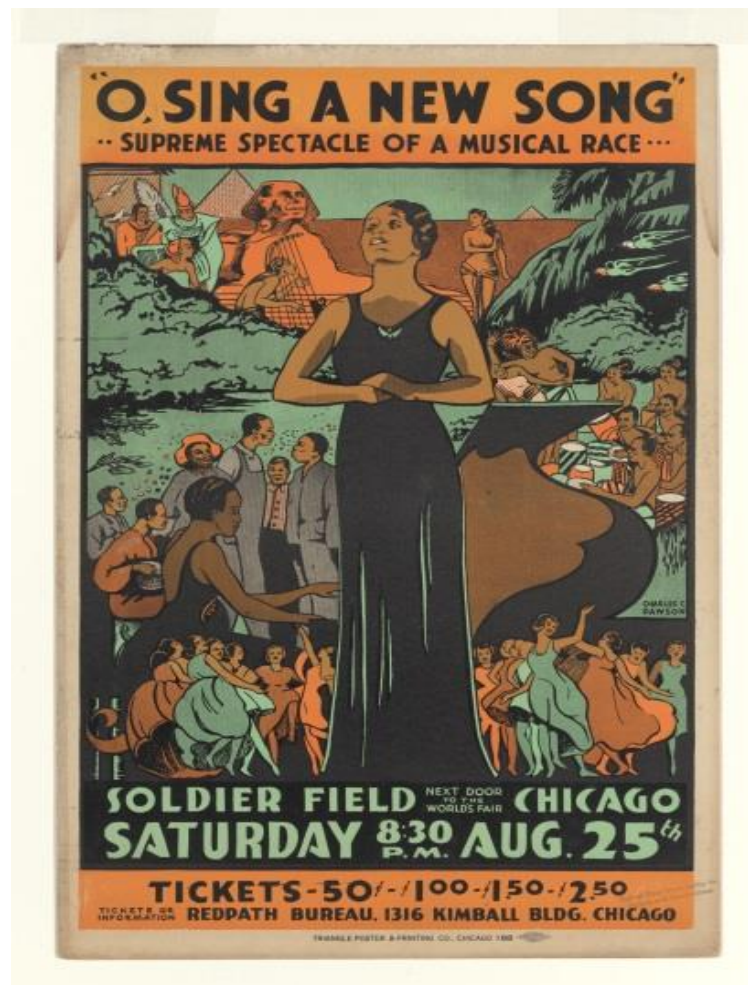


Chicago Cultural Center Exhibit Explorer

This is a guide to visiting the exhibit

African American Designers in Chicago: Art, Commerce and the Politics of Race.

Look. Think. Talk.



Charles Dawson, "O, Sing a New Song" (1934). Lithograph print. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Reba and Dave Williams (1999.529.58). Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource NY.

Make notes and draw on these pages so you can take your ideas with you from the exhibit.

START WITH THE POSTERS ALONG THE WALL

Look at all of them.

Then choose one you like.

- What do you like about it?
- What does the person who designed it want you to know?
- How does the design help you get that message?

Share Ideas.

Talk with another student about the posters – a student who chose a different one.

- *Explain why each of you chose your posters.*
- *Each poster is a kind of window-into the past.
What does the poster you chose show you about African American life and values in the past?*
- *How are the topics and ideas the posters show important today?*

Look for the Hidden Designers

The movie **Hidden Figures** told the history of African American women who did the math that enabled American astronauts to get to the moon. This exhibit tells about hidden designers – African American designers whose work resulted in improvements in everyday objects that were in many homes.

Find one of these objects and take a close look at it.

___toaster ___chair ___vacuum

People want these objects to be useful and look good.

What did the designer do to make this object useful and attractive?

What design skills did the designers need?

What challenges do you infer the African American designers met in order to do that work?

What traits would they need to meet those challenges?



Casual Chair, 1960s
Sears Roebuck, Chicago
Charles Harrison Collection,
Courtesy of ALD Project, LLC



Cover Designer, LeRoy Winbush, 1955
Ed Wentz, Designer
Bulletin of the Art Director's Club of Chicago
LeRoy Winbush papers, Special Collections University Library,
University of Illinois, Chicago

FIGURE OUT A STORY



Installation view by Daniel Schulman

The exhibit has many different cases.

Each one features a topic.

Explore one of the exhibit cases with another student.

Each case includes several artifacts.

An artifact is something people made that can tell you about culture and history.

The designer of the exhibit wants you to think about them to understand a part of history.

Look at the different artifacts.

- What are they?
- Why are they in the same case?
- What title would you give the case?

What do they tell you about the skills and creativity of African American designers?

Infer a story – tell a story based on the artifacts in the case.

Share:

Meet with other students at a different exhibit case.

Hear the story they made to explain it.

Then show and tell them your exhibit case and story.

Connect to Today

What would you put in an exhibit case about that same topic today?



Charles Dawson
Slick Black
Valmor Products, Chicago
Private Collection

Exhibit Expander: Design a Poster

Look again at the posters and the artwork on the walls.

Look for a poster or picture that shows one of these themes or your own idea.

Creativity **CULTURE** Community *Legacy* **UNITY**

Choose one that shows an idea you believe is important.

See how the designer used art and words to express an idea.

Think about how the designer showed that idea.

Then choose one of those themes or your own to design your own poster.

Plan your own poster.

You can use the picture planner on the next page to plan your own design.



Unknown Designer, circa 1912
Silkscreen ink on board
South Side Community Art Center,
William McBride Papers, Vivian G. Harsh Collection of
Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library

Poster Planner

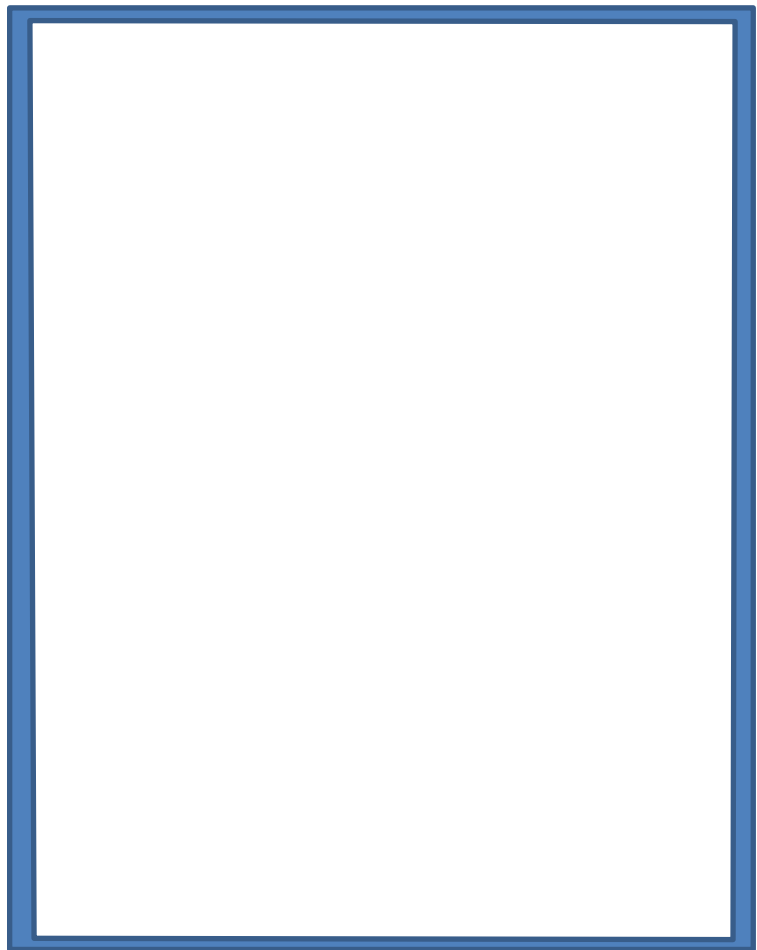
Planning and drawing a poster is like writing a story or a speech.
This is Common Core Writing Strand 4: Write a text to convey ideas clearly.

What is the message I want people to understand when they look at my poster?

What will I show so they see what I mean? List the persons, places, or things you will put in your poster to help people understand your idea. It could be a story in pictures.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Sketch your poster here.



Write a caption here.



Share What You Learned.

You can complete this page in the exhibit or back at school.

What are important ideas you learned in the exhibit?

Talk about what you think is important.

Then draw a picture or make notes here.

- About African American designers...

- About what people think about when they design something...

What would you put into your own exhibit that shows those ideas?

At your school, you can design that exhibit.

You can turn a bulletin board into an exhibit to share what you learned with everyone in your school.

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