teacher resource guide

audible &
njpac present

listen & learn

audible

ORIGINAL

the book

of baraka
In this innovative and groundbreaking Audible Original, hear how Ras Baraka — the mayor of Newark, New Jersey — grew from a spoken-word artist to school principal to successful politician.

Baraka’s story begins at home in Newark. He was raised in a house of art and politics, passion and provocation. His father was one of the most influential and controversial poets of the 1970s and filled his home with ardent activists, lively debates and conversations unlike any on his block — a powerful combination that influences him to this day.

His story is a deeply personal history that reflects a generation and a movement, vividly capturing a tumultuous period of political and social struggle and, ultimately, boundless hope and renewal. The tale is co-authored by acclaimed writer Jelani Cobb, a staff writer at The New Yorker and a professor at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism. Experience this exclusive, first-of-its-kind telling of Baraka’s journey from poet to principal to peacemaker through his own powerful, inspiring words.

The Book of Baraka is an Audible Original production. The New Jersey Performing Arts Center has teamed up with Audible to bring The Book of Baraka into classrooms.

Headquartered in downtown Newark, Audible is the city’s fastest-growing employer and the leading creator and provider of premium audio storytelling, enriching the lives of millions of listeners every day. At Audible, we strive to make a positive impact on the cities we call home because we believe companies can have hearts and souls and missions that transcend financial success.

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center is the anchor cultural institution of Newark and the state of New Jersey. Mayor Baraka has taken to the stage at NJPAC in many capacities — as a political leader, a poet and a committed advocate for the performing arts.
Before you listen to *The Book of Baraka*, take a moment to learn about some of the people we'll hear in the audiobook. Watch this trailer for *Why Is We American?*, a documentary about the Baraka family that was released in 2020 and produced by Ms. Lauryn Hill. After watching the trailer, think about what stood out to you the most. What made you feel angry or inspired? What art forms, events and people did you notice? What was familiar? What was surprising? What would you like to learn more about?

### Reflect, reframe, and read

Watch *A Mayor That’s Radical* (7 minutes). As a class, read the definitions of some words that came up during the video in the vocabulary section: systemic, gentrification, radical and radicalism. Lead students in a discussion about radicals throughout U.S. history to today.

Designate two sheets of chart paper for radicals and radicalism and assign two students as scribes. Have the class brainstorm radicals throughout U.S. history to today.

### Focus

Break the class up into four groups for research. Each group will read about one of four major events that influenced Mayor Ras Baraka’s call to action as an activist:

1. Interstate 208 and its effects
2. The Newark Rebellion of 1967
3. Apartheid in South Africa
4. Howard University and white supremacy

Distribute the sections of *Activity Sheet 2: Resource Articles* to the groups, each containing two article excerpts and one newspaper clipping from that time period (three pages per section). Instruct students to read through the articles together, taking individual notes. Their notes will be used in the *Originate* section.

Take a look at your notes and circle any words, phrases or events that resonate with you the most. Consider the types of visual art you’d feel most comfortable creating. In your group, share what you’d like to focus on and the medium you’d like to use. Together, brainstorm ideas about how your notes could be visually represented and how your ideas might be connected. Whether you’re creating individually or collaboratively, stay with your group. If you feel stuck, you can simply ask the collective “what do you think about…” to get some ideas.

### Originate

Groups may use the prompts on the second page of *Activity Sheet 2* to determine how they’d like to visually represent their topic and responses to it. Visual art components may include drawing, sketching, tag art, collage (digital or print) or any combination of mediums. Encourage students to support and rely upon each other as they are creating, reaching out to their peers for ideas if they feel stuck.

Take a look at your notes and circle any words, phrases or events that resonate with you the most. Consider the types of visual art you’d feel most comfortable creating. In your group, share what you’d like to focus on and the medium you’d like to use. Together, brainstorm ideas about how your notes could be visually represented and how your ideas might be connected. Whether you’re creating individually or collaboratively, stay with your group. If you feel stuck, you can simply ask the collective “what do you think about…” to get some ideas.

### Rehearse

Give the groups some time to prepare for sharing — how they’d like to present their artwork and details from their research, teaching their classmates what they’ve learned. Encourage groups to practice as if presenting to an audience, or at least talk through their presentation plan.

As an extension, consider visiting another class, admin, families or even local legislators, just as the Baraka home was open to the community. Could the gallery event also be an opportunity to raise awareness about an issue important to the class? If so, determine what issue the class would like to spotlight and have them prepare a statement or something tangible for guests to take home (i.e., having voter registration forms available or designing a “did you know?” sheet).

Since each group had a different event, your group has new information to share through the details you’ve collected and the artwork you’ve created. Determine how you would like to present and the order in which each group will speak. Just as the Baraka home was open to the community (neighbors, artists, activists), you would also like to welcome the school or local community to your gallery event! Consider using the event to spread awareness about an issue that is important to you as a collective. This could include a conversation you have for the school, town, state or nation. Prepare a statement to share with your guests and if you’d like, have something they could take home with them (like a flyer) to remind them of your cause.

### Make magic

Arrange the classroom in a way that best showcases the artwork and accommodates guests (if applicable). Encourage the audience to applaud as groups go up to present and after they are finished. Prompt the audience to share positive and reflective feedback.

From *The Book of Baraka* to your own gallery of art, you’ve worked hard and did an amazing job. You’ve demonstrated a willingness to face “that which is ugly” in society and create something original and of value. That’s truly remarkable!
### Inspired Ideas in the Classroom: Version 2 - Spoken Word

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<th>Teacher Focus</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prepare for the performance</strong></td>
<td>Before you listen to The Book of Baraka, take a moment to learn about some of the people we’ll hear in the audiobook. Watch the trailer for Why Is We American?, a documentary about the Baraka family that was released in 2020 and produced by Ms. Lauryn Hill. After watching the trailer, think about what stood out to you the most. What made you feel inspired? What art forms, events and people did you notice? What was familiar? What was surprising? What would you like to learn more about?</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLSA.R.7, Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 11, SEL Competency Social Awareness</td>
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<td><strong>Experience the performance</strong></td>
<td>Distribute Activity Sheet 1: Now Hear This, where students may write important details as they listen to each episode. Consider allowing students to listen to The Book of Baraka in small groups so they may support one another in actively listening and capturing key information. Sometimes information goes in one ear and out the other—don’t worry! Use Activity Sheet 1 to write down important details you hear in The Book of Baraka. While listening in small groups, support each other in capturing key events, details and people. Be sure to tune back in to the audiobook so as not to miss anything.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLSA.R.7, Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 8, 9 SEL Competency Self Awareness Social Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rehearse and read</strong></td>
<td>In preparation for writing collaborative poems in the Originate section, use Activity Sheet 4: Free Write Prompts to create a writer’s workshop. The activity includes: Free writing is an exercise where you write down your thoughts quickly and continuously as they come in. You don’t need to worry about grammar, spelling, structure or form. Follow the prompts on Activity Sheet 4 and write as quickly as you can without overthinking. If you find yourself spending too much time weighing your ideas as “good” or “bad,” take a second to acknowledge that thought and quickly move on. Whatever you do, don’t stop writing! Even if you don’t know what to write next, write that down and check back in with the prompt to get on track.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLSA.W.4, Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills 9.4.12.CI.1 Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 3, 7, 9 SEL Competency Responsible Decision-Making Social Awareness</td>
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<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Assign students to small groups to create their collaborative poems. Provide each group with sticky notes or index cards. Give writers five to 10 minutes to free write for each prompt. Students can write in notebooks, on loose leaf paper or in a document. A collaborative poem is one that is written with the input and ideas of others. Rather than starting from scratch, use the material generated from your free writing exercises. In your groups:</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLSA.W.5, Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills 9.4.8.GCA.2 9.4.8.GCA.3, 9.4.8.GCA.4 9.4.12.CI.1 Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 3, 7, 9 SEL Competency Responsible Decision-Making Social Awareness</td>
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<td><strong>Originate</strong></td>
<td>Have students refer back to Activity Sheet 1 to share takeaways from The Book of Baraka. Facilitate a brief discussion on a quote from the mayor’s father, Amiri Baraka: “The noblest function of art is to oppose that which is ugly.” Prompt the class to relate this quote to The Book of Baraka and to current/recent events, including present-day concerns they may have. Capture their contributions on chart paper or smart board so they may reference it later. Assign students to small groups in The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill and have volunteers read the quote at the top of the page, the introduction and the instructions for part one. Give students two minutes to brainstorm a word bank for part one. More time may be allowed, though this timed exercise will provide a sense of urgency and encourage free thought without overthinking. Give students five to 10 minutes for each section. When complete, invite students to share their stories. As an extension activity, have students design a slideshow for their story including text and any design elements they would like to add. Their stories could be printed or shared digitally. Revise as needed, trim away excess, add descriptive language and use the grammar tools from Activity Sheet 3. Once you are satisfied with your work, write out the final draft of your collaborative poem.</td>
<td>English Language Arts NJSLSA.W.5, Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills 9.4.8.GCA.2 9.4.8.GCA.3, 9.4.8.GCA.4 9.4.12.CI.1 Visual &amp; Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 3, 7, 9 SEL Competency Responsible Decision-Making Social Awareness</td>
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<td><strong>Reflect, respond and read</strong></td>
<td>In the Originate section, ask students to write down important details that they may snap). Encourage the audience to applaud as poets go up to present and after they are finished. As students may share their findings with the group and write them out onto sticky notes/cards. Groups may arrange their written contributions in a way that makes sense poetically, rearranging and revising as needed. Once the group is stylized and rehearsed their art! Have students divide up the lines so that everyone who wants to participate may do so. Consider allowing students to listen to The Book of Baraka in small groups so they may support one another in actively listening and capturing key information. Instruct students to read their free writing exercises and “mine for gold” by underlining favorite words and phrases. As you brainstorm ideas for the first section of Activity Sheet 2, consider the following: How do you connect to the poet’s words and feelings? Congratulations on giving your audience an opportunity to connect with you and your message!</td>
<td>From The Book of Baraka to six-word stories to collaborative poetry, you’ve worked hard and did an amazing job! You’ve demonstrated a willingness to “oppose that which is ugly” in society and create something original and of value. That’s truly remarkable. As you perform, relax and have fun. We enjoy watching and hearing poetry because we connect to the poet’s words and feelings. Congratulations on giving your audience an opportunity to connect with you and your message!</td>
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Audible Original: The Book of Baraka

NJSLSA.R7.
Quantitatively and orally.

NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS
corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy

NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS
socialstudies.org/standards

NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS
nationalartstandards.org

FIND THE STANDARDS
For more detailed information on the standards,
visit these websites:

Curriculum Standards

Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

Recognize one’s feelings and thoughts.

Social Awareness

Social Awareness
Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others.

Relationship Skills

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

SEL Competency

Self Awareness
Recognize one’s feelings and thoughts.

Vocabulary

African Liberation Flag

The Pan-African flag is a tri-colored flag consisting of three equal horizontal bands of (from top down) red, black, and green, symbolizing the union of governance, people and territory. Created in 1920 by Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican political activist, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur and orator. The flag represents Black liberation and unity across the diaspora to this day.

Amina Baraka

Poet, actress, dancer, singer, political activist; active member of the ANC (African National Congress); mother to Mayor Ras Baraka.

Amiri Baraka

World-renowned poet and playwright, political activist, professor (poetry and Africana Studies); former NJ Poet Laureate; father to Mayor Ras Baraka.

Apartheid

Or “apartheid” in the language of Afrikaans, was a system of legislation that upheld segregation against non-white citizens of South Africa.

The Black Power Movement

A revolutionary movement in the 1960s and 1970s. It emphasized racial pride, economic empowerment and the creation of political and cultural institutions. During this era, there was a rise in the demand for Black history courses, a greater embrace of African culture and a spread of artistic expression displaying the realities of African Americans.

David Duke

Former Grand Dragon of The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and continued figurehead for white supremacy.

Equity

In its simplest terms as it relates to racial and social justice, means meeting communities where they are and allocating resources and opportunities as needed to create equal outcomes for all community members.

Gentrification

Higher-income populations moving into lower-income areas resulting in renovation of the neighborhood at the cost of displacing previous residents and preventing lower-income families from moving into previously affordable neighborhoods.

The Great Migration

The Great Migration was the relocation of more than six million African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest and West from about 1916 to 1970. Driven from their homes by unsatisfactory economic opportunities and harsh segregationist laws, many Black Americans headed north, where they took advantage of the need for industrial workers that arose during the First World War.

Howard University

Founded in 1867 in Washington, D.C., Howard University is an HBCU (Historically Black College and Universities), a private research university comprised of 14 schools and colleges. Alumni include Amiri Baraka, Ras Baraka, Chadwick Boseman, Taraji P. Henson, Sean Combs, Nick Cannon, Marlon Wayans, Zara Neal Hurston and Toni Morrison.

Jesse Jackson

Civil Rights leader, minister and politician; traveled widely through the late 1970s to mediate or spotlight international problems, including South African apartheid; in the 1980s Jackson became a leading national spokesman and advocate for African Americans.

Jim Crow

A collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation. Named after a Black minstrel show character, the laws—which existed for about 100 years, from the post-Civil War era until 1968—were meant to marginalize African Americans by denying them the right to vote, hold jobs, get an education or other opportunities. Those who attempted to defy Jim Crow laws often faced arrest, fines, jail sentences, violence and death.

Kenneth Gibson

Newark’s first Black mayor, who served for 16 years, from 1970 to 1986. He led Newark’s efforts to overcome the physical and spiritual damage inflicted upon the city by the 1967 Rebellion. A statue honoring former Mayor Gibson was unveiled at Newark City Hall in 2021.

Lauryn Hill

Made her first televised appearance on Showtime at the Apollo, where she was booted off the stage at the age 13. She then appeared in a prominent singing role at 18 in Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit. As a member of the Fugees, their second album sold over six million copies and earned a GRAMMY® for the remake of Roberta Flack’s “Killing Me Softly with His Song.” Ms. Lauryn Hill’s solo album The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill sold 19 million copies. At the 1999 GRAMMY® Awards, she became the first woman to be nominated in 10 categories in a single year and the first woman to win five trophies in one night: Album of the Year, Best R&B Album, Best R&B Song, Best Female R&B Vocal Performance and Best New Artist. A longtime associate of...
unfounded categorizations of the race, culture and colonialism depended on and encouraged negative, Pan-Africanist philosophy held that slavery and colonization and exploitation of the African continent.

of African descendants in the New World; emerged in Pan-Africanism’s roots lie in the collective experiences of African people through a political, social or economic system.

values of African people.

of the Baraka family, Ms. Simone was very active in the Black Power movement, releasing multiple politically motivated songs.

Singer, pianist, songwriter and Civil Rights activist; Nina Simone known as “The High Priestess of Soul;” a close friend of the Baraka family.

arrests, 700 injuries and 26 deaths.

he was beaten so badly it was rumored that he was killed. Despite efforts from local organizers and activists to keep demonstrations peaceful, rioting and violence occurred.

began on July 12, 1967, when a Black cab driver was pulled over by two white police officers for a minor traffic offense. He was beaten so badly it was rumored that he was killed. Despite efforts from local organizers and activists to keep demonstrations peaceful, rioting and violence occurred.

The Newark Rebellion of 1967

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka to host 'Roadmap to Equity' education conference
date

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date

Get to Control Newark's Schools? A rabble-rousing new mayor wants to undo the reforms that Cory Booker, Chris Christie, and Mark Zuckerberg brought to town.

Newark's Voters Choose New Mayor and New Path

Nina Simone Protest Songs Playlist

3 Tips to Boost Confidence

More Confidence in Two Minutes

Short: Shrink the Audience

Short: Look More Confident, Part 1

Short: Look More Confident, Part 2

Black Power

In-School Residencies: NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you’ll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It’s the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development: Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC’s forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something… you’ll also have fun and be inspired.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please email our education sales team at artseducation@njpac.org.
Or visit njpac.org/education

Saturday Programs: NJPAC’s Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, theater, musical theater and symphonic band.

Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

For more information about Audible’s education efforts, please contact Jeff Anderson, Director of Community Education at jefande@audible.com

Generous support for SchoolTime provided by

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* deceased