Black Carnival Courts & Power

NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL STUDIO | LESSON 77 | GRADES 9–12 | CULTURE & SOURCES

Context before technique

Original and Young Men Illinois Clubs built Black social and Carnival traditions despite segregation.

Whose story is being told?

Teach this lesson through identified New Orleans institutions and, where possible, community-authored testimony. Name the people, places, and historical context in your examples. Explain what remains unknown or contested.

Responsible artistic engagement

Avoid costume reenactments and flattening Black social institutions into fashion alone.

Visual permissions

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Starter research sources

Louisiana State Museums: Illinois Clubs

https://louisianastatemuseum.org/exhibit/origins-new-orleans-black-carnival-society-story-illinois-clubs

HNOC: Louisiana history and diverse voices

https://visit.hnoc.org/louisiana-history-museum

Louisiana Visual Arts Benchmarks

Louisiana Department of Education arts standards (official PDF)

Discussion prompts

- Who created or maintains this tradition, space, or object?
- What do outsiders often overlook?
- Which images would require permission, and whose voices are missing?

Teaching note

These starter sources support inquiry, not a complete ethnography. Prioritize up-to-date local perspectives and appropriately compensated cultural partnerships when possible.