Arturo Alfonso Schomburg

Unearthing African and Indigenous Histories

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Date _____

Grades 6 through 12 interdisciplinary Research Simulation Task

Essential Question

How can Schomburg’s work help us recover connected histories obscured by colonialism and exclusion?

NJSLS Social Studies

Grades 6 through 8 6.3.8.CivicsPI.4 and 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 examine institutions and informed civic action. Grades 9 through 12 6.1.12.HistoryCC.8.c connects Schomburg’s writing to the Harlem Renaissance.

NJSLS English Language Arts

RI.CR.6.1, RI.AA.6.7, W.AW.6.1 and the corresponding grade 7 and 8 expectations support evidence and argument. Grades 9 through 10 and 11 through 12 use RI.CR.1, RI.AA.7, and W.AW.1 with their grade band prefixes. See teacher guide for full codes.

CCLS Literacy Connections

RH.6–8.1, RH.6–8.2, RH.6–8.7 and WHST.6–8.1 connect evidence, central ideas, visuals, and argument. RH.9–10.1, RH.11–12.1, WHST.9–10.1 and WHST.11–12.1 extend the work. These are Common Core literacy connections.

Interdisciplinary and Amistad Alignment

History examines Black scholarship and Indigenous Caribbean continuity. Geography traces movement. Mathematics analyzes a model archive. Science literacy examines preservation evidence. Civic reasoning considers public access and community authority.

Day 1 A Puerto Rican Scholar Recovers History

Do Now

What can a family preserve that a textbook might leave out?

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Source A A Life Across Places

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1874 and arrived in New York City in 1891. He supported Cuban and Puerto Rican independence through Las Dos Antillas. In 1911 he helped organize the Negro Society for Historical Research. His collecting and writing documented African diaspora history across national boundaries. [1]

Diaspora describes people and communities dispersed from an ancestral homeland. Indigenous describes peoples with enduring historical relationships to lands predating colonization. These descriptions can overlap within families and communities. A person's language or present nationality does not reveal every ancestral connection.

Schomburg's example invites a research question. Who controls the evidence used to tell a people's history? A missing chapter in a schoolbook does not establish that a community had no achievements. Researchers can seek letters, publications, objects, and family accounts. They must identify the creator, date, purpose, and limits of each item. Historical recovery requires both respect for people's knowledge and careful examination of evidence.

Quick Write

How did Schomburg's movement between places support a history that crossed national boundaries? Cite Source A.

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