



Adult Learning Within Reach

## Member Lecture – 1 February 2024

The literature of the Harlem Renaissance: an introduction  
Clare Jackson, WEA tutor

Questions answered post-lecture

### Q1 How does Zora Neale Hurston fit into the Harlem Renaissance?

Zora Neale Hurston was absolutely part of the Harlem Renaissance. One of her key works is the 1937 novel 'Their Eyes Were Watching God' – which I think is superbly written. She was also an influential essayist – see her 1934 essay 'Characteristics of Negro Expression'. She contributed strongly to the debates within the movement, challenging primitivism and emphasizing that White education was not the only measure of intelligence. She was absolutely clear that Black people should be allowed to speak for themselves. She also challenged the idea that all works concerning Black people should be about 'the race problem', as this would also be a failure to see Black people in whole human terms.

Useful links and resources for further reading

Books

**A History of the Harlem Renaissance** - ed. Farebrother and Thaggert, 2021

**The Cambridge Companion to The Harlem Renaissance** - ed. Hutchinson, 2007

**Black Drama and the Harlem Renaissance** - Freda L. Scott, 1985

**Black Female Playwrights: An Anthology of Plays before 1950** - ed. Kathy A. Perkins, 1990

Links

**[NAACP – the home of grassroots activism for civil rights and social justice](#)**

**[britannica.com - Harlem Renaissance Timeline](#)**

**[historytoday.com - Harlem Renaissance history](#)**

**[Harlem Renaissance - A chronology - Yale.edu](#)**