Africa and the African Diaspora

Literature for Youth
Africa has been a conundrum in the minds of many, alternately considered the:

* Savage unknown
* “Dark continent”
* “Motherland”
* Mother lode for resources, human and natural
* Land of endless war, poverty, and ignorance

* What Is Africa to Me?
* Countee Cullen: “What is Africa to Me”
* Dudley Moore

*Poetic Visions*
* Imaginative writing that emanates from the disparate and similar experiences of a person of African descent.

* Shaped by: place, gender, age, language, nationality, “race,” religion, class, education, individual creativity and myriad other influences.

* Emerges from oral and written traditions and undeniably affected by both modes.

* Conceptions
* Influence of colonial traditions
* Impact of liberation
* Emergence of educated middle and upper-classes
* Vision that a different literature is needed for youth vis-à-vis adults
* Role of indigenous publishing companies vis-à-vis colonial or multinational corporations

* Language

* Nationality

* “Creating Dangerously”-Edwidge Danticat

* Impediments to Sharing the Literatures

* Economic and Cultural Contexts
Responses to Some of the Texts: Mini-book Talks
Nervous Conditions

by Tsitsi Dangarembga
*Virginia Hamilton
Edwidge Danticat
Song for Night
A novella by Chris Abani

Chris Abani
* Background information critical:
  * Nation
  * Political and cultural contexts
  * Authors biographical information, aesthetic views, and ideological stances.

* Engagements with the Texts: Some Observations
* Gender
* Nationality
* Race or Ethnicity
* Language
* Experience with Literature
* Familiarity and Comfort with each other
* Willingness to Share
* Openness to new knowledge and perspectives

*The Readers*
* Conscious decisions about where to start, with whom, and what to include
* Willingness to share “authority” and “yield the floor”
* Openness to questioning, critique, and debate
* Knowledge seeker
* Limitations resulting from vastness of topic
* Desire to incorporate many cultural processes and products: art, film, music, dance, etc.
* Biases: Gender