African Americans have played a major part in the contribution to the Arts, such as dance, literature, music, and art. From the rise and impact of the Harlem Renaissance to the continued impact on the culture of modern day artists, there are plenty of African Americans who have made significant contributions to the Arts. Names such as Alice Walker, Maya Angelou, Josephine Baker, Duke Ellington, Jacob Lawrence, and Misty Copeland stand out among the rest, but are just a few who have made a cultural impression. One African American who stands out among the literary greats is Langston Hughes. He played a big role in the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s being an influential person in poetry. His poems reflected the pulse of the African American spirit and has influenced many who have come after him.

Langston Hughes was born on February 1st, 1901, in Joplin Missouri. His parents, James Nathaniel Hughes and Carrie Hughes got divorced when Langston was only a young child. His father then ended up moving to Mexico. Langston was raised by grandmother Mary Sampson Patterson Leary Langston until he was thirteen years old. He then went to live with his mother and her husband in Lincoln, Illinois. While in Illinois, Hughes started to write poetry until he and his family settled in Cleveland, Ohio. While in Cleveland his teacher started to introduce Langston to different poets like Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman. He also played a big role in his school’s literary magazine and would often send his work to other poetry magazine companies but his work would often get rejected.

Hughes graduated High School in 1920 and then moved to Mexico with his father. A year later he published his first poem called “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” which appeared in the *The Crisis* magazine. Later that year Hughes moved back to the U.S. and enrolled into Columbia University. While in New York City, he became a part of Harlem’s cultural movement, known as *The Harlem Renaissance*. In 1922, Langston dropped out of college and signed on as a steward on a freighter that took him to Africa and Spain. He left the ship in 1924 and moved to Paris to continue to write and publish his poetry.

Langston Hughes was the first African American to make a living as a writer. Hughes was also known for writing short stories, novels, plays, two autobiographies, and children books. His work plays a huge role in the experiences of everyday life of an African American in the 1920s. In 1924, Hughes' poem

“The Weary Blues” won first place in the opportunity magazine literary competition. His poems happened to appear in 16 volumes of poetry starting with “The weary Blues” which was published in 1926. In conclusion, Langston Hughes left an amazing mark on the African American community during the 1920s. He made a mark in an artistic movement by breaking boundaries with his poetry. He also found kindred spirits amongst his fellow artists along with taking a stand for the possibilities of Black art and the influence it had on the Harlem Renaissance and the way it is remembered today.