



RACISM AS A PRIMARY “INSTITUTION” OF THE U.S. — HOW WE MAY COMBAT SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY

SUMMARY:

The full collection of Racial Literacy Grade 8 lessons explores race and racism in the United States, and the importance of developing anti-racist frameworks. The overarching goal is for students to develop a deeper understanding of racism as a primary “institution” in the United States. Students will explore and analyze both historical and current forms of racism, including individual levels and systemic levels of racism, with a greater focus on the latter. For example, students will unpack sophisticated ideas like white privilege and white supremacy, as well as analyze the various manifestations of separate and unequal institutions and structures that generate and reify racial discrimination in the U.S., such as housing, education, and mass incarceration. Lessons will encourage students to think about their own agency and responsibilities. By the end of the unit, students will set commitments for rectifying current social ills, such as learning and planning how to carry out anti-racist activism and/or social advocacy in their communities and/or to improve their everyday lives. Please note that due to the violent and racist aspects of the formation of the United States, some graphic content is included. Please pre-screen and pre-read all suggested materials, and consider reading lessons for other grades as well, specifically Grade 4 through Grade 7. At the least, we strongly encourage teachers to read carefully through all the lessons of Grade 8, before launching the unit, to best understand the overarching objectives and to increase comfort with the scope and theme of topics.

GRADE 8 LESSONS BY TOPIC:

- 1 Understanding Racism: How It Manifests Across Individual and Systemic Levels
- 2 The Creation and Reinforcement of White Privilege and False Notions of Supremacy
- 3 Efforts of Racial Control and Resistance: From the One-Drop Rule to *Loving v. Virginia*
- 4 Separate and Unequal: Housing Discrimination and Geographic Segregation
- 5 Separate and Unequal: Education and the School-to-Prison Pipeline
- 6 Separate and Unequal: The Rise of Mass Incarceration and The Prison Industrial Complex
- 7 The Power of Viewing “Stories” with Complexity and Depth
- 8 Creating Action Plans to Further Racial and/or Social Justice

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LESSON 1

UNDERSTANDING RACISM: HOW IT MANIFESTS ACROSS INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEMIC LEVELS

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 60+ minutes (teacher may extend)

Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies; Sociology

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the difference between racism and prejudice.
- To understand the different "forms" of racism, such as individual levels of racism and systemic levels of racism.
- To discuss and understand individual levels of racism, including internal racism and interpersonal racism.
- To discuss and understand systemic levels of racism, including institutional racism and structural racism.
- To create a working definition of "racism," that encompasses the aforementioned levels.

MATERIALS

- "What Discrimination Looks Like in America," video by Now This World. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwljKuitlu8>
- "Sociology of Racism," academic article by Matthew Clair and Jeffrey S. Denis for the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Available here: https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/matthew-clair/files/clair_denis_2015.pdf
- For more information about the differences between racism and prejudice, consider reading, "How Is Racism Different From Prejudice," interviews of scholars for *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Available here: <http://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/qa/how-is-racism-different-from-prejudice>
- The following video may be helpful to aid in class discussion. If time allows, show: "Moving the Race Conversation Forward," video produced by Race Forward. Available here: <https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/moving-race-conversation-forward>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- As the underlying goal of this unit is to review race as a primary "institution" of the United States, this first lesson will unpack the various forms of racism. While the scholarship of racism is wide, we've chosen a particular view that asserts racism can happen on either an "individual" or "systemic" level. Examples of individual racism include internalized racism and interpersonal racism. Examples of systemic racism include institutional and structural racism. More information, including definitions of each, is included in the lesson notes below.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: idiosyncratic, bias, colonialism, discrimination, immigration, inequality, micro-level, macro-level, macrohistorical, macrostructural, microsocial, prejudice, psychology, race, racism, sociology, social psychology, stereotyping, stratification, etc.
- In the lesson, in order to differentiate the two ideas, we'll compare racism to prejudice. For definitions of "prejudice" and "racism," consider the following ideas, as described by historian George Fredrickson:
 - Prejudice: "is a matter of feeling; it's a hostile or dismissive attitude, a feeling toward people we find different from ourselves in some way, and some way that we take as significant."
 - Racism: "whole set of beliefs about that which justifies [prejudice] feelings and tries to make the case for differences that we find are innate, permanent, and are the basis for action; the basis for discrimination, or even for an institution that will be based on these differences; a kind of inequality or hierarchy based on these ideas."

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- There are many ways to approach the concept of “racism.” To better understand racism, it’s important to note how racism is different than prejudice.
- According to historian George Fredrickson: “Prejudice is a matter of feeling; it’s a hostile or dismissive attitude, a feeling toward people we find different from ourselves in some way, and some way that we take as significant, but racism is more than that. Racism is a whole set of beliefs about that which justifies those feelings and tries to make the case for differences that we find are innate, permanent, and are the basis for action, the basis for discrimination, or even for an institution that will be based on these differences. In other words, it tends to turn into a kind of inequality or hierarchy based on these ideas. So you’ve got to get the ideology in there for it to become racism rather than mere prejudice.”
- For another view, consider the concept proposed by social anthropologist Audrey Smedley: “Prejudice is a general statement; it’s a general attitude or general belief system about anything, and it comes out of not investigating the facts and not knowing the true nature of whatever that thing is that you’re prejudiced against. Racism is a particular kind of prejudice against other human beings, or groups of human beings, and it’s usually irrational...it’s based on the assumption that there are inequalities among the races.”
- In regard to racism, many scholars agree that there are different “levels” or “forms” of racism, such as individual levels and systemic levels. Individual levels of racism include internalized and interpersonal forms of racism. Systemic levels of racism include institutional and structural forms of racism. Below are definitions that may be helpful, as suggested by Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation. Consider printing these definitions as a guide for students.
 - **Individual Levels of Racism:**
 - Internalized racism: “prejudice, bias, and blind spots you might have within yourself as an individual.”
 - Interpersonal racism: “what happens when we act out that internalized racism on each other.”
 - **Systemic racism:**
 - Institutional racism: “racist policies and discriminatory practices in schools, work places, and government agencies that routinely produce unjust outcomes for people of color.”
 - Structural racism: “unjust racist patterns and practices that play out across the institutions that make up our society.”

OPENING

- Ask the class: What is racism? Is racism real? (This is an intentionally provoking question. Please note that this curriculum agrees that racism is “real.”) What is prejudice? Is there a difference between racism and prejudice?
- Read both George Fredrickson and Audrey Smedley’s descriptions of racism and prejudice (included in the Background section). Based on those descriptions, as a class, create working definitions for prejudice and racism.
- Now that we understand the differences between prejudice and racism, we’ll take a look at the ways racism manifests in U.S. society.
- According to many scholars, there are different “levels” or “forms” of racism, such as individual levels and systemic levels. The “Individual Level” of racism includes internalized and interpersonal racism. The “Systemic Level” of racism includes institutional and structural forms of racism. Either draw a concept map on the board, or distribute ready-made concept maps, or graphic organizers, to students. If using a graphic organizer, illustrate racism as the overarching idea at the top of the page, and from that label, two “subtitles” emerge: Individual Levels (of Racism) and Systemic Levels (of Racism). Underneath “Individual Levels,” include: “Internalized Racism” and “Interpersonal Racism.” Underneath “Systemic Levels,” include: “Institutional Racism” and “Structural Racism.” Either now, or printed ahead of time, write in definitions for each. (Definitions have been included in the Background section).
- Tell students that this indeed may seem like a lot of information to digest all at once. To help us understand examples of racism, which includes most of these “levels” or “forms,” we’re going to watch a video.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Introduce the video, “What Discrimination Looks Like in America.” (Link is referenced in the Materials section.) Mention that the video speaks to “systemic” racism by focusing on the generalized experiences of mostly Black Americans compared to White Americans. While this is a somewhat limited view, the data presented is rather illuminating. Show the video.
- After watching, have a brief discussion. Tell the class: In the video, the narrator states that racism, especially

for Black Americans, is “constant, varied, and idiosyncratic?” How so? What examples were given? For guidance, the video includes the following ideas:

- According to research published by the University of Arizona in 2015, “Drivers stop less frequently for Black pedestrians than for White [pedestrians].”
 - According to research published by Ohio State University in 2012, Black students are punished “more harshly” than White students, even if they “broke the same rule.”
 - According to research published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in 2003, “Job applicants with Black-sounding names receive fewer callbacks than those with White-sounding names.”
 - According to research published by Northwestern University in 2014, Black Americans working “just as hard as their White colleagues,” often make 30 percent less.
 - According to research published by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development in 2012, real estate agents show Black clients fewer properties than they show their White clients.
 - According to research published by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in 2015, Black Americans have a “harder time” getting a bank loan, compared to White Americans.
 - According to research published by *The New York Times* in 2015, Black Americans get pulled over by the police more than White Americans. If that happens, “police are more likely to search [their] car, and they’re more likely to use force against [them] if there’s a misunderstanding.”
 - According to research published by the U.S. Sentencing Commission in 2012, when arrested and convicted of crimes, sentencing for Black Americans is “harsher,” compared to White Americans.
 - According to research published by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2008, “Doctors prescribe pain relievers to Black patients less frequently than to White patients.”
 - According to research published by the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* in 2007, doctors often prescribe “life-saving heart medication” to Black Americans at lower rates than White Americans.
 - According to research published by the American Bar Association in 2004, Black Americans have a “harder time” getting into nursing homes than White Americans.
 - According to research published by the University of Southern California in 2014, it is more challenging for Black Americans to learn about where and how to vote, as “local officials might not even return” the call.
- Ask the class: How are these examples of systemic racism? May they also represent other “levels” of racism? For example, when a real estate agent shows White clients more homes than Black clients, is that systemic racism or individual racism? Can it somehow be related to both, especially if considering the history of “redlining,” or the systematic denial of services related to housing, which created racially segregated neighborhoods. Encourage student to see the “overlap” of these categories. While it’s important to understand the ubiquitous nature of racism, as Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum describes it as the “smog in our air,” noting such differences may be also helpful. One of the greatest reasons to delineate between “individual” and “systemic” forms of racism is to widen the scope of how we discuss racism. According to a study conducted by Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation, the media tends to focus mostly on “individual” levels of racism, leaving many to deduce that “racism” is a problem of individual prejudice, and not a systemic issue that requires civic engagement and the deconstruction and reconstruction of new “institutional” patterns in the U.S., such as adjusting the loan lending practices of banks to passing more equal legislation. Thus, for the purposes of this lesson, it may be helpful to view the different “levels” of racism as a pliable “guide” instead of firm, unyielding boxes.
- If time warrants, consider watching the video “Moving the Race Conversation Forward,” produced by Race Forward. (Link referenced in the Materials section.) After watching, encourage students to ask questions and/or share ideas.

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

- Introduce the paper, “Sociology of Racism.” (Link referenced in the Materials section.) In this article, academics Matthew Clair and Jeffrey S. Denis, outline the levels of racism.
- Begin by reading the first few paragraphs aloud, with the teacher modeling annotation and thinking strategies. Either independently or with partners or small groups, students should read the assigned article. Encourage students to apply “chunking” or a “chunk and summarize” strategy when reading, by adding notes to the margin, summarizing each paragraph.
- When reading, have students contemplate the following question: What are the various “levels” of racism? Provide examples for each.
- On another note, since this article is a lengthy read, consider assigning it the night before, as homework. If students have already read the article, they may use this time to meet in small groups to discuss their observations, in an effort to enhance their understanding before having a larger class discussion.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- When students are done reading, regroup as a class. Have a discussion. Ask the students: In the subsection titled, "Intellectual History," Clair and Denis describe "two distinct phases in the sociology of racism." What are these two phases? How did the conversation about racism move from highlighting more overt forms of racism to more subtle forms? In the text, Clair and Denis assert: "Instead of studying racism as a social problem, many social scientists – truly products of their time – maintained racist attitudes and incorporated racist assumptions into their explanations of racial group differences in social outcomes." What impact did such implicit and explicit forms of bias and racism have on larger society? Why did more scholars study the "issue" of racism after World War II? Using "contemporary definitions," of racism, how do sociologists explain persistent "racial inequalities in criminal sentencing, health, and wealth"? (As Clair and Denis state: "[Many] scholars have attempted to explain persistent inequality by showing how racism endures today – if not so much within individuals, then at least within institutions and organizations, and if not so much as explicit attitudes, then at least as implicit or covert biases.") Since the 1970s, what forms of "new racism" have sociologists "discovered"? Note examples, such as the following statement: "surveys repeatedly show that many Whites support racial equality in principle but resist policies to implement it." What do the authors say about implicit bias? How may implicit bias connect to both interpersonal racism and internalized racism? In the subsection titled "Racism as a Social Process," how do the authors describe racialization? Why is it an important idea to consider when discussing racism? How may "racialization" be a form of individual racism? How do Clair and Denis define "institutional racism"? According to Clair and Denis's article, what is the difference between microsocial forms of racism and microstructural forms? How is "American society fundamentally racist"? In their work, Clair and Denis highlight "forms of [everyday] resistance." What did they reference? Why may it be important to highlight forms of "everyday" resistance, especially when discussing racism? How is that an anti-racist approach? Finally, why do Clair and Denis assert that it is important to continue the study of racism? For guidance, consider the following excerpt: "As Western countries incorporate more 'nonwhite' immigrants and racial boundaries collapse, transform, and (re)emerge, scholars must use multivalent approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature, causes, and consequences of contemporary racism, racial discrimination, and racial inequality."
- Consider addressing the conception of racism one more time. Tell the class: In the text, Clair and Denis provide a definition for racism. They state: "While past scholarship emphasized overtly racist attitudes and policies, contemporary sociology considers racism as individual- and group-level processes and structures that are implicated in the reproduction of racial inequality in diffuse and often subtle ways. Although some social scientists decry this conceptual broadening, most agree that a multivalent approach to the study of racism is at once socially important and analytically useful for understanding the persistence of racial inequality in a purportedly 'postracial' society." Do we agree with this statement? If so, can we add aspects of their description to our working definition of racism?
- For a final exercise, revisit the "levels" of racism. Ask the class: When discussing racism and the impact of racism, why is it important to consider the various "levels" or "forms" of racism? Rather than dialoguing at this moment, consider allowing students to complete a "Rapid-Fire Writing" or "Quickwrite" exercise, such as by contemplating the question silently for one minute, writing about it for three minutes, then rereading the work for a minute, highlighting key ideas. If comfortable, they may then share.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For additional examples of (systemic and individual) racism, consider viewing: “Next Time Someone Says Racism Isn’t Real, Show Them This 3-Minute Video,” article and video on Vox, produced by Brave New Films. To watch the video in full screen, click the YouTube link. Please be advised there is a scene of drug use in this video. As always, please pre-screen all materials to ensure it is appropriate for your classroom. Article and video link available here: <https://www.vox.com/2015/4/30/8520305/systemic-racism-video>
- To hear more about navigating racism, listen to, “Howard Stevenson: How Can We Mindfully Navigate Everyday Racism?” audio podcast published on NPR for the *TED Radio Hour*. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/03/709094399/henry-louis-gates-jr-points-to-reconstruction-as-the-genesis-of-white-supremacy>
- For an animated presentation of a form of individual racism, specifically microaggressions, consider viewing the video, “How Microaggressions Are Like Mosquito Bites,” by Fusion. Available here: <https://fusion.tv/video/354460/how-microaggressions-are-like-mosquito-bites/>
- For a perspective on internalized racism, consider reading the article in Colorlines, where Emmy-nominated actress Sandra Oh discusses how internalized racism impacted the way she envisioned her own career and opportunities. Having played supporting characters for most of her career, Oh became the first woman of Asian descent to be nominated for an Emmy in a lead acting role. Article available here: <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/read-sandra-oh-how-internalized-racism-impacts-her-career>

LESSON 2

THE CREATION AND REINFORCEMENT OF WHITE PRIVILEGE AND FALSE NOTIONS OF SUPREMACY

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 90+ minutes (may need multiple class periods)

Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History; Sociology

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the social, legal, political, and economic advantages given to White Americans throughout U.S. history.
- To understand how such "racial preferences" created and reinforced an unnatural hierarchy of race, creating the structure of "white privilege."
- To conceptualize "white privilege" as a system of built-in advantages that favor or privilege White people over other racial groups.
- To question and reject these systems of inequality as natural.
- To understand that while not all White people have high levels of socioeconomic status, being perceived as White often carries legal, political, and social rights that may be denied to other racial groups.
- To realize that some people, despite great obstacles like systemic racism, have used agency (and sometimes the support of White allies) to seek and receive a form of equality.

MATERIALS

- As the content of this lesson represents mature and sophisticated topics, as always, please pre-screen and pre-read all materials to ensure it is appropriate for your classroom.
- "A Long History of Racial Preferences: For Whites," article by Larry Adelman for *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Available here: <http://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/articles/a-long-history-of-racial-preferences-for-whites>
- Excerpts from *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo, Chapter 2, "Racism and White Supremacy." Please note that we do not recommend reading the entire book, or even the entire chapter with students as some language and concepts may not be fully appropriate for an eighth grade audience. We do, however, recommend the introduction and the following subsections of Chapter 2, for a powerful read: "Social Constructions of Race in the United States," "The Perception of Race," "Racism," "Whiteness as a Position of Status," and the first-half of "White Supremacy" (we recommend stopping just after the list of the "people who control our institutions").
- "What Was the Dred Scott Decision?" video by PBS. Available here: <https://www.pbs.org/video/american-experience-what-was-dred-scott-decision/>
- "Dred Scott Decision," article and video on History.com. Available here: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/dred-scott-case>
- For an additional resource about racism in the U.S., consider: "American Racism in the 'White Frame,'" interview by George Yancy of Joe Feagin for *The New York Times*. Available here: <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/27/american-racism-in-the-white-frame/>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- The United States is a country founded on racist ideology. From the colonial era onward, privileges have been granted to White Americans at the expense of people of color, starting with Native Americans and Black Americans. With the founding of racist ideology in the colonial era, the perpetuation of inhumane systems of labor like slavery, the forced relocation of Indigenous people, and the creation of a legal status of "white," the

United States codified a social, legal, political, and economic structure that favored White Americans over other racial groups. Over time, these “racial preferences” for White Americans compounded, creating large gaps in wealth and forms of privilege.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: prejudice, discrimination, racism, white privilege, white supremacy, de facto, de jure, etc.
- For definitions of these terms, consider the ideas presented in Robin DiAngelo’s text:
 - Prejudice: “pre-judgment about another person based on the social groups to which that person belongs; thoughts and feelings, including stereotypes, attitudes, and generalizations that are based on little or no experience and then are projected onto everyone from that group; all humans have prejudice.”
 - Discrimination: “action based on prejudice; these actions include ignoring, exclusion, threats, ridicule, slander, and violence; [it also includes] subtle, even harder to detect [actions].”
 - Racism: “occurs when a racial group’s prejudice is backed by legal authority and institutional control; this authority and control transforms individual prejudices into a far-reaching system that no longer depends on the good intentions of individual actors; it becomes the default of the society and is reproduced automatically; racism is a system.”
 - White privilege: “a sociological concept referring to advantages that are taken for granted by whites and that cannot be similarly enjoyed by people of color in the same context (government, community, workplace, schools, etc.).”
 - White supremacy: “a descriptive and useful term to capture the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white and the practices based on this assumption; in this context does not refer to individual white people and their individual intentions or actions but to an overarching political, economic, and social system of domination.”

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Race is a powerful social construct. In the United States, race has systematically denied and/or granted privileges and advantages to different racial groups. Because of this engineering, there is a long history of institutional privileges for White people in the U.S. that must be analyzed to better understand current society, such as gaps in wealth and unequal access to opportunities.

OPENING

- Tell the class that today we are going to dive into challenging, yet important topics: white privilege and white supremacy.
- When speaking of racism, much of the attention is focused on analyzing how it negatively impacts people of color. While this is important to consider, we must also analyze the way racism benefits White people. As we know, race is a social construction, it had to be engineered — created and reinforced — over time. But why was “race” created? Did race or racism come first? We’ll unpack ideas about race, racism, and systems of privilege throughout this lesson.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Tell students: The creation of race was an intentional effort by the ruling White elite, from the colonial era through the formation of a U.S. government. According to academic Robin DiAngelo, “Race is an evolving social idea that was created to legitimize racial inequality and protect white advantage. The term “white” first appeared in colonial law in the late 1600s. By 1790, people were asked to claim their race on the census, and by 1825, the perceived degrees of blood determined who would be classified as Indian. From the late 1800s through the early twentieth century, as waves of immigrants entered the United States, the concept of a white race was solidified.”
- In order to better understand the concept of white “advantage,” or “white privilege,” let’s consider the definition offered by sociologist Robin DiAngelo. (Definitions are referred in the Vocabulary section of the lesson.) Review the definition for “white privilege.” Ask the class: Do we agree with the definition? If not, can we add anything to it?

- To better understand the “advantages” given to White Americans, we’re going to unpack the institutional privileges given to White people throughout the history of the U.S. Such privileges offered vast social and economic advantages that compounded over time. Introduce Larry Adelman’s article, “A Long History of Racial Preferences: For Whites.” As a class, read through the piece noting key ideas. For guidance we’ve included the core of Adelman’s evidence below:
 - The legal institution of slavery replaced White indentured servitude with enslaved African labor.
 - The 1790 Naturalization Act permitted only “free white persons to become naturalized citizens.
 - Immigrant restrictions “further limited opportunities for non-white groups, which remained until 1965.”
 - The U.S. government passed the Indian Removal Act in 1830 to “make [more] room for white settlers.” As a result, tens of thousands of Native Americans were forcibly removed from their land, many died from disease and violence.
 - The U.S. government passed the 1862 Homestead Act, “giving away millions of acres — for free — of what had been Indian Territory west of the Mississippi,” to White Americans to resettle (this was 10 percent of the total land area of the U.S.).
 - After the Civil War, the South never “followed through” on the federal government’s plan to give each freed enslaved person “40 acres and a mule” as a form of reparation. Instead, “government’ officials paid up to \$300 per [enslaved person] upon emancipation — not to the [enslaved person], but to local slaveholders as compensation for loss of property.” Economists have estimated that for the White Americans who profited from 200 years of unpaid enslaved labor, they made at least \$1 trillion — wealth that was passed to subsequent generations and compounded over time.
 - The Jim Crow laws of the 1800s and 1900s “reserved the best jobs, neighborhoods, schools and hospitals for white people.” They did not overturn in many states until the 1960s.
 - The landmark Social Security Act of 1935 “provided a safety net for millions of workers, guaranteeing them an income after retirement.” Unfortunately, “the act specifically excluded two occupations: agricultural workers and domestic servants, who were predominately African American, Mexican, and Asian.”
 - The Wagner Act of 1935, like Social Security, gave new rights to White people by “granting unions the power of collective bargaining, it helped millions of white workers gain entry into the middle class over the next 30 years.” Unfortunately, “the Wagner Act permitted unions to exclude non-whites and deny them access to better paid jobs and union protections and benefits such as health care, job security, and pensions.” As a result, many of these unions remained nearly all-White, “well into the 1970s.”
 - The Federal Housing Administration’s New Deal program “helped generate much of the wealth that so many white families enjoy today” by making it possible for “millions of average white Americans” to own a home, but denied this benefit to people of color. As Adelman states: “The government set up a national neighborhood appraisal system, explicitly tying mortgage eligibility to race. Integrated communities were deemed a financial risk and made ineligible for home loans, a policy known today as ‘redlining.’ Between 1934 and 1962, the federal government backed \$120 billion of home loans. More than 98 percent went to whites. Of the 350,000 new homes built with federal support in northern California between 1946 and 1960, fewer than 100 went to African Americans.”
 - The redlining efforts created racially segregated neighborhoods, and additional infrastructure reinforced either greater advantage or disadvantage for racial groups. As Adelman states: “These government programs made possible the new segregated white suburbs that sprang up around the country after World War II. Government subsidies for municipal services helped develop and enhance these suburbs further, in turn fueling commercial investments. Freeways tied the new suburbs to central business districts, but they often cut through and destroyed the vitality of non-white neighborhoods in the central city.”
 - Black and Latinx mortgage applicants are “60 percent more likely than whites to be turned down for a loan, even after controlling for employment, financial, and neighborhood factors.”
 - Racial segregation is still rampant: “According to the Census, whites are more likely to be segregated than any other group. [According to a study] in 1993, 86 percent of suburban whites still lived in neighborhoods with a black population of less than 1 percent.”
 - Because of generations of preferential treatment, “a typical white family [in the year 2003] had on average eight times the assets, or net worth, of a typical African American family.”
 - Advantage is passed down: “In 1865, just after Emancipation, it is not surprising that African Americans owned only 0.5 percent of the total worth of the United States. But by 1990, a full 135 years after the abolition of slavery, Black Americans still possessed only a meager 1 percent of national wealth.”

- Consider sharing more two more data points (from the *Race: The Power of Illusion* and the “The Racial Wealth Gap,” episode one of Netflix’s show *Explained*.)
 - “Between 1934 and 1962, the federal government underwrote \$120 billion in new housing. Less than 2 percent went to nonwhites.”
 - Current calculations show that the median White household wealth — which is defined by their savings, assets, minus their debts — is \$171,000. The median Black household’s wealth is \$17,600.
- Ask the class: According to Adelman, why is the “performance gap” between White people and people of color a “product not of nature, but unequal circumstance?” Why are “colorblind” approaches and ideologies problematic? In other words, how is recognizing systemic racism an anti-racist approach?

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

- Introduce the book by Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility*, to students. Ask if they have heard of this text? (This book has received a lot of media coverage, and they may have indeed heard of it.) Tell the class: We are going to read pre-selected excerpts of this text. (Please read only what was suggested in the Materials section of the lesson, as the language and concepts in the rest of the text may not be appropriate for an eighth grade audience.)
- Begin by reading the first few paragraphs of Chapter 2, “Racism and White Supremacy,” out loud, with the teacher modeling annotation and thinking strategies.
- Either independently or with partners or in small groups, students should read the rest of the assigned sections. Encourage students to apply “chunking” or a “chunk and summarize” strategies while reading, by adding notes to the margin, summarizing each paragraph, adding ideas of their own, and/or making other annotation symbols, such as question marks, exclamation points, etc.
- When reading, have students contemplate the following questions: How is racism a system? How is white supremacy a system?
- On another note, since this selection is a lengthy read, consider assigning it the night before, as homework. If students have already read the text, they may use this time to meet in small groups to discuss their observations, in an effort to enhance their understanding before having a larger class discussion.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- When students are done reading, regroup as a class. Have a discussion about the text. Consider the questions below for guidance.
- What does DiAngelo mean when she says “there is no true biological race”? (For more information on this topic, please review lessons for Grade 7.) How did the economic interests of slavery and colonization feed into racist ideology? What role did “race science” have in the cementation of such ideas? DiAngelo references Ta-Nehisi Coates’s statement, “But race is the child of racism, not the father.” Consider this idea. What does it encapsulate? In other words, how is race a product of racism (and not the other way around)? In the subsection, “The Perception of Race,” DiAngelo describes race as an “evolving social idea that was created to legitimize racial inequality and protect white advantage.” How does she support this argument? What evidence does she provide? Explain DiAngelo’s statement: “People already seen as white got to decide who was white.” What role did the courts play in “deciding” who was White? How did the process of assimilation aid in the formation of “Whiteness”? What does DiAngelo mean when she uses the phrase, “passing as white”? What is the difference between de facto and de jure? How did race “manifest” along class lines? According to DiAngelo, what is prejudice, and why is it important to recognize our own prejudice? What is discrimination? How is racism defined, what sets it apart from prejudice and/or discrimination? DiAngelo references J. Kēhaulani Kauanui’s statement, “Racism is a structure, not an event.” Consider this idea. What does it mean? How does the “American women’s struggle for suffrage” illustrate structures of oppression? How are structures of oppression backed by legal authority and institutional control? How do systems begin with ideology? What are examples of ideologies? What is a possible danger of internalizing systems of inequality as natural? How is racism different from individual racial prejudice? How does DiAngelo define “white privilege”? How does this definition leave room to consider the idea that White people may still “struggle or face barriers” in their life? How does being perceived as White carry “more than mere racial classification”? How can identity and perceptions of one’s identity, “grant or deny” resources? What are some of these resources? How does “Whiteness” elevate White people? How do “narratives of racial exceptionalism,” as illustrated with the case of Jackie Robinson, “obscure the reality of ongoing institutional white control”? How do such narratives also obscure the role of White allies? How is “Whiteness” both a “location of structural advantage” and a set of “cultural practices”? Why does DiAngelo argue that a narrow definition of “white supremacy” problematic? Instead, what does she suggest as a more comprehensive approach to

viewing “white supremacy”? Why is it important to make “white supremacy” visible? What data does DiAngelo use to demonstrate the “power and control” of a system that favors and privileges White Americans? Can the same data be used to demonstrate the “power and control” of a system that gives privilege to men? Beyond race and gender, are there other social groups that have “power and control” over others?

- After discussing DiAngelo’s text, consider showing the two-minute video, “What Was the Dred Scott Decision?” and the other two-minute video, “Dred Scott Decision.” (Links referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.)
- After watching the videos, ask the class: How was the Dred Scott decision an historical example of white supremacy? How was it also an example of a person of color exhibiting agency and resistance? How did it highlight the importance of having White allies? To guide discussion, consider how Dred and Harriet Scott used the “once free, always free” doctrine to fight for their freedom. Even though they lost the Supreme Court case, they eventually won their freedom with the help of White allies. Finally, consider the role of gender, such as the gender of the Supreme Court, the name of the case (which does not recognize Harriet), and how White men were the gatekeepers, either denying or granting freedom for both men of color and women of all racial groups.
- For a final exercise, students may reply to the following prompt: How is racism a system? Provide students ample time to draft and revise their response, as this is a core idea of the unit. Consider allowing students to complete the assignment for homework, and, when ready, share with the class, such as by posting their paragraphs anonymously on a password-protected class blog, or posting on the classroom walls, for a silent gallery walk.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- A subsequent lesson may trace the rise of white supremacy in the U.S. As early as the colonial era, a form of white supremacy has existed in U.S. society. As Kat Chow writes for NPR, “As long as the United States has existed, there’s been some version of white supremacy. But over the centuries, the way white supremacy manifests has changed with the times. This includes multiple iterations of the infamous Ku Klux Klan.” Many historians and sociologists note that social gains for people of color usually contribute to a rise of white supremacy. According to sociologist Kathleen Blee: “The Klan first surfaced in large numbers in the 1860s in the aftermath of the Civil War, then again in the 1920s, and yet again during the Civil Rights era.” To understand more, consider reading: “What the Ebbs and Flows of the KKK Can Tell Us About White Supremacy,” article by Kat Chow for NPR. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/12/08/671999530/what-the-ebbs-and-flows-of-the-kkk-can-tell-us-about-white-supremacy-today>
- For another resource about the emergence or creation of white supremacy, consider listening to: “Henry Louis Gates Jr. Points to Reconstruction As the Genesis of White Supremacy,” article for NPR. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/03/709094399/henry-louis-gates-jr-points-to-reconstruction-as-the-genesis-of-white-supremacy>
- To better understand the benefits of white privilege, consider reading: “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” the groundbreaking article and list by Peggy McIntosh. Available here: https://nationalseedproject.org/images/documents/Knapsack_plus_Notes-Peggy_McIntosh.pdf

LESSON 3

EFFORTS OF RACIAL CONTROL AND RESISTANCE: FROM THE ONE-DROP RULE TO *LOVING V. VIRGINIA*

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 60-75 minutes (teacher may extend)

Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that efforts of racial control permeated the personal realm, including marriage and self-identification.
- To understand that interracial marriage was banned by many states for centuries.
- To understand and analyze the one-drop rule, or hypodescent, and blood quantum.
- To explore and analyze how ideas of "racial inferiority" and "racial superiority" were created to justify unequal treatment.

MATERIALS

- "'One-Drop Rule' Persists," article by Steve Bradt for *The Harvard Gazette*. Available here: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2010/12/one-drop-rule-persists/>
- "So What Exactly Is 'Blood Quantum,'" article by Kat Chow on NPR. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/02/09/583987261/so-what-exactly-is-blood-quantum>
- "Loving v. Virginia," article and video on History.com. Available here: <https://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement/loving-v-virginia>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Race is a social construction. Because of this, the way racial categories are perceived fluctuate over time. One idea that has remained rather consistent, however, is the core definition of "Blackness." How has the one-drop rule, or hypodescent, defined Blackness in the U.S.? How is blood quantum, an idea imposed on Native Americans, different than the one-drop rule? How is the history of banning interracial marriage, and other forms of unions, serving to protect "White" interest in the United States?
- (To better understand the construction of "Whiteness," and how different groups of European Americans entered an homogenized racial category of "White," please see Grade 6, Lesson 4.)

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: amalgamation, miscegenation, interracial, marriage, Jim Crow laws, one-drop rule, hypodescent, hyperdescent, blood quantum.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Race is a social construction, and categories of race have fluctuated over time (For more information about this, review Grade 7, Lesson 8). How the colonial era and the U.S. government defined certain races and/or ethnicities was a reflection of “need” and greed. For example, when it came to “Blackness,” for much of U.S. history, all one needed to be defined as “Black,” was “one drop of blood” that was sub-Saharan African, meaning a person with any measurable amount of “Black” ancestry — be it one-half, one-fourth, one-eighth, one-sixteenth, or smaller — was socially and even legally considered “Black.” This was known as the “one-drop” rule, more specifically, the one-drop rule of hypodescent, which assigned the “subordinate” racial identity to such “mixed-race” people. Its effect was to reinforce and uphold a Black/White hierarchy that relegated Black Americans (and eventually other people of color) in a subjugated position, compared to White Americans. Blood quantum, another form of “racial measurement” applied only to Native Americans, in some ways, contrasts the one-drop rule. Blood quantum requires a minimum quantity of Native ancestry to gain tribal rights and membership. It was originally initiated by U.S. government officials to thin tribal membership, especially considering that generations of Native people have had multiracial children. Some see it as a positive way to maintain culture, while other tribes choose to open their memberships with other rules for eligibility.

OPENING

- Revisit the concept of race. In the previous lesson, we spoke about white supremacy and the long history of advantages that were given to White people in the U.S. But how was “Whiteness” defined? As a physical, social identity, how does society conceptualize or see “Whiteness”? As historian Nell Irvin Painter asserts (as referenced in Grade 6), “Whiteness [is] defined, as before, primarily by what it isn’t: Blackness.” Therefore, in order to understand “Whiteness,” and individual and systemic efforts to keep this identity “pure,” we have to understand how “Blackness” (and eventually other racial groups) has been defined.
- Introduce the concept of the one-drop rule and blood quantum. Provide an explanation of both, such as by reading the notes in the Background section of the lesson.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Given the history of racism in the U.S., why would Black people and Native Americans have unique rules applied to them when society was forming the conceptualization of their racial category? For guidance in answering this question, consider how chattel slavery emerged as an inherited system in the U.S., meaning the children of enslaved women were enslaved at birth. Since slavery eventually became synonymous with Blackness, who benefited from the one-drop rule? How was it used to create a larger enslaved population? In contrast, in an effort to seize more land, White settlers and White Americans would benefit from the application of blood quantum, as the U.S. government’s goal was to eradicate Native Americans and occupy their homeland. While these racial ideas based in “blood” have racist roots, can there possibly be unintended positive outcomes of such rules? For guidance, think about former President Barack Obama, who is considered to be the first Black president. With a White American mother and a Black Kenyan father, Barack Obama is “half-White” and “half-Black.” Yet, because of the one-drop rule, his presidency was considered groundbreaking. In short, can the one-drop rule help create a larger community? However, given its racist history, should these rules be abolished? Moreover, with growing numbers of multiracial births, especially in the U.S., should we begin to conceptualize race in a different way? If so, how?
- To better understand both the one-drop rule and blood quantum, we are going to read two articles: “‘One-Drop Rule’ Persists,” and “So What Exactly Is ‘Blood Quantum’.” (Links are referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.)

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

- Either independently or with partners or in small groups, students should read the assigned article. Encourage students to apply “chunking” or a “chunk and summarize” strategy when reading, by adding notes to the margin.
- For the article, “‘One-Drop Rule’ Persists,” consider the following questions: How are biracial people commonly viewed today? According to Ho and Sidanius’ research, how does applying rules of hypodescent to Black people remain “a relatively powerful force within American society”? In the article, Ho and Sidanius reference the “cultural entrenchment of America’s traditional racial hierarchy.” What do they mean by this? In their study, how were “mixed-race” Asian people perceived, compared to “mixed-race” Black people. What

may Arnold Ho mean when he says, “The persistence of hypodescent serves to reinforce racial boundaries, rather than moving us toward a race-neutral society”? What are some of the arguments for and against continuing the practice of the one-drop rule?

- For the article, “So What Exactly Is ‘Blood Quantum’,” consider the following questions: What is blood quantum and what is the origin of this regulation? How is it an inaccurate form of “measurement”? What was the U.S. government’s intended goal when creating blood quantum? How does its use today vary among tribes? What are some of the arguments for and against continuing the practice of blood quantum?
- Consider printing these questions, for students to reference while reading.
- For a writing activity, consider having students juxtapose the one-drop rule with blood quantum. Consider the following questions to serve as a prompt: What are the similarities? What are the differences? What were the original intents of these “rules”? In your opinion, are there any (unintended) positive consequence to these ideas?

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- To close the lesson, we are going to highlight examples of people who resisted laws that attempted to control their personal life, such as laws that banned interracial marriage. In many places, legislation was passed to curtail racial marriage and/or “racial mixing.” For example, the state of Virginia passed the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which aimed to categorize all people as either “White” or “Negro” (Black), with the ultimate goal of ending “amalgamation,” or the “mixing” of different racial groups. This wasn’t the first law of its kind, as the history of banning interracial marriage is centuries old, with the first law being passed by the state of Virginia in 1691, followed by Maryland in 1692. In fact, by 1913, 30 out of 48 states outlawed interracial marriage.
- A famous Supreme Court case, *Loving v. Virginia*, finally struck down state laws that banned interracial marriage. To learn more about this, we are going to watch the video, “Loving v. Virginia.” (Link is referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.) Show the video. After viewing, ask the class: What was Richard and Mildred Loving’s “crime”? What was their “ultimatum”? Why were they arrested for a second time? How did Mildred use her sense of agency? Who did she reach out to for support? In other words, how did she fight for her own equality and what role did White allies also have in this case? What were the lawyer’s arguments? What was the final ruling? What is the legacy of this case? How did other civil rights cases — like gay or same-sex marriage — benefit from the *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court ruling?
- For a final exercise, consider asking students to jot down a word, or a few words to describe how this lesson made them feel. If choosing to share these words with the group, students may vocalize their word(s), in a “wraparound” fashion, one after the other. Or, the teacher may collect students’ cards, anonymously reading their words out loud. Notice the range of emotion conservations of this nature bring up. While some may be more “positive” and others may be more “negative,” we can likely agree that such dialogue is integral, especially to make society more (racially) just.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To hear voices of couples who are in interracial marriages, consider watching, “Loving in America,” video produced by Vice News. Available here: https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/bjdanm/interracial-couples-50-years-after-loving-v-virginia

LESSON 4

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AND GEOGRAPHIC SEGREGATION

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 60+ minutes (teacher may extend)

Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To learn about racist housing policies that gave social and economic advantages to White people, and created disadvantages for people of color.
- To question and analyze the role of various forms of individual and systemic racism in creating racial geographic segregation.
- To understand how housing discrimination compounded the racial wealth gap, and negatively impacted other institutions like education, health, and policing.
- To understand the interconnectedness between race, wealth, and life opportunities in the U.S.
- To realize that racial segregation continues to grow.

MATERIALS

- As the content of this lesson represents mature and sophisticated topics, as always, please pre-screen and pre-read all materials to ensure it is appropriate for your classroom.
- "Why Are Cities Still So Segregated?" video by journalist Gene Demby for *Let's Talk*, NPR. Please note that because of language, the first fifteen seconds of this video is not suitable for students, consider showing at the 0:16 seconds mark. The rest of the six-minute video is powerfully informative. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/04/11/601494521/video-housing-segregation-in-everything>
- "The Racist History of Chicago's Housing Policies," video by AJ+. Link available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN_8KlpmZXs
- "Segregated Housing and the Racial Wealth Gap," article by Larry Adelman for *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Available here: <http://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/articles/segregated-housing-and-the-racial-wealth-gap>
- To learn more about how housing discrimination compounded the racial wealth gap, consider watching, "The Racial Wealth Gap," episode one of season one of *Explained*. Available on Netflix.
- For an additional resource, consider reading: "Racial Preferences for Whites: The Houses That Racism Built," article by Larry Adelman for *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Available here: <http://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/articles/racial-preferences-for-whites-the-houses-that-racism-built>
- To better understand housing discrimination and the racial wealth gap in another city, specifically Baltimore, view: "Why the Place You Grow Up Can Limit Earning Power for Life," by *PBS NewsHour*. Available here: <https://www.pbs.org/video/why-the-place-you-grow-up-can-limit-earning-power-for-life-1437953925/>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Systemic racism is rampant in U.S. society. To better understand the effects of racism, this lesson will analyze how "redlining" created racially segregated neighborhoods in the U.S., and how housing discrimination further compounded the racial wealth gap between White Americans and people of color, and negatively impacted other institutions like education, health, and policing.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: redlining, segregation, exacerbate, compounded, (racial) wealth gap, egalitarian, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Unfair housing practices have had a huge impact on the exaggeration of unequal access to wealth across race. Due to various efforts of systemic racism — such as “redlining,” or the disproportionate lending practices of banks along lines of race and socioeconomic status — neighborhoods and access to home ownership in the U.S. is incredibly segregated and unequal. Because most U.S. residents and citizens gain their wealth through homeownership, efforts of housing discrimination have further compounded the racial wealth gap. According to sociologist, Dalton Conley, “Where one’s family lives in America is not just a matter of taste and preference. You have the issue of housing and wealth. The majority of Americans hold most of their wealth in home equity...That’s how they can finance the education of their offspring...save up for retirement.” While segregation based on race is centuries old, more modern efforts, such as programs developed by the New Deal’s Federal Housing Administration, helped exacerbate racial and economic inequality.

OPENING

- Tell the class: In the last lesson, we explored rules that were meant to limit people of color’s rights in U.S. society, including the one-drop rule, blood quantum, and laws that banned interracial marriage.
- For this lesson, we are going to analyze the way housing discrimination exacerbated racial and economic inequality in the U.S.
- To introduce the history of housing discrimination, such as the practice of “redlining,” consider showing, “Why Are Cities Still So Segregated?” video by journalist Gene Demby for *Let’s Talk*, NPR. (Link is referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.) Please note that because of language, the first fifteen seconds of this video are not suitable for students, consider showing at the 0:16 seconds mark. The rest of the video is powerfully informative. After watching the video, craft a working definition of “redlining.” Then ask: What was the Fair Housing Act of 1968? How was it ineffective? How does housing discrimination and inequality impact education? How does school performance impact the property value of homes? How does this connection — of housing discrimination and educational inequality — reinforce a continuous cycle of systemic racism? How does housing discrimination negatively impact health? Given the effects of housing discrimination and its impact on policing, how can “racial profiling” be viewed as “spatial profiling”?

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Let’s now focus on a city in the U.S.: Chicago, one of the “most racially divided cities in the United States.” Show the video, “The Racist History of Chicago’s Housing Policies.” (Link is referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.)
- After the video, have a discussion. In the video, journalist Natalie Moore said, “Segregation is like air and water. We just live it, we just breathe it. We don’t really think about it, it’s just sort of how things are.” What may she have meant by that statement? How is Chicago racially segregated? How was “geographic” segregation engineered over the last century? What was “redlining”? What steps were taken that stopped real estate agents from selling homes to Black families in white neighborhoods? How did some real estate agents “cheat” both White and Black families? How did some people use threats and violence to stop real estate agents, like Frank J. Williams, from racially integrating communities? In what ways did “public housing” fail?
- Introduce the article, “Segregated Housing and the Racial Wealth Gap.” (Link referenced in the Materials section of lesson.)
- Begin by reading the first paragraphs out loud, which states: “In the United States, buying a home is the key to achieving the American Dream. Forty-two percent of the net worth of all households consists of equity in their homes — that means for most Americans, their homes are their single largest asset. Homeownership provides families with the means to invest in education, business opportunities, retirement and resources for the next generation.” Ask the class: Is homeownership a right? Is it fair to employ racial discrimination in the housing market?

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

- Either independently or with partners or in small groups, students should read the rest of the assigned article.
- When reading, assign students with a task. Have them consider the following questions: How did housing discrimination compound the racial wealth gap? Underline the data or information that you found to be the most compelling.

- For guidance, we've included key ideas of Adelman's article below, beginning with an excerpt shared with students in Lesson 2:
 - The Federal Housing Administration's New Deal program "helped generate much of the wealth that so many white families enjoy today" by making it possible for "millions of average white Americans" to own a home, but denied this benefit to people of color. As Adelman states: "The government set up a national neighborhood appraisal system, explicitly tying mortgage eligibility to race. Integrated communities were deemed a financial risk and made ineligible for home loans, a policy known today as 'redlining.' Between 1934 and 1962, the federal government backed \$120 billion of home loans. More than 98 percent went to whites. Of the 350,000 new homes built with federal support in northern California between 1946 and 1960, fewer than 100 went to African Americans."
 - "In 1995, the median white family had over 8 times the net worth of the median Black family. The gap is even greater for Latinos — the median white household has over 12 times the wealth of the median Latino family."
 - "The U.S. population is more racially and ethnically diverse than ever before. Yet for the most part, America's neighborhoods remain highly segregated. The only areas that have become more integrated since 1970 are cities with small minority populations."
 - "Across the nation, four out of five whites live outside of the cities and 86 percent of whites live in neighborhoods where minorities make up less than 1 percent of the population. In contrast, 70 percent of Blacks and Latinos live in the cities or inner-ring suburbs."
 - "In 1999, 74 percent of whites were homeowners, while only 45 percent of Latinos, 46 percent of Blacks and 51 percent of Asians owned their homes."
 - "Whites are still the most segregated of all racial groups, have the largest suburban presence and are most likely to own their homes."
 - "When whites relocated to the suburbs, their strong tax base and businesses followed. The result: a huge discrepancy in the quality and quantity of resources, jobs and public services in central cities and inner-ring suburbs inhabited by mostly minority populations. As white communities continue the trend of isolating themselves and their resources, the pattern of flight and divestment repeats, and the wealth gap grows larger."
 - "Confronted with racially discriminatory policies, minorities could not take advantage of the programs that made it possible for millions of people to buy homes in the suburbs. People of color remained in the cities while they witnessed their white counterparts leave in droves. Today, mostly minority inner cities are characterized by the unique phenomenon of concentrated poverty."
- If time warrants, perhaps in another class period, consider watching "The Racial Wealth Gap," episode one of season one of Netflix's *Explained*. This video features more recent data and statistics that may be worth considering.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- Together, as a whole group, give students time to share their ideas. What evidence did they find most compelling? Why? Consider allowing students to speak in a "wraparound" fashion, one after the other.
- For a final exercise, have students craft a written response to summarize what they've learned. First read the following quote, by psychologist and educator Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, "If you can get a government loan with your GI Bill, your newly earned college degree, and buy a house in an all white area, that then appreciates in value that then you can pass on to your children, then you're passing on wealth that has all been made more available to you as a consequence of racist policies and practices." Then ask: What is the legacy of housing discrimination and racial segregation? How did it compound the racial wealth gap? Do you think the "system" (of housing) can be redesigned to be more egalitarian. If so, how?



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For a literary perspective on racial segregation and housing discrimination, consider reading the play *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry.
- For additional nonfiction resources about racial segregation and housing discrimination, consider the following, which represent articles all published in *The New York Times* in four different years, in 1982, 1988, 1998, and 2013:
 - “Housing Discrimination: Study of City is Updated,” by Lee A. Daniels. (March 1982). Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/03/19/business/about-real-estate-housing-discrimination-study-of-city-is-updated.html>
 - “Agency to Survey Discrimination in Housing.” (April 1988). Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/11/us/agency-to-survey-discrimination-in-housing.html>
 - “HUD Plans Nationwide Inquiry on Housing Bias,” by Michael Janofsky. (November 1998). Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/11/17/us/hud-plans-nationwide-inquiry-on-housing-bias.html>
 - “Discrimination in Housing Against Nonwhites Persists Quietly, U.S. Study Finds.” (June 2013). Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/12/business/economy/discrimination-in-housing-against-nonwhites-persists-quietly-us-study-finds.html>

LESSON 5

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 90+ minutes (may need multiple class periods)

Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To learn about racist educational practices that created disadvantages for people of color.
- To question and analyze the role of various forms of individual and systemic racism in unfair educational practices.
- To understand the ramifications of racial discrimination in education, such as the "school-to-prison" pipeline.
- To understand the interconnectedness between race, wealth, and life opportunities in the U.S.
- To realize that despite legislation, such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, racial segregation continues to grow.

MATERIALS

- As the content of this lesson represents mature and sophisticated topics, as always, please pre-screen and pre-read all materials to ensure it is appropriate for your classroom.
- "American Kids and the School-To-Prison Pipeline," video by AJ+. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04pcSyzwoTg>
- "The School-to-Prison Pipeline, Explained," video by Vox. Please note that this video features images of "School Resource Officers' assaulting children. Available here: <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/1/11/10749266/school-to-prison-pipeline-video>
- "Preschool Suspensions Really Happen And That's Not OK With Connecticut," article by Cory Turner for NPR. Audio file accompanies article. Both available here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/09/05/490226345/preschool-suspensions-really-happen-and-thats-not-okay-with-connecticut>
- "Why White School Districts Have So Much More Money," article by Clare Lombardo for NPR. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/26/696794821/why-white-school-districts-have-so-much-more-money>
- "The Promise of Integrated Schools," article by Melinda Anderson for *The Atlantic*. Available here: <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/02/promise-of-integrated-schools/462681/>
- For an additional resource, consider reviewing: "\$23 Billion," an interactive report created by EdBuild. Available here: <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion>
- For an additional resource, consider reading: "The School-to-Prison Pipeline, Explained," article by Libby Nelson and Dara Lind for Vox. Available here: <https://www.vox.com/2015/2/24/8101289/school-discipline-race>
- For an additional resource, consider viewing, "Can School Integration Make a Comeback," video on *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/498941/school-integration-comeback/>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Systemic racism is rampant in U.S. society. Beyond housing discrimination, another key example of racial discrimination is the unequal treatment of students of color, compared to White students. This lesson will explore the unequal treatment of students in the U.S. based on race, and will consider ideas to curtail such individual and systemic forms of racism.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: school-to-prison pipeline, school resource officers, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- In 1954, with the *Brown v. Board of Education* trial, the Supreme Court ruled that segregated public schools were unconstitutional. Yet, in the subsequent decades, funding for schools has been grossly unequal, as they are generally funded by local and state resources, mostly derived from property taxes. With a long history of social and economic advantages given to White Americans, including housing, there are more resources given to local schools in higher-income White neighborhoods, than there are given to lower-income neighborhoods. Similarly, when considering individual forms of racism, “punishments” are doled out to students at different rates, resulting in higher suspensions for students of color — especially Black students — when compared to White students. Unsurprisingly, yet unfortunately, individual and systemic forms of racism play out in the U.S. education system.

OPENING

- In the previous lesson, we explored how housing discrimination compounded the racial wealth gap. For this lesson, we will explore education. Ask the class: Do you think schools should be institutions that promote equality? Why or why not? Elicit student feedback.
- Tell the class that we will explore the ways schools in the U.S. are impacted by individual and systemic forms of racism. First, we’ll begin with unfair systems of “punishments.”

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Show two videos, “American Kids and the School-To-Prison Pipeline,” followed by the video, “The School-to-Prison Pipeline, Explained.” (Links referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.) While watching, ask students to note: the tone of the two videos, how they present information differently, and what core messages or ideas they have in common. (Please note that the second video features images of “School Resource Officers’ assaulting children. As always, please pre-screen materials to ensure they are appropriate for your particular classroom.)
- After watching the videos, have a discussion. Consider the following to help guide the discussion: According to the second video, “The School-to-Prison Pipeline, Explained,” when did the “school-to-prison pipeline” begin? What are “zero tolerance” policies? What was the “hope” of this policy, and how is it different from the eventual result? What are School Resource Officers, or SROs? What was their intended goal, and how is it different from the eventual result? What schools are more likely to have an SRO on campus? As stated in the second video, in the 2010-2011 school year, “one in six public school students in the U.S. were Black, but they accounted for one in three arrests in school.” How does this unjust phenomenon begin in preschool? For example, the video states that: “eighteen percent of preschoolers are Black, but of all preschoolers suspended more than once, forty eight percent are Black.” Additionally, even though Black students and White students may be sent to the principal’s office at similar rates, Black students are more likely to receive a “serious” punishment. How are these examples forms of individual and systemic racism? Who is more likely to be suspended for “proveable” offenses compared to “subjective” offenses? What accounts for the mentioned disparities? In regard to systemic and individual forms of racism, why may this happen? Why are students who are suspended more likely to enter the criminal justice system? What is restorative justice? Why are the results of this alternative form of “punishment” encouraging? How is restorative justice an anti-racist solution?

GROUP WORK

- Tell students: Inequality in education is a large concept. In order to best tackle this, we are going to work in small groups. (The teacher should consider assigning groups ahead of time.) Each group will read a different resource and report to the class about the main idea and key details.
- Assign the following articles, one for each group: “Preschool Suspensions Really Happen And That’s Not OK With Connecticut,” article by Cory Turner for NPR; “Why White School Districts Have So Much More Money,” article by Clare Lombardo for NPR; and “The Promise of Integrated Schools,” article by Melinda Anderson for *The Atlantic*. Each resource touches upon different, yet related, themes and aspects of education. (Additional resources are suggested in the Materials section of the lesson, if more groups and/or content is preferred.)
- While students read, the teacher should circulate to assist as needed. While students work together, encourage them to describe the problem mentioned in the article, and to offer potential solutions.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- Students may present their findings. When presenting, encourage students to describe the problem and offer solutions. Consider having students present in the order the articles were listed, as it illustrates a “cause and effect” order. Thus, the content of presentations may follow this sequence: the impact of individual and systemic racism against preschoolers, as well as solutions to curtail this issue; why White school districts have more financial resources than other districts that serve primarily students of color, as well as solutions to make resources more equal across schools; and why some schools are intentionally integrating to have a more racially and socioeconomic diverse student body, and why the results are promising.
- After students share their ideas, consider having a whole group discussion, such as by conducting a Socratic seminar. In short, aim to discuss root problems and potential solutions.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To explore the myth of meritocracy, and how it can negatively impact students of color, consider reading, “Why the Myth of Meritocracy Hurts Kids of Color,” article by Melinda Anderson for *The Atlantic*. Available here: <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/07/internalizing-the-myth-of-meritocracy/535035/>
- A subsequent lesson may trace the racial inequalities in regard to health care. Consider the following resources to enhance teacher understanding and/or guide class discussions:
 - “Racial Health Inequalities in the USA: The Role of Social Class,” paper by M.N. Oliver for the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health. Available here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2614883/>
 - “Decoding Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care,” series of video lectures produced by the University of Pennsylvania. Available here: <https://ldi.upenn.edu/news/decoding-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-health-care>

LESSON 6

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL: THE RISE OF MASS INCARCERATION AND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes (teacher may extend)

Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the rise of mass incarceration in the U.S. and how it feeds the prison industrial complex.
- To understand that people of color, especially Black men, are incarcerated at disproportionate rates.
- To analyze the role individual and systemic racism plays in disproportionate incarceration rates.
- To consider the larger impact mass incarceration has on both individuals and social groups, such as families and communities.
- To explore ways to curb the rise of mass incarceration.

MATERIALS

- As the content of this lesson represents mature and sophisticated topics, as always, please pre-screen and pre-read all materials to ensure it is appropriate for your classroom.
- "Mass Incarceration, Visualized," an animated interview of sociologist Bruce Western for *The Atlantic*. Available here: <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/404890/prison-inherited-trait/>
- "Ways to End Mass Incarceration," article by James Cullen for Brennan Center for Justice. Available here: <https://www.brennancenter.org/blog/how-end-mass-incarceration>
- "Kids Meet a Death Row Exoneree," video produced by Cut. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzvcPrbVBnc>
- For more resources, consider reviewing: "Mass Incarceration," article and other resources created by Equal Justice Initiative. Available here: <https://eji.org/mass-incarceration>
- For a comprehensive report, consider viewing: "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019," article and statistics, including pie charts, created by Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner for Prison Policy Initiative. Available here: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2019.html>
- For another resource, consider reading: "The Case for Capping All Prison Sentences at 20 Years," by German Lopez for Vox. Available here: <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/2/12/18184070/maximum-prison-sentence-cap-mass-incarceration>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Some cite the ratification of the thirteenth amendment as the key moment that "ended" slavery in the United States. However, in many aspects, it simply rebranded slavery, as the amendment allowed for slavery as a form of incarceration. Unfortunately, in the last few decades, incarceration levels in the U.S. have risen, especially for people of color, leading to the growth and expansion of the prison industrial complex. This lesson will focus on mass incarceration and how it impacts people of color — especially Black men — at disproportionate rates, compared to White Americans.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: mass incarceration, prison industrial complex, exoneree.

- For definitions of “mass incarceration,” and the “prison industrial complex,” consider the ideas below:
 - Mass incarceration: describes the prison boom; or the modern, hyper-increased levels of incarceration in the U.S.; characterized by the disproportionate imprisonment of low-income, people of color.
 - Prison industrial complex: similar to the military industrial complex, the prison industrial complex is a term used to describe the overlapping interests of government and private industry, which deem policing and incarceration as viable “solutions” to curtail perceived social “problems.”

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- According to Bryan Stevenson, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, “Mass incarceration has been largely fueled by misguided drug policy and excessive sentencing. [Unfortunately], the internment of hundreds of thousands of poor and mentally ill people has been a driving force in achieving our record levels of imprisonment. It’s created unprecedented problems.”
- Stevenson notes the following reasons as to the rise of mass incarceration in the U.S.: the creation of laws that made petty or minor property crime “an offense that can result in life imprisonment” (which resulted in “hundreds of thousands of nonviolent offenders [being] forced to spend decades in prison”); the abolishment of parole in many states; the eradication of rehabilitation, education, and services for the imprisoned, as it’s been “rationalized” that “providing assistance to the incarcerated is apparently too kind and compassionate;” the institutionalization of policies that “reduce people to their worst acts,” permanently labeling them as ‘criminal’ and the like; the collection of “terrible mistakes” that have been made, evidenced by the “scores of innocent people that have been exonerated after being sentenced to death and nearly executed,” and the “hundreds more that have been released after being proved innocent of noncapital crimes through DNA testing;” and the amount of money being spent on jail, as “spending on jails and prisons by state and federal governments has risen from \$6.9 billion in 1980 to nearly \$80 billion today.”
- Stevenson describes this rise of the prison industrial complex, as he writes: “Private prison builders and prison service companies have spent millions of dollars to persuade state and local governments to create new crimes, impose harsher sentences, and keep more people locked up so that they can earn more profits. Private profit has corrupted incentives to improve public safety, reduce the costs of mass incarceration, and most significantly, promote rehabilitation of the incarcerated. State governments have been forced to shift funds from public services, education, health, and welfare to pay for incarceration, and they now face unprecedented economic crises as a result. The privatization of prison health care, prison commerce, and a range of services has made mass incarceration a money-making windfall for a few and a costly nightmare for the rest of us.”
- As a result of such efforts, mass incarceration has reached unprecedented levels in the United States. Individual and systemic forms of racism are central to this rise.

OPENING

- In the previous lesson, we explored the various ways individual and systemic forms of racism manifest in schools and throughout the educational system. For this lesson, we will explore incarceration, or more accurately, the rise in mass incarceration and the creation of the prison industrial complex. We’ll also analyze solutions to curbing incarceration levels.
- First, let’s unpack these concepts. What is mass incarceration? What is the prison industrial complex? Review the definitions provided in the Vocabulary section of the lesson.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Show the video, “Mass Incarceration, Visualized,” by *The Atlantic*. Ask students to take notes while watching the film. To guide them, encourage students to pay attention to increasing levels of incarceration rates, as well as who is greatly impacted by the growth of incarceration?
- After watching, review key ideas and statistics presented in the film, such as: The rate of incarceration is now five times higher than it was around 1940; per 100,000 residents of the U.S., 698 are incarcerated. This is overwhelmingly larger than other countries, as the country with the second highest rate — a combined “England and Wales” — had only 148. Based on data from 2010, per these 100,000 people, 380 were White, 966 were Latino, and 2,207 were Black. A Black man born after 1970 who dropped out of high school has a near seventy percent chance of serving time in state or federal prison in their lifetime. 1.2 million Black

children have a parent that is incarcerated, which is about one in nine Black children.

- Ask students to share their reactions to the data presented in the film. Does it represent a fair society? How do individual and systemic forms of racism feed into the rise of the prison industrial complex? Solutions are suggested to reduce incarceration rates. What are they? (Pause and/or or take a screenshot of the video at 2:04 to view the suggestions.)
- For our next step, we'll focus on ways to decrease mass incarceration.

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

- Introduce the text, "Ways to End Mass Incarceration." (Link referenced in the Materials section of the lesson.)
- Either independently, or with a partner/in small groups, students will read and annotate the brief article. They should take note of which solutions they think are more compelling. The teacher should circulate, supporting students as needed.
- If time allows, consider assigning students additional articles to read (such as those listed in the Materials section of the lesson) to enhance their knowledge.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- Regroup as a class. Have a discussion. Ask the class to consider the following questions: Which solution do you think is most compelling? In your opinion, what proposed solution may most realistically reduce mass incarceration: reforming monetary bail; "rethinking who goes to prison," such as utilizing other forms of punishment for minor crimes; or providing shorter sentences? Before having a group discussion, ask students to "turn and talk" to a partner to share their ideas. Then, elicit group responses.
- Show the video, "Kids Meet a Death Row Exoneree." Ask the class: Why is it important to listen to stories or voices like Sabrina (who is featured in this video)? As an exoneree, how does Sabrina's experiences speak to what Stevenson refers to as a "terrible mistake" of the prison industrial complex? In other words, why is it important to employ and/or develop a humanistic lens when speaking about topics like incarceration?
- Finally, since this lesson may have triggered many feelings, questions, or ideas, consider providing students with "exit slips" for them to anonymously jot down a note. Use the information to inform upcoming lessons, and/or assess if further conversations should be shared.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- In a subsequent lesson, consider reviewing the interconnectedness of police brutality, and racism and/or racial profiling. Consider the following videos to inspire class discussion. The first video features advice some Black parents give their sons, in regard to how to conduct themselves around police officers. The second video features voices of police officers, speaking to why they chose the profession and how individual and internalized racism manifests in their interactions with the public, including Black youth:
 - "A Conversation with My Black Son," video and brief article by Geeta Gandbhir and Blair Foster for *The New York Times*. Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/opinion/a-conversation-with-my-black-son.html>
 - "A Conversation with Police on Race," video and brief article by Geeta Gandbhir and Perri Peltz for *The New York Times*. Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/10/opinion/a-conversation-with-police-on-race.html>
- To enhance teacher understanding, consider reading: "Why Mass Incarceration Defines Us As a Society," article by Chris Hedges for *Smithsonian*. Available here: <https://www.smithsonian-mag.com/people-places/why-mass-incarceration-defines-us-as-a-society-135793245/>
- To better understand how slavery did not end, but "evolved," watch "Slavery to Mass Incarceration," animated video by Equal Justice Initiative. Available here: <https://eji.org/videos/slavery-to-mass-incarceration>
- To learn more about how the thirteenth amendment rebranded slavery, watch: *13th*, documentary by Ava DuVernay. Available on Netflix.

LESSON 7

THE POWER OF VIEWING “STORIES” WITH COMPLEXITY AND DEPTH

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes (teacher may extend)

Unit: Racism as a Primary “Institution” of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/History

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the idea that accounts or stories of oppression, such as genocide and racism, should also be viewed with a lens of “complexity and depth.”
- To recognize the significance of concepts like hope, courage, survival, adaption, and strength.
- To embrace a humanistic approach.

MATERIALS

- “Author David Treuer On Rewriting the Native American Narrative,” interview on PBS *NewsHour*. Available here: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/author-david-treuer-on-rewriting-the-native-american-narrative>
- “2020 Vision,” essay by David Treuer for *Harper’s Magazine*, adapted from his book *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*. Available here: <https://harpers.org/archive/2019/01/the-heartbeat-of-wounded-knee-david-treuer-ojibwe/>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- While it is important to understand the systemic creation and reification of racism and white supremacy, especially when reviewing inequality, it is also important to recognize examples of survival and, perhaps even more important, stories of those who exercised agency. This lesson will consider viewing history with a lens of “complexity and depth,” as historian David Treuer calls for in his work.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson: agency, complexity, depth, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Much of history focuses on stories of White conquest, and the resulting “defeat” of people of color. While it is important to underscore how racism was and continues to be a primary “institution” of the United States, it is also important to recognize our own agency. In an interview on PBS *NewsHour*, author and historian David Treuer said, “I’m not interested in the tragic narrative, I’m not interested in the story of hope, I’m interested in the story of complexity and depth.” This lesson will explore this core idea.

OPENING

- Tell the class: In previous lessons, we explored how forms of racism created unequal, even horrifying, experiences for individuals and large groups of people, especially people of color.
- For this lesson, we will apply a lens of “complexity and depth” to underscore the importance of recognizing our own agency.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Show the video, “Author David Treuer On Rewriting the Native American Narrative.” Ask the class: How did Treuer feel both “elevated and respected” as well as “silenced and gagged” when he read the historical nonfiction book, *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*? According to Treuer’s argument, why is it important to expand the way we see our own lives and others’ lives and experiences? Why does he say Native American “lives” as opposed to Native American “life”? Treuer calls for a more nuanced approach when considering history by referencing the example of forcing Native Americans to attend boarding school. According to Treuer, how was this event both an oppressive “tragedy,” and an advantageous — likely unintended — opportunity? Why does he call for a story of “complexity and depth”?

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

- Introduce the essay, “2020 Vision,” adapted from Treuer’s book *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*. Begin by reading the first few paragraphs out loud, with the teacher modeling annotation and thinking strategies.
- Either independently or with partners or in small groups, students should read the rest of the essay. Encourage students to apply “chunking” or a “chunk and summarize” strategies while reading.
- When reading, have students contemplate the following prompt: In his essay, Treuer writes, “Many Indians prefer not to think about Black Elk’s later years and consider his conversion a kind of surrender, a confirmation that the old ways were in fact dead. Maybe, maybe not. Black Elk was determined to live and to adapt. That doesn’t make him less of an Indian, as I see it; it makes him more of one.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What may Treuer mean when he writes, “In this sense, the victims of Wounded Knee died twice — once at the end of a gun, and again at the end of a pen,” followed by “We die, too, in our own minds.” What may he mean with this idea of “dying twice”?

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

- When students are done reading, regroup as a class. Have a discussion. Ask the class: Why is it important to approach historical (and current) stories, especially ones that center on “marginalized” groups, with complexity and depth?
- To facilitate dialogue, highlight key ideas of Treuer’s text, such as the excerpt: “I cannot shake the belief that the ways in which we tell the story of our reality shapes that reality: the manner of telling makes the world. And I worry that if we tell the story of the past as a tragedy we consign ourselves to a tragic future. If we insist on raging against our dependency on the United States and modernity itself, we miss something vital: as much as our past was shaped by the whims and violence of an evolving America, America, in turn, has been shaped by us.” Ask students to think of a “story” of racism they have learned or discussed recently. How can they reframe this story so it underscores the influence or agency of someone who is considered by larger society to be “marginalized”?
- Consider revisiting some of the questions Treuer posed in this essay. The following paragraph is an excerpt of his questions: “If you want to know America — if you want to see it for what it was and what it is — you need to look at Indian history and at the Indian present. If you do, if we all do, we will see that all of the questions posed at the founding of the country have persisted. How do the rights of the many relate to the rights of the few? What is or should be the furthest extent of federal power? How has the relationship between the government and the individual evolved? What are the limits of the executive to execute policy, and to what extent does that matter to us as we go about our daily lives? How do we reconcile the stated ideals of America as a country given to violent acts against communities and individuals? To what degree do we privilege enterprise over people? To what extent does the judiciary shape our understanding of our place as citizens in this country? To what extent should it? What are the limits to the state’s power over the people living within its borders? To ignore the history of Indians in America is to miss how power itself works.” Which question do students find most compelling? Explain why. (If time allows, for an extension, consider asking students to pick one of these questions and write a response.)
- Consider unpacking Treuer’s final paragraph. Reread it out loud: “To remember these stories and all the others is to remain humble in power, and to be called to tend to the troubled soul of the country; it is to remember that our very lives exist at the far side of policy. It is not to capture Indians, per se, but to capture the details of our lives. We are, for better or worse, the body of our republic. And we need to listen to it, to hear — beyond the pain and anger and fear, beyond the decrees and policies and the eddying of public sentiments and resentments, beyond the bombast and rhetoric — the sound (faint at times, stronger at others) of a heartbeat going on.” Why is it important to consider the “heartbeat going on”? What may Treuer mean by that statement?

- Ask the class to revisit an idea Treuer mentioned in the video: How are Native Americans [and other “marginalized” groups of people] more than a collection of problems? Before continuing with a group discussion, ask students to “turn and talk” to a partner to share their ideas. Then, elicit group responses. Ask the class: How can such a viewpoint be used to help eradicate forms of racism, especially individual forms of racism?
- For a final exercise, consider asking students to apply a “connect, extend, and challenge” strategy by crafting either an oral or written response to the lesson’s content based on three questions: 1) How did the content connect to the knowledge I already had? 2) How did the content extend my knowledge? and 3) How did the text challenge my knowledge?



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To better understand the early colonial and U.S. government’s imperialistic use of violence against Native Americans, read, “Indian Removal,” article created by PBS. Available here: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html>
- To enhance teacher understanding of the history and ideology behind U.S. imperialism, consider listening to, “The Story of American Imperialism,” audio report on NPR *Fresh Air*. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/14/694728435/the-story-of-american-imperialism>
- Also consider viewing, “Spanish American War,” video by PBS. Please be aware that this video does contain unpleasant, troubling images, such as prisoners of war. Available here: <https://www.pbs.org/video/latino-americans-spanish-american-war/>
- When learning about this history, remind students to look for stories of “complexity and depth.”

LESSON 8

CREATING ACTION PLANS TO FURTHER RACIAL AND/OR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Grade: 8 | Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes to review project (more time needed for research)
Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To identify and research a topic within the scope of racial and/or social justice that matters to them.
- To create a plan of action, outlining the end-result goal, or the "change" goal, and identifying who in the community has the ability to facilitate the end-result, and how to contact and/or address them.
- To follow through on the plan of action, whether it be with conversations, letters, meetings, proposals, demonstrations, or other activities.
- To conclude their endeavor with a review and reflection on successes, challenges, and ways to continue effort and growth in the future.

MATERIALS

- Access to books and materials used in previous lessons, as well as library resources.
- Art and writing material for students, including software to create presentations.
- "10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism," article created by the Anti-Defamation League. Available here: <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism>
- "Chicago Students Protest Gun Violence In March for Peace," audio podcast by NPR. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/20/533698452/chicago-students-protest-gun-violence-in-march-for-peace>
- Before the lesson, the teacher should read, "Can Teenage Defiance Be Manipulated for Good?" article by Amanda Ripley for *The New York Times*. Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/13/upshot/can-teenage-defiance-be-manipulated-for-good.html>
- The following was used as a guide, when crafting this lesson: "Ideas for Student Civic Action in a Time of Social Uncertainty," by Steven Zemelman for *The New York Times*. Available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/18/learning/lesson-plans/guest-post-ideas-for-student-civic-action-in-a-time-of-social-uncertainty.html>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Throughout the unit, we introduced ideas to explain how individual and systemic racism provided social, economic, political, and legal advantages to White Americans. As a result, students reviewed racial discrimination across housing, education, and school. They were also encouraged to consider approaching such stories with a lens of "complexity and depth."
- For a culminating activity, students will identify and research a topic within the scope of racial and/or social justice that matters to them. Such "problems," or areas of concern, may be local, such as within the community or city of the student body, or may reach broader, such as to the national level and beyond. After research, students will create a plan of action, outlining who to approach and how to approach them, resulting in a goal-oriented action plan.
- If available, consider teaching this lesson in conjunction with the school librarian, as well as a civics teacher.

VOCABULARY

- Consider reviewing and/or defining the following terms referenced in the suggested materials for this lesson, such as "appreciative inquiry," or the practice of finding existing solutions that worked for a different group of activists and applying it to new plans of action.

Lesson Procedure

OPENING

- Remind students of the various ideas they've learned thus far, including the forms of racism and how people have resisted and/or responded to it.
- Remind students of the previous lesson, and the idea of seeing ourselves and others — as David Treuer poses — with “complexity and depth.” In his writing, Treuer poses the question: “What kind of country do we want to be?” In this lesson, we are going to ask ourselves something similar.
- Tell students: Starting today, you are going to ask yourselves what kind of community we want to be. To do this, we will identify and research a topic within the scope of racial and/or social justice that matters to you. Your topic can be about race, related to race and/or encompass other forms of social identity. Our end goal will be to promote social justice.
- The teacher may consider using stories of other class projects to inspire students during the project introduction, such as by listening to the three-minute audio clip, provided by NPR, titled “Chicago Students Protest Gun Violence In March for Peace.” This clip shares the story of the Polaris Charter Academy Anti-Gun Violence campaign. (Link referenced in the Materials section of lesson.)
- After listening to the clip, ask the class: What did the student mean when he said, “If we weren’t doing anything about it, I think that we’d be a part of the problem too, because we would be bystanders”? What issue did the students in the clip want to improve? Was this problem at the school, local, and/or national level? What was their goal for change? How did they attempt to meet their goals? The students practiced something called “appreciative inquiry,” where they found a solution that worked for a different group of activists, and applied it to their own plan of action. What was that specific solution?
- Consider providing students with excerpts from the article, “Can Teenage Defiance Be Manipulated for Good?” The following excerpts may be helpful, consider sharing them with students:
 - “At Polaris Charter Academy on Chicago’s West Side, seventh graders learning about the Second Amendment decided to start a campaign against gun violence in their neighborhood. They created four public-service announcements, which aired on television; published a book about peacemakers in their community; and presented their work to the mayor.”
 - Ameerah Rollins, now 16 and a junior at Richard T. Crane Medical Prep High School, was one of the seventh graders. At first, she said, ‘none of us really thought we would make much impact.’ But as the students began to interview local officials and organize community events, ‘I noticed that people were starting to look at us, to acknowledge what we were doing.’ Nine out of ten of her classmates knew someone who had been shot or killed. Taking action felt like a way to begin to avenge those deaths. ‘It triggered something very personal. And when it became personal, we actually started to put in the work.’”
 - “From her experience, Ms. Rollins concluded that teenagers may have a distinct capacity to change society. ‘With adults, they’re more realists,’ she said. ‘They see how things happen, and they feel that maybe this isn’t really worth it. But in seventh grade, we don’t pay attention to the negativity. We never give up. A lot of people may see that as being naïve, but in reality, that’s power.’”

THE FIVE STEPS

- To launch student projects, review the steps below, as created and outlined by educator and author Steven Zemelman. Over the course of the next few days, perhaps weeks, follow the steps:
 - **Identify:** Through experience, past lessons, and research of current topics, students identify an issue they believe should change. Local issues may be within their school community. Local and/or school community issues are a great parameter to consider, as there is an increased likelihood that students will successfully influence change. Students may start with a broader, national or international issue and, if possible, find a way to engage this topic locally. For example, students may identify a national trend of food deserts in low-income urban neighborhoods, but can focus on the needs of a specific neighborhood within their own city, or even approach their entire city or town. In short, finding an issue with personal meaning to the students is highly encouraged. To begin, the class may want to brainstorm a list of issues together, or in small groups to present to the whole class. Additionally, students may want to take personal time to individually quick-write and identify their topics.

- **Research:** Once a topic has been selected, students will use library, news, and internet sources to thoroughly research their chosen issue. Students should consider the history of the issue; levels of legislation affecting the issue; who is in a position of power to influence or change this issue, such as local officials; and current examples of groups of people or individuals who are directly affected by this topic. Another area of research may include finding solutions that have worked for others. Rather than only finding what's not in place, garner current examples of what is working in other communities, and how students might replicate this in their own local environment. This process is often referred to as "appreciative inquiry." Using this type of research, students will form opinions on best solutions for changing and/or improving their unique issues. For this stage, a "root-cause" diagram, may be useful for students to organize their research. For instance, students may view the "symptoms" as the leaves, or what you can see at the top of the tree; the "big issue" as the trunk, which directly causes the symptoms; and the "roots" of the tree as the root causes of the social issue, which are beneath the surface but feed into the big issue. Consider creating a graphic organizer that depicts this image for students to use.
- **Plan:** Students interpret their research and their outcome goals, to create a plan of action. At the top of their plan of action, students should write their goal for change in detail. It does not need to be more than three sentences, but should be specific. The plan of action should then list measures to be taken to reach their desired goal. Steps include identifying individuals, people, or organizations with the ability to help make change, and how to most effectively approach these identified leaders, such as through letter-writing, requesting meetings, crafting policy proposals, or organizing community awareness events, PSAs, or demonstrations. While donating money and holding fundraisers are a valid method of helping, students are encouraged to engage their communities with the principles of education, knowledge, and policy to create change that has a probable impact, even a ripple effect. Consider reading this article as a class, "10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism." (Link referenced in the Materials section of lesson.) On another note, if students require additional resources, such as needing technological equipment and/or assistance, having the support of other teachers and community members and access to equipment would be ideal. However, when possible, try to simplify the process so students are capable of completing their work individually or in groups.
- **Act:** Students carry out their plan of action, catering to the specific needs of their cause. It is important students take assertive steps to best learn and understand their ability to successfully communicate and engage civically within their school and broader communities. As Zemelman writes, "It's not enough to just talk about change, practice mock legislatures, or serve in a soup kitchen (as valuable as these activities may be). Only when students see adults listening to them with respect, do they realize they have a voice and can make a difference in their world. Their efforts may not always succeed, but in being heard they come to value studying, reading, writing, and planning what they have done."
- **Reflect:** Students individually write reflections on their experiences with this project. What worked? What was particularly challenging? How do they plan to continue to learn and work more towards their goals?

PRESENTATION AND CLOSING

- Students will present their reflections and ideas to the class. If a larger celebration is desired, consider inviting parents/guardians ahead of time and/or other members of the school community to view the presentations.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For inspiration, consider watching *Knock Down the House*, a Netflix documentary that features the stories of four women who challenged Democratic incumbents in the 2018 midterm elections, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.
- To extend the lesson, students can offer suggestions for ways they could take one student's topic, and make it a school-wide effort, such as through the creation of a larger campaign.
- Also, consider asking students to set commitments for the future. For example, going forward, how will they apply an anti-racist lens when working with others and when developing their own sense of self?
- Finally, when ending your time together, encourage students to go forth and see the world with more complexity and depth.