UNITS IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM:

1. What Are Texts and What Stories Do They Tell About Race?
   - Lesson 1: What Is a Text?
   - Lesson 2: Our Communities as Texts
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   - Lesson 2: Seminar on "Who Said It Was Simple"

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ENGLISH UNIT 1

WHAT ARE TEXTS AND WHAT STORIES DO THEY TELL ABOUT RACE?

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Overview

The first lesson in this thematic unit broadens students' understandings of what constitutes a text and asks students to conceive of as many types of texts as possible. The second lesson shows this learning in action by using maps as texts. The third lesson gives students an opportunity to reflect on their own learning and thinking. The Suggested Reflection Questions for this unit are tailored to its specific learning objectives; these questions can be used with any of the suggested texts for this unit or with alternative text(s) of the teacher's or students' choice.

Objectives

- Students will learn to reimagine what constitutes a "text." Students will learn to see themselves, their communities, and the world around them as racialized texts.
- Students will learn about the role and power of storytelling and how they can shape their own racial identities.
- Students will examine how stories influence how their perceptions of others' racial identities.
- Students will reflect on the degree to which they can effectively control or shape the racialized stories that others have created about them.
- Students will critically explore how their actions reflect or impact the racialized stories that are created about others.

Key Understandings

- A text is anything that tells a story. A text can be a novel or a film, or it can by the way in which a city or town is mapped out. We are also characters in these larger texts, and just as we tell racialized stories about ourselves, racialized stories are also told about us by others. Some of these stories are uplifting; others, though, can be damaging. These inaccurate or distorted narratives often appear as microaggressions, stereotypes, prejudice, and racism.

  Possible misunderstanding: A text is always something that's written on the page. Texts are always physical.
- Everyone is part of a larger, interconnected web of stories and storytelling.
- We often create texts in response to our lived experiences. These texts, including the racialized stories we tell about ourselves and others, play an important role in how we see, treat, and speak to those who are different from us.

  Potential misunderstanding: Texts exist in a vacuum and are disconnected from socio-political and cultural currents and events around us.
- The "single stories" we hear about others are often created and affirmed in the media we consume. Learning to recognize the dangers of a single story is the first step toward deconstructing stereotypes and thinking critically about our own racial identities within the context of a larger, racialized world.

  Potential misunderstanding: Stereotypes do not influence how we see, interact with, and talk to people who might be different from us.

Vocabulary

bias
ethnicity
implicit bias
prejudice
race
racialized
racism

National Standards

The lessons in this unit align with the following Common Core English Language Arts Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3** Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

The lessons in this unit also align with the following Social Justice Standards learning outcomes:

- **DI.9-12.6** I interact comfortably and respectfully with all people, whether they are similar to or different from me.
- **DI.9-12.7** I have the language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including myself) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.
- **DI.9-12.8** I respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
- **DI.9-12.9** I relate to and build connections with other people by showing them empathy, respect and understanding, regardless of our similarities or differences.
- **JU.9-12.11** I relate to all people as individuals rather than representatives of groups and can identify stereotypes when I see or hear them.
- **JU.9-12.12** I can recognize, describe and distinguish unfairness and injustice at different levels of society.

Suggested Texts

Any of the following texts could be used to explore the themes of this unit.

Adichie, C. N. *The danger of a single story* [video]. TED. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.

Because race is often our most visible social identifier, we immediately make assumptions about others based on how they present or appear. This TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie underscores how our assumptions (i.e., a "single story") inhibit our ability to grow and connect with those whose lived experiences are different from our own.

Alexander, K. (2014). *The crossover*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Kwame Alexander's novel in narrative verse explores the lives of Black twins drifting apart as they mature. Poetry and artful language create an intimate portrait of a Black family in which relationships are tested and ultimately strengthened through the bonds of education and basketball. This novel refreshingly discards the trope of Black trauma in storytelling.

Alexie, S. (2017). *The absolutely true diary of a part-time Indian*. Little, Brown and Company.

In this coming-of-age novel, Junior leaves his reservation to pursue education. This decision is meant to give Junior more opportunities but comes at a cost; Junior must navigate belonging and relationships in both the White world and in his home in the world of the Native American reservation.

Ansari, A. (Writer, Director), Yang, A. (Writer), & Jarman, Z. (Writer). (2015). Parents (Season 1, Episode 2) [TV series episode]. In A. Ansari, A. Yang (Creators), *Master of None*. Netflix.

Season 1, Episode 2 of *Master of None*, entitled "Parents," explores the lives of the immigrant parents of Dev and Brian, both second-generation Asian Americans, who take for granted, and ultimately acknowledge, the privileges they have attained as a result of the sacrifice and racism their parents endured.

Butler, O. (2003). *Kindred* (25th anniversary edition). Beacon Press.

In this novel by Octavia Butler, Dana inadvertently travels back in time where she must live as an enslaved person and make decisions to protect her own life, the lives of enslaved people on the plantation, and even the life of her White enslaver ancestor—all while resisting the dehumanization of being enslaved.

Craft, J. (2019). *New kid*. HarperCollins.

Craft, J. (2020). *Class act*. HarperCollins.

Both graphic novels by Jerry Craft explore the lives of Brown and Black students who deal with the impact of well-intentioned and/or entitled community members of a predominantly White private school that is far removed from their home lives.

Kumari, R. (2020). N.R.I. [song]. Mass Appeal India; Universal Music India Pvt. Ltd.

This song by L.A.-based rapper Raja Kumari about being Indian American explores boundaries enforced by different cultures. Kumari criticizes White Americans and Indians who question her Brown identity by claiming that she is simultaneously inadequate and excessive.

Lyon, G. (1999). Where I'm from. In *Where I'm from: Where poems come from*. Absey & Company.

This poem by George Ella Lyon shows how every person is a character in a larger story that is racialized. In this case, Lyon's story spotlights her childhood in Appalachia, specifically in Harlan, Kentucky, a coal-mining town. Though subtle, the details in the poem racialize Whiteness, which is often rendered invisible.

Suggested Reflection Questions

- How does the text serve as a mirror for your own racialized lives? How does the text serve as a window into the racialized lives of other individuals and their communities?
- As you read the text, what did you notice? What surprised you? Which character most resonated with you? Why? Which character felt most different from who you are? Why?
- What are other elements of each character's identity? How does race or ethnicity play a role in the world they inhabit?
- Are there many other characters with similar racial or ethnic identities to the protagonist, and to what extent is this significant?
- What are some of the underlying stories that are told about each of the characters? What racial or ethnic stereotypes contribute to the stories that are told about each of the characters?
- When do the protagonist's stories and the stories others have about the protagonist differ? What conflicts emerge? How do these conflicts manifest in the protagonist's relationship with other characters? What impact do these conflicts have on the protagonist? How does race or ethnicity play a role in this tension or conflict?
- Who or what exactly is the antagonist of the text? Is the antagonist explicitly named or mentioned? If not, why do you think this is the case? (Keep in mind that there can often be more than one than one antagonist, and, in some cases, an antagonist can be an abstraction, such as an institution or a system.)
- How do ethnicity, race, racism, and/or prejudice contribute to tensions between the characters? How do any of these elements help resolve tensions between the characters?
- What does the text reveal about the ethnic or racial identities of the author and/or the reader?

ENGLISH UNIT 1, LESSON 1
WHAT IS A TEXT?

Suggested time: Two 50-60 minute class periods

Overview

This lesson introduces students to the idea that texts are not confined to the page. Texts can be maps, films, and even cereal boxes. In short, the world and our communities are one big text. How, then, should we make sense of the texts we inhabit as racialized characters, and what impact do they have on how others see us and our stories?

Materials

- Student writing materials
- Cereal boxes or other nontraditional examples of texts
- Index cards

LESSON PROCEDURE

Pre-work: Identify some texts that you would like to show and model to the class. For example, you might want to bring in two or three cereal boxes to demonstrate how font, colors, images, language, and other design elements are designed to send a particular message to consumers. You may also want to bring in magazine advertisements. Pay close attention to how these images are racialized, even if race is not overtly mentioned. For example, in advertisements for beauty products or clothing, you might notice that slimness or long straight hair on women is considered ideal and beautiful. At the same time, these standards are actually racialized in ways that affirm white supremacy.

1. Open by projecting or writing the following questions on the board:
    - When you think of a text, what comes to mind?
    - What makes a text a text?

    Have students Think, Pair, Share their responses. Start by giving students 3-4 minutes to write down their responses. Then, place students in groups of 2-3 and have them share what they have written, while one student in each group takes notes. Finally, have groups report their findings to the larger class. Write their responses on the board.

    Possible student responses:

    Texts that come to mind are...

    - *Novels, poems, short stories, plays*
    - *Paintings, sculptures, music*
    - *Movies, television*
    - *Company, organization, celebrity/personal, product, academic websites*
    - *Trailers, advertisements, billboards, transit or sidewalk ads*
    - *Pop-up ads, ads in videos, targeted online ads*

- *Social media: Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter*
- *Product packaging, marketing, spokespeople*
- *Physical space or objects as text*
- *Self, clothing, body, skin color, size and shape, gender presentation*

2. After each group shares, present the cereal box, magazine advertisement, or other text you found as part of the pre-work. Show your selected artifact to students and ask them to do a close reading of the words and images. Ask students the following questions about your artifact using the Observation-Inference-Interpretation-Explanation thinking structure:
   - Observation: What stands out to you?
   - Inferences: What do these certain choices on the part of the author/creator suggest and communicate to readers?
   - Interpretation: How do these authorial and creative choices create a certain story about the artifact? How is the issue of race explicit in, implicit in, or altogether absent from this artifact?
   - Explanation: Who is the intended reader or audience of this artifact? Is race an explicit part of this artifact? If so, what are its racial messages? If race is an implicit part of this artifact, why do you think these messages were made implicit rather than explicit? How does this choice impact your reading of the text? What larger message or story does this artifact seem to be telling? What evidence leads you to these interpretations?

   You might guide students to think about color, font, scale, imagery, language (e.g., English, Spanish), and amount of writing vs. images.
3. Students should look at the list of texts they generated as a class earlier in the lesson. Then, each student should spend about 4-5 minutes searching for a digital artifact (e.g., a web page for clothing, the school's homepage) that they would like to read closely and critically. Students should return to their small groups and share their chosen digital artifacts. Then, as a group, students should select one of the artifacts to present to the class using the Observation-Inference-Interpretation-Explanation thinking structure they used above. Remind students to reflect on how the issue of race is explicit, implicit, or absent from their artifact. One student from each group should then present their artifact to the class.
4. Close by passing out index cards and having students draw the following shapes: a square, a circle, and a triangle. Then have students respond to the following prompts for each shape:
   - Square: What about today's lesson squares with you? That is, what resonates with you?
   - Circle: What in this lesson would you like to circle back to and reexamine at a later point?
   - Triangle: What are three takeaways that you learned from today's lesson?

   Collect these index cards and read them to help guide your thinking as you craft your next lesson plans.

Asynchronous work: Have students complete the Demonstration of Learning asynchronously for homework.

Demonstration of Learning

In a personal reflection or narrative, students should analyze an artifact they come across in their home or neighborhood. In their essays, they should consider the following questions:

- What are the races of the intended audience? What leads you to this conclusion?
- What are the racialized assumptions about the intended audience?
- How does the artifact play into those assumptions?
- What characteristics of the artifact make it particularly effective for the intended audience?

Additional Resources

Adachi, J. (2006). *The slanted screen: Asian men in film and television*. Asian American Media Mafia.

Through interviews, this documentary considers the portrayal of Asians in the previous century of American film, as well as the struggle of actors against the reality of limited opportunities and stereotypes in the industry.

Defino, J. (2020). How white supremacy and capitalism influence beauty standards. *Teen Vogue*. Accessed September 1, 2021, at: https://www.teenvogue.com/story/standard-issues-white-supremacy-capitalism-influence-beauty.

Donnella, L. (2019). Is beauty in the eyes of the colonizer? *Code Switch*. NPR. Accessed September 1, 2021, at: https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/02/06/685506578/is-beauty-in-the-eyes-of-the-colonizer.

ENGLISH UNIT 1, LESSON 2
OUR COMMUNITIES AS TEXTS

Suggested time: One 50-60 minute class period

Overview

Through digital maps, students will learn to read and interpret different communities in their city or town as texts, using a racialized lens. Students will examine how the types of businesses in these neighborhoods and the layout of these communities privilege certain racial groups while disadvantaging others.

Materials

- Internet access for students
- United States Census Bureau Data, available at: https://data.census.gov/
- Social Explorer, available at: https://www.socialexplorer.com/
- Yelp, available at: https://www.yelp.com/

LESSON PROCEDURE

Before the lesson, identify five different neighborhoods or areas near your school that you can assign to groups of 3-4 students in your class. Select a range of neighborhoods or communities that are racially and socio-economically different from each other.

We also strongly suggest that teachers familiarize themselves with the U.S. Census Bureau Data and Social Explorer websites. While both serve as excellent resources for exploring census data at the neighborhood level, they can be a little tricky to navigate at first.

1. As part of an opening activity, ask a few volunteers to share their reflections from the homework assignment from the previous lesson (see Unit 1, Lesson 1, "Demonstration of Learning"). Afterward, talk to students about how different neighborhoods in a community tell certain stories about those spaces and the people who live in them. Today, students will learn to see and analyze maps as texts and use the Observation-Inference-Interpretation-Explanation thinking structure they practiced in the previous lesson.
2. In small groups for 3-4, students will examine demographic data for their assigned neighborhood or zip code. For context, they should start by looking at the demographics of the entire city, town, or region as documented by the U.S. Census. (Another great online tool for exploring census data is Social Explorer.) Students should be sure to note the following:
    - Racial demographics
    - Percentage of foreign-born persons
    - Median gross rent
    - Median household income
    - Percentage of households with a computer
    - Percentage of households with broadband internet access

- Percentage of businesses owned by minority and non-minority individuals
- Education attainment/level of inhabitants
- Percentage of owner-occupied housing units
- Median value of owner-occupied homes
- Percentage of people in poverty

3. Next, students should look up and record these demographics as they pertain to their assigned neighborhood. Students should make note of any differences or disparities between the demographics of their assigned community and the rest of the city, town, or region they examined.
4. Next, have students look at businesses and other establishments in their assigned area using Google Maps, Yelp, or a similar tool. Depending on the needs and learning goals of the class, you can have students look broadly at different types of establishments or focus on a specific industry or type of establishment within their assigned community. Examples of such establishments include:
   - **Automobile services:** used car lots, auto mechanics, dealerships, car rental companies
   - **Access to alcohol:** bars, breweries, night clubs, nightlife, liquor stores
   - **Access to books:** antique booksellers, libraries, bookstores
   - **Beauty supply:** tanning salons, manicurists, hairstylists, hair salons, makeup stores
   - **Clothing stores:** vintage or thrift stores, major clothing chains, indie designers, high fashion, boutique/small businesses
   - **Education:** private schools, public schools, colleges/universities, trade schools, community colleges, learning centers, tutoring centers, preschools, daycare
   - **Financial services:** banks, credit unions, check-cashing/payday loan services (this resource from the FDIC can help contextualize students' observations)
   - **Food:** corner stores or bodegas ("mart"), convenience stores, supermarkets with fresh produce, farmers' markets, butchers, grocers
   - **Recreation:** parks, playgrounds, museums, gardens, sightseeing
   - **Home improvement:** hardware supply, home improvement stores
   - **Houses of worship:** synagogues, cathedrals, churches, temples, mosques, shrines, and other similar spaces
   - **Medical facilities:** hospitals, dentists, urgent care facilities, community health services
   - **Legal services:** prisons, jails, law offices, bail bond, courts
   - **Real estate services:** realtors, mortgage brokers or companies
   - **Restaurants:** fine dining, take-out, fast food restaurants
   - **Small eateries:** bakeries, cafes/coffee shops, delis
   - **Athletic facilities:** gyms, fitness studios, swimming pools
   - **Travelers' accommodation:** hotels, motels
   - **Animal services:** veterinarians, pet supply stores
5. As students conduct their research, they might consider some of the following questions:
   - What trends do I notice? What might account for some of these trends?
   - How many dollar signs ($-$$$) are most of these establishments? What do they suggest about the income of the people in the community? What leads me to draw these inferences? (This could be a good opportunity to discuss the history of redlining, fair housing, and the impact of generational wealth.)

- What major roads or highways run through this community? How accessible are these establishments via public transportation? How might increased vehicular traffic benefit or negatively impact those who live or work in this community? (This could be a good opportunity to discuss how the history of road and highway locations is racialized.)
- How plentiful are green spaces in this space? Roughly speaking, what is the ratio between green spaces, such as public parks, and paved roads? (This could be an opportunity to discuss the impacts of environmental racism and urban planning. Studies have demonstrated that people of color, particularly in urban areas, are disproportionately impacted by high heat, which leads to mental and physical health problems.)
- Stepping back and considering what I noticed within the context of data from the U.S. Census, what surprised me? What didn't surprise me?
- Now that I have learned more about this community and the ways that it is racialized, what do I have questions about? What do I want to learn more about?

6. All students should consider how these establishments and structures in their assigned communities might bridge or maintain racial and socio-economic disparities. For example, to what degree are the selected establishments in the community catered to the needs of the local population? Based on the census information, to what degree are most establishments affordable to the local community?
7. Have each group present their findings to the class.
8. Close by passing out index cards and having students draw the following shapes: a square, a circle, and a triangle. Then have students respond to the following prompts for each shape:
   - Square: What about today's lesson squares with you? That is, what resonates with you?
   - Circle: What in this lesson would you like to circle back to and reexamine at a later point?
   - Triangle: What are three takeaways that you learned from today's lesson?

   Collect these index cards and read them to help guide your thinking as you craft your next lesson plans.

Asynchronous work: Have students complete the Demonstration of Learning asynchronously for homework.

Demonstration of Learning

Students should write and submit a 1-2 page reflection on their findings from the in-class research project. Within their reflections, students should describe what surprised, intrigued, or confounded them as they investigated trends and disparities in their communities.

Remind students to be mindful of their own implicit biases. You might have students who say, "There are lots of liquor stores in a particular neighborhood because everyone likes to drink alcohol." Remind them that there are multiple perspectives to a story. One possible response might be: "These types of businesses might actually be preying upon those with addiction or profiting from certain types of challenges that lead people to seek unhealthy outlets such as drinking alcohol."

Extension Opportunity

Consider showing this interview with Richard Rothstein, author of *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. In this video, Ta-Nehisi Coates chats with Rothstein about his research and his book on the racist history of redlining and how governmental policies and urban planning continue to widen inequities between white people and people of color, particularly Black Americans.

This activity uses the following resource:

History Bookshelf. (2017). The color of law [video]. C-SPAN. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.c-span.org/video/?428341-1/the-color-law

Additional Resources

Badger, E., & Cameron, D. (2015). How railroads, highways and other man-made lines racially divide America's cities. *The Washington Post.* Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/07/16/how-railroads-highways-and-other-man-made-lines-racially-divide-americas-cities/.

Fleischer, M. (2020). Want to tear down insidious monuments to racism and segregation? Bulldoze L.A. freeways. *Los Angeles Times.* Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-06-24/bulldoze-la-freeways-racism-monument.

Kutzbach, M., Lloro, A., Weinstein, J., & Chu, K. (2020). How America banks: Household use of banking and financial services. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.fdic.gov/analysis/household-survey/2019execsum.pdf.

Little, B. (2021). How a New Deal housing program enforced segregation. History. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.history.com/news/housing-segregation-new-deal-program.

NPR. (2018). Housing segregation and redlining in America: A short history | Code Switch | NPR [video]. YouTube. Accessed February 1, 2022 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5FBJyqfoLM.

Parker, A. (2020). Why are highways built to run through Black communities? SC faces a historic dilemma again. *The Post and Courier*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.postandcourier.com/news/local_state_news/why-highways-were-designed-to-run-through-black-communities-sc-faces-historic-dilemma-again/article_576f3fce-0976-11eb-a46c-635e6fad5d38.html.

Witze, A. (2021). Racism is magnifying the deadly impact of rising city heat. *Nature*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01881-4.

ENGLISH UNIT 1, LESSON 3
REFLECTIONS ON RACE AND RACISM

Suggested time: One 50-60 minute class period (subsequent reflections will take 10-20 minutes)

Overview

After consuming – reading, observing, watching, listening, or examining – a text or a portion of a text, students will take time to write a reflection on the reading using guiding questions. These questions encourage students to examine the ways in which stories are told about racialized lives. The students' written reflections help the teacher assess their comprehension of the text as well as the key understandings and vocabulary for the unit.

Materials

- Selected text(s)
- Example reflections (optional)

Note to Teacher

Before the lesson, either select a text (or group of texts) that students will use for this reflection activity or give students the option of choosing a text to reflect on. Consider using texts from the list of Suggested Texts for Unit 1.

Then determine expectations for students' written reflections. Criteria might include:

- Students should incorporate at least one of the vocabulary words from this unit.
- Students should include at least one rich quotation to support their claims, properly cited.
- Students should meet a minimum or maximum number of sentences or write for a minimum or maximum number of minutes.

In addition, determine an appropriate length of time and frequency for such reflections, taking into consideration the time it takes for students to consume the assigned text(s) and whether students will conduct these reflections during or outside of class time. Determine whether these reflections are to be written in a journal that is collected and graded periodically, submitted on paper every day, or submitted electronically or in some other form.

Finally, you will need to choose one or more questions from the Suggested Reflection Questions for Unit 1 that are best suited to the text or the portion of text students will be reflecting on. With your chosen question(s) in mind, consider creating two sample reflections: one that meets or exceeds expectations for the assignment and one that does not meet expectations. For a more difficult task, you may decide to create two sample reflections that each have a mix of meeting and missing expectations rather than creating examples that are wholly "good" or "bad."

LESSON PROCEDURE

Before this lesson, have students read the assigned text, texts, or portion(s) of text you have chosen.

1. Let students know that, in today's class, they will examine their reactions and responses as readers. Point out that readers are also part of a larger ecosystem in which messages about race and racism are transmitted, and a reader's racialized life informs how they interpret and read text.

   Give students a few minutes to reflect on the following prompt:

   > Think about a time or situation when you were aware of your race and how it affected your experience. Alternatively, you might reflect on a time or experience when you were not thinking about race and how that experience might have been different if you had thought about race.

2. Briefly discuss the text students read in advance of class to refresh their memories.
   - Ask students to share aloud their understanding of the plot, character development, and recurring themes of the text.
   - Help students work out any misunderstandings about the text together.
   - Make sure everyone has a shared, common understanding of the text before moving on to the rest of the lesson.
3. Present students with the reflection question(s) you have chosen for the assigned text. If you prepared sample reflections, share those with your students and have them determine the strengths and deficits of each sample individually. Then have them share their evaluations in groups or as a whole class.

   After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the sample reflections, explain the expectations for students' reflections. See whether students were able to ascertain the expectations from the samples. Give students a hard copy of these expectations. You might also ask students to work individually, in pairs, or in groups to revise or improve the sample reflections so that they meet the requirements of the assignment.
4. Close by letting students know that they will complete their own reflections over the course of the semester.

Extension Opportunities

- After consuming new texts, present the Suggested Reflection Questions from Unit 1 that most pertain to your teaching goals/objectives for your selected text. You may choose to rotate through each of the Suggested Reflection Questions or focus only on certain ones. Alternatively, you may allow the students to choose from the list of questions over the course of the semester.

  You may decide to collect these reflections periodically or at the end of the semester to assess student comprehension of texts, vocabulary, and key understandings. In any case, make sure students understand the time frame for completing and submitting these reflections as well as guidelines for how their reflections will be assessed.
- You can use the Suggested Reading Questions from this unit in various additional ways. You can have students respond to these prompts in the form of a formative assessment, such as an opening free-write (see Unit 2, Lesson 1) or a seminar (see Unit 3, Lesson 2), or in the form of a summative assessment, such as an essay (see Unit 4, Lesson 2).

ENGLISH UNIT 2

INTERNALIZING OTHER PEOPLE'S STORIES ABOUT US

2

Overview

The first lesson in this thematic unit teaches students to attend to and surface their own biases as readers. The second lesson is specific to the graphic novel *American Born Chinese*, by author Gene Yang. The Suggested Reflection Questions for this unit are tailored to its specific learning objectives; these questions can be used with any of the suggested texts for this unit or with alternative text(s) of the teacher's or students' choice.

Objectives

- Students will see how racial identity is constructed, informed, or impacted by the texts they consume.
- Students will recognize the ways in which texts confirm or subvert perceptions about race.
- Students will think critically about how authors consciously or inadvertently impact their readers' perceptions about race.

Key Understandings

- Racial identity is shaped or impacted by the texts we consume. When we read texts, we absorb certain messages, consciously or subconsciously, that impact and distort how we see people of certain races.
- When we read texts, we are sometimes unaware of how our unconscious biases affirm the negative racial stereotypes we are taught to believe are accurate and true. We harbor certain biases that we do not even realize. As a result of our biases, we as readers can unknowingly become complicit in the production and replication of negative racial stereotypes that support white supremacy.
- Bias can be mitigated. Mitigating our biases requires acknowledging them and developing an awareness of when they surface.
- Being a "good person" does not necessarily mean that one's actions, words, or behaviors are not racist. Even having the best intentions does not absolve us from taking responsibility for how our actions, words, or behaviors impact other individuals or groups of people.
- Reading critically and closely requires careful examination of how authors consciously or inadvertently impact readers' perceptions about race. At the same time, we must learn to be more mindful of our biases and how these biases effect how we read and perceive texts. This process begins with questioning and critically analyzing the assumptions about race we encounter within texts.
- Like everyone, writers are not immune to bias. Part of being a good critical reader is asking questions and questioning what we read.

Vocabulary

assimilation
bias
double consciousness
ethnicity
othered

otherness
prejudice
race
racism
sinophobia
stereotypes

National Standards

The lessons in this unit align with the following Common Core English Language Arts Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3** Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

The lessons in this unit also align with the following Social Justice Standards learning outcomes:

- **DI.9-12.7** I have the language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including myself) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.
- **JU.9-12.13** I can explain the short and long-term impact of biased words and behaviors and unjust practices, laws and institutions that limit the rights and freedoms of people based on their identity groups.
- **AC.9-12.16** I express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when I personally experience bias.

Suggested Texts

Any of the following texts could be used to explore the themes of this unit.

Alexie, S. (2013). *Flight: A novel*. Open Road Media.

> The protagonist of this novel, Zits, is a Native American teen who has a complicated relationship with his own racial identity. In the story, Zits is transformed into different characters in different moments in history. Along the way, he learns to recognize that there is no one way of being and feeling Native American. That is, identity is not singular and cannot be distilled into a list of characteristics.

Alvarez, J. (2010). *How the García girls lost their accents.* Algonquin Books of Chapel.

> Otherness and assimilation are at play in this coming-of-age novel by Julia Alvarez. The daughters of the García family, all immigrants from the Dominican Republic, deal with the transition of moving between cultures, caught between the wishes of their parents' generation and coming of age in a world that is different from the one they left.

Cary, L. (2010). *Black ice.* Vintage.

> In this memoir, Lorene Cary documents her experiences as a young Black woman attending St. Paul's School, an elite boarding school in New Hampshire. She shares her own struggles with remaining true to herself amidst the pervasive impacts of white supremacy on how she sees herself.

Chan, J. (Writer), Erskine, M. (Writer), Konkle, A. (Writer), & DeYoung, A. (Director). (2019). Posh (Season 1, Episode 6) [TV series episode]. In Konkle, A., Erskine, M., & Zvibleman, S. (Creators), *PEN15*. Hulu.

> In this television episode, Maya, who is biracial (White and Asian), experiences casual racism when working on a group project with some of her White peers. Maya struggles with being othered while her best friend, Anna, who is White, contends with White guilt and her role in hurting Maya.

C-SPAN. (2015). Landmark cases: Brown v Board doll test [video]. YouTube. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://youtu.be/a7sX1cn5aO4.

> This experiment played a role in the Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. Board of Education*, a decision that mandated the desegregation of schools. The experiment demonstrated how both Black and White children internalize messages of anti-Blackness at an early age.

Diaz, J. (2021). How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie. In *The Art of Friction* (pp. 64-68). University of Texas Press.

> In this short story, the narrator privileges Whiteness over his own Dominican identity. This internalization of toxic masculinity leads him to see and treat women in disrespectful ways. What makes this story poignant and compelling is how Diaz illustrates the constant and dynamic struggle that people of color feel as they contend with Whiteness.

Hansberry, L. (1984). *A raisin in the sun*. Concord Theatricals.

> This play by playwright Lorraine Hansberry depicts the Youngers family, a Black family in the 1950s. The matriarch believes her working-class family can access middle-class security – and the freedom to pursue their dreams – by buying a house in a White neighborhood. While the family is hampered by racism and financial struggles, they overcome obstacles and take the step forward.

Lee, C. R. (1995). *Native speaker*. Penguin Books.

> This novel by Chang-Rae Lee focuses on a Korean American protagonist's struggle with feelings of cultural alienation in the U.S. He sees how his desire to fit in and be perceived as American, which, in many ways, is code for "White," also comes at a high cost, especially in terms of his connection to his Korean identity and heritage.

Morrison, T. (1993). *The bluest eye*. Knopf.

In this novel, Pecola Breedlove is a young Black girl who wishes she could have blue eyes (and thus be White). Flashbacks in the story show Pecola's parents struggling to live in predominantly White communities. This book shows how no one is immune from the damaging effects of white supremacy. (Content warnings: language, sex, violence, rape.)

Shakespeare, W. (2001). *The tragedy of Othello, the moor of Venice* (Vol. 24). Penguin.

In this play by William Shakespeare, Othello is a Black man who marries Desdemona, a White woman. Though Othello is a well-respected military officer, he is made to feel lesser because of his race. Over time, he internalizes these damaging messages and becomes increasingly insecure about his own racial identity and his wife's fidelity.

Yang, G. L. (2006). *American born Chinese*. First Second Books.

This graphic novel by author Gene Yang explores otherness as felt by Asian Americans. The protagonists in each of these stories are made to feel lesser because of their race, appearance, or social circles. Unfortunately, they internalize these racist narratives and change how they act and appear. In the end, they ultimately learn to be proud of who they are.

Suggested Reflection Questions

- How are people of different racial identities characterized or described in this text?
- What are the connotations of the words and images used to describe certain racial groups? Which of these words and images stand out? Why?
- Identify one character who has internalized racial messages about themselves. What are those messages? Where did these messages come from? How are they manifested in the character's thoughts, words, and actions? How do these internalized racial messages inform the ways that this character interacts with those of the same racial identity and those with different racial identities?
- To what extent has an author internalized racial messages about themselves? About others? What moment(s) in the text lead you to this conclusion?
- What are some racial tensions or conflicts that emerge between and within certain characters? What surprises you about these tensions and conflicts? To what extent are they resolved, if at all? What would an ideal resolution look like to you?
- Which characters in the text serve and reinforce racial assumptions? What leads you to draw this conclusion? What about their experiences resonates with you?
- Which characters in the text subvert racial assumptions? What leads you to this conclusion? What about their experiences resonates with you?
- How is "otherness" created and pathologized in the text? To what extent can you relate to this feeling of otherness? Who or what creates these feelings of otherness? What is the purpose of creating these distinctions?
- Identify a character who acknowledges and celebrates their racial identity. What about their actions, words, and thoughts reflect this pride? Looking at the same character, what parts of their racial identity do they diminish, hide, ignore, or not talk about? Why do you think this is the case? How do they avoid or ignore their racialized identities?
- To what extent do the stories told about each character affirm or contradict what you have heard about people who share identities with them, particularly their race and ethnicity? Who or what were the sources of these stories?
- To what degree is the protagonist able to change their own racialized stories or other characters' perceptions of their racialized stories?

ENGLISH UNIT 2, LESSON 1

NOTICING AND REFLECTING ON OUR OWN BIASES AS READERS

Suggested time: One 50-60 minutes class period

Overview

This lesson explores race as a story that White people have told about people of color, a construct that has evolved over time to include certain groups of people and to exclude – or otherize – other groups of people. Students will consider: How do authors and texts contribute to racial constructs? How do these racialized representations affirm, resist, and complicate our perceptions of race? How are stories about race internalized, and what is the impact of internalizing racialized stories?

After consuming – reading, observing, watching, listening, or examining – a text or a portion of a text, the teacher should present a free-writing exercise using some of the Suggested Reflection Questions for Unit 2. When the writing period is finished, students will have an opportunity to review their own reflections and notice their own biases without fear of judgment. Students will evaluate how their interpretations of the text surface their unconscious biases, biases that impact how they see, understand, and interpret issues of race and racism in the text.

Materials

- Free-write reflection prompts
- Student writing materials, including colorful pens or pencils

LESSON PROCEDURE

Before the lesson, read through the list of Suggested Reflection Questions for Unit 2. Identify the questions that are most pertinent to the text with which you will anchor this lesson and to your learning objectives for this text. Choose anywhere from one to five questions to use as prompts for the free-writing reflection activity.

1. Open by having students write uninterrupted in response to the chosen prompt or prompts. Ideally, students will have 15-20 minutes for this activity and will handwrite their responses, as this kinetic connection will likely be more fruitful; however, those with learning differences or accommodations should use whatever devices work best for them.

   Before the students begin, explain why free-writing is important. Free-writing allows writers to be honest and open without fear of judgment. At the same time, it is a good tool for overcoming writer's block. It is generative and can allow writers to notice ideas they may not have been aware of. Explain to students that the process requires them to write continuously without pause. Remind them that it is perfectly normal if their minds wander as they write; they should write down whatever they are thinking without forcing their thoughts in one direction or another. If a student cannot think of anything to write, they should write, "I can't think of anything" until their next thought comes to mind. Reiterate to students that no one, including the teacher, will read their reflections; these reflections are meant for them and only them.

   To guide the free-writing exercise, read the prompt or prompts chosen from the list of questions at the start of this lesson. If using multiple prompts, give students 3-4 minutes to write before moving onto the next question.

2. After the writing period has ended, give students 7-10 minutes to read over their own free-writes. While they review their own writing, have students use a colorful pen or pencil to make note of comments, questions, or lines within their writing that surprise them.
3. For about 7-10 minutes, have students share their experiences with this exercise in pairs or small groups. Here are some possible guiding questions they should consider:
    - What surprised you? Why?
    - What frustrated you? Why?
    - What about this exercise made you feel uncomfortable? Why?
    - What about this experience felt useful to you? Why?

    Afterward, each group should have one person share out what their group talked about.
4. Close by reiterating to students the value of free-writing as a tool for surfacing their own latent thoughts. Free-writing can also help students overcome writer's block.

Asynchronous work: Before the next class, students should reread and annotate their free-writing reflections. Using different colors of pen or pencil, students should make note of parts of their free-write that resonate with them, as well as parts of their free-write they would like to further explore, particularly as they pertain to the reflection prompts.

Demonstration of Learning

Distribute the list of free-write reflection prompts to students. Have students write a 3-4 page personal narrative that responds directly to two or more of these prompts, this time in a way that is planned and organized. Students' responses and annotations from the free-writing exercise should inform what they include in their personal narratives. Students should also incorporate at 3-4 properly formatted and cited quotations from the text within these narratives. Remind students the importance of reading closely and critically. Ask them to consider how certain words, phrases, patterns, and images from the text lead them to make certain assumptions or inferences about a particular character and their race.

Extension Opportunities

- Photocopy and distribute several pages or passages from one of the Suggested Texts for Unit 2. Ask students to use a pencil to underline, circle, or box words on the page that have positive connotations associated with a particular race. Then, with a colored pen or pencil, have students underline, circle, or box words that depict a particular race in a negative or problematic way. Have students share their findings in pairs or small groups, and then with the class.
- You can use the Suggested Reading Questions from this unit in various additional ways. You can have students respond to these questions in the form of a formative assessment, such as a reflection (see Unit 1, Lesson 3) or a seminar (see Unit 3, Lesson 1), or in the form of a summative assessment, such as an essay (see Unit 4, Lesson 2).

Additional Resources

Morrison, T. (1994). *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. Vintage.

In this text, Morrison explores how the metaphor of darkness – and, by extension, Blackness – in the American literary canon is racialized and functions as a response to White fears of the Africanist presence. Anti-Blackness, Morrison argues, is steeped in the construction of U.S. history and values and is an indelible part of this country's past and present identity.

Project Implicit [website], available at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/.

This website and its accompanying non-profit organization, created by several professors from Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington, offers an online test and additional information for users to demonstrate how no one is immune from bias.

ENGLISH UNIT 2, LESSON 2

SURFACING OUR BIASES IN ORDER TO DISMANTLE THEM

Suggested time: Two 50-60 minute class periods

Overview

This lesson intentionally utilizes the medium of the graphic novel to underscore that a text can be more than just written words on a page. Gene Yang's *American Born Chinese* engages students on a visual level and invites them to think about how form, structure, shading, and other artistic choices impact how a frame or story is read and interpreted. At the same time, Yang's story tackles the issue of racism, particularly against Asian Americans. The objective of this lesson is to explore how surfacing, acknowledging, and confronting bias – and, by extension, racism – is a necessary step for dismantling systems of oppression. In order to fully appreciate and understand *American Born Chinese*, students must first understand the historical context that undergirds much of what Yang attempts to dismantle in his graphic novel. Day 1 will provide historical context. Day 2 focuses more deeply on the content of Yang's book.

Materials

- Nast, T. (1870). Throwing down the ladder by which they rose [image]. Illustrating Chinese Exclusion. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2015/01/06/throwing-down-the-ladder-by-which-they-rose-23-july-1870/.
- Keller, G. F. (1881). The coming man [image]. Illustrating Chinese Exclusion. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2014/04/03/the-coming-man-20-may-1881/.
- Nast, T. (1882). Let the Chinese embrace civilization and they may stay [image]. Illustrating Chinese Exclusion. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://thomasnastcartoons.com/2014/03/31/let-the-chinese-embrace-civilization-and-they-may-stay-18-march-1882/.
- Knackfuss, H. (1895). Peoples of Europe, guard your most sacred possessions [image]. Wikimedia. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fa/Voelker_Europas.jpg.
- The Yellow Terror In All His Glory [image]. (1899). Wikimedia. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/YellowTerror.jpg.
- Yang, G. L. (2006). *American born Chinese.* First Second Books.
- Siegel, M. (2007). Gene Yang on stereotypes [interview]. First Second Books. Accessed September 1, 2021 at: https://firstsecondbooks.com/uncategorized/gene_yang_on_st/.

Note to Teachers

Before you teach this lesson, we recommend you familiarize yourself with several historical resources that document and explain the history of Yellow Peril and anti-Asian racism in the United States. The following websites, images, and slides help demonstrate that anti-Asian racism is neither novel nor random but, instead, systemic and deeply rooted in colonialism and conquest:

- European imperialism in China during the 1800s resulted in serious economic and social turmoil that left many Chinese fleeing to other countries, including the United States. Many Chinese immigrants arrived in the 1850s in order to capitalize on the California Gold Rush. Later, in the 1860s, Chinese immigrants were hired as laborers to construct the Transcontinental Railroad.

- White Americans eventually saw Chinese immigrants as economic, political, health, and moral threats. In 1882, the U.S. government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese citizens from immigrating to the U.S. The Chinese are the only ethnic group in U.S. history to be legally barred from immigrating to the U.S.
- States such as Oregon and California passed laws that banned people of Asian descent from owning land in the U.S.
- In the *Geary Act*, the U.S. government required that all Chinese nationals – and only Chinese nationals – must, at all times, carry proper documents certifying their right to reside and work in the U.S. (This law was ripe for racial profiling, especially toward those who are not Chinese or are U.S.-born children of Chinese citizens.) Timelines of laws discriminating against Southeast Asians, Filipinos, and people of South Asian heritage can be found here.

LESSON PROCEDURE

Day 1: Introduction to *American Born Chinese*

1. Open by breaking students into groups of 2-4. One person in each group should be the designated scribe. Cycle through each of the political cartoons below, spending 3-5 minutes per image, and have the students discuss each cartoon in their small groups. Afterward, have the groups share their observations and reactions to each of the images.
    - "Throwing Down the Ladder By Which They Rose" (1870)
    - "The Coming Man" (1881)
    - "Let the Chinese Embrace Civilization and They May Stay" (1882)
    - "Peoples of Europe, Guard Your Most Sacred Possessions" (1895)
    - "The Yellow Terror In All His Glory" (1899)
2. Give students 4-5 minutes to open and browse *American Born Chinese*. Have them make note of anything that stands out to them as well as any similarities they see between the political cartoons and their cursory look at the graphic novel. Then, have students share their observations. (In all likelihood, students will note how the text reads like a comic book.) Remind students that a text can be more than just words on a page. Some of the most powerful texts are illustrations. Then use the following questions to guide a seminar discussion regarding their initial observations about *American Born Chinese* using the Observation-Inference-Interpretation-Explanation thinking structure to deepen the conversation:
    - Observation: In this graphic novel, how are White people depicted? How are Chinese people depicted? In what specific ways does the author/illustrator distinguish Chinese people from White people? What are the notable differences (e.g., clothing, affect, gestures) between the two?

      Possible student response: White characters appear and speak "normally." On the other hand, Chin-Kee's physical features, behavior, outfit, and accent are exaggerated in ways that make him distinctly "other." Yang's use of stereotypes resembles some of the illustrations that the late-19th century political cartoonists used. "Chin-kee" is also a play off the racist language used to describe many people with East Asian heritage.
    - Inference: As you observe each frame in the graphic novel, what inferences can you draw? What message(s) is the author communicating to readers? In what ways are visual depictions more powerful than written words? (This is a good moment to present the idea that Asian Americans are often perceived and treated as a "perpetual foreigner" in their own country.)

      Possible student response: Seeing racist stereotypes in illustrated form is more powerful and more unsettling than if they were written on the page. Chin-Kee and Danny's story is set as a sitcom, indicated by phrases such as "hahahaha" and "clap clap clap...."
    - Interpretation: What interpretations can you draw from each of the frames? As you think about how Asian Americans are depicted today, what racist stereotypes or tropes persist? In what ways do these stereotypes malign and misrepresent Asian Americans? While the racist stereotypes in the graphic novel seem dated, to what extent do they still exist today, albeit in different forms?

Possible student response: Chin-Kee's character appears to be from another era in terms of how he is dressed. Racist stereotypes about Asian Americans that persist today include depictions of Asians Americans as passive conformists and, at the same time, as inherently different and thus unable to assimilate into U.S. culture. These contemporary stereotypes trace back to the stereotypes from the 19th century cartoons, in which people of Chinese heritage were portrayed as distinctly different in terms of their appearance, dress, speech, and morality.

- Explanation: What do you think are some of the root causes for these racist beliefs about Asian Americans? How do these racist stereotypes and tropes reaffirm white supremacy? What are ways to combat these harmful stereotypes?

  Possible student response: The process of othering Asian Americans centers Whiteness, particularly White Americans, as the norm and standard by which everyone else is judged. To combat these racist stereotypes, it is important to reflect on how and why narratives about particular groups of people were created, as well as how our own implicit biases help perpetuate these stereotypes.

3. After the discussion, have students work in pairs or small groups and share their experiences with this exercise for 7-10 minutes. Here are some possible guiding questions they should consider:
   - What surprised you? Why?
   - What frustrated you? Why?
   - What about this exercise made you feel uncomfortable? Why?
   - What about this experience felt useful to you? Why?

   Afterward, each group should have one person share out what their group talked about.
4. As students begin to read *American Born Chinese*, remind them to be mindful of their own biases and to consider how Yang utilizes a similar art form that once denigrated Asian Americans in order to dismantle racist stereotypes and tropes about his community. Remind students the importance of reading each frame with a critical eye. They should think about how form and style inform how the content in each frame is read and interpreted.

Asynchronous work: Have students read pages 1-52 in *American Born Chinese*. In their journals, students should make three columns for form, style, and content. Within each column, students should identify 3-4 frames that surprised them. They should explain why and be prepared to share their thoughts with the class.

Day 2: Digging into *American Born Chinese*

1. Open by asking for volunteers to recap important take-aways from the previous lesson. Then explain that, in today's class, students will explore how and why Yang's illustrations effectively provide a counternarrative to dismantle racist stereotypes.
2. In small groups, have students spend 7-10 minutes sharing some highlights from their journal entries with their group members. Afterward, have the groups share their observations and reactions with the rest of the class.
3. Lead a discussion about pages 1-52 in *American Born Chinese*. Consider using some of the Suggested Reflection Questions for Unit 2 to guide this discussion. You might also want to utilize the Observation-Inference-Interpretation-Explanation thinking structure:
   - Observation: When you first started reading, what did you notice? What specific images, in particular, drew your attention? As you were reading, were there certain images that elicited a reaction from you?
   - Inference: As you reflect on your observations about the form, structure, and style of the text, what stands out to you? Why? How the structure of this story impacts your reading of this story?
   - Interpretation and Explanation: Why do you think Yang includes a figure like Chin-Kee in the novel? Why is his storyline framed as a sitcom? What does Chin-Kee represent or symbolize as a character? What does

Danny represent or symbolize as a character? In Jin Wang's story, what does his Transformer represent? Why might this be important? As you think about the mythology of the Monkey King, what do you think he represents?

Possible student responses:

Through the depiction of Chin-Kee, Yang is intentionally creating a tension that makes the reader feel uncomfortable. He is highlighting how racism is frequently casual and couched in supposed humor.

Danny's embarrassment about his cousin Chin-Kee reflects his own internalized racism. Readers might question whether Chin-Kee actually looks like how he is presented, or if this image is merely Danny's perceptions of him.

In Jin Wang's story, the Transformer toy is connected to a key theme in the story: transforming one's identity. The woman at the Chinese herbalist shop warns Jin how he can transform into anything he desires, so long as he is willing to forfeit his soul.

The Money King's story marries Yang's desire to share his culture with the story's focus on feelings of alienation. The Monkey King's feelings of insecurity leave him despising his monkey community and his own monkey identity. His story focuses on the impacts of internalizing the harmful messages that others create about us.

4. Close by assigning students to read pages 58-84 of *American Born Chinese* as well as the interview with Gene Yang on Stereotypes. Ask students to consider the following questions while completing these readings:
    - In what ways is a graphic story more effective in surfacing, confronting, and dismantling racist stereotypes than a conventional novel that is written on a page? What are its limitations?
    - What about this story unsettles or troubles you? Why?

    Remind students to be mindful of their own biases as they are reading. Remind students the importance of reading each frame with a critical eye. They should think about how form and style inform how the content in each frame is read and interpreted.

Asynchronous work:

- Have students read pages 58-84 in *American Born Chinese*. In their journals, they should make three columns: form, style, and content. Within each column, students should identify 3-4 frames that surprised them. They should explain why and be prepared to share their thoughts with the class.
- Students should also read Gene Yang on Stereotypes. At the end of this piece, Yang writes, "The fact of the matter is, sometimes you have to exaggerate to get your point across. Sometimes a stereotype needs to be dressed up in bright yellow skin and a queue in order for folks to recognize its severity. So does acknowledging a stereotype perpetuate it? There certainly is that danger. But there is also the danger of brushing off stereotypes with a polite grin and downward glance. And given Asian America's historical lack of political participation, which is the greater danger?" Ask students to reflect on this question and write a response in their journals. Remind them to be mindful of their positionality as a racialized person who might be writing about a lived experience that is not theirs.

Demonstration of Learning

Have students create their own graphic stories inspired by *American Born Chinese*. This story should not be evaluated based on students' artistic talent; rather, it should be assessed in terms of students' artistic choices.

You can provide students with the following instructions:

> As discussed in class, communicating emotions and experiences visually is often more powerful than if these same emotions and experiences were written in words. In Yang's graphic novel, readers see and feel what Jin, Danny, and the Monkey King experience as they reflect on their own identities and some of the tensions and anxieties that emerge in the process of finding themselves.
>
> Create a graphic story that explores and depicts a moment when you have changed or hidden something about yourself in order to fit into a group or situation. What happened? Who was involved? What did you initially feel when you noticed that you did not fit in? What did you eventually change? Did this change work? If not, why? Looking back on this moment, how do you feel about your decision? Why? Would you have done something differently? Why or why not?

Successful projects should contain the following elements:

- The story has an arc. That is, there is character development, rising action, a climax, falling action, and a resolution.
- The frames and the details in them effectively communicate what the author and character(s) are thinking and/or feeling.
- The story and its frames and panels are visually effective.
- The student makes judicious artistic choices such as use of color, repetition, and symbols.
- The student uses words judiciously such that their reader is not overwhelmed by the volume of text.
- The student's use of text is mechanically sound, unless there are artistic reasons behind not doing so.
- The student uses space wisely, including the size and shape of frames. The student might also think about when they might want to use a gutter and the size of it.
- The student will have a minimum of 15 frames.

Additional Resources

Aoki, K. (No date). Alien Land Laws. *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/alien-land-laws.

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History.com Staff. (2019). Chinese Exclusion Act. History. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/chinese-exclusion-act-1882.

Huynh, Q. L., Devos, T., & Smalarz, L. (2011). Perpetual foreigner in one's own land: Potential implications for identity and psychological adjustment. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 30(2), 133–162. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3092701/.

Kennedy, L. (2020). Building the transcontinental railroad: How 20,000 Chinese immigrants made it happen. History. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.history.com/news/transcontinental-railroad-chinese-immigrants.

McCloud, S. (2006). *Making comics: Storytelling secrets of comics, manga and graphic novels*. William Morrow Paperbacks.

Timeline. (2019). Immigration History. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://immigrationhistory.org/timeline/.

Yuan, H. (2004). Monkey King. University Libraries, WKU. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://people.wku.edu/haiwang.yuan/China/tales/monkey.html.

ENGLISH UNIT 3

DISMANTLING RACIALIZED STORIES AND WRITING OUR OWN

3

Overview

The first lesson in this thematic unit teaches students to examine media portrayals of characters of a specific race or ethnicity. The second lesson is specific to the novel *Passing*, by author Nella Larsen. The Suggested Reflection Questions for this unit are tailored to its specific learning objectives; these questions can be used with any of the suggested texts for this unit or with alternative text(s) of the teacher's or students' choice.

Objectives

- Students will learn the ways in which white supremacy culture is related to colorism and racism.
- Students will use texts to interrogate the means, benefits, and costs of accessing Whiteness.
- Students will examine the ways in which white supremacy culture allows dominant groups to speak for marginalized groups or co-opt language of marginalized groups.
- Students will examine the different tools people have used to create their own stories and to disrupt and dismantle the racialized stories others have told about them.

Key Understandings

- Colorism and racism are symptoms of white supremacy and create inequal power dynamics among individuals and communities. White supremacy can be internalized not only by White people but also by people of color; it pervades almost every part of our lives. Even within certain communities of color, having fair or light skin is often characterized as higher class or more beautiful, desirable, and socially acceptable.

  Possible misunderstanding: White supremacy cannot exist within communities of color.

- Allying oneself with whiteness comes with both costs and benefits for people of color. By attempting to adopt certain behaviors, mindsets, or ways of being that are rooted in white supremacy, people of color risk effacing their own racial, cultural, and ethnic identities in order to fit into the majority. At the same time, some individuals make this choice in order to appear non-threatening to White people and thus avoid being targeted or discriminated against. White people, however, rarely need to make these difficult choices in order to be perceived as competent, intelligent, and non-threatening.
- White supremacy culture is sustained when marginalized people of color are not allowed to tell their own stories, or when dominant groups speak for them. Many of the texts that are taught in English classes are written by White authors who lack the lived experiences of people of color. As a result, students and educators who consume these texts might assume these depictions represent the experiences of entire groups of people when, in fact, there is no single story that represents the entirety of experiences of any given racial or ethnic group.
- White supremacy culture can be rejected when racialized individuals are able to tell their own stories about themselves. Silence and white supremacy are deeply interconnected. When racialized individuals are able to tell their own stories, these stories actively disrupt dominant narratives that are frequently steeped in prejudice, bias, and stereotypes.

Vocabulary

ally
colorism
dominant
ethnicity
marginalized
passing
prejudice
race
racialized
racism
stereotypes
Whiteness
white supremacy

National Standards

The lessons in this unit align with the following Common Core English Language Arts Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3** Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6** Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3** Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

This lesson also aligns with the following Social Justice Standards learning outcomes:

- **JU.9-12.13** I can explain the short and long-term impact of biased words and behaviors and unjust practices, laws and institutions that limit the rights and freedoms of people based on their identity groups.
- **JU.9-12.14** I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages I have in society because of my membership in different identity groups, and I know how this has affected my life.

Suggested Texts

Any of the following texts could be used to explore the themes of this unit.

Achebe, C. (1992). *Things fall apart*. Knopf.

> This novel by Chinua Achebe seeks to dismantle Western stereotypes about Africans. Originally written as a counter-narrative to Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, *Things Fall Apart* presents the Igbo community's rich heritage filled with complex language, culture, traditions, and experiences that are often ignored by Western culture. Whereas the West has often cast its imperial projects in a benevolent light, Achebe illustrates how European invaders destroyed entire communities and their ways of life.

Baldwin, J. (1963). *The fire next time*. Dial Press.

In this pair of essays, James Baldwin shares his lived experiences as a Black man. Baldwin argues that racial harmony in the U.S. requires input and effort from the oppressed and the oppressor alike, departing from the assumption that the privileged should carry the burden of fixing unjust systems. The central message in this text is focused on a transcendent type of love based on forgiveness and grace.

Baldwin, J. (2008). A talk to teachers. *Teachers College Record*, 110(14), 17-20.

In this 1963 speech, James Baldwin examines the nature and role of education in the United States. He exhorts teachers to use their power to create social change, teach the truths of U.S. history, confront racism, and empower their Black students to create positive social change as well.

Beyoncé. (2020). Beyoncé, Blue Ivy, SAINt JHN, WizKid - BROWN SKIN GIRL (Official Video) [video]. YouTube. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRFS0MYTC1I.

Colorism is prejudice based on darker skin tones within the same racial group and has manifested in the popular media celebration of lighter-skinned Black women over darker-skinned Black women. This music video by musical artists Beyoncé, Blue Ivy, SAINt JHN, and WizKid addresses colorism and celebrates the beauty of darker-skinned women.

Blanco, R. (1998). América. In *City of a Hundred Fires*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

In this poem about Thanksgiving, a quintessentially American holiday, Richard Blanco recounts his desire to be more "American" by asking his family to cook the same types of foods that White Americans eat on this occasion. What emerges is a rich mix of Cuban and American cultures that shows how people in a non-dominant group can also create their own experiences.

Coates, T. N. (2015). *Between the world and me*. One World.

Framed as a letter from the author to his teenage son, this essay by Ta-Nehisi Coates explores personal, historical, and contemporary experiences of inhabiting a Black body in a White supremacist world, a world that seeks to control and destroy the Black body. Insightful, clear-eyed, and resolute, Coates sums up the struggle with which his son must engage as bleak, yet essential and worthwhile.

Douglas, F. (1845). *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave*. Anti-slavery Office.

Originally published in 1845, this memoir by orator and activist Frederick Douglass recounts his life as an enslaved Black person. He learns to read and write at a young age, which allows him to tell his own story in his fight to free both himself and other enslaved Black Americans.

Khor, S. Y. (2021). I do not want to write today: A comic. *Catapult*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://catapult.co/stories/do-not-want-to-write-today-comic-by-shing-yin-khor.

This short comic by Shing Yin Khor explores the experience of writing as an Asian American woman. The author confronts the tropes, expectations, and limitations of writing for the benefit of White audiences as well as the dangers of giving up too much of oneself for others' consumption. Khor desires the freedom to write as she pleases.

Kingston, M. H. (1999). *The woman warrior: A casebook*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

Maxine Hong Kingston's work mixes memoir with Chinese mythology. Kingston portrays her childhood in California, during which she develops the agency to create her own story and embrace her intersectional identities as a Chinese American woman and immigrant.

Woodson, J. (2016). *Brown girl dreaming*. Penguin.

This coming-of-age memoir written in free verse capture the experiences of the author, Jacqueline Woodson, and her family during the Jim Crow era and the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement in both South Carolina and New York City. Woodson expresses her Blackness in the course of the novel by embracing her identity as a writer and an activist.

Suggested Reflection Questions

- What does accessing and allying oneself with Whiteness look like in the text?
- How do a character's language, thoughts, perceptions, actions, and ways of being illuminate their relationship with Whiteness?
- How does colorism manifest and function in the text?
- How is colorism connected to power dynamics among characters, communities, and institutions?
- In the text, what are the benefits and costs of a character allying with Whiteness? (Note that some characters may ally themselves with Whiteness even if they cannot or do not pass as White.)
- To what extent do the authors or creators of the text ally themselves with White supremacy? Where do you see these decisions playing out in the text? What are the benefits and costs of this allyship?
- To what degree are characters of a text able to write their own stories or create their own paths independent of the racialized expectations that readers have of them? What factors lead to a character's success or failure at writing their own story?
- What are examples in mass media and in literature where you see characters or people of color successfully resisting or existing independently of racialized stereotypes?

ENGLISH UNIT 3, LESSON 1
RACIALIZED STORIES IN THE MEDIA

Suggested time: Two or three 50-60 minute class periods

Overview

This lesson allows students to explore the media and examine portrayals of characters of a specific race or ethnicity. They will consider the context in which these portrayals were created as well as the reception of these portrayals by their intended consumers and by members of different communities.

Materials

- Access to a library or online videos (non-subscription and paid subscription)
- Posters and writing utensils or a presentation application such as Google Slides

Note to Teachers

Before conducting the activity lesson, you will need to decide and plan for the following elements:

- Determine which types of media texts students should use for this assignment, keeping in mind access and availability as well as financial costs. Texts may include television shows, commercials, comics, film, music, music videos, art, or other media in which characters of a specific race or ethnicity are portrayed.
- You may want to create a list of non-White and non-European racial or ethnic groups students may focus on. You should also determine whether racial or ethnic groups can be used once per class or if multiple students or groups of students are allowed to examine portrayals of the same race or ethnicity.
- Determine how much time you will give students to complete their research for the assignment, taking into consideration the type of media as well as available asynchronous and synchronous class time. Students' research is easiest done online and you may want to suggest search terms students might find useful. If done offline, seek help from the librarian and add additional time for completing this lesson.
- Decide how students will publish their findings. Options include make a poster, multimedia presentation, or slideshow, or allowing students to choose their own format.
- Plan how students will share their findings with the rest of the class. Options include a gallery walk, a class presentation, or a slideshare.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Open with a discussion about the ways in which media portrayals tell stories about people of different races and ethnicities. Have students share their feelings about stories told through media portrayals of people with the same ethnicity or race as themselves. Explain that, because European and White people create and are depicted in the majority of popular media in the United States, in this lesson, students will be examining media portrayals of non-European and non-White ethnic and racial groups.
2. In groups of 2-4, have students decide to focus on portrayals of a specific race or ethnicity that is not White or European. If you have not already decided for them, have the students determine which kind of media they will

examine as texts. Using the selected media, have students find 5-6 portrayals of characters of a specific race or ethnicity.

3. Based on their findings, have students make a presentation that addresses the following questions:
    - To what degree was it easy or difficult to find portrayals of people with this race or ethnicity?
    - Which of these are instances in which characters are written, portrayed, voiced, directed, and/or depicted by those with the same racial or ethnic identity? Which of these are instances in which characters are written, portrayed, voiced, directed, and/or depicted by others outside of that racial or ethnic identity? To what extent are these instances different or similar?
    - What stories are being told by these portrayals?
    - Who are the intended consumers of these different portrayals?
    - Describe the reception of these portrayals by: intended consumers, members of the same ethnicity or race, and people of a different ethnicity or race.
    - What is the role of authenticity or accuracy in these portrayals? Who gets to decide what is authentic or accurate?
4. Close by having the students present their findings to one another. You might consider facilitating a discussion afterward about any patterns students notice across their classmates' findings, including the extent to which stories about members of a race or ethnicity are different based on whether the creator of the portrayal is of the same or a different race or ethnicity as the portrayal.

Asynchronous work: Students may be assigned to continue their research or continue work on their final presentation outside of class.

Demonstration of Learning

Assess the students' application of the learning concepts to the media they have chosen and analyzed. You can also have students turn in exit tickets or reflections on each group's findings in order to demonstrate their understanding of the core concepts of the lesson.

Additional Resources

Waters, M.C. (2008). Optional ethnicities. In D. M. Newman & J. O'Brien (Eds.), Sociology: *Exploring the architecture of everyday life readings* (pp. 276-282). SAGE Publications.

Waters describes optional ethnicities as the ability of White Americans to choose to be just "White" or "American," or to select ethnicities from their ancestry to identify with, particularly ethnicities that they perceive as positive in a given context. Please note: the n-word is used in this article.

ENGLISH UNIT 3, LESSON 2
SEMINAR ON *PASSING*

Suggested time: One 50-60 minute class period

Overview

This lesson on the novella *Passing*, by Nella Larsen, focuses on how biracial and multiracial identities are complicated by structural racism and white supremacy. This text exposes students to the concepts of passing and colorism. Through a guided seminar, students will learn about white supremacy culture and its impacts on and within the Black community. Note that the guiding questions in the seminar can be used for other texts as well

Materials

- Larsen, N. (2004). *Passing*. Dover Publications.
- Random House. (2017). Ta-Nehisi Coates on words that don't belong to everyone | We Were Eight Years In Power book tour [video]. YouTube. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO15S3WC9pg.
- TODAY. (2018). Meet the woman who learned that her mother passed as White | Megyn Kelly TODAY [video]. YouTube. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNiEBnOzgVw.
- Index cards

Note to Teachers

Before teaching this lesson, we recommend that teachers familiarize themselves with the following concepts, historical context, and background regarding Nella Larsen's *Passing*:

- The concept of passing.
- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the "one drop" rule. Homer Plessy had Black ancestry, but few people could tell just by looking at him. He stepped on a railroad car in New Orleans in 1892 in order to stage a challenge to "separate but equal" doctrine. Plessy bought a first-class ticket (in the "Whites only" section) and the White conductors did not seem to care until authorities were notified of his racial lineage. The argument made by Plessy's lawyer was that the overwhelming amount of White blood in his veins should make it possible for him to enjoy all the rights and privileges of White people. The case was less about ensuring the socio-political privileges of Homer Plessy as an individual so much as it showed the arbitrary nature of racial categories in general.
- Nella Larsen's *Passing* was published in 1929. It was written during the New Negro Movement and the Harlem Renaissance. During this time, Black Americans were defining themselves as a community and culture, but they were moving through severely limited spheres.
- In 1920, the U.S. Census eliminated the category of "mulatto," and thus officially erased the designation of being mixed-race in the U.S. This changed in 2000 when the U.S. Census allowed people to choose more than one race.

In addition, please note that the n-word is used in the novel Passing. Be prepared to discuss the use and implications of this word with students, and to set a policy about whether, when, and how this word will be used in your classroom when reading texts that contain it.

LESSON PROCEDURE

Before the lesson, assign students to read the novel *Passing* by Nella Larsen.

1. Open by reminding students that race is a social construct—a function of law, history, and politics, but not of science. Provide students with a historical overview of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Explain to students the concept of passing and how and why it originated. Finally, show students the two recommended clips from *Vox* (4:58 minutes) and *Today* (10:11 minutes). The video clip from Coates's conversation about the n-word at Northwestern University should underscore the how and why this slur is problematic and should not be used by certain groups of people. In the second clip, Gail Lukasik discusses her book, *White Like Her*, which recounts how she uncovered her mother's secret—that she was keeping her mixed-race heritage hidden even from her own husband.
2. During the following seminar-style discussion, the facilitator (you or a student leader) will ask the Suggested Reflection Questions from Unit 3 in order to deepen the discussion about the novel Passing. Remind students to give specific examples and textual support for their claims. It may be helpful to ask students who usually dominate class conversations to step back and make space for other students to contribute. Allowing for longer periods of silence also makes for more contributions. Note that this may be done in a fishbowl format to accommodate larger class sizes.
3. Close by passing out index cards and having students draw the following shapes: a square, a circle, and a triangle. Then have students respond to the following prompts for each shape:
    - Square: What about today's lesson squares with you? That is, what resonates with you?
    - Circle: What in this lesson would you like to circle back to and reexamine at a later point?
    - Triangle: What are three takeaways that you learned from today's lesson?

    Have a few students share what they have written with the class. Collect these index cards and read them to help guide your thinking as you craft your next lesson plans.

Asynchronous work: Have students complete the Demonstration of Learning asynchronously for homework.

Demonstration of Learning

Have students write a personal narrative inspired by the novel *Passing*. Consider the following prompts. The guiding questions for each prompt are meant to serve springboards for student thinking:

- Think about the "Big 8" social identifiers – sex, gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, and religion – and describe a time or moment when you "passed" for having an element of identity that you do not have. Who was involved? Why did you feel compelled to pass? How did it feel? What were some of the results? In what ways has this decision affected you today?
- Reflect on your own personality. What aspect of your personality do you hide? Describe a specific time or moment when you hid this part of your personality. Why did you do so? What was the impact? Do you still hide this part of yourself? Why or why not? In what ways has this decision impacted your ability to be your authentic self?
- For students who self-identify as White: When did you realize your own Whiteness and the privileges that come with your racial identity? What happened? What was your reaction? How did you feel before and after you realized your own racial identity? How did recognizing your White identity impact how you see yourself in your community? Because recognizing your White identity is not a singular moment, you are also welcome to bring up multiple moments that have guided you toward understanding your own Whiteness.

Extension Opportunities

You can use the Suggested Reading Questions from this unit in various additional ways. You can have students respond to these prompts in the form of a formative assessment, such as a reflection (see Unit 1, Lesson 3) or an opening free-write (see Unit 2, Lesson 1), or in the form of a summative assessment, such as an essay (see Unit 4, Lesson 2).

Additional Resources

American Experience. (No date). Plessy v. Ferguson. PBS. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/neworleans-plessy-v-ferguson/.

Davis, F. J. (2014). Who is Black? One nation's defintion. PBS. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/mixed/onedrop.html.

Fikes, R. (2014). The passing of passing: A peculiarly American racial tradition approaches irrelevance. BlackPast.org. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.blackpast.org/about-us/.

ENGLISH UNIT 4
THE INTERSECTIONAL SELF UPLIFTING THE COMMUNITY

4

Overview

The first lesson in this thematic unit teaches students the concept of intersectionality. The second lesson includes a formative assessment in the form of an analytical essay. The Suggested Reflection Questions for this unit are tailored to its specific learning objectives; these questions can be used with any of the suggested texts for this unit or with alternative text(s) of the teacher's or students' choice.

Objectives

- Students will examine intersectionality, and the ways in which race complements, informs, or otherwise intersects with additional elements of identity.
- Students will reflect on race and the other elements of their identities that allow them to navigate certain spaces with ease, and the elements of their identities that make it harder to navigate spaces as freely or easily.
- Students will learn how the concept of intersectionality allows more people to be included in efforts toward racial justice.
- Students will explore ways to leverage certain elements of their identities to help others in their communities to (re)claim their own identities and tell their own stories.

Key Understandings

- We all live rich, dynamic, multi-dimensional lives, and the concept of intersectionality helps us understand the interactions between race and the other elements of our identities. Furthermore, how we are treated and perceived is affected by how our multiple identities interact with one another. To disentangle these identities is not only impossible, but it also effaces the lived experiences of individuals who are further marginalized or disadvantaged because of certain social identifiers.
- Race, in conjunction with other elements of identity, is complicated by historical, social, and political structures.
- True and complete justice is only achievable when we acknowledge, honor, and affirm people's intersectional identities. An intersectional approach to justice invites members of different communities to work together toward common goals. Everyone benefits when we liberate the most marginalized individuals in our communities.

  Possible misunderstanding: Intersectionality further divides communities based on different elements of their identities.
- Antiracist individuals utilize whatever privilege they may have to dismantle systems of oppression and lift up others. Anyone can be antiracist if they are willing to recognize their privilege and use their privilege in service of collective liberation.

  Possible misunderstanding: Privilege is inherently bad and people should feel guilt and shame about their privilege. A person with privilege cannot be antiracist.

Vocabulary

antiracist
intersectionality

National Standards

The lessons in this unit align with the following Common Core English Language Arts Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3** Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6** Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5** Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6** Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases,

sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

The lessons in this unit also align with the following Social Justice Standards learning outcomes:

- **ID.9-12.3** I know that all my group identities and the intersection of those identities create unique aspects of who I am and that this is true for other people too.
- **ID.9-12.5** I recognize traits of the dominant culture, my home culture and other cultures, and I am conscious of how I express my identity as I move between those spaces.
- **DI.9-12.8** I respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
- **DI.9-12.10** I understand that diversity includes the impact of unequal power relations on the development of group identities and cultures.
- **JU.9-12.14** I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages I have in society because of my membership in different identity groups, and I know how this has affected my life.

Suggested Texts

Any of the following texts could be used to explore the themes of this unit.

Akhtar, A. (2013). *Disgraced*. Back Bay Books.

This play by Ayad Akhtar explores the life of Amir, a successful Pakistani American lawyer, who has distanced himself from his Muslim upbringing. Amir is not as far removed from his roots as he thinks, however, and his complicated attitude toward his identity and biases about Islam reveals itself over the course of the play, with consequences for his marriage and his career.

Ansari, A. (Writer), Yang, A. (Writer), Waithe, L. (Writer), & Matsoukas, M. (Director). (2017). Thanksgiving (Season 2, Episode 8) [TV series episode]. In A. Ansari, A. Yang (Creators), *Master of None*. Netflix.

Season 2, Episode 8 of Master of None, entitled "Thanksgiving," depicts Denise's growth into her identity as a queer Black woman within the context of her family relationships.

Anzaldúa, G. (2022). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza* (fifth edition). Aunt Lute Books.

Originally published in 1987, this semi-autobiographical work by Gloria Anzaldúa examines the interstices of geographical borders and identity. Anzaldúa explores the liminal spaces that people inhabit, as well as the spaces that inhabit people.

Livingston, J. (Director). (2009). *Paris is burning* [film]. Second Sight Films.

This 1990 documentary chronicles the ballroom culture created by Black and Brown drag queens of New York City in the mid-to-late 1980s. This world of performance offers a community to those who are othered by their race, sexuality, and class, and who use their bodies and fashion to make their own spaces.

Lorde, A. (1973). Who said it was simple. Poetry Foundation. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42587/who-said-it-was-simple.

Audre Lorde's poem critiques social movements that are one-dimensional. Lorde wrote this poem in the context of the Women's Movement of the 1970's, a White feminist movement that neglected the intersections of race, age, class, and sexuality.

Lozada-Oliva, M. (2017). *peluda*. Button Poetry.

In this collection of poetry, Lozada-Olivia takes readers through an intersectional consideration of Latina identity, femininity, class, the immigrant experience, and beauty.

Orange, T. (2018). *There there: A novel.* Vintage.

This novel by Tommy Orange portrays a number of Native characters who are all attending the Big Oakland Powwow. Together these portrayals examine the state of contemporary Native American identity.

Rankine, C. (2014). *Citizen: An American lyric.* Graywolf Press.

This book by Claudia Rankine includes a book-length poem and lyric essays interspersed with various forms of visual art. In this mélange of traditional and new media, Rankine explores microaggressions, shootings, racist language, and the Black experience.

Sáenz, B. A. (2012). *Everything begins & ends at the Kentucky Club.* Cinco Puntos Press.

Sáenz's collection of stories, situated in a bar near the Mexico-U.S. border, explores the contours of identity, including class, sexuality, ethnicity, language, and nationality.

Whitehead, C. (2009). *Sag Harbor: A novel.* Doubleday.

In this novel by Colson Whitehead, Benji, who attends a predominantly White private school in Manhattan during the academic year, spends his summers in a small community of wealthy Black families in the Hamptons. This coming-of-age, semi-autobiographical novel explores the intersections of class and Blackness.

Suggested Reflection Questions

- As you read and analyze this text through the lens of intersectionality, how is the racial identity of a character informed by other elements of their identity (e.g., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, ability, religion, immigrant/native status)? Alternatively, how is another element of a character's identity informed by their racial identity?
- To what degree does a character's race amplify or overshadow other elements (e.g., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, ability, religion, immigrant/native status) of their identity? Why do you think this is the case? How does this dynamic impact how a character sees themself? How does this dynamic impact how others see and treat this character?
- How is intersectionality overlooked or dismissed in the text?
- How is intersectionality highlighted or centered in the text?
- Within the text, how does intersectionality impact or depend on a situation or relationship between characters?
- How do characters with racial or intersectional privilege show good intentions but ultimately harm marginalized community members?
- What are successful strategies used by characters with racial or intersectional privilege in using their privilege to build up marginalized communities or amplify others' voices?

ENGLISH UNIT 4, LESSON 1
SEMINAR ON INTERSECTIONALITY

Suggested time: Two or three 50-60 minute class periods

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the concept of intersectionality. Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the concept of intersectionality reflects a convergence of social identifiers that further privilege or oppress individuals based on certain social norms or systems. Intersectionality is also relational. Students will watch a TED Talk by Crenshaw and then have an opportunity to reflect and share their reactions with one another.

Materials

- Crenshaw, K. (2016). The urgency of intersectionality [video]. TED. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=ted-comshare.
- Index cards

Note to Teachers

Before teaching this lesson, we recommend teachers read the following two resources:

- "The Intersectionality Wars" by Jane Coaston articulates different viewpoints on intersectionality and its relevance to crafting legislation, programs, and structures to support underprivileged groups. More importantly, this article identifies common critiques to Crenshaw's work and possible responses that may be helpful for the teacher in the event that a student raises objections.
- "Understanding Intersectionality" by Kirthi Jayakumar.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Open by explaining to students that they will be exploring the complex concept of **intersectionality**, beginning with themselves first. Students will learn to see themselves and one another as dynamic individuals with varying levels of privilege depending on certain social contexts or norms. Recognizing that everyone lives an intersectional life is essential to dismantling systems of oppression in ways that elevate all people.
2. Give students 3-4 minutes to briefly write down their social identifies. Remind them that social identities can be visible (e.g., race) or invisible (e.g., sexual orientation). Students may regard some of their identities as private, so make sure each student has a private space to write these down and emphasize that students' notes will not be read by or shared with others. You might also consider having students fill out a Social Identity Wheel such as this one.
3. Show students Kimberlé Crenshaw's TED Talk, "The Urgency of Intersectionality". Afterward, have students write down their reactions and feelings in response to Crenshaw's talk. They should also jot down any questions that come up for them. Next, in groups of 3-4, have students take turns sharing their reactions, reflections, and questions. Have each group designate a "reporter" to summarize the most salient comments and questions

from their group for the rest of the class. As each group is sharing, make note of any patterns, themes, or tensions that emerge.

4. Facilitate a brief conversation that touches upon the themes you noticed during the class-wide debrief. Consider asking the following questions:
   - What about Crenshaw's talk most surprised you? Why?
   - What about Crenshaw's talk confused you? Why?
   - In what way or ways does Crenshaw's talk resonate (or not resonate) with you? Why?
5. Point out to students that intersectionality requires us to think in relational terms. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, while cis-gender women in the U.S. make less money as a group for the same work as their male counterparts, Black and Hispanic women make even less than White women.

   You may have students who resist discussions of racial and gender privilege by arguing that they also experience hardship or lack of privilege based on other identities they hold. Acknowledge these students' lived experiences because they are true to them! A good way to reframe such comments is by asking students how their experiences of hardship or lack of privilege in certain situations help them cultivate deeper empathy for those who are marginalized or oppressed in situations where they are not?
6. Close by passing out index cards and having students draw the following shapes: a square, a circle, and a triangle. Then have students respond to the following prompts for each shape:
   - Square: What about today's lesson squares with you? That is, what resonates with you?
   - Circle: What in this lesson would you like to circle back to and reexamine at a later point?
   - Triangle: What are three takeaways that you learned from today's lesson?

   Have a few students share what they have written with the class. Collect these index cards and read them to help guide your thinking as you craft your next lesson plans.

Additional Resources

Anthony, B. & Stutelberg, E. (2022). Diversity and inclusion resources for curricula: Intersectionality [resource guide]. Salisbury University. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://libraryguides.salisbury.edu/c.php?g=903753&p=6507941.

Coaston, J. (2019). The intersectionality wars. *Vox*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination.

Jayakumar, K. (2017). Understanding intersectionality. Medium. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://medium.com/the-red-elephant-foundation/understanding-intersectionality-a1da46e2e0b2.

The Program on Intergroup Relations. (No date). Social identity wheel. University of Michigan. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w7yo6ljyS0pnvEO-BOrE7Aohmaa9n5Jf/view.

Women's Bureau. (No date). Median annual earnings by sex, race and Hispanic ethnicity. Department of Labor. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/data/earnings/median-annual-sex-race-hispanic-ethnicity.

ENGLISH UNIT 4, LESSON 2
SEMINAR ON "WHO SAID IT WAS SIMPLE"

Suggested time: Two or three 50-60 minute class periods

Overview

This lesson focuses on building student capacity for analyzing poetry and deepening their understanding of intersectionality. Audre Lorde's poem "Who Said It Was Simple" speaks to her lived experiences as a Black lesbian woman. Lorde's poem underscores how dismantling systems of oppression requires an intersectional approach, especially for people who are marginalized in multiple ways.

Materials

- Lorde, A. (1973). Who said it was simple. Poetry Foundation. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42587/who-said-it-was-simple.
- A whiteboard or chart paper and markers

Note to Teachers

We recommend teachers familiarize themselves with the historical context for Lorde's poem, which was published in 1973. During this period, the Women's Rights Movement was taking place across the U.S. and around the world. As a woman, the narrator sees the value and importance of the women's march, yet she also notes that some of its White participants fail to see how their actions reinforce systemic oppression.

LESSON PROCEDURE

Have students read and annotate Audre Lorde's poem "Who Said It Was Simple" for homework in advance of this lesson. Students should look up any words or terms they are unfamiliar with.

1. Open by having students reread "Who Said It Was Simple" to themselves silently. Then, in small groups, one group member should read the poem aloud. Listeners should underline or circle any words, phrases, lines, or images that stand out to them. Afterward, in their small groups, students should share and discuss what they have annotated in each stanza.
2. While the students are reading, use a whiteboard or chart paper to create areas for students to write, one for each of the three stanzas in the poem. Once they have finished annotating the poem, have each group decide on a line or a phrase from each stanza that they will write on the whiteboard or chart paper.
3. Reread the poem aloud so that students can make any last-minute annotations on their own copy of the poem. Then ask students to provide a summary (not an analysis) of the poem. Here are some questions to consider:
    - Who are the characters in this poem?

      Possible student response: The narrator, a group of White women, a light-skinned restaurant employee, and a Black customer.

- Who is speaking?

  Possible student response: The narrator. This voice may or may not represent Lorde's own voice.

- What is literally happening in the poem?

  Possible student response: The narrator describes a group of White women sitting in Nedicks, a local fast-food establishment, before they march in support of women's rights. The fair-skinned waiter chooses to privilege these women over a Black customer who has been patiently waiting. The narrator then describes how these White women fail to recognize that their ability to protest depends on the labor of their Black servants. The narrator finally reflects on how the women's rights movement (and its protests) fail to liberate the other parts of her identity.

4. Have students look at the lines and phrases they wrote down from the first stanza. What patterns come up for them? What seems to be the central image? What questions arise for them?

   It is likely that students will notice the "tree of anger," "roots," and "shatter." Ask them to identify the narrator's tone. If students bring up the image of the tree, ask them what this tree might allude to. What might be the significance of roots?

   Possible student response: If the tree represents an individual's life, the roots represent the various "-isms" (such as sexism and racism) that are part of that life. These experiences shape an individual sees, feels, responds to, and interacts with the world, represented by its branches and the fruit it doesn't bear.

5. Repeat the process for the second stanza. Consider asking the following questions:

   - Why are the women marching? (If students are uncertain, call attention to the publication date of the poem.)

     Possible student response: At this moment in U.S. history, women were marching for equal rights.

   - Who are "the problematic girls" and in what ways do they allow this group of women "to make them free?" "Free" in what way or ways? Why do they describe their Black servants as "problematic?" What does this language reveal about the women who are speaking?

     Possible student response: These "problematic girls" are the Black servants of the White marchers, whom they see as troublesome and lesser. Ironically, Black labor in their homes is exactly what gives these White women the ability and time to march for women's rights. In some ways, the White women's ability to exercise their political freedom depends on oppressing Black women.

   - What does the narrator mean when she says, "almost white counterman?"

     Possible student response: This man is light-skinned. He passes "a waiting brother" (a Black customer) in order to serve the women first. This group of women is oblivious to their own racial privilege in this context ("they neither notice nor reject / the slighter pleasures of their slavery").

   - When the narrator refers to slavery, she is not talking about literal slavery. Rather, she is speaking in figurative terms. Who seems to be enslaved in this context?

     Possible student response: The waiter and the Black customer are enslaved by ongoing racism. At the same time, the White women are unknowingly enslaved by White supremacy and patriarchy.

   - At the end of the stanza, the narrator speaks about how she is "bound by my mirror / as well as my bed / see causes in colour / as well as sex." What aspects of identity is she referring to with these images?

     Possible student response: The mirror represents physical appearance, which may include both racial phenotype as well as the gendered expectations around appearance that are placed specifically on women. The bed is a place of intimacy and therefore may represent sexual orientation. By colour, the narrator is referring to race.

6. Repeat the process for the third stanza. Consider asking the following question:
    - What does the narrator mean when she wonders "which me will survive / all these liberations"?

      Possible student response: Dismantling systems of oppression is multidimensional and requires an intersectional approach. Efforts for equality must advance the needs of all individuals and not just some. Fighting for true gender equality, for example, must be informed by the lived experiences of Black transgender women, whose experiences are different from White women and from Asian American women. Tackling systemic inequality with an intersectional approach requires constant recalibration, reimagining, and perseverance.
7. After the discussion, step back and invite students to think about how designing systems from the margins – that is, from the perspectives of those most oppressed – might actually benefit all people. Share the example of how sidewalk cutouts actually benefit all people, not just those with physical disabilities.
8. Close by passing out index cards and having students draw the following shapes: a square, a circle, and a triangle. Then have students respond to the following prompts for each shape:
    - Square: What about today's lesson squares with you? That is, what resonates with you?
    - Circle: What in this lesson would you like to circle back to and reexamine at a later point?
    - Triangle: What are three takeaways that you learned from today's lesson?

    Have a few students share what they have written with the class. Collect these index cards and read them to help guide your thinking as you craft your next lesson plans.

Asynchronous work: Have students complete the Demonstration of Learning asynchronously for homework.

Demonstration of Learning

Taking what they have learned from reading and analyzing "Who Said It Was Simple," students should construct an analytical essay in response to one of the suggested Unit 4 texts listed above. Consider incorporating any of the Suggested Reflection Questions from this unit into students' essay prompt.

Remind students how a formal, academic analytical essay should be structured. This will vary depending on student needs and what has been taught thus far. Required structural elements might include a five-paragraph structure, MLA format, specific grammar or editing skills, and/or properly integrating quotations.

Extension Opportunities

You can use the Suggested Reading Questions from this unit in various additional ways. You can have students respond to these prompts in the form of a formative assessment, such as a reflection (see Unit 1, Lesson 3), an opening free-write (see Unit 2, Lesson 1), or a seminar (see Unit 3, Lesson 2).

Additional Resources

Bates, K. G. (2017). Race and feminism: Women's March recalls the touchy history. NPR. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/01/21/510859909/race-and-feminism-womens-march-recalls-the-touchy-history.

Cargle, R. E. (2018). When White feminism is white supremacy in heels. *Harper's BAZAAR*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a22717725/what-is-toxic-white-feminism/.

Morson, E. (2016). The curb cut effect: How making public spaces accessible to people with disabilities helps everyone. *Disability Science Review*. Accessed March 1, 2022 at: https://mosaicofminds.medium.com/the-curb-cut-effect-how-making-public-spaces-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-helps-everyone-d69f24c58785.