



**POLLYANNA**  
BUILDING STRONGER AND KINDER COMMUNITIES.

## Dear Educators,

We hope this message finds you well and energized for the important work of teaching racial literacy!

Established in 2018, Pollyanna's Racial Literacy Curriculum for Grades K-8 was designed to help students gain knowledge about race as it has been constructed in the United States. Our educational program aims to help students acquire an awareness of their own racial socialization and skills for engaging in productive conversations about race and racism.

This curriculum has been crucial in supporting educators across the United States to engage difficult topics and build bridges and connections within their classrooms. In 2023, we asked two of our Pollyanna educators to explore updating the curriculum to ensure the content remained evergreen and relevant for the modern day classroom. After a peer review, they found much of the content still applicable and essential to teaching today's students. In an effort to maintain the integrity and legacy of the original lessons we decided to keep the K-8 curriculum untouched and intact as a body of work.

Instead we sought to address some of the teacher challenges we have heard (and experienced ourselves) when trying to implement this curriculum into an actual classroom setting. For instance,

- How to take inspiration from the topics and themes and distill them into lessons that can be completed in one or two class periods?
- How to navigate challenging teaching moments that inevitably emerge when teaching racial literacy?
- How to build upon racial literacy as a platform for learning about various intersectional and societal issues?
- How to manage pushback and a challenging educational landscape?

**We are thrilled to provide educators with new enhancements to the beloved K-8 curriculum including:**

- Nine new lessons, one per grade, K-8
- Ready-to-go slide decks for ease of teaching with lesson instructions in the speakers' notes
- Scenarios embedded at the end of each deck with guidance
- A FAQ on navigating challenging questions and scenarios

These new lessons and teaching materials should serve as examples of how flexible and expansive the curriculum is and ways teachers can interpret, modify, update, simplify, or expand the curriculum to best align with your educational goals and meet the needs of all our students.

Join us as we explore these new materials with the hope to plant seeds that will deepen cultural competence and encourage kindness, bravery, and empathy in our school communities.

Warmly,

**Pollyanna Team**



# Pollyanna Racial Literacy Curriculum

## EDUCATORS GUIDE

### FAQS FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

### BUILDING STRONGER AND KINDER COMMUNITIES.

*In 2018, Pollyanna set out to create a curriculum to support educators in building bridges and connections—for all students to recognize similarities among their peers along lines of race, while also celebrating perceived differences.*

*Over the last several years, teachers and administrators have raised recurring questions as they have rolled out our racial literacy curriculum. These questions connect to navigating tricky issues and moments. We have curated below a selection of the most pressing questions we've received alongside responses to them in hopes of offering a helpful tool to school-based professionals interested in deepening their racial literacy work.*

*We hope to plant seeds that will encourage and enhance racial literacy, geographical awareness, and cultural competence both in the classroom and throughout one's life.*

## What is the goal of the racial literacy curriculum?

The curriculum aims to empower students, in developmentally appropriate ways, to understand the beauty of racial and cultural diversity, forces that have historically undermined that diversity, and steps that changemakers have taken to remove those barriers. To encourage kindness, bravery, and empathy when exploring and better understanding the cultural and racial diversity of local and global communities.

While the curriculum focuses on the United States, it weaves in examples from around the world to highlight the fact that the struggle for inclusion and embracing difference is a perennial human challenge. Every human society has grappled with the impulse to “other,” and that impulse manifests differently in different societies. The preeminent way in which that impulse manifests in the United States is through the category of race, so much so that it is impossible to understand United States history and contemporary society without understanding the role that race has played and continues to play.

In this sense, a goal of this curriculum is to prepare students with the necessary knowledge to be informed residents and citizens of the United States and the world—and to be able to navigate an increasingly complex and diverse society with skill.

## As a teacher, what mindset or posture should I adopt as I teach this curriculum?

In this curriculum, you are not only a teacher who is providing direct instruction. You are also a facilitator who is leading students into deep conversation, in age-appropriate ways, regarding key issues in how humans have organized themselves in the United States. The material discussed can bring up feelings of pride for students as they learn about instances of cross-identity collaboration or successful changemaker work in United States history. The material can also bring up “big emotions” and challenging feelings as students encounter moments when either people who look like them were discriminated against or people who look like them enacted discrimination. As educators it is our responsibility to model the behavior we wish to inspire in our students.

In light of these possibilities, a few general principles for facilitation are warranted:

- Adopt a calm and focused demeanor. Set the tone with warmth, presence, and attentiveness.
- Be mindful of your body language and adjust away from a closed and defensive posture to an open and affirming posture.
- With your tone and pacing in the conversation, as well as your willingness to slow conversations down and use silent reflection to deepen exploration and understanding, you can model a way of being that foregrounds curiosity.
- Set and reinforce norms for respectful dialogue, tailored to the specific age group of the students.

These general facilitator behaviors can be helpful in creating a container for courageous learning.

## **A white child expressed worry that they must be bad because they are white. How should I respond?**

It's important to address concerns like these with empathy, understanding, and a commitment to fostering a positive sense of self in every child, regardless of their racial background. Through a compassionate response you can validate their emotions while also challenging harmful misconceptions. Any time we learn about events, historical or otherwise, that involve an identity group to which we belong doing harm to another identity group to which we do not belong, we may experience discomfort. We may be worried that we will be guilty by association. The impulse to associate with a group and to feel guilty or personally responsible when that group's reputation is challenged is normal. The key here is to remind the child that what they feel is normal and understandable. Then share that there are some things for them to consider as well.

1. Each of us can choose to make inclusive decisions.
2. We can choose to be kind.
3. We can choose to be welcoming.
4. We can choose to speak out against unfairness.
5. We can make different choices than those who made bad choices and who happen to share with us a common characteristic.

What defines us is our commitment to the core values of respect for difference and fairness.

## **A child of color expressed sadness and anger while learning about incidents of discrimination against people who look like them. How should I respond?**

It is normal for children to express sadness and anger while learning about challenging aspects of human history. When a child detects that unfairness or injustice has been inflicted on others with whom they share a key characteristic, their outrage can be more acutely felt. The key here is to tell a child that their feelings are normal. They have the right to feel the way that they do. Share that you, too, feel sad and angry about injustice, regardless of your own skin color. Reinforce that the discrimination and injustice experienced by different groups is wrong. Encourage the student to journal about their feelings or to draw pictures that illustrate their emotions. Remind them of a changemaker or two who make a powerful difference on the issues being discussed. It is important that children don't only study and discuss challenges, but we should also make sure we are discussing solutions or purveyors of them. Talking only about challenges without discussing examples of solutions and changemakers who have advanced them can be demotivating and debilitating. Empowering children with knowledge of what is possible is crucial to helping them realize the power of individual and collective agency to make positive changes in society.

## **A student asks whether all of United States history is bad. Another student says they feel like we only talk about bad things. How should I respond?**

One way students cope with studying hard things, particularly things they had not known about previously, is to dismiss, discredit, or sideline them. This is an understandable human response to challenging information. You could share with a student that it is normal to feel overwhelmed by new challenging information, thereby reframing their narrative in a more positive and empowering way. The important thing is how they handle that sense of overwhelm. You might share that we study these challenging realities so that we can prevent them from happening again.

You might also offer the idea that we are also looking at changemakers who made a real difference to help us internalize the idea that change is possible. Furthermore, learning about these changemakers enables us to identify strategies for making change in the world. You might encourage them to find one or two examples of a situation in history where something went well—e.g. members of one group collaborating with members of another group; members of one group being advocates and allies on behalf of members of another group, etc. These positive examples suggest that meaningful cross-racial connection and collaboration are possible.

This could also be a great opportunity for you to pause and reflect on your own teaching practice and whether you are spending enough time highlighting changemaker examples and positive stories of cross-racial and cross-cultural collaboration throughout U.S. history. For instance, while it is important to discuss the impulse to preserve slavery and to deny women's right to vote, it is also important that we highlight the complex friendship between Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony as they advocated for equal rights and access to the vote regardless of race or gender as members of the American Equal Rights Association. These stories elevate a sense of possibility as well as revealing that the impulse toward connection, collaboration, and solidarity is also a human and American impulse.

## **A parent sent me an angry email accusing me of trying to indoctrinate their child. How should I respond?**

The first step is to consult with an administrator at your school on the appropriate course of action. An administrator might step in and address the parent directly or they might coach you on language to use in your reply email. One approach is to ask the parent to join you for a brief meeting to discuss, so that you are not having to address such a sensitive issue over email, where controlling for tone can be especially challenging. You might invite an administrator to join you for that conversation should the parent accept the invitation. Another approach is to write a carefully worded email back to the parent:

- a) Thanking them for raising their concerns with you.
- b) Stating that you join them in caring deeply for their child and for all of your students.
- c) Sharing that your goal is to support students in learning valuable skills for thinking critically, evaluating and appreciating different perspectives, and navigating a world of people with different lived experiences and backgrounds.
- d) Explaining that you foster open dialogue and inquiry-driven learning in your classroom and that you want children to come to their own conclusions regarding the human challenges that you all discuss.

- e) Offering to meet with them (and an administrator) to discuss things further and thanking them for reading your response.

These steps could help to de-escalate the situation and foster clarity.

## What's the difference between Racial Literacy and Critical Race Theory?

If you have been following current events in recent months, you have likely heard the ongoing debates about Critical Race Theory (or "CRT"). A recent article in EdWeek defined Critical Race Theory in the following manner:

*"Critical race theory is an academic concept that is more than 40 years old. The core idea is that race is a social construct and that racism is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice, but also something embedded in legal systems and policies."*

In spite of this definition, some commentators and politicians have attempted to use CRT to reframe and distort racial and social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter and DEI work in schools. These distortions reflect fear-mongering and a zero-sum ideology that posits both racial and social justice can only be achieved at the expense of some groups over others.

We categorically reject this way of thinking.

Pollyanna's K-8 Curriculum is premised on the idea that Racial Literacy is:

- A movement to support the accurate telling of U.S. history that includes the complex history of racism and includes stories of White folks and people of color who were racially literate.
- A movement to challenge structures and practices of racial inequality and racist ideas that assign inferiority to some and superiority to others.
- A movement for full inclusion and belonging of all people regardless of their skin color.
- A movement to unearth the diverse ways that racism has negatively impacted both White people and people of color.
- A movement to empower people of color to reject racist socialization and to empower White people to be allies for racial justice work.
- A movement to empower all people to embrace racially literate ideas and practices.

By helping all students have the tools to become racially literate, we open up the possibility of a more equitable and just future for all.

## How can I use the curriculum if there isn't a ready-made space for it?

The beauty of the Pollyanna Racial Literacy Curriculum is the flexibility and adaptability. The curriculum is not meant to put added pressure onto educators or subscribe them to one narrow way to utilize it. Teach it in its entirety or pick and choose lessons, activities, games, and discussion topics that work to support you and enhance your teaching style. We understand the logistical constraints within an already packed school day and encourage educators to consider the following ways they can integrate the curriculum throughout the school year:

1. Weave Pollyanna lessons into existing learning times in ways that feel organic and enhancing. Such as:
  - a. Introduce the Kindergarten lessons, "A Celebration of Skin Colors," into art class to help bolster student's expressive language to discuss tone, color, and paint empowering self portraits.
  - b. Integrate the 5th grade lessons, "How Immigration Shaped the US," to enhance existing history and social studies curriculum.
  - c. Use the 7th grade lessons on "What is Race?," to explore genetics and DNA in science class.
2. Use the topics as guides for curriculum mapping and to assist you in scoping and sequencing the racial literacy themes and vocabulary you wish to explore and unpack for your students in developmentally appropriate ways.
3. Use the curriculum as content for scheduled non-academic times such as morning meeting, advisory, community times, assembly times, extra curricular activities, service learning opportunities, heritage month celebrations, belonging and inclusion programming, etc. Emphasize the rich social emotional learning (SEL) outcomes of this curriculum as it relates to fostering connection, belonging, and healthy identity formation in children.

## What do I do when I don't have support at my school to implement the curriculum?

Ultimately, this curriculum is meant to enhance the curriculum, not replace it. The lessons were intentionally designed to provide a plethora of pre-vetted tools, content, and resources in which educators could use to enrich their teaching. With that said, resistance to racial literacy is to be expected, especially if it is something very new to your school environment. When moving through resistance, consider the following tips:

1. Roll with the resistance. Be curious about what the opposition has to say, rather than dismissing their concerns entirely. Perhaps the trust garnered from folks feeling heard and their worries considered is enough to encourage skeptics while also modeling the skills for inclusive dialogue upheld in this curriculum.
2. Start small. If faced with resistance, consider starting small by incorporating elements of racial literacy into existing courses or extracurricular activities. This can demonstrate the value of such education and lay the groundwork for broader implementation in the future.



3. Seek support. Identify your allies and key stakeholders with positions of influence that can advocate for the inclusion of racial literacy education into the school curriculum. Support could be colleagues, administrators, parents, students, alumni, or the broader community.
4. Lean in to transparency. Be open about the intentions of this curriculum and the ways in which you believe it enhances and upholds the values of the school community. Share resources, sample curricula, lesson plans, and ideas for activities with the larger community and provide opportunities for folks to ask questions and engage in healthy dialogue. Be prepared to address any concerns or objections with empathy and understanding.
5. Be persistent. Change takes time and perseverance. Even if progress is slow, continue to advocate for racial literacy education, maintain open communication with school leadership, and seek opportunities to advance this work.

## **My students really care about what they are learning and want to do something to effect change. What can I do to activate their learning?**

Service learning is the ideal vehicle for providing students with opportunities to engage directly with diverse communities, confront social inequities, and develop empathy, understanding, and critical consciousness around issues of race and systemic injustice.

For younger students, service learning can take the shape of community service projects. This is when students learn about social issues while also working to support historically marginalized or underserved communities. For instance, in the third grade curriculum students learn about the ripple effect of kindness. They could activate these learnings by identifying an area in their community that could benefit from some love and attention. This could be organizing a park clean-up, planting a small community garden, or making sandwiches to donate to a local food pantry.

For older students, learning about injustice can be energizing but also frustrating when students don't know how to channel their new learnings into real change. Advocacy and activism are powerful ways to instill a strong sense of civic engagement in students, and provide them with concrete ways to become active participants in addressing social issues and advocating for racial justice within their communities. Prior to engaging in activism, it is important for students to first engage in critical reflection by examining their own perspectives and assumptions. Once students have grounded themselves in self-awareness and empathy, they can then move on the action portion of activism. Student activism could look like participating in student government, launching a poster campaign, creating a public service announcement, art as activism (murals, spoken word poetry, songs of resistance, etc), registering people to vote in your community, or redistributing resources through fundraising and organizing drives and donations. Once students become attuned to the vast inequities in our society they will begin to see opportunities to make things better. An important outcome of this curriculum is preparing students to be engaged and responsible citizens of the world, and encouraging them to move from learning, to reflection, to community action is a concrete way for students to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the classroom to address real-world challenges related to racial injustice.

Our hope is that this FAQ document provides helpful suggestions on responding to tricky moments in implementing the racial literacy curriculum.





## KINDERGARTEN

# TALKING ABOUT SKIN TONES AND SKIN COLORS

## Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to rich language options in which to express and talk about skin tones and colors.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade K
- 30-45 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: The Physical World Around Us – A Celebration of (Skin) Colors
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

- Have students begin to observe, explore, and express differences in skin color.
- The goal is for every child to feel comfortable and proud of their skin tone and have rich language to describe their skin color and the skin color of others.

### MATERIALS

- [Class K: Talking about Skin Tone and Colors.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- All skin colors are beautiful and can be expressed in respectful ways.
- Some people may have less experience or even feel discomfort in talking about brown or melanated skin tones.
- We want to normalize talking about brown or melanated skin tones in an empowered and respectful way.
- Some people may think about white skin tones as the default “flesh tone” and we want to disrupt that and explore the nuance and variation of lighter skin tones.

### VOCABULARY

- Melanin: A natural pigment that gives skin its color and protects the skin from the sun. People whose ancestors came from hotter climates have more melanin and darker skin colors than people whose ancestors came from cooler climates.
- Ancestor: An ancestor is someone from your family that came before you. Such as your grandmother’s grandmother and all the relatives before her are examples of ancestors.

# Lesson Procedure

## INTRODUCTION

Recall lesson #7: What is skin?

"Talk about how our skin comes in different colors or shades and textures. What makes it a different color is a pigment called melanin. When people have more melanin, their skin is darker. When people have less melanin, their skin is lighter. Depending on where our ancestors came from, we may have more or less melanin. A long time ago, before we lived in permanent homes, skin with more melanin helped people live with a lot of sun. And skin with less melanin helped people live with less sun. Now, we live all over the world. So, no matter where we live, our skin can be different colors."

Use a map or globe to show how people who live closer to the equator, live in hotter climates, and tend to have darker skin colors.

## DISCUSSION

How should we talk about different skin colors in a kind and respectful way?

We can describe skin color using vibrant descriptor words.

- **Start with basic colors:**

- Black
- Brown
- Beige
- Peach
- Pink

- **Add modifiers:**

- Dark, deep, rich, cool
- Warm, medium, tan
- Fair, light, pale

## ACTIVITY: NAMING CRAYONS

Pass out skin tone crayons or [markers](#) and let students talk about how they would describe the colors. Pass out paper and let them practice drawing and coloring with the crayons and markers.

Show students [Crayola's "Color's of the World"](#) crayons and the descriptors that Crayola came up with.



## ACTIVITY: NATURE WALK

If possible, take your students outside! Have them observe their natural surroundings and consider things in nature that mimic different skin tones. Examples could be: wood, soil, tree bark, acorns, fallen leaves, seeds, mushrooms, flowers, snow, clouds, clay, logs, rocks, silt, moths, shells, beetles, caterpillars, eggs, snails, sand, birds, pebbles, etc.

Allow students to collect these items to display in the classroom or take photos or allow students to track the natural objects they observe on a [Nature Walk Worksheet](#)

*\*Feel free to customize this worksheet based on your environment.*

## CLOSING

Some students may be able to find lots of natural objects that reflect their skin color and some may not, which is ok. Encourage students to consider variations of color tone and practice describing them.

*"My skin color is a little pinker than this clay"*

*"My skin color is a little deeper than this dried leaf"*



## Extension Activity

Read [Skin Again](#) a book by Bell Hooks and Chris Raschka or read the [Skin Again Poem](#).

Have students describe the paint colors Chris Raschka chose for different skin colors.

### Ask students:

- Why does the author say "skin is just a covering?"
- Why does the author mean when they say, "come inside?"
- How do we let others know what we are really like?

## RESOURCES

- <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/4000-skin-colors-in-pantone-squares-1254683>
- <https://britthawthorne.com/blog/diverse-skin-tones/>
- <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/crayola-announces-new-colors-of-the-world-crayons-to-help-advance-inclusion-within-creativity-301063370.html&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1703695060706513&usg=AOvVaw186EE24WTvsBjlOnW0EJUD>



# CELEBRATING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ANCESTRY

## Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the concepts of cultural heritage and ancestry and give them ideas on how to celebrate and feel proud and connected to their unique cultural identities and honor the cultural identities of others.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 1
- 30-45 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: We Are Part of a Larger Community – Encouraging Kindness, Social Awareness, & Empathy
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

- Introduce the concepts of cultural heritage and ancestry.
- Have students reflect on their own cultural heritage and ancestry and consider ways they can celebrate and feel connected to those identities.
- Have students share their cultural heritages and ancestries with one another and celebrate the similarities and differences.

### MATERIALS

- [Class 1: Celebrating our Heritage and Ancestry.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Everyone has ancestors.
- Everyone has a cultural heritage.
- We can honor our own cultural heritage and celebrate the cultural heritage of others.

### VOCABULARY

- Cultural heritage: is all about the special things that make us who we are and connect us to our families and where we come from.
- A family is a group of people who love and care for each other!
- Ancestor: An ancestor is someone from your family that came before you. Such as your grandmother's grandmother and all the relatives before her are examples of ancestors.

# Lesson Procedure

## OPENING

### What is Cultural Heritage?

Imagine your family has special traditions, like celebrating holidays in a certain way, or maybe your grandma has a special recipe that has been in the family for a long time. That's part of your cultural heritage! It's like a big collection of stories, customs, and things that are important to the people in your family and community.

Teacher should offer an example of something from their own cultural heritage.

- *"In my family we cook a big family breakfast on Sunday mornings"*
- *"In my culture we do a big party and celebration for someone's 15th birthday"*
- *"In my family's tradition we tell stories after dinner"*

### What is a Family?

A family is a group of people who love and care for each other! Families can look and feel different. Some families have a mom, a dad, and kids while others might have just one parent, or maybe grandparents taking care of the kids. Some families might have step-siblings or adopted children. There are families with two moms or two dads, and some families are made of friends who are like family. What's important is the love and support they share.

If students ask about step-family members you can say:

*"A stepfamily is when two families come together to make one big family. You might get new step-siblings, which means brothers or sisters from your mom's or dad's new partner. Sometimes, you even get new aunts, uncles, or grandparents from the other side of the family!"*

If students ask about adoption you can say:

*"Adoption is a special way that some families come together. When a child is adopted, it means that their birth family, for different reasons, asked another family to take care of and love them forever. The family that adopts them becomes their forever family."*

### What's an ancestor?

An ancestor is someone from your family that came before you. Such as your grandmother's grandmother and all the relatives before her are examples of ancestors.

If the teacher knows where their ancestors are from they should share and model for students:

- *"My ancestors come from Jamaica."*
- *"My ancestors come from the American South, Georgia to be precise"*
- *"My ancestors are from all over Europe. Ireland, England, and Italy"*

## ACTIVITY: READ ALOUD

[Where Are You From? by Yamile Saied Mendez Illustrated by Jaime Kim || Read Aloud Read Along || \(Youtube\)](#)

### Guiding Questions for Students:

- What are the main character's feelings and why does she feel like she doesn't belong?
- Why do you think she turns to her grandfather for help?
- Where do you think the main character is from based on her grandfather's description? Is she from one single place?
- Can you think of things in your family or culture that are special and unique, like the things the grandfather mentions?
- How do you think learning about our heritage and where we come from can help us understand ourselves better?

## DIALOGUE

Ask students: **What is your cultural heritage?**

- Consider that some students may be excited to talk and share about this topic and know a lot about it. Other students may be shy or unsure about their ancestry or cultural heritage, which is fine!
- If students seem unsure, encourage them to focus on family traditions, foods, holidays they celebrate, activities they do with their families instead of ancestry.
- Provide them with lots of examples!
- Be aware that for some students, ancestry and cultural heritage can be tied to difficult and painful legacies of enslavement, forced migration, displacement, etc. Although these topics can be emotional, it is important to honor and acknowledge a student family's lived experience and history if they share.

## CLOSING

Ask students: **What are some things we can do with our cultural heritage?**

Ask students to come up with how we could do each other these things:

- **Understand it and learn about it**
  - Ask our parents or grandparents about our ancestors or our cultural heritage.
  - Read books or watch movies or shows about our cultural heritage.
  - Learn how to make a recipe from our cultural heritage.
- **Care for it**
  - Support our community through acts of service.
  - Clean or care for the special objects or artifacts from our cultural traditions (clothes, cookware, quilts, jewelry, etc).
- **Educate and share with others**
  - Talk about our cultural heritage with classmates.
  - Invite friends to join and participate in our cultural heritage activities.
- **Enjoy it**
  - Eat the food.
  - Do the activities with people we love.
  - Feel proud about our cultural heritage and be curious about it.



## Extension Activity

Read [You Hold Me Up by Monique Gray Smith](#)

### Guiding Questions:

- How do the characters in the book show kindness and support for one another?
- How do the illustrations in the book make you feel? How do they add to the story?
- What are some activities characters do in the book that could be tied to their cultural heritages?





# THANK YOU! HOW PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD EXPRESS GRATITUDE AND WHY

## Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to a variety of practices of gratitude from around the world and to inspire them to practice gratitude as an expression of social-emotional well-being.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 2
- 30-45 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: Diversity Around the World—  
How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand gratitude as a universal human practice
- To explore the different ways in which that universal human impulse is practiced in various cultures
- To inspire gratitude as a healthy practice grounded in social-emotional learning

### MATERIALS

- [Class 2: HOW PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD EXPRESS GRATITUDE AND WHY.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Practicing and expressing gratitude is a universal human impulse and experience. Every human culture has ways of expressing gratitude.
- People from around the world express gratitude differently, in culturally specific ways. Those culturally specific ways of expressing gratitude are of equal value.
- Expressing gratitude daily is a healthy practice of social-emotional well-being. There are a range of reasons to express gratitude each day, and brainstorming for a few minutes each day will bring a range of things to mind.

### VOCABULARY

- Gratitude: Gratitude is noticing and feeling thankful for the good things in your life, like the people who care about you, the things that make you happy, and the moments that make you smile. It's about saying, "thank you" and showing kindness when someone does something nice for you or when you see something wonderful around you.
- Superpower: A superpower is a special ability or talent that makes you amazing in your own way. It could be something you're really good at, like making people laugh, being a great listener, solving problems, or being super kind. Everyone has their own superpower, and it helps them make the world a better place!

# Mindfulness Moment

Gather students in a circle for the lesson in front of the projected slides.

- Invite students to wiggle their bodies into a comfortable position and then lead them through a simple breathing or mindfulness exercise.
- **Examples:**
  - 1-minute of mindful breathing
  - (fake) Yawn & 10 second stretch - notice and "greet" any tension or tightness
  - Self-Love Hug w/ 3 deep breaths
  - Hand stroke - with eyes cast or closed, using index finger of one hand, gently trace the outside of all fingers on the opposite hand, then switch hands
  - full body scan - noticing any tension, sensations, or emotions in different parts of the body
- Remind students that slowing down to breathe in this way helps us to stay calm and focused.

## Lesson Procedure

### PURPOSE

Today we are going to talk about saying thank you and showing gratitude. When do we usually say "thank you" to another person? What are some examples?

### REVIEW

Review these ideas with students as a complement to ones they've already shared.

- When someone opens the door for us
- When someone gives us food or a drink
- When someone gives us a gift
- When someone gives us a compliment
- When someone makes us laugh or gives us a listening ear when we feel sad

### ASK

Ask students: Why do we say thank you?

### REVIEW

Review these ideas with students as a complement to ones they've already shared.

- To practice our values
- To show that we are thankful
- To make them feel good
- To show that we care
- To show that we understand that they did something nice for us

### READ ALOUD

Share that we are now going to read a beautiful story about gratitude being our superpower.

Ask students, what is a super power? What are some examples? (e.g. flying, speed – being able to run really fast, super strength – being able to lift big objects).

A super power lets us do amazing things. Let's listen to find out what gratitude lets us do.

*Listen to story. "Gratitude is My Superpower: A children's book about Giving Thanks and Practicing Positivity" by [Alicia Ortego](#).*

Ask students: What is one thing you learned from this story?

We learn that the author of the book has many things to be grateful for like the sun that warms and the bird that sings, family and friends, books and pets. I want each of you to think about one thing that you are grateful for.

Now I want you to return to your desks.

## **GRATITUDE JOURNAL**

*Reproduce the image on the slide so that there are copies of it on each student's desk. Make sure there are writing utensils available.*

We learn that the author of the book has many things to be grateful for like the sun that warms and the bird that sings, family and friends, books and pets. The author then invites us on a gratitude journey so that we can write things that we are grateful for.

Let's go back to our seats and do a small exercise that will allow us to write down three things we are grateful for this week.

*Explain the five options on the sheet. Define the terms if helpful for students.*

Please choose three of these ideas to write about. You can choose a person, a thing, a place, a good, or a hobby.

*Give students 10 minutes to complete this exercise.*

*Ask for 4-5 volunteers to share with the class what they wrote about.*

*Consider creating a gratitude wall where you can feature all of the students' worksheets.*

## **REVIEW**

Thank you so much for participating in that exercise, students!

People show gratitude by saying thank you, but "thank you" sounds differently around the world in different languages.

When I say "thank you" what language am I speaking?

English is correct!

Does anyone know how to say thank you in another language?

I'm hearing a couple of good examples.

Let's watch a short video where we will learn about saying thank you in different languages.

*Play video twice, and encourage students to sing along the second time.*

## **LANGUAGE CHART**

Ask students to help you fill in this chart from memory.

Ask students to pick one of these words to draw and share that you will add their drawing to the gratitude wall.

Provide students with the necessary materials.

## WITH OR WITHOUT EXERCISE

Invite students to identify something for which they are grateful for that they would not like to live without. They can draw a picture of that person or thing.

Then invite them to imagine living life without that person or thing. Ask, if you didn't have this person or thing, how would you feel? What might be harder?

End this exercise by sharing with students that there are many people in the world who do not have what we have but would want to. This is a reason to be especially grateful AND to do what we can to contribute to the happiness of others.

Ask them to brainstorm one small thing they can do today at home to contribute to the happiness of those around them.

Challenge students to go home and take action and report back the next day.



### Extension Activity

Consider this for an extension activity:

<https://www.operationgratitude.com/volunteer/anywhere/letters>



## WHY DO WE MARCH?

### Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the use of marching as a form of protest, activism, and a way to encourage social change.

### Lesson Introduction

- Grade III
- 45-60 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: Stories of Activism – How One Voice Can Change a Community (and Bridge the World)
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

### Background

#### OBJECTIVES

- Explore common reasons why individuals choose to march.
- Discuss ways that individuals can work together as collectives to express their beliefs and advocate for change.

#### MATERIALS

- [Pollyanna Class III: Why do we March?.pptx](#)

#### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Marching is a peaceful way people can stand up for injustice.
- Marching has historical significance and there is a long legacy of social justice leaders and activists utilizing marching as a way to advocate for social change.
- We all have the power to make positive change in our communities in different ways.

# Lesson Procedure

## OPENING

Ask students why they think people march?

## REVIEW VOCABULARY

- Activism is action to make a change, or stop a change, in society. It can be trying to make a government change its laws, or trying to make people change what they do. There are many forms of activism. Activism is most associated with protests.
- Injustice is a situation in which the rights of a person or a group of people are ignored, disrespected or discriminated against.
- A social issue is a problem that affects many people within a society.
  - Some examples are:
    - Climate change
    - Racism
    - Homelessness
    - Animal rights

## ACTIVITY 1: READ ALOUD

[Sometimes People March by Tessa Allen](#)

### Guiding Questions for Students:

- Many of the illustrations in the book are inspired by real life marches and protests in history. Can the students identify any of them?
  - *Some examples in the book are March for Climate Change, Black Lives Matter Movement, Women's Suffrage Movement, Delano Grape Boycott, etc.*
- What do students notice about the people in the book and the kinds of signs are they carrying?
- What does it mean to resist injustice? What are some examples of small injustices? What are some examples of big injustices? How is marching a way of resisting?
  - *Small injustices tend to occur between individuals such as rude or unkind behavior, exclusionary or discriminatory behavior, bullying, microaggressions, etc.*
  - *Large injustices tend to occur on a larger more systemic level such as gender inequality, systemic racism, income inequality, war, environmental injustice, etc.*
  - *Marching is a form of resistance because it is peaceful protest, public, collective, disrupts the status quo, and builds community.*
- Why does it take courage to march? Is it a risky thing to do? Why? What scary things can happen when people march?
  - *Marching can be risky due to unknown variables such as law enforcement response, potential for conflict with counter-protestors, and safety concerns related to being in large crowds. It can also feel emotionally risky to stand up for your beliefs in a highly visible way.*
- What is gained by marching?
  - *People march for different reasons. Some people march to increase awareness and visibility for causes they care about, some march to show solidarity for others who are suffering, some people march to put pressure on policy and decision makers, some people march to inspire and educate others on important issues, some people march for symbolic reasons or because they enjoy coming together with community members that they have shared beliefs and passions with.*



## DIALOGUE

Ask students: **What is a social issue that you care about?**

**What are some ideas or actions you can take to address that issue?**

Model for students a social issue you care about and explain why. Choose an issue that you feel is appropriate to share with students.

For example,

- "I care about climate change, because I live near a coast and have felt the impact of rising sea levels" or
- "I care about affordable housing because I live in a city with very expensive housing and I worry about the unhoused people who don't have permanent homes."

Model for students ways you can take action to support the social issues you care about.

For example,

- "I participate in the river clean-up in my neighborhood"
- "I volunteer at the local soup kitchen"
- "I donate to my city's homeless shelters"
- "I recycle, compost, and take public transportation every day to reduce my carbon footprint."

## ACTIVITY #2: ART AS ACTIVISM

Art has always been a powerful tool for social and political change.

Pass out art supplies (poster paper, markers, construction paper, gluesticks, etc) and have students work in groups of three to design a poster about a social issue that they all care about.

Show students some examples of protest signs as inspiration and ask students what they think makes for a powerful march sign:

- Powerful words
- Color
- Symbols of peace, love, unity, and resistance
- Positive language

## CLOSING

Have students share the social issues they chose, explain why, and present the posters they created to support that social issue.

Close with a short activism brainstorm, where as a class you generate a list of ways individuals can stand up for issues they believe in:

- Volunteer
- Donate
- Make art
- Make music
- Educate yourself and others
- Participate in community events
- Support brands and business that align with your values
- Engage in thoughtful dialogue around social issues with others



## Extension Activity

Read [We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom](#)

### Guiding Questions:

- What is the main message of “We Are the Water Protectors”?
- What is the importance and significance of water in the story?
- What challenges do the characters in the book face?
- How do the characters take action to protect the water?
- What environmental issues do you care about and what can you do to address them?

Extension activities: [We Are Water Protectors - Macmillan](#)

## RESOURCES

- <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/sometimes-people-march-literature-guide>
- <https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/teaching-guides/TG-9780062991188.pdf>
- [We Are Water Protectors - Macmillan](#)



# FROM AROUND THE WORLD--LESSONS FROM CHANGEMAKERS ON WHAT MAKES A GREAT SOCIETY

## Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to measures by which they can determine societies that are great, effectively challenging dominant narratives of what makes a society great and which societies typically get to qualify.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 4
- 30-45 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: The Development of Civilization--  
How Geography Gave Some Populations a Head Start
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

- To think critically about dominant narratives or stereotypes that unhelpfully create hierarchies of value among societies
- To think critically about the value systems of dominant cultures that often wreak havoc on humans and the planet
- To explore healthy criteria for determining what makes a society great, which runs counter to the dominant narrative
- To introduce several important changemakers from around the world who made significant contributions to human evolution

### MATERIALS

- [Class 4: How Geography Gave Some Populations a Head Start.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- There is a stereotype that the greatest societies are 1) Euro-American and 2) that what makes them great is their power, money, and resources.
- Yet this pervasive idea does not center the values of empathy, compassion, and equality in evaluating what makes a society great.
- Changemakers who have advanced human evolution have taught that education, dialogue, care for the planet, and care for humans and opposition to racism, poverty, and war are all characteristics and commitments that distinguish great societies.

## VOCABULARY

- **Changemaker:** A changemaker is someone who sees a problem and works to make it better. They use their ideas, kindness, and actions to help people, their community, or the world. A changemaker can be anyone—kids included—who wants to make a positive difference.
- **Fossil Fuels:** Fossil fuels are energy sources like coal, oil, and natural gas that come from plants and animals that lived a long, long time ago—millions of years! They were buried deep under the ground and turned into fuel we use to make electricity, heat, and power cars. But using too much fossil fuel can hurt the Earth, so people are finding cleaner energy to use instead.
- **Poverty:** Poverty means not having enough money or resources to meet basic needs like food, a safe home, clothes, or other important things. It can make life really hard, but people and communities often work together to help those who are struggling.
- **Racism:** Racism is when people are treated unfairly or unkindly because of the color of their skin or where they come from. It happens when someone thinks they are better than others because of these differences, but that's not true—everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect, no matter what they look like or where they are from.

## Mindfulness Moment

Gather students in a circle for the lesson in front of the projected slides.

- Invite students to wiggle their bodies into a comfortable position and then lead them through a simple breathing or mindfulness exercise.
- Examples:
  - 1-minute of mindful breathing
  - (fake) Yawn & 10 second stretch - notice and “greet” any tension or tightness
  - Self-Love Hug w/ 3 deep breaths
  - Hand stroke - with eyes cast or closed, using index finger of one hand, gently trace the outside of all fingers on the opposite hand, then switch hands
  - full body scan - noticing any tension, sensations, or emotions in different parts of the body
- Remind students that slowing down to breathe in this way helps us to stay calm and focused.

## Purpose

Students, today we are going to talk about the characteristics of a great society according to changemakers from around the world.

Some societies have been celebrated for not-so-good reasons while other societies that have done great things have been downplayed. Furthermore, some people have misidentified the characteristics that make a society truly great.

Most, if not all, humans belong to a society, which is a large group of people who have a particular way of living together – or an “order” of how they do things together.

All human societies have their shortcomings, where they are not good at promoting what is best for a variety of people.

Let's brainstorm together what comes to mind on two important questions:

- What makes a human society great?
- What makes a human society not-so-great?

Now let's turn our attention to ideas from changemakers from around the world.

## Quotation 1 Part A

A famous changemaker here in the United States once made this statement.  
Read the quotation.

**“We must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools.” (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)**

- Can anyone guess who it was?

## Quotation 1 Part B

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Black Baptist preacher and changemaker who spent much of his life during the 1950s and 1960s pushing for civil rights for Black people in the United States.

- What do you think Dr. King meant when he made this statement?
- Can anyone think of examples that illustrate Dr. King’s point?

In his own time, Dr. King saw hatred tear people apart and make society far more dangerous. He wanted people to learn to embrace each other across differences as if they were members of the same family.

- Based on this quote, why do you think Dr. King was such a fierce opponent of war?

## Beloved Community

Dr. King had strong feelings about the need to create a society where there was no more poverty and no more racism and mistreatment of people on the basis of skin color. He wanted a society where everyone had what they needed to flourish and survive. He wanted a society without hate and without neglect. When people need help, it should be available to them. When people need support, it should be there for them. Dr. King believed that all humans should be treated fairly and respectfully regardless of their color or how much money they had or didn’t have. For Dr. King this was a true beloved community. A society that cares about people who are poor is a great society. A society that tries to stop poverty and also racism is a great society.

## Quotation 2 Part A

A famous changemaker not from the United States once said this very quotation.  
Read the quotation.

**“Education is the right of every child, and especially for girls, this right should not be neglected. If you want to go forward, we have to give education to girls.” (Malala Yousafzai)**

- Can anyone guess which changemaker said this quote? A hint: She is from the country of Pakistan.  
And you may have learned about her last year.

## Quotation 2 Part B

This quote comes from Malala Yousafzai, a changemaker from Pakistan who took a stand in her country for the human right to education.

- What do you think this quote means?

In her country of Pakistan, Malala encountered people in power who did not believe that girls should go to school. These people said that girls belonged at home and should be doing things they thought was better for girls and women to do. These people had stereotypes about girls and boys – really unhelpful.

## The Right to Education

In 2008, a rebel group took charge of Malala's village in Pakistan. They said that girls could no longer go to school and had to stay at home. Malala had to say goodbye to all of her classmates. She was so hurt and upset. The rebel group began spreading fake information around the country. Years later she began to speak out against the unfairness of not allowing girls to go to school. The rebel group searched for her and shot her. She was flown to the UK for surgery and to recover. It was a terrible situation. But, it did not stop Malala from speaking out and creating change. She has been an advocate around the world for education for everyone! The more that people know the less likely they are to be controlled by others or to believe false information. Education for all can make a society great.

### Quotation 3 Part A

A famous changemaker not from the United States once said this very quotation.  
Read the quotation.

**"You must unite behind the science. You must take action. You must do the impossible. Because giving up can never ever be an option."** (Greta Thunberg)

- Can anyone guess which changemaker said this quote? A hint: She is from the country of Sweden and cares deeply about the planet.

### Quotation 3 Part B

This quote comes Greta Thunberg, who is now 21 years old, but she got her start much younger as a change-maker in Sweden who has been educating people about the negative impact that humans have had on the climate and the planet. She has argued for people to take action to treat the planet better. She has asked leaders of countries and big companies to work harder to protect the planet.

- What do you think this quote means?

## The Role of Government and Big Business

Many big companies and governments burn fossil fuels for electricity, heat, and transportation. Burning fossil fuels hurts the planet. Greta is pushing for new ways to provide electricity, heat, and transportation. She is also pushing for leaders to acknowledge the truth that they have not cared enough about the planet and have not worked hard enough to protect it from fossil fuels. Science is showing us what happens to our planet when we don't take care of it. Greta argues that we must take action to care for the planet and for the humans and other species who depend on it. She tells us we can't give up and have to push people to do what is right. For Greta, a great society is one where we care for the planet and one where we take action on what we believe in.

### Quotation 4 Part A

A famous changemaker not from the United States once said this very quotation.  
Read the quotation.

**"We have to choose between dialogue and utter devastation."** (Aung San Su Kyi)

Can anyone guess which changemaker said this quote? A hint: She is from the country of Myanmar.



## Quotation 4 Part B

This quote comes from Aung Saan Su Kyi, who was once upon a time a political leader in the country of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. She worked hard to rid her country of rebel groups and military that took over the country and denied everyday people's right to elect a leader. The rebel groups and military had refused to talk with her and with others. Yet she protested and spoke out until things changed. She repeatedly invited her enemies to have a conversation and to try to create change together.

- What do you think this quote means?

## The Power of Dialogue

Without dialogue, horrible things can happen. Aung Saan Su Kyi had strong feelings about war and violence. She was very worried that people in power would ignore those who are not in power and would take over her country and other countries. She rejected war. Su Kyi wanted people to find nonviolent ways of working through their disagreements. She saw ways that violence would tear societies apart and would devastate human families. She pushed for the idea that we should all be in dialogue with one another. A truly greater society would be one of more dialogue and less violence, is a great society.

Something else to note is that Aung Saan Su Kyi has faced criticism in recent times because people have felt that she did not live her own values. Some have argued that when she was given a chance to govern, she was not kind to Rohingya Muslims who were a minority population in her country. Even great changemakers can make real mistakes.

## Four Major Lessons

- Education
- Not Hate, No Racism, No Poverty
- Care for the Planet
- Dialogue

These are four things that we have heard from changemakers on what can make a society great. Let's review. If you had to add a fifth idea to this list that you could create on your own, what would it be? Take out a piece of paper and journal in response to that prompt.

After some time, ask a few volunteers to share some of their ideas.



# INTERRACIAL FRIENDSHIPS--THEN & NOW

## Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to empower students to think about the benefits and challenges of cross-racial and cross-cultural friendships that the movement of people, within and among countries, fosters.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 5
- 30-45 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: How "Immigration" Shaped the Racial and Cultural Landscape of the United States
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

- To understand how the movement of people affects all quarters of U.S. American life, including friendships and relationships
- To explore historical examples of interracial friendships and how they functioned
- To understand the contemporary challenge that continued racial separation in U.S. society poses
- To identify tools for creating cross-racial friendships and for preserving them

### MATERIALS

- [Class 5: Interracial Friendships--Then & Now.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- The movement of peoples has profoundly shaped U.S. life, including the most intimate spheres of life like friendships and relationships. There are many benefits of cross-racial friendships, and there are challenges that we can learn to overcome.
- Racism and a fear of difference, all based on ideas that are false or exaggerated, can get in the way of meaningful relationships across racial lines. Racism creates a hierarchy of value of human beings on the basis of skin color and ancestry.
- There are meaningful examples from history on the power of interracial friendships and how they can magnify efforts to create positive change. Yet despite desegregation, racial separation persists in society today.
- We can overcome racial separation through thoughtful and intentional effort, including building relationships and protecting them in the face of opposition to them.

### VOCABULARY

- Hierarchy: A way of organizing people or things where some are ranked higher or more important than others.
- Racial bias: Treating people unfairly because of their race, often without realizing it.
- Racial hierarchy: A belief or system that unfairly ranks some races as better or more important than others.
- Stereotypes: Ideas about a group of people that are not always true and can be unfair or hurtful

## Mindfulness Moment

Gather students in a circle for the lesson in front of the projected slides.

- Invite students to wiggle their bodies into a comfortable position and then lead them through a simple breathing or mindfulness exercise.
- Examples:
  - 1-minute of mindful breathing
  - (fake) Yawn & 10 second stretch - notice and “greet” any tension or tightness
  - Self-Love Hug w/ 3 deep breaths
  - Hand stroke - with eyes cast or closed, using index finger of one hand, gently trace the outside of all fingers on the opposite hand, then switch hands
  - full body scan - noticing any tension, sensations, or emotions in different parts of the body
- Remind students that slowing down to breathe in this way helps us to stay calm and focused.

## Purpose

We’ve spent time this year studying how immigration, both chosen and forced, shaped what became known as the United States – and we will add internal migration to that idea, where people, in this case, U.S. Americans, move around the country. Every area of life in the U.S. has been touched by immigration – even the most intimate parts of our lives – including friendships and relationships. With internal migration and immigration in the U.S., the opportunities for cross-racial and cross-cultural relationships have grown exponentially. Today we will explore this reality.

## Friendships & Relationships Across Difference

With a more diverse society, there is greater opportunity for friendships and relationships across racial and cultural lines. Immigration has helped to create the context for this.

- What might be some of the benefits of friendships and relationships across differences? What might be some of the challenges?

## Big Idea

A study in [Psychological Science](#) reports that students who have relationships with students who are different from them, and who get to learn new ideas and diverse perspectives that these relationships bring, tend to better skills for thinking creatively and critically about important issues. Why do you think this is true?

One challenge is how racism and a fear of difference can get in the way of these meaningful connections.

Let’s jump to the present and watch this clip of two young girls navigating their interracial friendship.

## Video Clip 1

- What struck you about what you just heard?
- How does it relate to your own experience?
- How did we get here as a society such that two girls in an interracial friendship would become newsworthy?

# Stop Racism

I want to remind you of a couple of things we have learned about racism and race in the history of the United States.

Racism is a huge problem in the United States and has been in particular since the country began. Racism is a set of beliefs and practices that reinforce the idea that some humans are more valuable than others on the basis of skin color.

## Skin Color

Those beliefs and practices are toxic, and they have created a society where people with lighter, whiter skin are considered more valuable than people with darker, blacker skin. In other words, our society is shaped by what we call “racial hierarchy,” a kind of ladder of skin colors and advantages with light/white at the top, dark/black at the bottom, and a range of people in between.

Yes, race was created as a way of categorizing humans largely according to their skin color as if different skin colors actually meant different things – which they didn’t until people in power said they did. Over time, the ideas that people came up with around race shaped people’s lives – from their livelihood to their love life to their families and friendship networks.

## Hierarchy

- This pyramid represents a hierarchy.  
Does anyone know what the word “hierarchy” means?

One way of thinking about Hierarchy is the belief that some people, because of what they look like, are more valuable than others and therefore should be treated that way. In a hierarchy, there is a top and a bottom and spaces in between.

Some people support the idea of racial hierarchy and do everything in their power to make sure that it continues. To justify this hierarchy or to make it seem like this hierarchy was normal and natural, people created all kinds of ideas that would sort of explain racism away – these ideas were racist ideas. Racist ideas tell stories to teach people that lighter, whiter people are better and superior to darker, blacker people. Those stories use stereotypes to distort the truth. Stereotypes are huge generalizations that often take a sliver of truth and makes it the whole truth. Stereotypes sound like “All White people are ...” or “All Black people like ...” or “All Asian people believe ...”

## Separation

Not only do we have a lot of work to do to end racist behaviors and practices that give some people more advantages than others simply because of skin color, we also have to end racist ideas that aim to drive us apart. Racist ideas, what some people call “racial bias,” can divide us and drive us away from each other. Racist ideas can prevent us from having beautiful friendships and relationships with people who are different from us.

## Hands Together

In the early days of the American colonies that eventually became the United States, interracial marriage and relationships – marrying people across lines of race – were not outlawed. In some ways, it was normal for people to be together interracially. The more there were people of different backgrounds spending time with each other, the more likely it was that people would want to be with each other across racial lines.

However, as racism picked up steam to justify slavery, those relationships were eventually outlawed in many places until the late 1960s.

The primary interracial relationship that people wanted to prevent was white people and people of color.

- Why do you think people in power worked so hard to keep white people and people of color away from each other?

The idea of racial separation has persisted in U.S. history and people have resisted it in different ways.

## Lincoln and Douglass

- Anyone know who these two figures are?

One famous example of an interracial friendship is the one between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass (Ambar, 2022). They formed a political alliance and interracial friendship, with Douglass helping Lincoln to inform those enslaved in the South that the Emancipation Proclamation would grant their freedom.

## Bethune and Roosevelt

- Anyone know who these two figures are?

Another well-known example is the interracial friendship between Mary McCleod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt. Bethune's relationship with Roosevelt gave her significant power and influence as the first Black woman to serve as an advisor to the president. Together they worked on many efforts to advance the position of Black Americans and served as a symbol of what was possible on a national level.

## Heschel and King

- Anyone know who these two figures are?

The interracial friendship between Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr is also an excellent example of a famous interracial friendship (Ambar, 2022). They had a strong moral sense of justice in common. They got to know each other at the Chicago Conference on Religion and Race in 1963. Their friendship was exemplified during the Selma march in 1965 and King's Riverside speech condemning the Vietnam War in 1967. Their bond drew attention to moral courage in the face of profound injustice and overcame historical tensions in Black-Jewish relations.

Yet interracial friendships, despite their rich history, continue to be unique. Let's fast forward to today.

## Important Data Points

Review these data points:

- Polling data reported in the Washington Post suggests that 75% of whites have no non-white friends whatsoever.
- 83% of people in black Americans' social networks are black.
- 64% of people in Hispanic Americans' social networks are Hispanic.
- 54% of Asians have reported that all or most of their close friends are Asians.
- Only 17% of couples in the US are interracial.

Ask students:

- Why do you think there is still so much racial separation and why are interracial friendships and relationships rare in some parts of the country?
- What kinds of stories get in the way?

In this next clip, we will hear from young people who have experienced positives and negatives while navigating cross-racial friendships.

## Clip

Let's watch this clip.

## Reflection

Ask students now to complete the reflection chart on the slide deck based on the video they watched. Ask for several volunteers to share what they wrote under that last column.

## Brainstorm

Let's spend time thinking about what makes interracial friendships work well – given all of what we have learned.

- What makes interracial friendships work?

Examples:

- Being honest about our experiences
- Listening thoughtfully to one another
- Being aware of different lived experiences
- Being upstanders

## Upstander Strategies

Let's end by talking about upstander strategies. Review the information on the slide.

- Can you imagine a situation where you are faced with someone saying offensive things about interracial friendship or relationship -- perhaps about your interracial friendship. What could you say in response? What are your options?
- What are your takeaways from today's class?

Remind students that they always have options in challenging moments like these.



# VOICES FROM TODAY—SPEAKING OUT AGAINST THE SINGLE STORY

## Summary

The purpose of this lesson is to deepen understanding about the danger of the single story and to illuminate those who have contested the single story in favor of more expansive and diverse narratives.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 6
- 30-45 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: The Historical Construction of Race and Current Racial Identities Throughout U.S. Society
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

- To crystallize understanding of the danger of a single story
- To explore how different groups of people see themselves versus how they are often seen by others in society
- To compare and contrast the experiences of people of different racial groups
- To better understand their own experiences and racial identities

### MATERIALS

- [Class 6: Voices from today.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Every human society generates stories about groups of people, and the stories created by those in power, also known as the dominant culture, tend to become pervasive. These stories can be generous or ungenerous, accurate or inaccurate. Those stories have consequences for how people are treated. Bad stories equal bad treatment.
- Our identities, our senses of self, are informed by these stories. We can choose whether we accept the dominant narrative or not, once we become aware of it, whether that dominant narrative is about us or others.
- Expanding our understanding of others' experiences, beyond dominant narratives, enables us to see their complex humanity and our own, which dominant narratives aim to hide.

### VOCABULARY

- Identity: Who you are, including the things that make you special, like your name, culture, beliefs, and what you care about.
- Dignity: The worth and respect every person deserves, just because they are human.
- Dominant Culture: The way of life, traditions, or beliefs of the group of people who have the most power or influence in a society.

## Mindfulness Moment

Gather students in a circle for the lesson in front of the projected slides.

- Invite students to wiggle their bodies into a comfortable position and then lead them through a simple breathing or mindfulness exercise.
- Examples:
  - 1-minute of mindful breathing
  - (fake) Yawn & 10 second stretch - notice and "greet" any tension or tightness
  - Self-Love Hug w/ 3 deep breaths
  - Hand stroke - with eyes cast or closed, using index finger of one hand, gently trace the outside of all fingers on the opposite hand, then switch hands
  - full body scan - noticing any tension, sensations, or emotions in different parts of the body
- Remind students that slowing down to breathe in this way helps us to stay calm and focused.

## Purpose

Earlier this year we watched Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk, the Danger of a Single Story.

Here is a quotation by her. Would someone like to read it?

**"Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity." (Chimamanda Adichie)**

- What do we think Adichie means?

Every human society tells stories about different groups of people. Sometimes those stories are ungenerous and harmful. And when they are, people are treated poorly and suffer. However, we can all learn to tell better stories about people and learn to treat them better.

We can begin by listening to people's stories about themselves and their experiences and about how they want to be treated.

## Excerpts

Read excerpts from *This Book is Anti-Racist*



**YOU** get to decide which identities you will share with the world and how you'll do so. You get to choose how to name your identities.

Your identity grows and changes just like you. There are some things that are static and stay with you always. My skin color and the many freckles on my face have been with me for as long as I can remember and will continue on with me until I am 103+!

There are other parts of us that change (even daily). I can wear my hair up or down, braided or straight; I can change the color and the length—it's all up to me.



## MANY OTHERS WILL TRY TO GET YOU TO FIT INTO AN IMAGINARY BOX.

This box includes what we call “the dominant culture.” If you are white, upper middle class, **cisgender** male, educated, athletic, **neurotypical**, and/or able-bodied, you are in this box. (We’ll go through all of these in the next chapter.)

If you do not fit into this box, you are considered to be a part of what’s called the “subordinate culture.” Folx included in the “subordinate culture”, include Black, Brown, Indigenous People of Color of the Global Majority, queer, **transgender**, and **nonbinary** folx, and cisgender women, youth, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, atheist, and non-Christian folx, **neurodiverse** folx, folx living with disabilities, those living in poverty, and more. There are many more who exist outside of this imaginary box than those who fit inside of it.

The dominant culture is what has been considered “normal” and this “normal” has been created and is maintained by those who are in the box. It is this version of normal that has shaped how we see ourselves and the world around us.

### *Who is smart? Beautiful? Worthy? A leader? Trouble?*

Many labels and descriptions have been created so it seems like people either fit neatly into the box or not. I never really did. And you don’t need to either.

Our many identities make us who we are. They help others to understand who you are and help you to know more about the folx who are in your life and in the world. They connect us and divide us. Understanding who you are allows you to grow and know more about yourself. It can give you direction and empower you. The world will try to tell you who you are, but you are the only person who gets to decide that.

## Dialogue

How does Adichie’s thinking connect with what we just read from Jewell’s work?

I am going to ask you to free-write a few thoughts in response.

Now I am going to ask you to talk with a neighbor about the ideas you wrote about.

I would love to hear a few people share with the large group what they wrote about or what came up in their conversations.

## Defining Racism

Let’s go back to Jewell’s book where she defines racism.

- Would anyone like to read the two circles on the screen?

Bad stories about people on the basis of race creates mistreatment of those people. That is true historically – and it is true of how people have been treated even today.

## Windows and Mirrors

Now we are going to watch a series of short films produced by the New York Times. Each film focuses on the experiences of a different racial group. We will watch two films and then have a short discussion on them. Then we will watch another two films, followed by discussion. Afterwards, we will watch one more film and close with one final discussion. As you watch each film, please consider which film or films serve as a mirror for your own experiences with racial and which film or films serve as a window into the experiences of others who have different racial identities than your own.

## Video Clips & Discussion

*Consider watching the videos two at a time and then stopping for discussion.*

- In what way did this film serve as a mirror for you? In what way did this film serve as a window for you?
- What stood out to you? What surprised you? What didn't?
- How would you compare and contrast the films?

## Stuck, Getting There, Got it

Now that we have moved through this conversation, I'd like to give you an opportunity to journal in response to the prompt on the screen.

Explain the prompt.

Provide time for students to write and then to share some thoughts out loud before closing class.

## Final Reflection

Thank you so much for participating so fully in our session today. Through several exercises and dialogue, we explored a mirrors and windows approach to sharing our stories of race and identity and to developing a sense of empathy across lines of racial difference. The more self-aware we become about the power of race in our world, the more self-aware we become about how race has impacted us, giving some of us advantages and others of us disadvantages, the more we can work across racial lines to change things for the better.

We can commit to speaking out when we hear racist comments. We can commit to challenged racist ideas and beliefs. We can commit to having hard conversations with friends and families. We can be more sensitive with our own language, more inclusive and just with our own actions. And we can commit to ongoing learning.

Would someone like to read the quotation on the screen to close class?



# TALKING ABOUT RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CULTURE

## Summary

Race, ethnicity, and culture are key components that make up identity and help us understand how ourselves and others experience the world. However, it can be confusing to understand where these things intersect, how they are different, and how to define them for ourselves and talk about them with others. In this lesson we will define race, ethnicity, and culture and explore strategies for identifying these things for ourselves as well as strategies for how to engage others in conversations around identity.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 7
- 60-75 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: What is Race? – How Science, Society, and the Media (Mis)represent Race
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Sociology

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

Competency in understanding and identifying the difference between one's race, ethnicity, culture and skills to comfortably discuss these differences with others.

### MATERIALS

- [Class 7 Talking about Someone's Race, Ethnicity, and Culture.pptx](#)

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Race is about the meaning that is assigned to the way you look.
- Ethnicity is about the social group you belong to.
- Culture is about what you do, and with whom you tend to do it.

### VOCABULARY

- Race: refers to groupings of people who share physical characteristics and a common origin or ancestry.
- Ethnicity: denotes groups that share a common identity-based on ancestry, language, or culture. It is often based on religion, beliefs, and customs as well as memories of migration or colonization.
- Culture: the customary beliefs, shared attitudes, values, and practices of a particular nation, people, or other social group.

# Lesson Procedure

## BACKGROUND

In advance of this lesson, instructors should reflect on their own racial, ethnic, and cultural identities and be prepared to share these identities with students as a way to model the nuance of the various identities we can hold.

Instructors should review the handout Social Identity Profile-Standard V.docx for the activity and modify based on the needs and comfort of their students. For example, for some students the categories of (body size, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc can be triggering). Remind students to complete handout to their comfort level and that it is a private reflection activity.

## OPENING

Explain to students that today we will be discussing the differences between race, ethnicity, and culture. Reflecting on our own racial, ethnic, and cultural identities and practicing different strategies for how to discuss these identities with others.

Encourage students to stay in a place of curiosity, openness to reflect, and willingness to share and listen.

## DISCUSSION

Write “race” on the board and ask students if they could come up with a working definition for race. Based on previous lessons in this unit we are aware that this may not be the easiest task as race is heavily influenced by our unique social contexts, hierarchies, and histories.

Share this quote by Robin D.G. Kelley, Professor American History at UCLA: *“Race was never just a matter of how you look, it’s about how people assign meaning to how you look.”*

**Ask students what they think this quote means and how it impacts how they would define the term, “race.”** - For the purposes of this discussion we will define race as:

- Race: refers to groupings of people who share physical characteristics and a common origin or ancestry.
- Race is about what people see when they look at you and/or when they look at your family tree.
- Refer back to lesson 2: RACE VS ANCESTRY: HOW TO THINK OF RACE IN THE AGE OF GENOMICS AND DNA TESTING.
- Race is a **social construct**, not an accurate representation of human genetic variation. Humans are remarkably genetically similar, sharing approximately 99.9% of their genetic code with one another.

**Ask students to give examples of racial categories:**

- Asian Pacific Islander, Native American, Latino/a/x/e, Black, White, Bi/Multiracial

**Ask students to define ethnicity and culture in the same way and provide examples of each.**

- **Ethnicity:** denotes groups that share a common identity-based on ancestry, language, or culture. It is often based on religion, beliefs, and customs as well as memories of migration or colonization.
  - Ethnicity is about which social group you belong to.  
Examples: Irish, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Italian, Mohawk, Jewish, Guatemalan, Lebanese, European-American
- **Culture:** the customary beliefs, shared attitudes, values, and practices of a particular nation, people, or other social group.
  - Culture is about what you do, and with whom you tend to do it.  
Examples: music, food, sports, fashion, holidays, dances, family structures, greetings, manners, religious practices.
  - Ask students to turn to a partner and share one aspect of their culture. Instructors should model by sharing one aspect of their culture.  
Examples: Removing shoes in the home, Sunday night dinners, respect for elders

## ACTIVITY #1

Pass out handout and ask Social Identity Profile-Standard V.docx students to think about their identities using these common social identity categories. You may need to provide additional examples or definitions for some of these categories.

*\*Customize handout in advance*

*\*\*Let students know that completion of the handout is optional, private (not to be shared with others), and they can skip anything they don't understand or feel uncomfortable answering.*

### Discussion:

- Which categories were easier to complete? Which were difficult? Why?
- Which social identity categories do you feel most aware of?
- Which social identity categories do you feel least aware of?
- What is a category you would like to be more aware of? Why?

## ACTIVITY #2

Oftentimes people feel curious about the race, ethnicity, and culture of others. How can we learn about the rich differences of others while also being respectful? Here are a few scenarios where folks are trying to learn more about the identities of others. How would you change the language or reframe to make the exchange more respectful and intentional?

### SCENARIO #1:

Jay asks Aubrey where she is from and she answers, "I'm from New York City." Jay responds by saying, "No, where are you really from?"

#### Guiding Questions for Students:

- What is Jay really asking Aubrey?  
Possible student responses:
  - *Jay wants to know where Aubrey's parents/ancestors are from.*
  - *Jay wants to know Aubrey's ethnicity.*
- What is another way Jay could have asked the question?  
Possible student responses:
  - *"What is your ethnicity?"*
  - *"What is your ancestry?"*
  - *"I grew up in Baltimore, but my family is originally from Puerto Rico. How about yourself?"*
    - *It can be thoughtful to share information about yourself before asking for the personal information of someone else.*

### SCENARIO #2:

Charlie meets Blake at a school event and asks them, "So what are you?"

#### Questions:

- Why would Blake find this question rude?  
Possible student responses:
  - *Asking someone "what they are" can be othering and imply that they must be from "somewhere else" or "something else."*
- What would be a better question to ask?  
Possible student responses:
  - *Asking someone "what they are" is imprecise. Are you asking about their gender identity? What grade are they in? What their ethnic background is? Or something else? Be specific about what you are curious about and perhaps offer that information about yourself first before asking it of someone else. Additionally, take the time to get to know someone before asking personal questions that someone may or may not be comfortable disclosing to you.*

## CLOSING

We are all complex individuals, with various social identifiers that make us who we are. Being curious about the identities of others is natural and learning about those different from oneself is a great way to build connection, understanding, and empathy for others. However, there are some things to consider when engaging other in conversations about race, ethnicity, culture, or other social identity categories:

- **Don't make assumptions.** Just because someone looks a certain way doesn't mean they identify one way or another. Identity groups are not monolithic and there is a lot of diversity and variation within racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.
- **Lead by example.** Don't ask someone a personal question that you wouldn't be willing to share yourself, and perhaps offer that information before asking it of someone else.
- **Get to know one another!** The best way to learn more about someone's race, ethnicity, or culture is by spending quality time together, sharing meals, meeting each other's families, swapping stories and sharing experiences. Put in the effort to really get to know someone before asking personal questions about their identities.
- **Build cultural awareness.** Having a strong understanding of your own race, ethnicity, and culture and the societal context that impacts these various categories is crucial. These categories are not neutral as we live in a society that privileges some identities over others. Going into conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture with an understanding of power dynamics, history, and social justice will help you navigate and acknowledge the complexities of these conversations.



## Extension Activity

Watch the videos:

[The myth of race, debunked in 3 minutes](#)

[Race & Ethnicity: Crash Course Sociology #34](#)

Create a culture crest:

- Distribute paper, markers, crayons.
- Ask students to design a crest or banner that represents their culture. They can use pictures, symbols, or words to represent their lifestyle, families, traditions, values, and places that are significant for their cultures.
- Have students share their culture crests with one another.



# UNDERSTANDING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

## Summary

Throughout this series we have discussed various ways that institutions have grappled with race and racism by either reinforcing systemic inequality or pursuing equity by removing barriers that marginalize certain groups over others. In today's lesson we will be exploring one strategy intended to create more diversity within college admissions processes, affirmative action.

## Lesson Introduction

- Grade 8
- 60-75 min (teacher may extend)
- Unit: Racism as a Primary "Institution" of the U.S. – How We May Combat Systemic Inequality
- Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies; Sociology

## Background

### OBJECTIVES

To learn about affirmative action, a controversial equity strategy intended to create more opportunities for historically excluded groups and increase diversity in college admissions.

### ESSENTIAL IDEA

Affirmative Action is an imperfect policy designed with the intention of leveling the playing field for students of diverse backgrounds affirmative action refers to policies and practices designed to increase opportunities for historically underrepresented groups.

### VOCABULARY

- Affirmative Action: an effort by universities to diversify their classes by factoring race into their admissions decisions.

# Lesson Procedure

## BACKGROUND

Affirmative Action refers to policies, used most frequently by college/universities as well as corporations, designed to ensure diverse student bodies and workforces and increase opportunities for historically underrepresented groups. It is a contentious strategy that can trigger strong feelings either for or against. In today's lesson we will do a brief historical overview of Affirmative Action, explore why it has historically been a polarizing topic, and consider the lasting legacy of Affirmative Action, as well as alternative efforts for creating more equity and opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups.

## OPENING

Explain to students that today we will be learning a short history of Affirmative Action, its intentions, impact, and legacy. We will also explore alternative ways for institutions to achieve diversity and equity, despite limitations on affirmative actions policies.

### What is Affirmative Action?

- Affirmative Action refers to policies, used most frequently by college/universities as well as corporations, designed to ensure diverse student bodies and workforces and increase opportunities for historically underrepresented groups.

Examples:

- Race-conscious admissions policies at universities.
- Targeted recruitment efforts and outreach campaigns toward members of historically underrepresented groups.
- Having inclusion targets or goals that an institution with low diversity aspires to.
- Special training or work programs, internship programs for members of historically underrepresented groups.

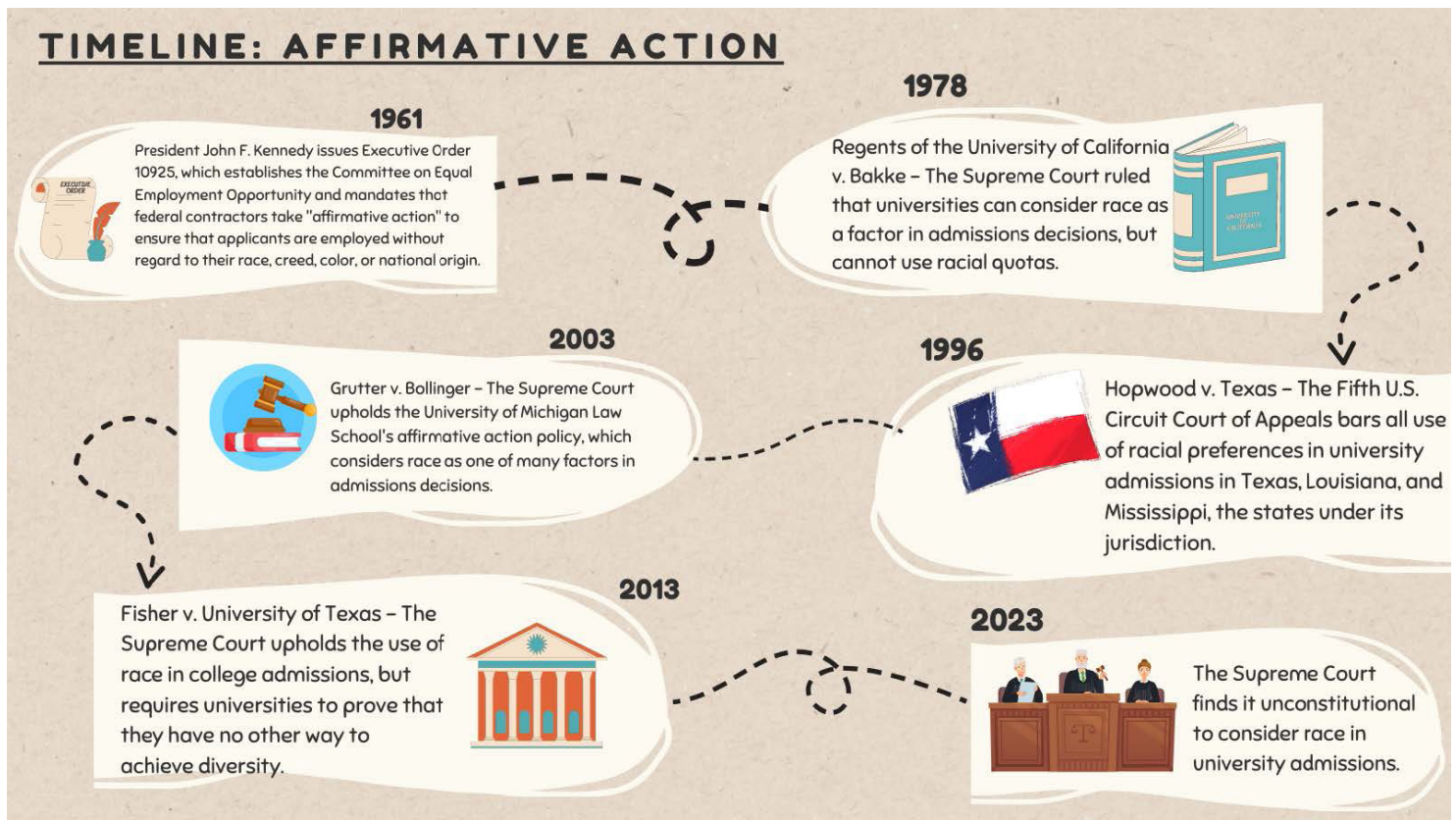
### What Problem is Affirmative Action Trying to Solve?

- The legacy of enslavement created a deep-seated racial hierarchy and economic disparities that persisted long after its abolition in the form of Jim Crow Laws that disenfranchised Black Americans through forced segregation and restricted housing, voting, and employment opportunities.
- Racial discrimination led to severe disparities among education, wealth, and employment opportunities and outcomes for folks of different races in the United States.
- This is a chart showing the racial wealth gap in the United States in 2021:  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/2023/12/04/wealth-gaps-across-racial-and-ethnic-groups/>



## HISTORY

Show students this timeline:



Timeline of Affirmative Action by Artorious DaVinci

<https://medium.com/the-vinci-town/the-end-of-affirmative-action-exploring-alternative-strategies-for-justice-8665662722b0>

- President John F. Kennedy was the first president to acknowledge the term affirmative action in 1961 by establishing the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and requiring federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color or national origin."
- Encouraged by the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's and 70's the concept of affirmative action became a strategy in education as an effort by universities to diversify their classes by factoring race into their admissions decisions.
- There have been numerous cases that have called into question using race as an aspect of admissions consideration, however it remained a diversity strategy until June 2023 when the Supreme Court ruled that private and public colleges and universities can no longer consider race as a factor in admissions, overturning 45 years of legal precedent.

## DISCUSSION

In advance of this conversation acknowledge that this topic has the capacity to elicit strong emotions. Norm the conversation by encouraging students to abide by these guidelines:

- Be fully present.
- Have an open mind and heart.
- Speak from the 'I' perspective. Talk about your own experiences.
- The learning leaves but the stories stay.
- Listen actively and respectfully.
- Question or critique the idea, but not the person.

Ask students to turn to a partner and discuss why they think affirmative action has been such a controversial topic? Encourage students to speculate on why some folks would be for or against these policies.

Possible student responses:

- *Some people could argue that the media has made affirmative action a charged political topic between “liberals” and “conservatives.”*
- *Some people may argue that affirmative action isn’t fair because everyone should be treated equally.*
- *Some people could argue that affirmative action reduces opportunities for white people and other members of dominant identity groups.*
- *Some people could say that certain candidates or applicants deserve special consideration because of the history of discrimination against their group.*
- *Some people think colleges have the right to create a diverse student body as diversity benefits everyone.*
- *Some people could argue affirmative action could unintentionally contribute to underlying racial divisions, fostering resentment, and perpetuating stereotypes.*
- *Some people could argue the focus on race and ethnicity may overlook other crucial factors like socio-economic status.*
- *Some people could argue that institutions that only recently began considering and accepting applicants from diverse backgrounds have a responsibility to correct past discriminatory behavior.*
  - *(Some Ivy League universities didn’t admit women and Black students until the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s).*
- *Some people could argue that affirmative action is a necessary and concrete tool and strategy to close the racial wealth gap.*
- *Some people could argue that systemic racism creates significant barriers for entry to elite institutions for people of color, and affirmative action is one way we acknowledge those barriers.*

Have students share some possible reasons with the larger group and write down responses on chart paper/ white board.

Ask students to turn back to their partner and explore any factors that could advantage members of dominant identity groups in admission to an elite school or desirable job?

Possible students responses:

- *Legacy admissions policies that give preference to certain applicants on the basis of their familial relationship to alumni of that institution.*
- *Wealthy families who can pay full tuition and give donations to the school.*
- *Students that come from well-resourced schools with college counselors and connections to elite colleges.*
- *Expensive tutoring or standardized test prep.*
- *Vast personal and professional networks could lead to more job opportunities.*
- *Being able to consider an unpaid internship rather than needing a paying job.*
- *People are more likely to hire, promote, mentor, sponsor people that they share certain identities with, thus perpetuating the advantage of certain dominant groups in schools and the workforce.*

Have students share some possible factors with the larger group and write down responses on chart paper/ white board.

## ACTIVITY

Given what we know about the complexity of affirmative action and the ways in which it works and fails as a tool for equity:

***How would you design an admissions policy that seeks to create diverse student bodies, removes barriers to entry from people from underrepresented backgrounds, and provides opportunities for everyone to thrive and succeed?***

Break students into groups of 3-4 and have them brainstorm their ideal admissions policy while also acknowledging the most recent supreme court ruling banning race considerations in admissions practice.

Questions for students to consider and to spark thoughts:

- Should only grades and standardized test scores be considered?
- Should the quality of a student's high school or difficulty of curriculum be considered?
- Should an applicant's alumni connections or athletic ability be considered?
- Should socio-economic class or geography (where applicant lives) be considered?
- Should leadership opportunities, volunteer opportunities, internships, travel opportunities, etc be considered?

## CLOSING

Affirmative action was an imperfect solution to a complex problem, but it was a solution nonetheless. All of us must reflect on the ways in which we benefit from the status quo of systems that perpetuate inequities and privilege certain identities over others. With that said, how do we move forward? How do we continue to grapple with the painful existence of systemic racism and inequality to ensure that the racial income gap does not continue to grow.

Some strategies we could consider:

- Invest in our failing education systems starting from early childhood programs through high school.
- Broaden recruitment of students from historically marginalized backgrounds.
- Reduce costs of higher education to middle income and low income families.
- Lean into race-neutral strategies such as class based and geography based affirmative action.
- Don't just look at elite universities, which makes up a very small percentage of people.
- Also look into expanding and bettering state schools, community colleges, career academies, trade schools, etc.

## RESOURCES:

- [What is affirmative action? The SCOTUS decision affecting college admissions, explained - Vox](#)
- [What Is Affirmative Action? What Is the Equal Protection Clause? - The New York Times](#)
- [Affirmative action for rich kids: It's more than just legacy admissions : Planet Money : NPR](#)
- [Affirmative action around the world](#)
- [Study of Elite College Admissions Data Suggests Being Very Rich Is Its Own Qualification - The New York Times](#)
- [Opinion | The Real College Admissions Scandal - The New York Times](#)