




IN-PERSON TRAINING

BREAKING BIAS


LESSONS FROM THE AMISTAD

NEW JERSEY STATE BAR FOUNDATION



**“My part has been to
tell the story of the
slave. The story of the
master never wanted
for narrators.”**

Frederick Douglass



**"Hold fast to dreams,
for if dreams die, life is
a broken-winged bird
that cannot fly."**

Langston Hughes



Creating Brave Spaces

Talking about race and other facets of identity can engender strong feelings. It is important to create environments in which students can participate in these conversations constructively, and express opinions and questions without fear of judgement. This requires that educators create time to teach and practice social and emotional skills, including developing an awareness of one's own biases, building empathy, managing conflict and appreciating the perspectives of others.

"Safe spaces" is often used to describe settings that are conducive to positive dialogue. However, social justice educators have more recently reconceptualized these settings as "brave spaces." "Safe space" suggests that participants will not need to experience discomfort when discussing sensitive topics, but talking about issues such as race often involves difficulty and risk. Since members of marginalized groups often experience such struggles in their everyday lives, the expectation of "safety" for majority group members can be seen as an exercise of privilege. "Brave spaces" conveys the idea that all participants will embrace the discomfort of hard conversations with courage and openness.¹

The following group expectations are offered as a set of understandings that can be introduced to students as you work to build brave spaces. They can be adapted to suit the age and experience level of students.

¹ Arao, Brian and Clemens, Kristi. "From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice." *In The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections From Social Justice Educators*, edited by Lisa M. Landreman, 135–150. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013.

GROUP NORM	EXPLANATION
Recognize your own bias	We all have prejudices. They have been learned and can be unlearned over time. Change is a process.
Respect others	Value the perspectives of others. Listen openly and communicate nonjudgmentally.
"Try on" new ways of thinking	Let your guard down in response to ideas that are different; consider points of view that are new.
Speak from your own experience	Use "I-statements" that express your personal feelings; avoid "you should statements" that pass judgement on others.
Assume good will	Look for the good intentions of others before taking offense. At the same time, challenge biases in others directly and constructively.
Own your intentions and impact	Avoid being defensive when your words or actions hurt others. Reflect on your meaning and how you have affected others.
Ask questions	Be curious and open-minded. Don't avoid questions for fear that they won't come out right. Try your best to frame questions respectfully.
Find comfort in discomfort	Some discussions will make us feel uneasy. Remember that these feelings are a necessary part of learning and growing.
Conflicts may arise	Disagreements and hurt feelings will happen. Use conflict resolution skills and manage disagreements with civility.
Confidentiality	Don't reveal the identities of actual people when sharing instances of bias. Everything said in the room stays in the room.
Take space, make space	Participate and add your voice to the conversation. If you are taking too much space, step back and make room for others.



Race: *The Power of an Illusion*

Video Response—Episode 1: *The Difference Between Us*

"We can't find any genetic markers that are in everybody of a particular race and nobody of some other race; we can't find any genetic markers that define race."

1 What is your reaction to the idea that race is "an illusion"?

2 What has motivated people to classify humans in this way and powered this false idea for centuries?



What's in a Word?

What might be the inherent problems with these slavery-related terms? What are possible alternatives?

TERM	PROBLEM	ALTERNATIVE
Slave		
Slave owner or master		
Runaway or fugitive		



Lesson Plan Review: Agency, Resistance and Voice

1 Review one lesson plan that aligns with your grade level:

- a Grades 3–5—La Amistad: A Child's Journey
- b Grades 6–8—The Worth of a Slave
- c Grades 9–12—Slavery Built Our Region

2 As you review the lesson with your small group, think about and take notes on the following questions:

a What examples of agency, resistance or voice resonated for you in this lesson? Why?

b How would you adapt or extend this lesson for your particular students or program?

c How have you applied, or might you apply, the idea of highlighting agency, resistance or voice to other lessons you teach about the history/experiences of marginalized groups?

LA AMISTAD: A CHILD'S JOURNEY



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What do you think the experience was like for children who came to the U.S. on the *Amistad*? How do you think the experience changed them?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn about the rebellion by the kidnapped Mende aboard the slave ship *La Amistad*.
- Analyze a fictionalized child's perspective on the *Amistad* by creating a visual representation of it.
- Describe the lives the children of the *Amistad* were forced to leave behind and identify connections between these children's lives and their own.
- Interpret Hale Woodruff's murals depicting the *Amistad* and discuss the social and emotional effects of the rebellion and legal victory.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.

TIME NEEDED

60–90 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to project images
- *Journey on the Amistad—A Child's Perspective* handout (one per student)
- Drawing implements (markers, crayons, colored pencils)
- *Amistad Knowledge Cards* handout (one set per small group)
- *Gallery Cards* handout (one per student)



VOCABULARY

abolitionist

captive

enslaver

mutiny

bondage

enslaved

La Amistad

rebellion

Procedures

NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

When discussing slavery with students, it is suggested the term “enslaved person” be used instead of “slave” to emphasize their humanity; that “enslaver” be used instead of “master” or “owner” to show that slavery was forced upon human beings; and that “freedom seeker” be used instead of “runaway” or “fugitive” to emphasize justice and avoid the connotation of lawbreaking.

1 Project the image of the ship, La Amistad at <https://www.history.com/topics/abolitionist-movement/amistad-case>. Ask students if they have ever heard of the ship and invite them to share their prior knowledge. Briefly provide information from the site above (or a source of your choosing) about the Amistad rebellion and subsequent court case.

2 Project the painting *The Mutiny on the Amistad*, which is part of the series *Rising Up: Hale Woodruff's Murals at Talladega College*: <https://high.org/exhibition/rising-up>. Invite students to observe it closely. Have students engage in a turn-and-talk with a partner in which they discuss what most stands out to them in the painting and why. As a class, continue to examine the painting using some of the questions below.

- What feelings do you think the African people aboard the Amistad experienced after being forced from their homes and held captive on this ship? What do you think it took for them to rebel?
- What do you notice about the style of the painting, such as the colors and shapes the artist uses? What feelings does the style of the mural cause you to experience?
- Notice that Cinqué (the rebellion's leader) is battling the cook (in the yellow bandana) and another African is fighting the captain (in the green hat), but the faces of the white men are not shown. Why do you think the artist made this choice? *[The reason was to not humanize the enslavers.]*

NOTE

In 1938, the artist Hale Woodruff was commissioned to paint a series of murals for the new Slavery Library at Talladega College. The school, formed by a group of former enslaved people and new freedmen, was Alabama's first college dedicated to the educational needs of Black people. *Rising Up: Hale Woodruff's Murals at Talladega College* portrayed six noteworthy events in the history of Black people, from slavery to freedom. Three of the pieces focus on the Amistad rebellion.

3 Share with students that there were four children aboard the *Amistad*, three girls and a boy, and ask them to consider what it might have felt like for someone their age to be in such a frightening situation. Tell students that they will create a drawing—like Hale Woodruff—about the *Amistad*, but from a child's point of view. Distribute the handout *Journey on the Amistad—A Child's Perspective*, and explain that the story is a fictional account of what the experience of *La Amistad* might have been like for a child. Read aloud or have students independently read the story. After, direct students to sketch a portrait of the narrator or the scene as they imagine it. When students are done with their drawings, have them share and discuss in pairs or small groups. (Keep students in their small groups for the next step.)

4 Point out Sierra Leone on a map and ask students to consider what type of life the children on the *Amistad* were forced to leave behind in their home country. Give each small group a set of *Amistad Knowledge Gallery Cards*. Instruct group members to take turns drawing a card, reading it together, and discussing the questions at the bottom. Encourage students to make connections between these children's lives and their own, and to reflect on the idea that before they were taken into captivity, the children of the *Amistad* had lives not so different from their own.

5 Project (but omit the titles of) the two remaining *Amistad* murals at <https://high.org/exhibition/rising-up>: *The Trial of the Amistad Captives* and *The Repatriation of the Freed Captives*. Distribute copies of the *Gallery Cards* handout to students and review the instructions with them. Have students do a "gallery walk" and close observation of one or both paintings. When they are done, have students share their titles and captions in small groups or as a class. Share the actual titles and answer any questions students may have. Make sure they understand the following key points:


- Mural #2: *The Trial* depicts the court case in which the African people argued they had been illegally captured and had the right to fight for their freedom. The Court agreed and set them free.

NOTE

The captives aboard the *Amistad* were taken from Mendeland (also spelled Mendiland), in modern-day southwest Sierra Leone. The Mende people, whose language is also called Mende, are one of the two largest ethnic groups in Sierra Leone.

NOTE

For additional context and analysis of the murals, see the article "Amistad and after: Hale Woodruff's Talladega murals" in *The Magazine ANTIQUES*: <https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/amistad-and-after>.

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- Though the Court freed the African people, the U.S. government did not provide funds for their passage back to Africa. This money was raised by abolitionist groups, and the 35 surviving Africans returned home two years after they had been captured, as depicted in mural #3: *The Repatriation*. The other 18 people died at sea or in prison awaiting trial.
 - The Amistad case is one of the most important court cases in U.S. history. It ruled that enslaved people were not property and could not be owned. The case showed that many people—including powerful individuals—were against slavery. It strengthened the abolitionist movement, which would lead to the end of slavery 25 years later.

Discussion Questions

1

How do you think it felt for millions of enslaved Americans to learn of the case freeing the Amistad captives, even while they remained in bondage? Do you think they felt more hopeful or discouraged? Why?

2

How does it make you feel to read what could have been a child's version of history? Why are these kinds of sources difficult to find?

3

What connections did you discover between your life and the West African children aboard the Amistad? What kinds of things do children everywhere have in common?

4

What do you think was the first thing the children of the Amistad did when they returned home?

5

How do you think the children—and their families and communities—were different as a result of the Amistad events?

6

Efforts to end chattel slavery in the U.S. began in the late 1700s, but slavery did not become illegal until the 1860s. What does this tell you about the way change happens? What other movements for change are you aware of that took a long time to reach their goals?

Lesson Extensions

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Edinger, Monica. *Africa is My Home: A Child of the Amistad*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2013.
 - + Janovy, C.J. "With Powerful Murals, Hale Woodruff Paved The Way For African-American Artists." *NPR*, December 19, 2015. <https://www.npr.org/2015/12/19/459251265/with-powerful-murals-hale-woodruff-paved-the-way-for-african-american-artists>.
 - + PBS Newshour Extra. "Lesson plan: Six murals tell the story of La Amistad and the African slave trade." January 29, 2015. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons-plans/rising-up-the-talladega-murals-lesson-plan-and-digital-student-guide>.
 - + State Bar of Georgia. "The Amistad Case: 'Give us Free'." June 20, 2018. YouTube video, 7:22. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_zTN6tsDpw&t=18s.
 - + Studies Weekly. "The Amistad." March 4, 2016. YouTube video, 1:21. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NE1xFtoFvco>.
- Have students create a map tracing the route of the Mende captives aboard La Amistad, from their home in Sierra Leone to Cuba and north to New York and Connecticut. Have them include the journey back to Africa for the 35 people who survived.
 - *The United States v. The Amistad* was an important court case that helped to pave the way for the abolition of slavery. Assign students to research another U.S. Supreme Court decision related to slavery. *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) is the most famous. Lesser-known cases include *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842), *Strader v. Graham* (1851), and *Ableman v. Booth* (1859). Have students create a poster illustrating the significance of the case.
 - Hale Woodruff's murals helped educate the public about the evils of slavery. Have students explore other works of art that were used to resist slavery, such as the painting "Am Not I A Man And A Brother," (c. 1800), based on English potter Josiah Wedgwood's design: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-43233175>. This image depicts an enslaved African man, in chains, kneeling at a sugar plantation in the Caribbean. It became the dominant image of the abolition movement in Britain.

Amistad Knowledge Cards Photo Credits

SLAVE SHIP: Sullivan, George L. *Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters and on the Eastern Coast of Africa*. 1873. The Graphic: An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper, London.

RICE AND PLANTAINS: Nwachukwu, Nancy. Jollof rice with fried fish and fried plantain. March 17, 2013. Wikimedia Commons. Accessed June 17, 2020. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:jollof_rice_with_fried_fish_and_fried_plantain.jpg.

MANKALA: Burnett, Colin. Wooden Mancala board. June 30, 2005. Wikimedia Commons. Accessed June 17, 2020. https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Wooden_Mancala_board.jpg&oldid=195747615.

CHILDREN PLAYING: Gitau, Git Stephen. Shallow Focus Photography Of Two Kids Playing On Swing. Digital image. Photo by Git Stephen Gitau from Pexels.

CHILD WITH MOTHER: Dazzle Jam. Girl With Braided Hair Standing While Carrying Boy Wearing Beige Long Sleeved Top. June 21, 2017. Digital image. Pexels.



Journey on the Amistad— A Child's Perspective

NAME: _____

I am so cold, and hungry, and tired, but I cannot sleep. I need to sleep. Maybe I'm dreaming. Maybe I am home in bed with my baby sister and brother. We are huddled together, full bellies, with plans to play tag, and hunt and fish. Maybe I am dreaming. But I can't close my eyes. Then I will see the white face man who hit me and took me. I can't close my eyes. I hate his face. I don't ever want to see it again. If I sleep, I will see it again. Maybe I should try. Maybe this is a dream.

Or maybe my daddy will come for me. He is so big and strong. He will find me, and take me home. And my mom will hold me, and fill my belly and tell me stories. They will find me, and protect me. I will never have to see another white faced man again.

It is so cold here. Why is it so cold? I haven't seen the sun in so long. Is there no sun where we are going? Where are we going? Why did the white faced men take us?

I hope my baby brother and sister are safe. They were still sleeping when I last saw them. I should have stayed. I shouldn't have snuck away to play with my friend Imani before sunrise. I should have stayed. Then, I would still be with them. I miss them. And I miss Imani. I hope she got away. She was running so fast when we saw the white faced men. She was always faster than me. I hope she got away. I hope she is warm and her belly is full. I hope I will see their faces again.

Maybe I'm just dreaming. My eyes are so heavy. I can't stop them from closing anymore. Maybe when I wake up I will be home.

Below, sketch a portrait of the storyteller or the scene that is taking place as you imagine it.



Amistad Knowledge Cards



THE CHILD ON THE SHIP

- Slave ships were cold and dark.
- Some children were hungry and seasick.
- The children were separated from the adults and they felt alone and scared.

Question for discussion: Discuss a time when you felt alone and scared.



THE CHILD IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY

- In West Africa, some children ate rice and plantains.
- Some children slept in village huts with their whole family, including grandparents.
- West Africa is very hot and the children went to the beach and swam in the ocean.

Questions for discussion: What is a favorite food in your home? What activities does your family enjoy?



THE CHILD PLAYING WITH FRIENDS

- Some children in West Africa play Mancala.
- Children played on the beach around the fishing boats.
- Children used their imaginations and made up a lot of games.

Question for discussion: What are some of your favorite games and why do you like them?



THE CHILD WITH THEIR MOM

- In West Africa, children are considered the hope and future of a community.
- Children are loved by their mom and dad. Each day after school they are hugged and kissed.
- One day, the children will be the leaders and elders of their community.

Question for discussion: What do you do with your mom or dad that is special?



Gallery Cards

NAME: _____

As you view the Hale Woodruff murals, think about the following questions and write notes about what you observe. Then give each mural a title and caption (short description) that you think captures the main idea.

- 1 What do you think is taking place in the scene?
- 2 Who do you think are important figures in this scene? What do you think they are thinking or feeling?
- 3 What objects did the artist include to help us understand this moment in history?
- 4 How does the painting make you feel? How does the artist create these feelings?

MURAL #2

Title: _____

Caption: _____

Notes: _____

MURAL #3

Title: _____

Caption: _____

Notes: _____

~ Use the back of this page to write additional notes if you need more space. ~

THE WORTH OF A SLAVE



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is chattel slavery and how did it dehumanize Black people? What was the relationship between chattel slavery and economics in the U.S.?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Explain the difference between slavery and chattel slavery.
- Create a graph showing the growth of chattel slavery in the U.S. between 1790 and 1860.
- Investigate the economics of slavery, specifically the relationship between slavery and the cotton industry.
- Analyze primary documents on slave auctions and the commodifying of Black people.
- Discuss and reflect on the dehumanization required for the practice of chattel slavery.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

60–90 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- *To the Highest Bidder* handout (one copy to project)
- *Chattel Slavery* handout (one copy per student)
- *Bought and Sold* handout (one copy per student)



VOCABULARY

auction

chattel slavery

dehumanize

enslaved

enslaver

transatlantic
slave trade

The Weeping Time

Procedures

NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

When discussing slavery with students, it is suggested the term “enslaved person” be used instead of “slave” to emphasize their humanity; that “enslaver” be used instead of “master” or “owner” to show that slavery was forced upon human beings; and that “freedom seeker” be used instead of “runaway” or “fugitive” to emphasize justice and avoid the connotation of lawbreaking.

PART I

Defining a Cruel Institution (20 minutes)

- 1 Project the handout depicting the painting *To the Highest Bidder*. Ask students to reflect on the image and the questions below as a “quick-write” or by discussing with a partner. Then provide context on the painting (see the NOTE) and allow students to share some of their reactions.
 - Who are these people and what might be happening to them? How do you know?
 - What is the meaning of the painting’s title?
 - What might the people in the painting be feeling? How do they make you feel? Explain.
- 2 Comment that the type of slavery practiced in the United States was a particularly inhumane form called *chattel slavery*. Independently or as a class, have students review the two definitions on the handout, *Chattel Slavery*, and create a Venn diagram comparing them.
- 3 Share the following facts with students. Then ask what they think drove the investment of huge sums of money in slavery. What made this abhorrent practice a “big business” during the 1700s and 1800s?
 - The average cost of an enslaved person at auction in the United States was about \$400 in the 1850s (approximately \$13,000 in today’s money).¹

NOTE

New York artist Harry Herman Roseland (c.1867–1950) was known for his paintings depicting poor Black Americans. *To the Highest Bidder* portrays a pre-Civil War scene of a mother and daughter about to be separated by a slave auction. A post on the website *Jubilo! The Emancipation Century*, notes: “I am taken by the somber desperation in the eyes of the mother. Her gaze seems to both shame and challenge the viewer: how can you look at me, and know what is about to happen, and yet do nothing?” (<https://jubiloemancipationcentury.wordpress.com/tag/harry-herman-roseland>)

¹ CPI Inflation calculator, <https://www.officialdata.org>; Williamson, Samuel H. and Cain, Louis P. “Measuring Slavery in 2016 Dollars.” MeasuringWorth.com. <https://www.measuringworth.com/slavery.php>.

- About a third of all Southerners enslaved Black people. Of the 46,300 plantations that existed in 1860, about half had 20 or fewer enslaved people; 45 percent had 20–30, five percent had 100–500, and a smaller number 500–1,000.²
- According to the 1860 census, 4 million enslaved people lived in the U.S. (This was 89 percent of all people of African descent in the U.S.) Their value was about \$3.5 billion at the time.³

NOTE

In *The New York Times Magazine* article “What Is Owed,” Nikole Hannah-Jones (drawing on Ta-Nehisi Coates) writes: “Racism is the child of economic profiteering, not the father.” During this lesson, help students understand that economic systems and the desire for wealth drove slavery, and that racist ideology grew from this as a rationale for the brutal practice.

PART II

The Economics of Slavery (30 minutes)

4

Tell students that Southern landowners knew they could make huge profits from crops like cotton and tobacco, but these crops required a lot of people to work the land. Enslaved labor provided a cheap (though morally costly) solution to their problem. As an example of this slavery-driven economy, show students the following PBS video and debrief using the questions below: “African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross—The Cotton Economy” (3:03): <https://www.pbs.org/video/african-americans-many-rivers-cross-cotton-economy-and-slavery/>

- What was the relationship between cotton and chattel slavery?
- How did the desire for cotton affect Native American people?
- How did all white Americans—not just Southerners—profit from slavery?
- What facts or images stood out to you most? How did they make you feel?

2 Pruitt, Sarah. “5 Myths About Slavery.” *History.com*, May 3, 2016. <https://www.history.com/news/5-myths-about-slavery>; National Humanities Center. “Enslavement/Plantation.” <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/enslavement/enslavement.htm>.

3 Coates, Ta-Nehisi. “Slavery Made America.” *The Atlantic*, June 24, 2014. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/slavery-made-america/373288>.

5

Project the interactive map, "The Spread of U.S. Slavery, 1790–1860": <https://lincolnmullen.com/projects/slavery>. Briefly click on each decade (1790, 1800, 1810, etc.) so students can observe the expansion of slavery over this 70-year period. Roll the cursor over any area to show students how the statistics for particular counties come into view. In small groups, have students create a graph comparing two counties, one Northern and one Southern (include your own county if possible). Direct them to plot the total number of enslaved people for each county at three points in time—1800, 1830 and 1860. Give students access to laptops or tablets to gather the data, or post the data on the board if this technology is not available.

PART III

Human Beings for Sale (30 minutes)

6

Play the following audio clip of Fountain Hughes, a former enslaved person, reflecting on the buying and selling of Black people: "1619," Episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy (10:40–11:31): <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html>.

(A transcription of the clip is included in the handout *Bought and Sold*.) Discuss the following:

- How did it feel to hear about a human being treated like an animal or other possession (chattel)?
- What mindset or motivation do you think it took for white people to dehumanize Black individuals in this way?
- What is your reaction to Fountain's comment that he "doesn't like to talk about it, because it makes people feel bad"? Why is it important that we talk about slavery today, more than 150 years after it was abolished?

NOTE

"1619" is a *New York Times* audio series that examines the long shadow of American slavery. Fountain Hughes (1848–1957) was born into slavery in Virginia and remained enslaved until the end of the Civil War, in 1865. His interview is part of *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938*, which contains more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery collected in the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

7

Share that one of the largest auctions of enslaved people was held on a racetrack near Savannah, Georgia, in 1859. Due to the steady rain throughout the two-day sale and devastation to the 436 affected families, the event came to be known as “the weeping time” because it was said that the heavens were weeping over the inhumanity. Distribute the handout *Bought and Sold* to each student. In small groups, instruct them to read at least two of the narratives from enslaved people and to review the slave auction illustration and poster on the following pages. Have them discuss and record their response to the following prompts:

- Describe what you imagine a slave auction was like—the sights, the sounds, the people present and their thoughts and feelings.
- What details did you notice in the interviews and images that reveal the inhumanity of slave auctions?
- Enslaved people called the Georgia auction “the weeping time.” What name would you give to the time in history in which we allowed the buying and selling of human beings?

8

Conclude the lesson by returning to the painting *To the Highest Bidder*. Share the following post from an online commentator (see step 1 for attribution): “Her gaze seems to both shame and challenge the viewer: How can you look at me, and know what is about to happen, and yet do nothing?” Have students choose one of the following voices and write a brief reflection in that voice, exploring what might have motivated people’s actions in response to slavery in the 19th century:

- I look at you and see only property to be bought and sold...
- I look at you and it pains me, but there is nothing I can do...
- I look at you and feel a sense of personal responsibility to do something...

Discussion Questions

- 1 What are the beliefs behind chattel slavery that made it so terribly brutal?
- 2 What do you think were the primary motivations leading white individuals and the U.S. government to support slavery for over 200 years?
- 3 What does it mean to dehumanize a person or group? Why did chattel slavery *have to* dehumanize Black people?
- 4 How did enslaved and other Black people resist being dehumanized?
- 5 How did it feel to hear/read interviews in which former enslaved people share their experiences in their own words?
- 6 How do you think slavery might still affect our country more than 150 years after the Civil War? Is there anything ordinary people or the government can do to deal with these problems today?

Lesson Extensions

- Have students listen to the section of “1619,” the New York Times audio series, that explores the cotton economy and its relationship to slavery: Episode 2—The Economy That Slavery Built (7:05-13:35): <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html>.
- Have students listen to additional audio clips from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938*. The interview of Aunt Phoebe Boyd (Dunnsville, Virginia, 1935) includes a section on picking cotton: https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1984011_afs25752b.
- Have students research the ways in which the economics of the textile industry continue to encourage human rights violations in today's world. For example, see the PBS/POV film “Made in L.A.,” and accompanying lesson plan on “Labor Practices in the Garment Industry”: <http://archive.pov.org/madeinla>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Coates, Ta-Nehisi. “Slavery Made America.” *The Atlantic*, June 24, 2014. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/slavery-made-america/373288>.
- + Desmond, Matthew. “In order to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the plantation.” *NY Times Magazine*, August 14, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html>.
- + Hannah-Jones, Nikole. “What Is Owed.” *NY Times Magazine*, June 26, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/24/magazine/reparations-slavery.html>.
- + History.com. “Roots: A History Revealed—The Slave Auction.” February 27, 2017. YouTube video, 3:02. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2lwAd0qrWo>.
- + USA Today. “Slavery's explosive growth, in charts: How ‘20 and odd’ became millions.” <https://www.usatoday.com/pages/interactives/1619-african-slavery-history-maps-routes-interactive-graphic/>



To the Highest Bidder by Harry Herman Roseland (1906)



Oil on canvas, 60 x 32 in., Oprah Winfrey collection, picture source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eoskins/27936673892>



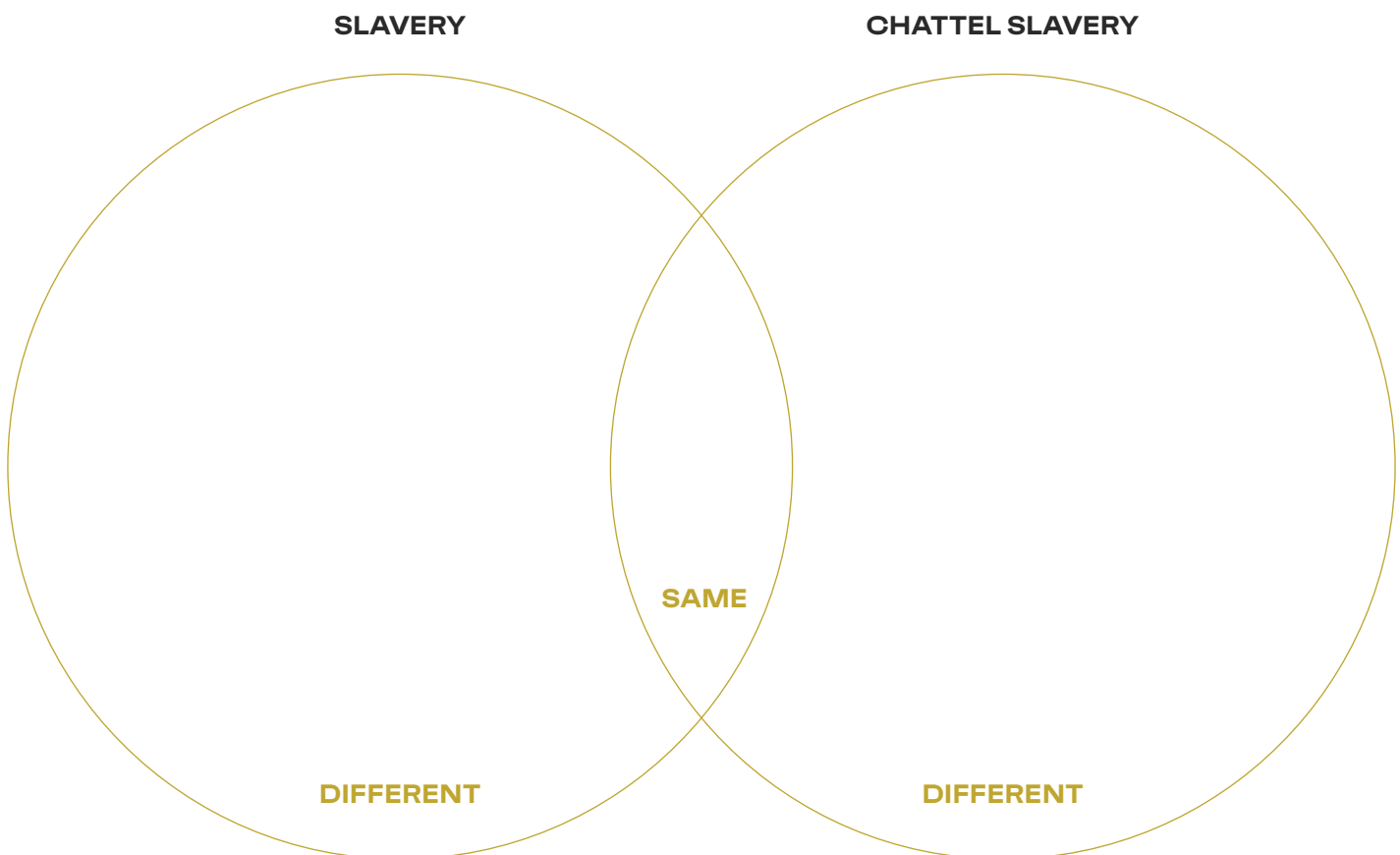
Chattel Slavery

NAME: _____

Read the definitions below. Then fill in the Venn diagram with examples of ways in which the types of slavery described are similar and different.

SLAVERY: Slavery is a condition in which a person is owned by another person. Slavery was historically practiced in the ancient world when conquerors would enslave the people they defeated. Very often, enslaved males were murdered and females worked for the conquerors. Enslaved people were owned, but had the ability to become a part of the community through marriage and/or owning property. This type of slavery was not primarily driven by profit. Enslaved people were seen as humans of a lower status.

CHATTEL SLAVERY: Chattel slavery is a condition in which enslaved Africans were viewed as personal possessions, the equivalent of livestock or furniture. These “possessions” had a monetary worth and generated wealth for enslavers and for white society. In this system, enslaved people had no rights or privileges and were unlikely to be freed. This form of slavery was practiced in the Americas and was a result of the transatlantic slave trade. The enslaved people were seen as less than human.





Bought and Sold

The excerpts below are from "Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938." The collection contains more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery and 500 photographs of former enslaved people, and can be found at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection>.

Fountain Hughes, Baltimore, Maryland, Age 101 (at time of interview)

"My name is Fountain Hughes. I was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. My grandfather belonged to Thomas Jefferson. My grandfather was 115 years old when he died, and now I am 101 year old. Now in my boy days, we were slaves. We belonged to people. They'd sell us like they sell horses and cows and hogs and all like that, have an auction bench. Put you up on the bench and bid on you the same as you're bidding on cattle, you know. But still, I don't like to talk about it, because it makes people feel bad."



Hannah Travis, Little Rock, Arkansas, Age 73

"Didn't nobody have any rights then. They would just put 'em up on a block and auction them off. The one that give the most he would take 'em. Didn't nobody have no schooling only white folks. The white children would go to school but they didn't allow [Black children] to go."

Will Ann Rogers, Brinkley, Arkansas, Age 70

"When ma was a young woman, she said they put her on a block and sold her. They auctioned her off at Richmond, Virginia. When they sold her, her mother fainted or dropped dead, she never knowed which. She wanted to go see her mother lying over there on the ground and the man what bought her wouldn't let her. He just took her on. Drove her off like cattle, I reckon. The man what bought her was Ephram Hester. That the last she ever knowed of any of her folks. She say he mated 'em like stock so she had one boy. He livin' down here at Helena now. He is Mose Kent. He was born around Richmond, Virginia jes' lack dat she say."

Violet Shaw, West Memphis, Arkansas, Age 50

"I heard Grandma Katie Williams say she was put up on a high stump and auctioned off. She told how great-grandma cried and cried and never seen her no more. Grandma come from Oakland, Tennessee to Mississippi. Grandma took the two young children and left the other two with great-grandma. They took her from her husband. She never seen none of them again. After freedom she didn't know how to find them. She never could get trace of them. She tried. She never married no more."

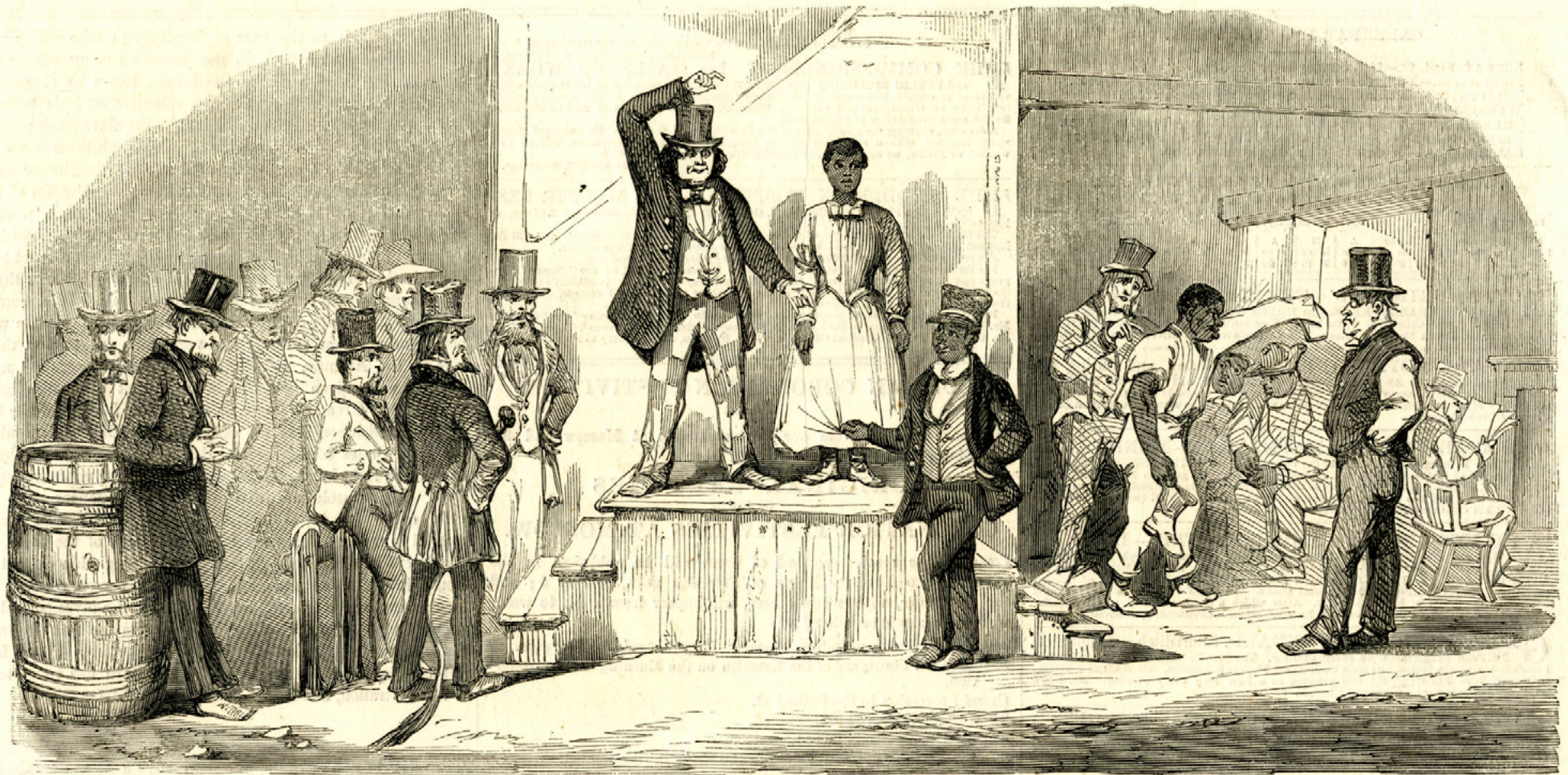
William Henry Rooks, Brinkley, Arkansas, Age 84

"Some of the white men had a hundred slaves and had plenty money. The war broke nearly all of them. The very worse thing I ever knowed about it was some white men raised hands to sell like they raise stock now. It was hard to have your child took off and never see or hear tell of it. Mean man buy it and beat it up. Some of them was drove off to be sold at auction at New Orleans. That was where some took them 'cause they could get big money for them."

Photograph of Fountain Hughes courtesy of The Jeffersonian newspaper, Towson, Maryland.
Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FountainHughes.jpg>.



Bought and Sold: Slave Auction at Richmond, Virginia



SLAVE AUCTION AT RICHMOND, VIRGINIA.

Author: VCU Libraries Commons; source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vcucommons/17243519918>



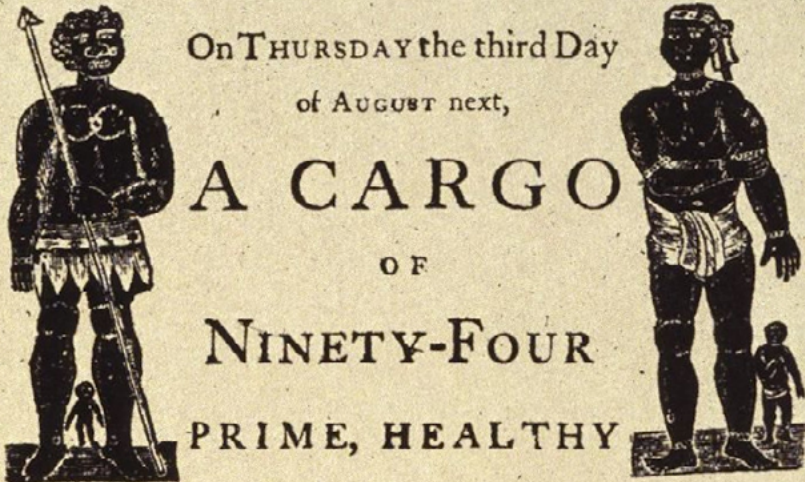
**Bought and Sold: Reproduction of a handbill
advertising a slave auction in Charleston,
South Carolina, 1769**

Charlestown, July 24th, 1769.

TO BE SOLD,

On THURSDAY the third Day
of AUGUST next,

A CARGO
OF
NINETY-FOUR
PRIME, HEALTHY



NEGROES,

CONSISTING OF
Thirty-nine MEN, Fifteen BOYS,
Twenty-four WOMEN, and
Sixteen GIRLS.

JUST ARRIVED,
In the Brigantine DEMBIA, *Francis Bare*, Master, from SIERRA-
LEON, by
DAVID & JOHN DEAS.

SOURCE: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slave_Auction_Ad.jpg

SLAVERY BUILT AMERICA: HOW IMPLICATED WAS OUR REGION?



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How did New Jersey participate in and profit from chattel slavery? How did enslaved people and abolitionists resist and ultimately end slavery in New Jersey?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Investigate a museum exhibit on slavery in New Jersey.
- Identify economic, political, social and geographic factors related to chattel slavery in New Jersey.
- Explain how enslaved people and abolitionists resisted and brought an end to slavery in New Jersey.
- Research abolition in New Jersey, and create a work product reflecting what they have learned.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

90–135 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to project images
- [Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History](#) (one copy per student or online access)
- *Five Dollars Reward* handout (one to project or one per student)
- *Notes: Slavery in New Jersey* handout (one per student)
- *Sold to Go South* handout (one to project)
- *Choice Board: The Forces of Abolition* handout (one per student)
- Laptops or tablets for student research



VOCABULARY

13th Amendment
abolition/
abolitionist
bondage
chattel slavery

Emancipation
Proclamation
enslaved
enslaver
fugitive

import/
importation
manumit/
manumission
plantation
Quaker

resistance
servitude
slave codes
Underground
Railroad

Procedures

NOTES

In this lesson, students examine the exhibit, *Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History*. The middle school lesson on this topic engages students in a lower level investigation of the same exhibit. See that lesson if some of your students would benefit from it.

When discussing slavery with students, it is suggested the term “enslaved person” be used instead of “slave” to emphasize their humanity; that “enslaver” be used instead of “master” or “owner” to show that slavery was forced upon human beings; and that “freedom seeker” be used instead of “runaway” or “fugitive” to emphasize justice and avoid the connotation of lawbreaking.

PART I

Introducing the *Slavery in New Jersey* Exhibit (20 minutes)

- 1 Project or distribute the handout *Five Dollars Reward* (from page 3 of the *Slavery in New Jersey* exhibit) and have students discuss the following questions in pairs:
 - Where and when do you think this ad might have been printed? What clues in the text lead to your conclusions?
 - What image do you have of the “negro boy” based on the description?
 - What do you think were the “perils” of “harboring” an enslaved person at this time?
 - How does it make you feel to read about a human being treated as chattel or property?
- 2 Reveal that the ad was placed in the *New Jersey Journal* in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, on October 20, 1812. Share that slavery was not legally abolished in New Jersey until the 13th Amendment became law in 1865, and that New Jersey was the last Northern state to ratify the amendment in 1866. Ask students if they are surprised that slavery existed in New Jersey for so long. Discuss why people might not associate the Northern states with slavery.

- 3 Tell students that the ad was featured in an exhibit called *Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History*,¹ which was on display at the Durand-Hedden House, a historic house museum in Maplewood, New Jersey. Tell students they will be exploring the exhibit (available in a booklet form) in class. Project the title page of the exhibit: <https://www.cbac.alpha60.org/docs/slavery-in-new-jersey-a-troubled-history.pdf> Together read the author's note on page i and the opening paragraph on page 2.
- 4 For homework, assign students to read pages 2–10 of the exhibit. Provide them with either a copy of the booklet or the URL if they are able to access it online. Distribute the handout *Notes: Slavery in New Jersey*, and review the instructions with students. Direct them to complete the handout as they read through the exhibit.

PART II

Slavery in New Jersey—Digging Deeper (20 minutes)

- 5 Have students take out (or access online) their homework and the *Slavery in New Jersey* exhibit. Seat them in small groups of 4–6 students and assign each group one of the following categories to focus on for this part of the lesson: economic, political, social or geographic.
- 6 Project the handout *Sold to Go South* (from page 8 of the *Slavery in New Jersey* exhibit). In their groups, have students discuss the details they notice and how the image reflects at least one economic, political, social or geographic factor related to slavery (focusing only on their assigned category). Students should reference their homework to support their observations. As a class, discuss their thoughts, which might include some of the following ideas:
 - **Economic:** Enslaved people were often kidnapped and sold South because it was profitable for enslavers.
 - **Political:** Changing laws and action by the courts against slavery motivated enslavers to sell their “property” out of fear that they might soon lose their legal right to ownership.

NOTE

If possible, enlarge pages 2–10 of the *Slavery in New Jersey* exhibit and post the pages around the room. Invite students to move around and view the posted panels as they work so the experience feels a bit more like being in a museum.

¹ Safian, Gail R. “Slavery in New Jersey: A Troubled History.” Durand-Hedden House & Garden Association Inc. in consultation with South Orange-Maplewood Community Coalition on Race. <https://www.cbac.alpha60.org/docs/slavery-in-new-jersey-a-troubled-history.pdf>

→ Social: White enslavers wielded social and physical power over enslaved people; it was acceptable for them to sell enslaved people, beat them, and otherwise treat them as chattel or personal property.

→ Geographic: The advent of railroads in 1829 made it easier to transport enslaved people across states.

7 In their table groups, have students continue to discuss economic, political, social and geographic factors that sustained or led to the abolition of slavery in New Jersey. Remind them to focus on the category their group has been assigned, and to reference the *Slavery in New Jersey* exhibit and their homework as they share.

PART III

Focus on the Forces of Abolition (45–90 minutes, depending on the independent projects chosen)

8 Tell students they will work on an independent project focused on their assigned factor (economic, political, social or geographic) as it relates specifically to resistance by enslaved people and “The Forces of Abolition” section of the exhibit. Post and review the following definitions:

→ Abolition: The act of getting rid of something

→ Abolitionist: A person taking action to eliminate slavery

9 Distribute the *Choice Board* handout and go over the options with students. Allow them to choose one project to work on individually, with a partner or as a group. Provide students with access to laptops or tablets as well as other relevant materials, and give them time in class to complete their projects.

10 When students are done, have them share and discuss their work in small groups that contain a mix of students who have completed different projects. Hang up work that is in a displayable form and allow students to briefly examine their classmates’ projects.

11 As a class, debrief their experience delving into the *Slavery in New Jersey* exhibit using some of the discussion questions on the next page.

Discussion Questions

1

Were you surprised to learn that chattel slavery existed and endured in New Jersey for almost 200 years? Why?

2

Why do you think the history of slavery in the North is often missing from our history books or lessons? What do you think these omissions tell us?

3

How has your understanding of slavery in our region changed?

4

Have any of your perceptions about slavery been challenged?

5

Which examples of resistance to slavery did you find most effective or inspiring?

6

What methods of resistance used by abolitionists do you think can be applied to problems in today's world?

7

What questions still remain for you about slavery in New Jersey?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + CamCo History. "Slave Ships on the Delaware: A Story of Camden, NJ." March 29, 2009. YouTube video, 7:23. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-juuB9SZr2A>.
- + Gigantino, James J. *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey, 1775–1865*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- + Harper, Douglas. "Slavery in New Jersey." 2003. <http://slavenorth.com/newjersey.htm>.
- + Hennelley, Robert. "Secret history of a northern slave state: How slavery was written into New Jersey's DNA." *Salon*, July 29, 2015. https://www.salon.com/2015/07/29/secret_history_of_a_northern_slave_state_how_slavery_was_written_into_new_jerseys_dna.
- + NJTV News. "NJ Stops Along the Underground Railroad." February 16, 2015. YouTube video, 3:14. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9e4nWro68>.
- + NJTV News. "Stops on the Underground Railroad in New Jersey." February 16, 2012. YouTube video, 3:06. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGAgpUiWJE>.
- + NPR. "New Jersey Apologizes for Slavery." *Tell Me More*. January 8, 2008. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=17925822>.
- + Princeton University. "The Princeton & Slavery Project." <https://slavery.princeton.edu>.
- + Rutgers University. "Slavery in New Jersey Lesson Plan." New Jersey Center for Civic Education. <http://civiced.rutgers.edu/files/nj/Slavery%20in%20NJ.docx>.
- + Switala, William J. *Underground Railroad in New Jersey and New York*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006.



Five Dollars Reward

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.
Ranaway from the subscriber, the 21st inst. a *NEGRO BOY* named *BOB*, aged 13 years, very black, had some dim letters printed on his arm, a little above the wrist, and had an iron strap round his neck;—he also had on when he went away, an old hat, tow trowsers, and a man's round jacket made of linsey woolsey. Whoever takes up said Negro boy, and secures him in any goal, or returns him to the subscriber, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges paid. All persons are forewarned harboring him at their peril.

JOHN WOOD, JUN.

Transcription:

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.

Ranaway from the subscriber, the 21st inst. A NEGRO BOY named BOB, aged 13 years, very black, had some dim letters printed on his arm, a little above the wrist, and had an iron strap around his neck;—he also had on when he went away, an old hat, tow trousers, and a man's round jacket made of linsey woolsey. Whoever takes up said Negro boy, and secures him in any goal, or returns him to the subscriber, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges paid. All persons are forewarned harboring him at their peril.

JOHN WOOD, Jun.

NOTES:

Tow cloth was a coarse heavy linen used for clothing in the 18th century.

Linsey woolsey was a coarse fabric woven from linen or cotton and a wool filling.



NOTES: SLAVERY IN NEW JERSEY

NAME: _____

Read pages 2–10 of the exhibit about the history of slavery in New Jersey. As you read, consider the economic, political, social and geographic factors that sustained slavery or led to the abolition of slavery. For each section, write notes on the chart in at least two columns.

SECTION	ECONOMIC <i>Relating to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services</i>	POLITICAL <i>Relating to the government or the public affairs of a country, state, city or town</i>	SOCIAL <i>Relating to society or its organization, and the way people and groups interact</i>	GEOGRAPHIC <i>Relating to the nature and physical features of places, and their arrangement</i>
Page 2: <i>How It All Started</i>				
Page 3: <i>The Growth of Slavery in NJ</i>				

NOTES: SLAVERY IN NEW JERSEY (CONTINUED)



SECTION	ECONOMIC <i>Relating to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services</i>	POLITICAL <i>Relating to the government or the public affairs of a country, state, city or town</i>	SOCIAL <i>Relating to society or its organization, and the way people and groups interact</i>	GEOGRAPHIC <i>Relating to the nature and physical features of places, and their arrangement</i>
Page 4: <i>The Revolutionary War</i>				
Page 5: <i>Slavery in NJ Declined</i>				
Page 6: <i>The Civil War</i>				
Pages 7–10: <i>The Forces of Abolition</i>				

SOLD TO GO SOUTH



From an old print

SOLD TO GO SOUTH



Choice Board: The Forces of Abolition

NAME: _____

Choose one of the projects below under your assigned category and explore how enslaved people and abolitionists worked to end slavery in New Jersey. Revisit “The Forces of Abolition” section of the exhibit (pages 7–10) and conduct online research to help you gather information and ideas.

ECONOMIC <i>Relating to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services</i>	POLITICAL <i>Relating to the government or the public affairs of a country, state, city or town</i>	SOCIAL <i>Relating to society or its organization, and the way people and groups interact</i>	GEOGRAPHIC <i>Relating to the nature and physical features of places, and their arrangement</i>
Research the abolition movement in NJ. Imagine you are part of an abolition group and create a flier that persuades the public to abolish slavery by highlighting at least two ECONOMIC incentives. The flier should include your group's name, ideas and an illustration.	Research the abolition movement in NJ. Imagine you are part of an abolition group and create a flier that persuades the public to abolish slavery by highlighting at least two POLITICAL incentives. The flier should include your group's name, ideas and an illustration.	Research the abolition movement in NJ. Imagine you are part of an abolition group and create a flier that persuades the public to abolish slavery by highlighting at least two SOCIAL incentives. The flier should include your group's name, ideas and an illustration.	Research NJ ports and towns that were centers for the importation of enslaved people. Imagine you are part of an abolition group and create a flier advertising an upcoming abolition meeting in one of those cities or towns. The flier should include your group's name, at least three facts about the importation of enslaved people and an illustration.
One way enslaved people resisted slavery was to sabotage work and limit profits (e.g. by breaking tools or faking sickness). Research ways enslaved people disrupted economic activity and create a storyboard with at least three illustrated panels that tells this story.	Black Americans published many petitions and wrote letters to Congress making the case for abolition. Draft your own petition or letter in which you present at least three reasons why NJ should abolish slavery.	Research abolitionists Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, who ran the Eagleswood school, which was in a community that may have been a stop on the Underground Railroad (see p. 10 of the exhibit). Design a monument to honor their work that includes a plaque describing their accomplishments.	NJ's geography made it an important link on the Underground Railroad. Research “stations” in New Jersey and create a map showing possible routes to freedom passing through the state. Include labels and symbols showing how freedom seekers might have traveled and through which towns and cities they may have passed.
Many enslaved people ran away, winning their freedom and hurting their enslavers economically. Choose one of the reward notices on p. 3 of the exhibit. Imagine the enslaved person in the ad made it to freedom in Canada. Write an article for a local newspaper there describing their journey.	Research anti-slavery laws in NJ resulting from Quaker activism and the Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery (SPAS) (see p. 8 of the exhibit). Create a short speech for the next SPAS meeting that celebrates the passage of one of these laws and describes its requirements.	Black churches played an active role in abolition and the Underground Railroad. Research a NJ church and prepare a brief slide presentation that educates your classmates about its anti-slavery work. Examples include the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church near Swedesboro, Bethel A.M.E. Church in Greenwich Township and First Presbyterian Church in Newark.	In 1838, Jacob Brown, a freed enslaved person, bought eight acres of land in Fair Haven, NJ. He subdivided the land and sold pieces to his friends and family. Research Brown and create a design of the new neighborhood. Include a school, church, farms, shops and homes, and labels that describe how the residents used the land to create a free and independent existence for themselves.

FROM JUNETEENTH TO RECONSTRUCTION: THE PROMISE OF EQUALITY



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did new opportunities inspire Black people to turn hope into achievement during Reconstruction?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Explore the historical importance of *Juneteenth* and ways in which it is observed today.
- Discuss the meaning of Reconstruction and how it relates to the history of enslavement.
- Produce a work product that reflects their learning about one aspect of Reconstruction, such as education, the growth of Black communities or the right to vote and run for elected office.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

60 minutes



MATERIALS

- *All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom* by Angela Johnson (one copy of the book or access to online read-aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRIExoTfm3g>)
- *Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington* by Jabari Asim (multiple copies of the book or access to online read-aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ7OYUDVWBE>)
- *Booker T. Washington Route Map* handout (copies for 1–2 small groups)
- *Nicodemus: The First Black Community West of the Mississippi* handout (copies for 1–2 small groups)
- *The First Black Members of Congress* handout (copies for 1–2 small groups)
- Drawing paper and implements
- Different colored sticky notes



VOCABULARY

13 th Amendment	emancipation	homestead	Union
14 th Amendment	Emancipation Proclamation	Juneteenth	U.S. Congress
15 th Amendment	enslaved	plantation	U.S. Constitution
amendment		Reconstruction	

Procedures

1 Write “Juneteenth” on the board. Have students do a turn-and-talk to discuss what they know about this term, and allow a few volunteers to share their thoughts with the class.

2 Read aloud the book *All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom*, by Angela Johnson, (or show the online read-aloud at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRIExoTfm3g>). Discuss the following questions as you read:

- What does the title “All Different Now” mean? What changes took place that made things different?
- How did the local people react to the news of freedom? How did their reactions make you feel?
- The author says that the people ate, laughed and told stories “as a free people.” How do you think ordinary acts like eating and telling stories felt different to them after the news of freedom?
- What do you think the people were thinking as they passed by the cotton fields that night after the celebration?
- What do you think the people did the next day, week or month? How do you think they transformed their lives once things were “all different now”?
- What individuals or groups of people do you know about in today’s world who have to adapt to big changes in their lives? How are things “all different now” for those people?

3 Tell students that Juneteenth marks the beginning of a period called *Reconstruction*. Explain that in the years following the end of slavery, Black people took advantage of their new freedoms and rights to get an education, build new communities and job opportunities, vote and run for elected office and more.

NOTE

All Different Now tells the story of the first Juneteenth (June 19, 1865) through the eyes of a young girl, as news of emancipation spreads to her Texas plantation and the last of the enslaved people in the South. See the Background Information section of this unit for more information on Juneteenth.

NOTE

The links to online resources provided for option (c) below may be challenging for students. Encourage them to scan for relevant facts rather than read through the entire articles. If you have access to a children's encyclopedia or other elementary-friendly reference materials, redirect students toward these sources.

4

Set up learning stations as described below. (Depending on your class size, you may want to create two stations for each activity.) Tell students that they will choose one activity to help them learn more about Reconstruction and some of the ways in which Black people improved their lives following the end of slavery. Form groups based upon students' interests and have them complete the station activities. Circulate and guide students as they work.

STATION WORK

TOPIC	MATERIALS	INSTRUCTIONS
a) Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ <i>Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington</i> by Jabari Asim (physical copies of the book or online read-aloud at https://www.youtube.com/watchv=HZ7OYUDVWBE)→ <i>Booker T. Washington Route Map</i> (handout)→ Different colored sticky notes	Students read about Booker's efforts to become literate and his 500-mile journey to enroll in college. They sketch or write about two challenges he faced and two accomplishments he achieved, which are recorded on sticky notes and attached to a route map of Booker's journey.
b) Building New Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ <i>Nicodemus: The First Black Community West of the Mississippi</i> (handout)→ Drawing paper and implements	Students read about a community developed for and by Black people. They sketch a town plan as they imagine it, including at least five people and places from the reading. Students may also use an online town-building platform to recreate Nicodemus if available, such as Minecraft, Townscaper, Urban Plan or Cities: Skylines.
c) Voting and Electing Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ <i>The First Black Members of Congress</i> (handout)→ Access to the internet→ Drawing paper and implements	Students study a portrait of the first seven Black members of Congress and choose one to research further. They write a one-paragraph campaign speech for their subject that includes one detail about his background, one personal quality and one way he will improve his country.

- 5 If time allows, create small groups of students who completed different activities and have them share their work with each other. Conclude the lesson by gathering the class and discussing some of the questions below.

Discussion Questions

- 1 Why is Juneteenth an important day of celebration in the U.S.? If you have celebrated it, describe your experience.
- 2 What was Reconstruction? How did Black people rebuild their lives following the end of slavery?
- 3 What accomplishments during Reconstruction most stood out to you? What do you think it took for former enslaved people to achieve these things?
- 4 How did it feel for you to learn about the struggles and triumphs of newly freed Black people?
- 5 What struggles do Black people still face today? What modern-day triumphs do you know about?

Lesson Extensions

- Assign students to do additional research on the history of Juneteenth and the way it is celebrated today, including conducting interviews with community members, if appropriate. Then have them plan a Juneteenth school observance, which might include designing informative posters, delivering a multimedia presentation on the story of Juneteenth, reading or telling stories about the holiday and organizing a picnic or luncheon with red foods (symbolizing resilience).
- Have students read picture books about Reconstruction and then create their own picture book featuring the accomplishments and progress of Black people during this era. Recommended books include: *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch* by Chris Barton; *Ellen's Broom* by Kelly Lyons and Daniel Minter; and *Follow Me Down to Nicodemus Town* by A. LaFaye.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

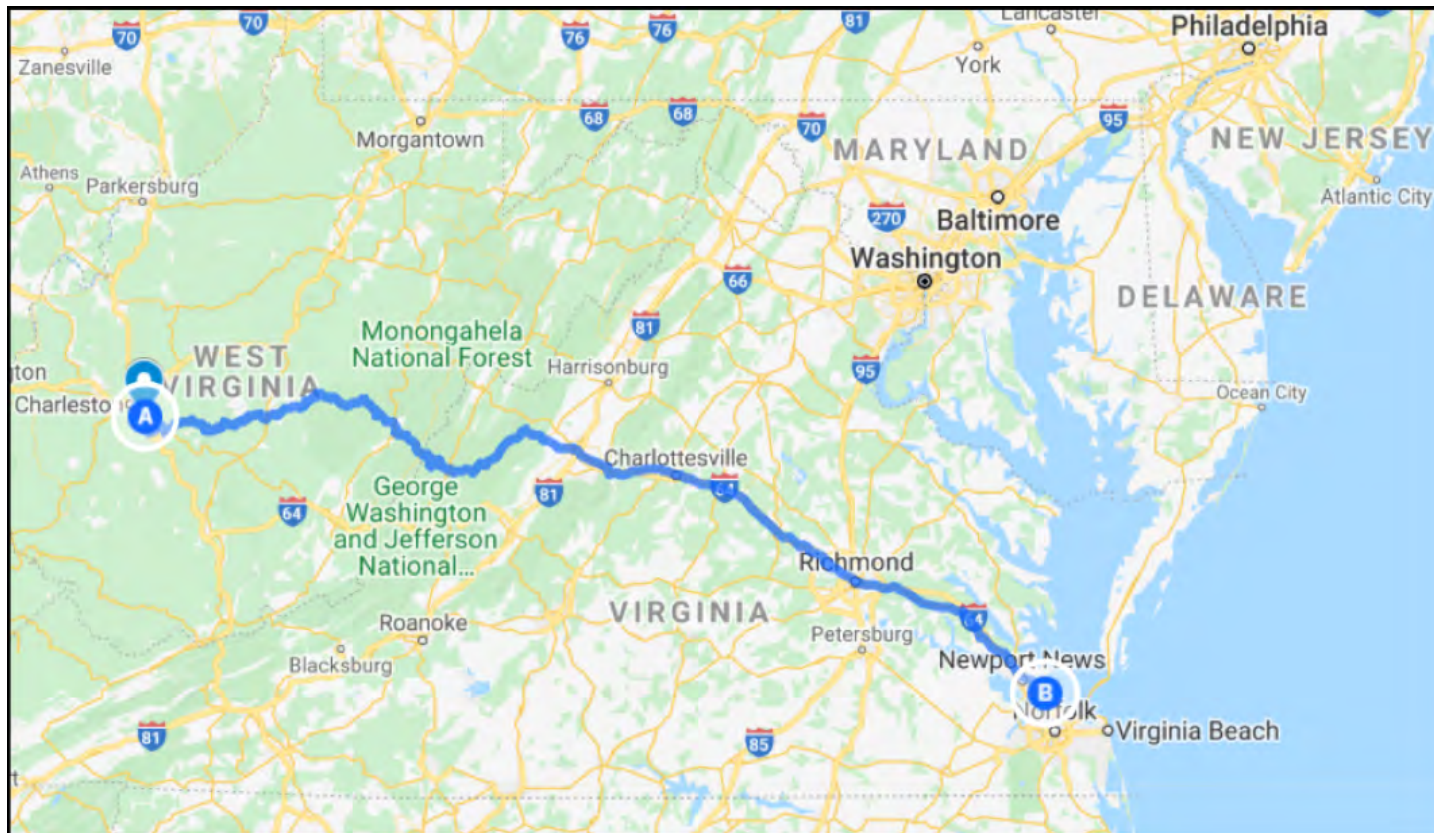
- + American Battlefield Trust. "Reconstruction: The Civil War in Four Minutes." April 25, 2017. YouTube video, 4:45. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CKcGj4Cq8E>.
- + CBS Sunday Morning. "The story of Reconstruction." April 7, 2019. YouTube video, 8:13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjetWrsQb-E&t=2s>.
- + Cooper, Floyd. *Juneteenth for Mazie*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Young Readers, 2015.
- + Dillard, Coshandra. "Teaching Juneteenth." *Teaching Tolerance*, June 12, 2019. <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-juneteenth>.
- + Scholastic, "Reconstruction: A History Mystery Activity," <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/activities/teaching-content/reconstruction-history-mystery-activity>.



Booker T. Washington Route Map

NAME: _____

Read about Washington's 500-mile journey from his home in West Virginia to Hampton Institute in Virginia. This historically Black university was created in 1868 to provide education to former enslaved people. As you read, think about the challenges Washington faced and the accomplishments he achieved. Sketch or write about at least two challenges and two accomplishments on sticky notes and attach them to the route map.





Nicodemus: The First Black Community West of the Mississippi

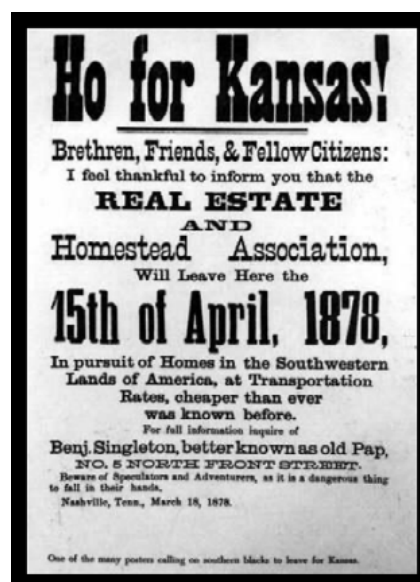
NAME: _____

Read about the community of Nicodemus and sketch a town plan as you imagine it. Include at least five people and places from the reading.

After the Civil War, many Black people wished to leave the places where they had been enslaved and start life anew. At that time, the U.S. government was giving away plots of land called “homesteads” to people who agreed to settle and farm them. Two men—a Black minister named W.H. Smith and a white land developer named W.R. Hill—decided to start a new community in Kansas. The state had declared itself free in 1861 and was far from the plantations of the South. They named their town Nicodemus, after a figure in the Bible, and in 1877 the first Black community west of the Mississippi River was born.

Now that they had a town, Hill and Smith set out to convince people to move there. They received help from Benjamin “Pap” Singleton, a carpenter from Tennessee. Pap traveled far and wide, handing out fliers about Nicodemus to other Black people looking for a fresh start. Pap couldn’t read or write himself, but he was an enthusiastic messenger. He handed out so many fliers, they nicknamed him the “Moses of the Colored Exodus” (exit), and those who followed were called “Exodusters.” Before long more than 300 settlers from Kentucky headed to Nicodemus, though many turned back when they saw how far-off and barren the land was. One of the settlers, Williana Hickman, remembered her reaction this way:

“When we got in sight of Nicodemus the men shouted, ‘There is Nicodemus!’ Being very sick, I hailed this news with gladness. I looked with all the eyes I had. I said, ‘Where is Nicodemus? I don’t see it.’ My husband pointed out various smokes coming out of the ground and said, ‘That is Nicodemus.’ The families lived in dugouts... The scenery was not at all inviting, and I began to cry.”





Nicodemus: The First Black Community West of the Mississippi (continued)



Soon the settlers built houses from sod, the grassy surface of the ground, and they were called “sodbusters.” As their first winter approached, they didn’t have enough tools, seed or money. They survived by selling buffalo bones, working for the local railroad and with help from Native Americans. As time went on, the townspeople built a stable, town hall, post office, bank, schools, churches and shops. By 1880, there were 500 people living in Nicodemus, which grew to include an ice cream parlor, hotels, two newspapers and even a baseball team.

Today, Nicodemus is a National Historic Site and only about 20 people live in the tiny town. Every July the residents hold a homecoming for the family members of the first settlers. They remember the hardships faced by those former enslaved people and the bravery it took for them to build a new life on the frontier.

SOURCES:

“Ho For Kansas!” April 14, 1878. Copyprint of handbill. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam009.html#obj9>.

Early Area Homestead—Nicodemus Historic District, Nicodemus, Graham County, KS. Photocopy of Historic Photograph. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.ks0077/photos.069503p>.

Legends of America. “Nicodemus—A Black Pioneer Town.” <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ks-nicodemus>.

National Park Service. “Kansas: Nicodemus National Historic Site.” <https://www.nps.gov/articles/nicodemus.htm>.

Washington Street Showing First Stone Church and Williams General Store—Nicodemus Historic District, Nicodemus, Graham County, KS. C. 1885. Photocopy of Historic Photograph. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.ks0077/photos.069504p>.



The First Black Members of Congress

NAME: _____

Read the information below and study the portrait “The First Black Members of Congress.” Choose one person to learn about using the links on this handout. Then create a one-paragraph campaign speech for him. Include one detail about his background, one personal quality and one way he will improve his country.

The United States Constitution sets forth the laws and rights that are most important to our country. An amendment is a change or addition to the Constitution. After the Civil War, three major amendments were passed:

- **The 13th Amendment**, approved in 1865, ended slavery in the United States.
- **The 14th Amendment**, approved in 1868, gave citizenship to all people born in the U.S., including former enslaved people.
- **The 15th Amendment**, approved in 1870, gave Black men the right to vote.

Once Black men were able to vote, they worked to elect members of their own communities to public office. From 1869–1899, more than 20 Black men—mostly former enslaved people—were elected to the United States Congress. Their presence in government did not last long, though, due to resistance among many white people and discrimination against Black people in the voting process. Women would not win the right to vote until 1920, and a Black woman would not be elected to Congress until 1969—a full century after the election of the first Black man.

Learn about the first Black congressmen using these sources. (If an article is long or challenging, scan for the facts you need rather than trying to read the entire page.)

Black Americans in Congress

<https://history.house.gov/People/Search?filter=1>

BlackPast

<https://www.blackpast.org>

5 Former Enslaved Turned Statesmen

<https://www.history.com/news/5-former-slaves-turned-statesmen>



The First Black Members of Congress (continued)



SOURCE: *The First Colored Senator and Representatives—in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States.*
Color film copy slide. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.17564>.

THE MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF RECONSTRUCTION



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What progress did Black people achieve during Reconstruction to create a more equal nation?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define Reconstruction and identify some of the major achievements of this era.
- Investigate key people, places and events during Reconstruction that represent the ways in which Black people improved their lives following the Civil War.
- Explore the significance of Reconstruction Era National Historical Park and design a monument for it based on their research on Reconstruction.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

90 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to watch a video and project an image
- *Emancipation Day in South Carolina* handout (one copy to project)
- *Design a Monument to Reconstruction* handout (one copy per student)
- Laptops or tablets for small group research
- Drawing paper and implements



VOCABULARY

13 th Amendment	emancipation	Freedmen's Bureau	Union
14 th Amendment	Emancipation Proclamation	plantation	U.S. Congress
15 th Amendment	enslaved	Reconstruction	U.S. Constitution



Procedures

- 1 Write “Reconstruction (1865–1877)” on the board and have students participate in a think-pair-share in which they discuss what they know about Reconstruction and the accomplishments of this era. Allow students to share some of their thoughts with the class and list key ideas on the board. Post and review the following definition:

Reconstruction: The period after the Civil War, from 1865–1877, when steps were taken to remedy the inequalities of slavery and bring the 11 states that had seceded back into the U.S.

- 2 Show the video “The Story of Reconstruction” (up to 5:25): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjetWrsQb-E>. Direct students to listen for information that confirms or negates what they discussed during the think-pair-share, and for additional examples of accomplishments during Reconstruction. After the video, discuss some of the following questions and continue to add to the information listed on the board in step 1.

- What is your reaction to the story of Robert Smalls, the enslaved man who captured a Confederate ship and later went on to become one of the first Black members of Congress? Had you heard this story before? Why do you think stories like his are not widely known?
- In the video, Reconstruction is described as a time of “unparalleled hope” and “irrational exuberance.” What do these terms mean? Why did many Black people feel this way about the period from 1865–1877?
- What were some major achievements of the Reconstruction era?
- What does the commentator mean when he says it was “the first time in this country or anywhere that an interracial democracy was created”?
- Upon seeing the portrait of a Black senator, Frederick Douglass is quoted as saying, “At last, the Black man is represented as something other than a monkey.” What did this quote make you think or feel?

- 3 Tell students that a memorial to Robert Smalls was installed at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Beaufort, South Carolina, near the house where he was born into slavery (and which he later purchased). Point out that according to the video (2019), this memorial is the only known statue in the South of any of the pioneering Black congressmen of Reconstruction. Show students a photo of the memorial, featuring the quote in the note to the right, and have them do a few minutes of reflective writing in response.
- 4 Share that Reconstruction Era National Historical Park was established in the final days of the administration of President Barack Obama as a way to honor the Black heroes of the Reconstruction era. Add that Beaufort, South Carolina—Robert Smalls’ birthplace—was chosen as the site for this park because of its special history in the struggle for racial equality.
- 5 Display the handout *Emancipation Day in South Carolina*, which depicts one of the earliest public readings of the Emancipation Proclamation at Port Royal, near Beaufort, on January 1, 1863. In pairs, have students write a caption for this image that imagines how Black residents of the region might have felt upon hearing the news that President Lincoln had declared the enslaved people of the Confederacy free.
- 6 Tell students that they will be conducting research into other people, places and events in and around Beaufort related to Reconstruction. Based on their research, they will design a monument for Reconstruction Era National Historical Park that represents the accomplishments of Black people during Reconstruction.
- 7 Distribute the handout *Design a Monument to Reconstruction*, and review the instructions with students. Form small groups and assign each one topic to investigate or allow them to choose the topic based on their interests. Provide students with access to laptops or tablets, and allow them time to research and design their monuments.
- 8 Post the monuments that groups have designed and direct students to conduct a “gallery walk” to view their peers’ work. Alternatively, form new small groups with a mix of students who have researched different topics and allow them to share in this forum. Encourage students to discuss what stood out to them about the ways in which Black people improved their lives in the years following the Civil War.

NOTE

The Smalls memorial can be viewed at https://southcarolinalowcountry.com/beauforts-hero-robert-smalls-and-tabernacle-baptist-church/?gclid=CjwKCAiAzKqdBhAnEiwAePEjknUdgPfGp-x91Eemx9mn1mYG3URh-89wXmTZRrZ-7WpcQUhfeB9bixoCzA0QA_vD_BwE. The words below the statue read, “My race needs no special defense, for the past history of them in this country proves them to be the equal of any people anywhere. All they need is an equal chance in the battle of life.”

NOTE

Research design contests or competitions that might be available to students and consider entering their monument designs, or hold your own class- or school-wide competition.



9

Conclude the lesson with a discussion using some of the questions below.

Discussion Questions

1

The Reconstruction era has been called a time of “unparalleled hope.” How did Black people channel their hope into progress during this period?

2

What qualities do you think it took for a largely poor Black population without much formal education to rebuild their communities and their lives?

3

What people, places or events from the Reconstruction era most surprised or stood out to you? Why?

4

How did the achievements of Black people during Reconstruction improve not only their own lives, but the nation as well?

5

Why do you think there are relatively few monuments in the U.S. that celebrate Reconstruction?

6

Do Black communities today face challenges that you can trace back to the time of the Civil War? Despite the achievements of Reconstruction, how has racism and inequality been ongoing in the lives of Black people?

Lesson Extensions

- Assign students to investigate the Digital Public Library of America's "Primary Source Set" on the Freedmen's Bureau (<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-freedmen-s-bureau#tabs>) or the 15th Amendment (<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-fifteenth-amendment>). Have them create a collage depicting key ideas, people and events they learned about as part of their exploration.
- The term "40 acres and a mule" is a famous phrase that is associated with Reconstruction. Ask students to deduce the meaning based on what they know about the needs of newly freed Black Americans. Then have students watch the PBS Learning Media video "Forty Acres and a Mule" (4:08, <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/mr13.socst.us.forty-acres/forty-acres-and-a-mule>) and/or read the excerpt from General William T. Sherman's "Special Field Orders, No. 15" (https://d43fweuh3sg51.cloudfront.net/media/media_files/Special_Field_Order_15_Student_Handout.pdf). Discuss the significance of "40 acres and a mule" and the desire among Black people for land during the Reconstruction era.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + American Battlefield Trust. "Reconstruction: The Civil War in Four Minutes." April 25, 2017. YouTube video, 4:45. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CKcGj4C-q8E>.
- + Digital Public Library of America. "Primary Source Sets: The Freedmen's Bureau." <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-freedmen-s-bureau>.
- + Dillard, Coshandra. "Teaching Juneteenth." *Teaching Tolerance*, June 12, 2019. <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-juneteenth>.
- + Facing History and Ourselves. "Video Lessons: The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy." <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/reconstruction-era-and-fragility-democracy-0>
- + PBS Learning Media. "The Reconstruction Amendments." <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/ilwnet17-soc-us-reconamend/the-reconstruction-amendments>.



Emancipation Day in South Carolina



"Emancipation Day in South Carolina"—The Color Sergeant of the 1st South Carolina (Colored) Volunteers addressing the regiment, after having been presented with the Stars and Stripes, at Smith's Plantation, Fort Royal Island, January 1—from a sketch by our special artist—see page 275.

SOURCE: *Emancipation Day in South Carolina*, 1863. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly.
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emancipation_Day_in_South_Carolina_\(1863\),_by_Frank_Leslie%27s_Illustrated_Weekly.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emancipation_Day_in_South_Carolina_(1863),_by_Frank_Leslie%27s_Illustrated_Weekly.png).



Design a Monument to Reconstruction

NAME: _____

- 1 Visit the website for Reconstruction Era National Historical Park to learn more about the park and Reconstruction: <https://www.nps.gov/reer/index.htm>. BONUS: If you have time, read the presidential proclamation establishing the park: <https://www.nps.gov/reer/learn/proclamation.htm>.
- 2 Choose one of the topics below to research. Review at least two sources and take notes on key people, places, events and other important facts.
- 3 Design a monument for Reconstruction Era National Historical Park based on what you learned. Choose a person, place or event that is an important part of the story of Reconstruction and freedom for Black Americans. Create your monument by sketching it, building a model of it or designing it online. Include a plaque with a brief paragraph describing it.

TOPIC	RESEARCH SUBJECT	SOURCES
The freedom to vote and serve as an elected representative	Robert Smalls , who escaped from slavery, served in the Union Army and was one of the first Black people elected to Congress	<p>Robert Smalls (U.S. House of Representatives) https://history.house.gov/People/Detail/21764</p> <p>Which Slave Sailed Himself to Freedom? https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/which-slave-sailed-himself-to-freedom/</p> <p>Robert Smalls (American Battlefield Trust) https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/robert-smalls</p> <p>Tabernacle Baptist Church—Resting Place of Robert Smalls and home of Robert Smalls monument http://www.beaufortsc.org/50-things-to-do/resting-place-of-robert-smalls</p> <p>Robert Smalls House, a National Historic Landmark http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/beaufort/S10817707017/index.htm</p>



Design a Monument to Reconstruction (continued)

The freedom to
get an education

Penn School,
one of the first southern
schools created to educate
formerly enslaved people

Penn Center History Timeline

<http://www.penncenter.com/explore-penn-centers-history>

Penn Center

<https://southcarolinalowcountry.com/penn-center>

Charlotte Forten (first Black teacher at the Penn School)

<https://www.pbs.org/onlyateacher/charlotte.html>

Brick Baptist Church (first site of the Penn School)

<https://www.nps.gov/reer/planyourvisit/brick-baptist-church.htm>

TOPIC

The freedom to
own property

RESEARCH SUBJECT

Green-Meldrim House,
where Union General
William T. Sherman—
after meeting with Black
leaders—issued the order
to redistribute property
once owned by Confederate
landowners to Black people
(known as “40 acres and a
mule”)

SOURCES

Sherman's Headquarters During the Civil War

<http://stjohnssav.org/worship/visit/green-meldrim-house>

The Story Behind '40 Acres And A Mule'

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/01/12/376781165/the-story-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule>

The freedom to
self-govern

Mitchelville, the first
self-governing community
of formerly enslaved people
during the Civil War

Mitchelville: The Hidden Town at Dawn of Freedom

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16754502>

Mitchelville History

<https://www.exploremitchelville.org/our-story-2/>

Mitchelville: One Town's Blueprint for Reconstruction

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/mitchelville-one-towns-blueprint-reconstruction>

RECONSTRUCTION: WHEN FREEDOM BROKE



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What was the promise of Reconstruction and what achievements did Black people make toward this promise?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define Reconstruction and describe some of the key achievements of this era.
- Explain the significance of the Reconstruction Amendments (the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution).
- Investigate the Freedmen's Bureau and its role in aiding Black Americans during Reconstruction.
- Analyze primary source material to better understand the perspectives of Black Americans during Reconstruction, the challenges they faced and their accomplishments.
- Create a poster representing key achievements of Black Americans during Reconstruction in one area, such as employment, education, voting and elected office and land ownership.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

65 minutes + time for students to complete research project



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to listen to/view audio and video clips, and to project a website
- *Thomas Nast's "Emancipation"* handout (one copy to project or one per student)
- *Thomas Nast's "Emancipation" Explained* handout (one copy for teacher reference)
- *The Promise of Reconstruction* handouts (one set of each of the following per small group)
 - *Employment*
 - *Education*
 - *Voting and Elected Office*
 - *Land Ownership*
- Access to laptops or tablets



VOCABULARY

13th Amendment

14th Amendment

15th Amendment

"40 acres and a mule"

Civil War

emancipation/emancipated

Emancipation

Proclamation

enslaved

Freedmen's Bureau

HBCUs

Juneteenth

reconstruction

secede/secession

Procedures

PART I

Defining Reconstruction (45 mins.)


NOTE

Mrs. Laura Smalley was born into slavery on a plantation in Hempstead, Texas, on an unknown date in the 1800s. She was interviewed in 1941 as part of *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938*. This collection contains more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery gathered in the 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

1

Tell students that they will listen to an audio recording of a former enslaved woman, Mrs. Laura Smalley, who recollects her life at the end of the Civil War, when enslaved people were emancipated. Share the background information from the note. Then project the page with the transcription and interview (1:49), and play the recording: <https://hearingvoices.com/webworks/juneteenth-emancipation>. After, discuss the following questions:

- Mrs. Smalley's timeline and memories seem to be a bit confused. Why might this be? How did her enslavers keep them in the dark about events that were taking place during and after the Civil War?
- Why did Mrs. Smalley think her enslaver ("old master") was dead? Why do you think the enslaved people did not know he was fighting in the war?
- Why didn't "old master" tell the enslaved people they had been emancipated at first?
- Why was there a big dinner on the 19th? What is the significance of this date? [*June 19, 1865—Juneteenth—is the day Union soldiers landed in Texas with news that the Civil War and slavery had ended.*]
- What does Mrs. Smalley say it was like for her family after "freedom broke"? What does she mean when she says, "turned us out just like...you turn out cattle"?
- What choices and resources do you imagine most former enslaved people had available to them after "freedom broke"?
- How did it feel to hear the actual voice of a former enslaved person? How was this different from reading about the experiences of enslaved people in a book?

- 
- 2 Ask students if they know the name of the period immediately following the Civil War, when “freedom broke,” or anything about this era. Allow a few volunteers to share their ideas. Post the following definition on the board and review with students.

Reconstruction: The period after the Civil War, from 1865–1877, when steps were taken to remedy the inequalities of slavery and bring the 11 states that had seceded back into the U.S.

- 3 Show the video, “Reconstruction in Four Minutes” (4:45): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CKcGj4Cq8E>. As students watch, have them note information that confirms or negates what they discussed earlier, and generate at least one question that they have about Reconstruction. Post their questions on the board.

- 4 Highlight the “Reconstruction Amendments” noted in the video and their critical importance in laying the foundation for a more equal life for Black Americans. Form small groups and assign each one of the Reconstruction Amendments—the 13th, 14th or 15th Amendment. Have groups consult one or more of the sources below and investigate what rights and freedoms their assigned amendment provided.

SOURCES

National Constitution Center: <https://constitutioncenter.org/education/classroom-resource-library/classroom/the-reconstruction-amendments>

Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/reconstruction.pdf>

Fasttrack Teaching Materials: https://www.fasttrackteach-ing.com/ffap/Unit_1_Reconstruction/U1_Reconstruction_Amendments.html

Kids Encyclopedia: https://kids.kiddle.co/Reconstruction_Amendments

5

In their groups, have students prepare a brief oral summary of the amendment in the voice of a 19th century member of Congress (encourage them to have fun with the old-time role play). Then create new small groups that include a mix of students who studied different amendments. Have them perform their old-time oral summaries and question one another about the significance of each amendment.

PART II

The Achievements of Reconstruction (20 mins. + time for group research projects)

NOTE

If students have access to laptops or tablets, the image can be viewed online at <https://tile.loc.gov/stor-age-services/service/png/pga/03800/03898r.jpg>.

6

Project or distribute the handout *Thomas Nast's "Emancipation,"* and review the introduction as a class. In small groups, direct students to analyze this famous lithograph, which imagines the difference that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would have on former enslaved people. Have groups create a T-chart with before and after conditions for Black people according to Nast. Use the handout *Thomas Nast's "Emancipation" Explained*, as needed to guide students' work.

7

As a class, discuss students' observations. Highlight Nast's emphasis on the themes of safe and adequate housing, public education and paid work. Ask students which of these predictions they think were realized during the period of Reconstruction.

8

Comment that Black people showed tremendous agency, imagination and innovation in building free lives with limited resources during Reconstruction. Note that the U.S. government aided Black people through an agency called the Freedmen's Bureau, and share the following brief summary:

"The Freedmen's Bureau, formally known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, was established in 1865 by Congress to help millions of former Black slaves and poor whites in the South in the aftermath of the Civil War. The Freedmen's Bureau provided food, housing and medical aid, established schools and offered legal assistance. It also attempted to settle former slaves on land confiscated or abandoned during the war. How-

ever, the bureau was prevented from fully carrying out its programs due to a shortage of funds and personnel, along with the politics of race and Reconstruction.”¹

- 9 Tell students they will conduct research, using primary documents from the Reconstruction era, to learn more about the achievements of Reconstruction in the areas of: (a) employment, (b) education, (c) voting and elected office, and (d) land ownership. Have students select one topic to study further and form small groups based on their chosen topics. Distribute the relevant *Promise of Reconstruction* handouts to each group and provide them with access to laptops or tablets.
- 10 Assign groups to review at least two of the primary documents on the handouts and consult one to two additional sources on their topic. After conducting their research, groups should create a poster representing key ideas, people, places and/or events related to their topic and the “Promise of Reconstruction.” Groups can create physical posters or design them digitally using online tools such as Glogster, Canva and Emaze.
- 11 When the posters are complete, display them in the classroom or in an online gallery (e.g., Voodoochilli), and allow groups to present their work. Conclude the lesson by conducting a discussion using the questions on the next page and by revisiting the questions students posed in step 3 of this lesson.

¹ “Freedmen’s Bureau,” History.com, last modified October 3, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/freedmens-bureau>.



Discussion Questions

1

What accomplishments during the Reconstruction era most stood out to you? What personal qualities did Black Americans exhibit in order to accomplish these things?

2

What challenges and obstacles did Black people encounter as they tried to rebuild their lives?

3

How did the U.S. government both help newly freed Black Americans and hinder their efforts?

4

How did Reconstruction change life for Black people? How did it change the United States?

5

What does it mean to be free? What does it mean to be equal? Do you think Black Americans secured freedom or equality during the Reconstruction era?

6

Do you think the promises of the Reconstruction era were fulfilled? Why?

7

Do Black communities today face challenges that you can trace back to the time of the Civil War? Despite the achievements of Reconstruction, how has racism and inequality been ongoing in the lives of Black people?

Lesson Extensions

- As of 2021, there have only been 11 Black senators in the history of the United States, and two of them were elected during the Reconstruction era—Hiram Revels (served 1870–1871) and Blanche K. Bruce (served 1875–1881). Assign students to research these senators and learn how they advocated for the needs of Black people following the Civil War. Then direct students to research how one modern-day Black senator is working on behalf of Black Americans. Have them compare the types of issues and needs addressed by early and current U.S. senators.
- Have students watch the PBS Independent Lens film *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities* (<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/tell-them-we-are-rising>). Discuss the history of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)—from the pre-Civil War era to today—and their significance for Black Americans. Assign students to choose one HBCU and investigate its unique history, which they can share through a brief oral report or multimedia presentation.
- Discuss that while there are few memorials to the Black heroes of the Reconstruction era, there are over 700 statues and monuments in the U.S. honoring the Confederacy. Have students analyze the map of “Confederate Symbols in the U.S.” at <https://www.politico.com/interactives/2017/confederate-monuments>. Investigate possible reasons for the large number of tributes to people and events that propped up slavery as opposed to the Black people who helped to rebuild our country after the Civil War.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

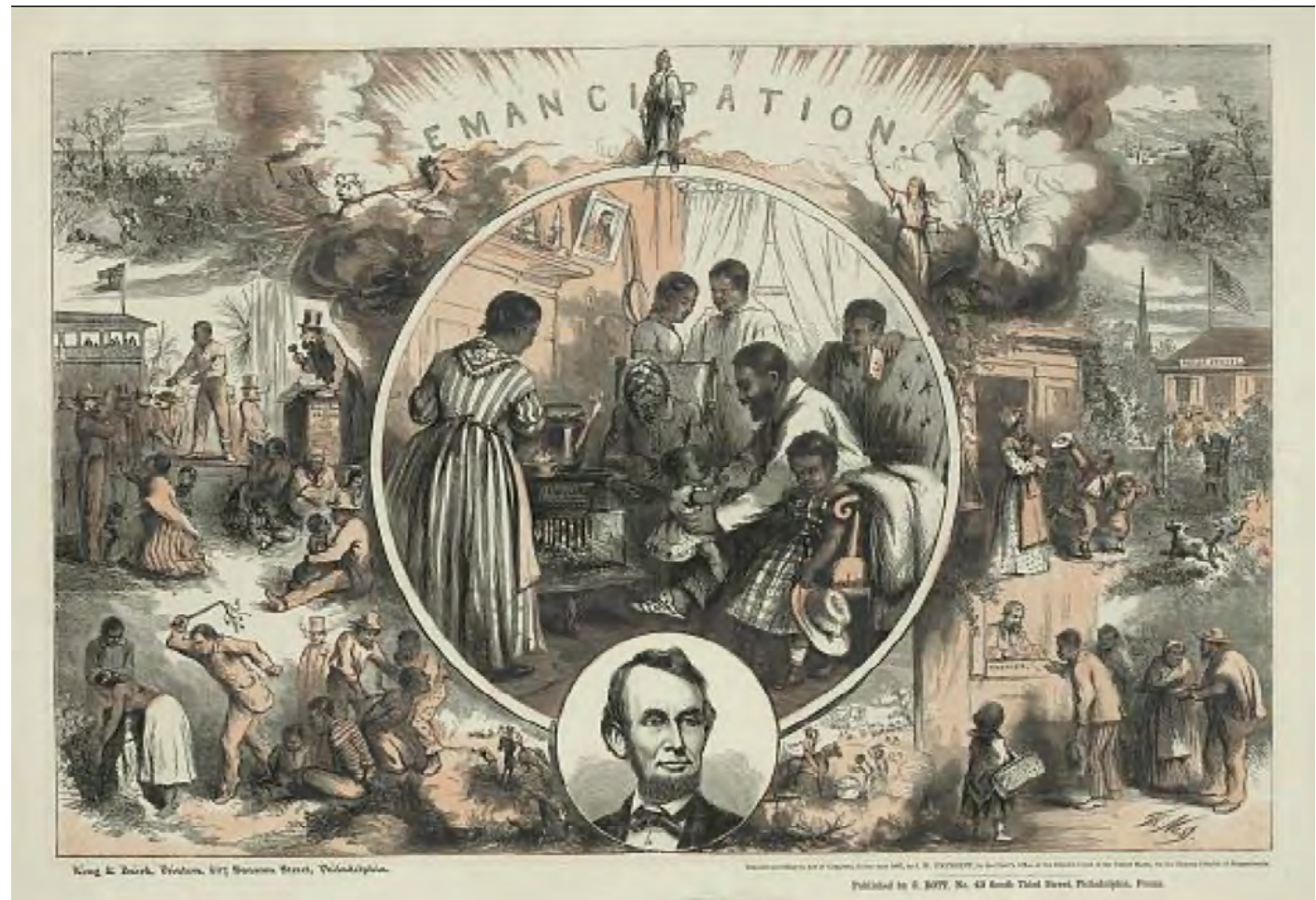
- + CBS Sunday Morning. “The Story of Reconstruction.” April 7, 2019. YouTube video, 8:13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjetWrsQb-E>.
- + CrashCourse. “Reconstruction and 1876: Crash Course US History #22.” July 18, 2013. YouTube video, 12:59. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=newsS7pMAPI&t=8s>.
- + Digital Public Library of America. “Primary Source Sets: The Freedmen’s Bureau.” <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-freedmen-s-bureau>
- + Facing History and Ourselves. “Video Lessons: The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy.” <https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/lessons>.
- + Library of Congress. “Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1938.” <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938>.
- + New Jersey State Bar Foundation Resources on the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments: <https://njsbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/respect-fall-2012.pdf>
- + <https://njsbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Respect-Winter-2007.pdf>
- + <https://njsbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Respect-Winter-2015.pdf>
- + PBS Learning Media. “The Reconstruction Amendments.” <https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/ilwnet17-soc-us-reconamend/the-reconstruction-amendments>.



Thomas Nast's "Emancipation"

Thomas Nast (1840-1902) was a famous editorial cartoonist, considered to be the "Father of the American Cartoon." He created "Emancipation" for the magazine *Harper's Weekly* in 1863, in response to President Lincoln's "Emancipation Proclamation." Issued on January 1, 1863, this proclamation set free all enslaved people in the 11 rebel states that had seceded from the Union.

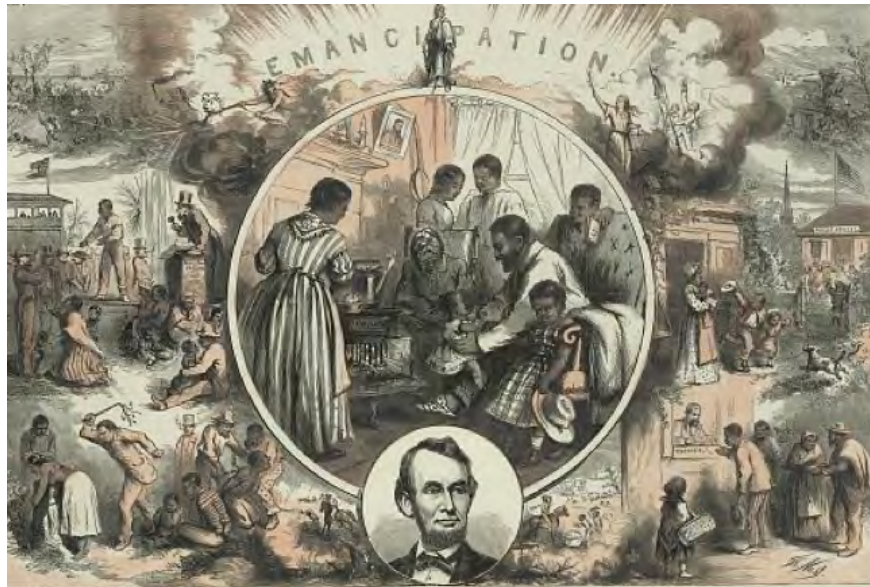
In "Emancipation of the Negroes—The Past and the Future," Nast depicts life for Black Americans before and after freedom. What predictions does he make? Which do you think were attained during the period of Reconstruction?



Thomas Nast. *Emancipation of the Negroes—The Past and the Future* (from "Harper's Weekly"), January 24, 1863, digital file from original print. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pga.03898>.



Thomas Nast's "Emancipation" Explained



The following description of Nast's lithograph is adapted from the Library of Congress:

- The central scene shows the interior of a freedman's home with the family gathered around a "Union" wood stove. The father bounces his small child on his knee while his wife and others look on.
- On the wall near the mantel hang a picture of Abraham Lincoln and a banjo.
- Below this scene is an oval portrait of Lincoln and, above it, Thomas Crawford's statue of "Freedom," which sits atop the dome of the U.S. Capitol.
- On either side of the central picture are scenes contrasting Black life in the South under the Confederacy (left) with visions of the freedman's life after the war (right).
- At top left, fugitive enslaved people are hunted down in a coastal swamp.
- Below, a Black man is sold, apart from his wife and children, on a public auction block.
- At bottom, a Black woman is flogged and an enslaved man branded.
- Above, two "hags," one holding the Cerberus (a multi-headed dog from Greek mythology that guards the gates of the Underworld), preside over these scenes and flee from the gleaming apparition of Freedom.
- In contrast, on the right, a woman with an olive branch and scales of justice stands triumphant. Here, a freedman's cottage can be seen in a peaceful landscape.
- Below, a Black mother sends her children off to "Public School."
- At bottom, a free Black man receives his pay from a cashier.
- Two smaller scenes flank Lincoln's portrait. In one, a mounted overseer flogs a Black field slave (left); in the other, a foreman politely greets Black cottonfield workers.

SOURCE: "Emancipation." Library of Congress. Accessed October 29, 2020. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004665360/#:~:text=Summary%3A%20Thomas%20Nast's%20celebration%20of,a%20%22Union%22%20wood%20stove.>



The Promise of Reconstruction: Education

- 1 **View** at least two of the primary documents below online.
- 2 **Consult** one to two additional sources to learn about education opportunities for former enslaved people following the Civil War. Examples include the Penn Center (one of the first schools for formerly enslaved people); Freedmen's schools (thousands were built by the U.S. government); and the establishment of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
- 3 **Create** a physical or digital poster representing some of the key ideas, people, places and/or events related to your topic. Your poster should show the opportunities and challenges for Black Americans during Reconstruction.



Education Among the Freedmen, 1866–1870, South Carolina

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african-american-odyssey/images/05/0502001r.jpg>



School in Liberty County, Georgia, about 1890

<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-freedmen-s-bureau/sources/110>

The Freedmen's Bureau established schools throughout the South, such as this one created by the Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia between 1865 and 1870.

The Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association published this newsletter featuring "Sea-island School, No 1—St. Helena Island, Established April 1862." Donations from various organizations aided 1,400 teachers in providing literacy and vocational education for 150,000 freedmen.



The Freedmen's Union Industrial School, 1866, Virginia

<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a38219/>



Howard University Medical School, Washington, D.C., 1868

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medical_faculty_\(IA_101487174_nlm.nih.gov\).pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medical_faculty_(IA_101487174_nlm.nih.gov).pdf)

Howard University was among the first historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) established in the South following the Civil War. This flier announces their first medical session in 1868, just three years after emancipation.

Northern teachers, mostly white women, traveled to the South to provide education for formerly enslaved women from primary to college levels. They taught literacy, arts, theology and vocational skills, such as sewing (as seen in this image).



The Promise of Reconstruction: Voting and Elected Office

- 1 **View** at least two of the primary documents below online.
- 2 **Consult** one to two additional sources to learn about opportunities to vote and hold office for former enslaved people following the Civil War. Examples include the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, people like Tunis G. Campbell (the Georgia clergyman and politician who organized for voting rights), organizations like the Union League of America (a patriotic club that lobbied for Black political rights), and the achievements of the 2,000 Black men who won office in the South between 1869 and 1877.
- 3 **Create** a physical or digital poster representing some of the key ideas, people, places and/or events related to your topic. Your poster should show the opportunities and challenges for Black Americans during Reconstruction.



The First Vote, 1867

<https://objectofhistory.org/objects/extendedtour/votingmachine/index.html%3Forder=2.html>

The 15th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, ratified March 30, 1870, provided the right to vote to all male citizens. This illustration from Harper's Weekly in November 1867 imagines the first voting experience for Black men.



The First Colored Senator and Representatives, 1872

<https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/digitool%3A129464>

Once Black men were able to vote, they worked to elect members of their own communities to public office. From 1869-1899, more than 20 Black men—mostly former enslaved people—were elected to the United States Congress. This Currier & Ives lithograph depicts the first seven Black members of Congress.



Reply of the Colored Delegation to the President, 1866

<https://rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/4391>

A delegation of Black leaders, including Frederick Douglass, met with President Andrew Johnson in the White House in 1866 to persuade him to change his approach to freedom and reconciliation. Among other issues, they argued for the right to vote for Black people and a new political party bringing together freedmen and poor whites. Johnson could not be persuaded, and Douglass wrote this open letter for publication in newspapers.



The Promise of Reconstruction: Voting and Elected Office

- 1 **View** at least two of the primary documents below online.
- 2 **Consult** one to two additional sources to learn about opportunities for land ownership for former enslaved people following the Civil War. Examples include General William T. Sherman's order leading to "40 acres and a mule," the Homestead Acts (granting public lands to individual families), and the many towns founded by former enslaved people after the Civil War (such as Shankleville and Kendleton in Texas).
- 3 **Create** a physical or digital poster representing some of the key ideas, people, places and/or events related to your topic. Your poster should show the opportunities and challenges for Black Americans during Reconstruction.



"Negroes of Savannah," 1865

<http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/savmtg.htm>

This newspaper account, from February 13, 1865, describes a meeting between Black religious leaders and Union military authorities to discuss matters relating to former enslaved people in Georgia. When asked about caring for themselves, leaders replied, "The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor."



Special Field Order No. 15, 1865

<http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/sfo15.htm>

In 1865, Union General William T. Sherman issued a set of military orders resulting in the confiscation of 400,000 acres of land that once belonged to Southern plantation owners, and the redistribution of this land to freed Black people in parcels of up to 40 acres ("40 acres and a mule"). The plan—which would have settled 18,000 formerly enslaved families along the Atlantic coast of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida—was later revoked by President Andrew Johnson.



Rev. Ulysses L. Houston, 1865

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2008675489>

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/the-truth-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule>

Baptist minister Ulysses L. Houston, one of the pastors who met with Union General William T. Sherman, led 1,000 Black people to Skidaway Island, Georgia, where they established a self-governing Black community with Houston as the governor.

THE CRUELTY OF JIM CROW SEGREGATION



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What was Jim Crow and what was life under it like for Black Americans?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define *stereotype* and explain the negative effects of stereotypes on individuals and society.
- Examine the origins of Jim Crow and associated anti-Black stereotypes.
- Analyze primary sources demonstrating ways in which Black people were segregated during the Jim Crow era.
- Discuss ways in which Black people resisted discrimination and worked to end Jim Crow segregation.
- Compose a written reflection on the impact of those who struggled to end segregation.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

60 minutes



MATERIALS

- *Who Was Jim Crow?* handout (one copy to project)
- *Jim Crow Gallery* handout (one copy per small group)
- *Where Did Jim Crow Segregation Take Place?* handout (one copy to project)



VOCABULARY

activist	generalization	segregate/ segregation	sit-in
blackface	Jim Crow	“separate but equal”	stereotype
civil rights	minstrel show		

Procedures

NOTE

While Jim Crow was most prevalent and deeply rooted in the South, segregation was a national problem. Segregation actually existed earlier in the North than in the South, for example on the Massachusetts Eastern Railroad in the 1830s. In the 20th century, federal and local policies led to segregation in public housing and schools throughout the country, and “whites only” policies were enforced in many northern shops, theaters, hotels and restaurants. “Sundown towns” were common in both the North and South, excluding Black people through discriminatory laws, intimidation and signposts literally requiring “colored people” to leave by sundown. In addition to these practices, anti-Black riots and killings happened with regularity in many northern cities. Students should understand that while Jim Crow was most repressive and violent in the South, it wasn’t exclusively a regional problem.

PART 1

What is a Stereotype? (20–30 mins.)

- 1 Post the following sentence on the board: “All cities are dangerous.” Ask students if they agree that this is true. Explain that this statement is a *generalization*—it takes a fact that may be true about some cities and applies it to all cities. Ask students what the harm is in making generalizations.
- 2 Write the term *stereotype* on the board. Ask students if they have heard this term and what they think it means. Introduce and discuss the following definition:

Stereotype: a generalization about a person or group without regard for individual differences; the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way
- 3 Provide an example of a stereotype that you have personally experienced or observed. Make sure students understand that stereotypes are specific to identity groups (e.g., race, religion, gender, etc.), and this term is not used to describe other sorts of generalizations.

NOTE

Help students understand that seemingly positive stereotypes (e.g., Black people are great athletes) also cause harm by making those who don’t fulfill them feel like failures; not recognizing the efforts of those who do fulfill them; suggesting that we can know things about people based on their group; and inferring that one’s group membership is connected to their intelligence, ability or character.

NOTE

Avoid creating a long list of negative stereotypes. Allow students to share a few illustrative examples, but try not to overwhelm them with ideas about prejudice that may be new, upsetting or used in ways that hurt others.

4

Have students do reflective writing in response to the prompts below. Afterwards, invite a few volunteers to share their reflections. Discuss why it is so dangerous to believe and spread stereotypes.

- Has a stereotype ever been used to describe you or someone you know? If so, what was the stereotype and how did it make you feel?
- Why are stereotypes a problem? What effects do they have on individuals and communities?

PART 2

The Cruelty of Jim Crow Stereotypes and Segregation (90 mins.)

5

Comment that Black people have been subject to harmful stereotypes throughout our nation's history. Project the image on the handout *Who Was Jim Crow?* (but hide the text below it). Explain that in the 1800s, a white actor named Thomas Rice created a Black character named Jim Crow. In pairs or small groups, have students identify some of the stereotypes they observe in the image. Then discuss the following questions:

- What stereotypes does the Jim Crow character communicate? *[Possible responses include that all Black people are foolish, clownish, stupid, lazy, clumsy, poor, raggedy, dirty and dangerous.]*
- How do you think the Jim Crow stereotypes affected the white audiences who watched Rice's shows?
- What actions do you think these stereotypes caused in communities across the nation at this time?

6

Together, read the text at the bottom of the handout *Who Was Jim Crow?* Answer any questions students may have. Ask if they have heard about Jim Crow laws before, and allow them to share examples.

7

Introduce students to John Lewis. Explain that he was a civil rights activist who fought for equal rights from the time he was a student in the 1950s, and was also a U.S. Congressman from Georgia until he died in 2020. Play the video "What was it like growing up in Alabama under Jim Crow?" [1:54]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p8t-Tij3EoY>. As students watch, ask them to list the different

ways Black people were segregated or separated during the Jim Crow era. After the video, discuss the following:

- What were some of the ways Lewis and other Black people were segregated during Jim Crow? (*List responses on the board.*)
- What was your reaction to Lewis's parents telling him, "Don't get in trouble, don't get in the way"? Why didn't his family encourage him to stand up for himself or fight back?
- How did it feel to hear that Lewis's local library gave him a library card 40 years after he was denied one?

8 Tell students they will observe some photos and add to the list they started of the ways Black people were segregated during Jim Crow. Divide students into small groups and give each a copy of the *Jim Crow Gallery* handouts. Direct groups to examine the images and complete the accompanying graphic organizer.


9 Gather the class and discuss students' observations. Add to the list (started in step 7) of ways that segregation took place during the Jim Crow era. Project the handout *Where did Jim Crow Segregation Take Place?* Allow students to react to the list and remark on which places surprise them the most. Emphasize how widespread and dominant Jim Crow segregation was during the nearly 100 years that it lasted.

10 Tell students that Jim Crow segregation ended after many decades of struggle and resistance by Black activists and their allies. Play the following StoryCorps audio interview, which provides a first-person account of someone who resisted Jim Crow: "Dion Diamond remembers the risks he took as a young civil rights activist" [2:22]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySx3xNdmg0A>. Afterwards, discuss the following questions:

- What is a sit-in? Why did Diamond start his "own private sit-ins"?
- Why did Diamond keep his activities from his parents? How did his family react when they found out?
- Diamond describes his actions as the "chances you take when you're young." Do you think it was just his youth that caused him to act as he did? What other reasons or personal qualities may have motivated him?
- How did Diamond react to the boy who pointed a finger in his face? Were you surprised by his reaction? Explain.

NOTE

When reviewing the "Think it Through" question on the handout, make sure students understand that "separate but equal" is never acceptable. Such policies signal that some groups are different and even inferior, and often result in exclusion and unequal treatment. The doctrine of "separate but equal" comes from the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which said that racially separate facilities, if equal, did not violate the Constitution. In 1954, the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* set a new precedent by ruling that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and that segregation is a form of discrimination.

- 
- 11** Highlight Diamond's words at the end of the clip: "Today, when people read my name, they may not know who I am... But anytime I pick up a historical publication, I feel as if a period or a comma in that book is my contribution." Assign students to create a piece of writing reacting to Diamond and reflecting on why he is more than a "period or comma" in our history books. Students may do this in the form of a letter to him or an original poem.
- 12** As time allows, have students share their writing in pairs or small groups. Conclude the lesson by discussing some of the questions on the following page.

Discussion Questions

- 1 How do stereotypes (even ones that sound like compliments) harm people and society?
- 2 What is the connection between stereotypes and the way Jim Crow arose in our country?
- 3 What surprised you about the ways Black people have been segregated in our country? How did it make you feel to learn about this history?
- 4 Have you ever been afraid to speak up when you heard a stereotype or saw unfair treatment? Explain.
- 5 What did you learn from the civil rights leaders you met during this lesson that you can apply to your own life?
- 6 What can we do to make sure our classroom and community is a safe and stereotype-free place?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + BrainPOP. "Jim Crow." <https://www.brainpop.com/social-studies/ushistory/jimcrow>.
- + Ferris University. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow>.
- + Osborne, Linda Barrett. *Miles to Go for Freedom: Segregation and Civil Rights in the Jim Crow Years*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2012.
- + State Bar of Georgia. "Brown v. Board of Education (1954): Separate Is NOT Equal." May 22, 2016. YouTube video, 8:03. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aX9Dmo24_cc&t=2s.

Lesson Extensions

- Have students read stories about children who fought for civil rights and discuss the personal qualities and actions that they can apply to their own lives. Recommended picture books include *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles and George Ford; *The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist* by Cynthia Levinson and Vanessa Brantley-Newton; *Let the Children March* by Monica Clark-Robinson; and *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh.
- Investigate the history of the Civil Rights Movement in your town or local community. Have students create a timeline of notable people and events. Invite a community member who participated in the movement to visit your school and speak about their experiences.
- Show the video *Brown v. Board of Education (1954): Separate Is NOT Equal* (see Additional Resources) and introduce students to the court case that ended legal segregation in the United States.
- Assign students to research current civil rights issues and leaders. Have them choose one, consult at least three online sources of information and create a brief report or multimedia presentation to share with the class.



Who Was Jim Crow?



Thomas Rice playing Jim Crow in blackface, Bowery Theatre, New York City, 1833

In 1828, a white comedian from New York named Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice first performed the song and dance *Jump Jim Crow*. He darkened his face with burnt cork and paraded around the stage in an exaggerated way that made fun of Black men. Some say he got the idea from watching an elderly enslaved man who had trouble walking. Others say it was a ragged Black stable boy. However it began, the mocking performance became a huge hit with white audiences across the country.

Jump Jim Crow contributed to the rise of a new form of musical theater called the minstrel show. These shows included comedy and variety acts, songs and dances performed by white people in blackface. From the 1830s to the 1920s, these shows were highly popular and spread ugly stereotypes about Black people across the U.S.

“Daddy” Rice’s character and the popularity of minstrel shows led many white people to start referring to all Black men as “Jim Crow” in an insulting and demeaning way. Stereotypes of Black people as stupid, lazy and less than human caused many white people to believe that Black and white people should live separately. From the 1870s to the 1960s, a great number of laws were passed that separated Black people in almost every part of society, including schools, transportation, hospitals, theaters, parks and more. This cruel system of segregation is known as Jim Crow.

IMAGE SOURCE: BlackPast.org, “Thomas Rice as Jim Crow,” <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/jim-crow>.



Jim Crow Gallery

View the photos in the Jim Crow Gallery. Choose three to examine closely. Record your observations on the chart below. Then answer the question at the bottom of this page.

Photo number	Where is the segregation taking place?	What do you notice? What details in the scene stand out?	What might have been the effect of the segregation?

Think it Through: During Jim Crow, some argued that segregation was acceptable as long as it was equal. For example, it was okay if the law required Black and white children to attend separate schools as long as one school was as good as the other. What do you think? Is “separate but equal” ever acceptable? Why or why not?

Jim Crow Gallery



Jim Crow Gallery



4



5



6



7

Jim Crow Gallery





Jim Crow Gallery Photo Credits

- 1 Bubley, Esther. *1943 Colored Waiting Room Sign*. September 1943. United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. Accessed February 4, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1943_Colored_Waiting_Room_Sign.jpg.
- 2 Delano, Jack. *At the bus station in Durham, North Carolina*. May 1940. United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. Accessed February 4, 2021. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JimCrowInDurhamNC.jpg>.
- 3 *Discrimination in a restaurant in Juneau*. January 1, 1908. Accessed February 4, 2021. <http://historicalaska.blogspot.com/2011/06/racism-and-jim-crow-in-alaska.html>.
- 4 *New Orleans—Whites Only—Maids in Uniform Accepted*. 1969 “Jambalaya” Tulane University yearbook. Accessed February 4, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New_Orleans_-_Whites_Only_-_Maids_in_Uniform_Accepted.jpg.
- 5 Tampone, Victor. *African Americans WWII*. April 13, 1942. NARA—Pictures of World War II. Accessed February 4, 2021. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African-americans-wwii-002.jpg>.
- 6 Alexisrael. *A Jim Crow Law sign for bus segregation in North Carolina*. Accessed February 4, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_Carolina_Jim_Crow_Laws.JPG.
- 7 Colored Sailor’s Room. 1917–1919. War Department photograph via NARA website. Accessed February 4, 2021. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ColoredSailersRoomWWINOLA.jpg>.
- 8 Lange, Dorothea. *Rex Theatre for Colored People, Leland, Mississippi*. June 1937. United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. Accessed February 4, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rex_theatre.jpg.
- 9 Wolcott, Marion Post. *Segregated cinema entrance*. October 1939. United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. Accessed February 4, 2021. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Segregated_cinema_entrance3.jpg.
- 10 *View of street showing segregated taxi cab sign*. 1935–1965. New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed February 4, 2021. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/9e8d39a4-cf9b-7f26-e040-e00a18066977>.
- 11 Lee, Russell. *“Colored” drinking fountain from mid-20th century with african-american drinking*. July 1939. United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. Accessed February 4, 2021. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997026728/PP>.



Where did Jim Crow Segregation Take Place?

- Barber shops/ salons
- Housing
- Trains
- Facilities for people with disabilities
- Telephone booths
- Childcare
- Boating
- Parks
- Schools
- Libraries
- Waiting rooms (e.g., train stations)
- Bars
- Textbooks
- Circus tents
- Fishing
- Buses
- Prisons
- Sports
- Marriage
- Water fountains
- Bathrooms
- Theaters
- Concerts
- Hospitals
- Cemeteries/funeral homes
- Restaurants/ lunch counters
- Swimming pools/areas
- Military
- Billiard halls
- **and many more places**

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST JIM CROW SEGREGATION



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How were the lives of Black Americans impacted by Jim Crow and how did they resist it?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Define Jim Crow and describe what life was like for Black Americans living under this system of segregation.
- Identify ways in which Black people resisted segregation and asserted their humanity during the Jim Crow era.
- Investigate sources on key events that reflect efforts by Black communities to end segregation.
- Create a timeline of important people and events related to the struggle against Jim Crow.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

105–135 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video
- “*Jim Crow Train*” handout (one to project)
- *Growing up under Jim Crow* handout (one per student)
- *Resistance to Jim Crow: Key Events* handout (one for teacher reference or one per student)
- Laptops or tablets for student research
- Construction paper



VOCABULARY

blackface

Jim Crow

oppressive

stereotypes

The Green Book

minstrel shows

segregation

Procedures

NOTE

While Jim Crow was most prevalent and deeply rooted in the South, segregation was a national problem. Segregation actually existed earlier in the North than in the South, for example on the Massachusetts Eastern Railroad in the 1830s. In the 20th century, federal and local policies led to segregation in public housing and schools throughout the country, and “whites only” policies were enforced in many northern shops, theaters, hotels and restaurants. “Sundown towns” were common in both the North and South, excluding Black people through discriminatory laws, intimidation and signposts literally requiring “colored people” to leave by sundown. In addition to these practices, anti-Black riots and killings happened with regularity in many northern cities. Students should understand that while Jim Crow was most repressive and violent in the South, it wasn’t exclusively a regional problem.

PART 1

Living Under Jim Crow (45 mins.)

1

Project the handout “*Jim Crow Train*” and introduce students to musician Joshua White. Play the song “Jim Crow Train” [3:01]: <https://bit.ly/37jqXbr>. While students are listening, have them write a response to one or more of the prompts below. Play the song a second time while students reflect and write.

- What was Jim Crow? Why might White have written a blues song about it?
- Why does White compare Jim Crow to a train? Why is he unable to ride the train?
- What hope or demand is White communicating through this song?
- What is the tone or feeling of the song?

2

Have students share their reflections with a partner or allow a few volunteers to share with the whole class. Make sure students understand the meaning of the term Jim Crow. Provide the following background as needed.

In 1828, the white comedian Thomas “Daddy” Rice first staged the song and dance “Jump Jim Crow,” which was performed in blackface and mocked Black men. This act and the many minstrel shows that followed were highly popular among white audiences and spread ugly prejudices about Black people across the U.S. Soon many white people began referring to all Black men as “Jim Crow” in a demeaning way. Stereotypes of Black people as stupid, lazy and less than human caused many white people to believe that Black and white people should live separately. From the 1870s to the 1960s, numerous laws were passed that separated Black people in almost every part of society, including schools, transportation, hospitals, theaters, parks and more. This cruel system of segregation is known as Jim Crow.

3

Ask students what their lives might have been like if they had grown up under Jim Crow. Have them think about the things that are important to them—school, athletics, hobbies, etc.—and imagine how those pursuits would have been impacted. Distribute the handout *Growing up under Jim Crow* and review the directions. Show one or more of the clips below from the PBS series by the same name. As they watch, have students take notes on the handout. Pause the video as needed to allow students time to record their observations.

- *Growing up under Jim Crow in Piedmont, WV and Chattanooga, TN*, featuring Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Samuel Jackson [4:31]: <http://bit.ly/3tTy1VW>
(NOTE: This clip contains use of the N-word.)
- *Growing up under Jim Crow in Birmingham, AL*, featuring Condoleezza Rice [3:34]: <https://bit.ly/3jVL1pD>
- *Growing up under Jim Crow in Grapeland, TX*, featuring Ruth Simmons [5:02]: <http://bit.ly/379FZR0>

4

Discuss students’ reactions to the film clips and allow them to share some of the quotes they recorded. Post some of the quotes students captured and/or those below in different parts of the room. Have students form small groups around one quote that most resonates for them. Direct groups to interpret the quote and discuss how it makes them feel.

- “I had a very good idea of what our place was.”
—Samuel Jackson
- “I was aware that there were certain ways of behaving that were essential to surviving in that environment.”
—Ruth Simmons

- “In some ways, because it was so segregated, racism was everything and nothing at all.”
—Condoleezza Rice
- “Segregation could impose many limits, but it couldn’t completely crush all of our dreams.”
—Henry Louis Gates Jr.

PART 2

Resisting Jim Crow (60–90 mins.)

5

Comment that Jim Crow was violently oppressive and Black people continuously resisted this system in courageous and creative ways. To illustrate this idea, show the following two short videos one after the other.

- A woman who grew up in the Jim Crow South remembers one night on a rural road [3:05]:
<https://bit.ly/3ak0zjF>
- The real story of *The Green Book* [4:16]:
<https://bit.ly/2OBV47r>

6

After showing the videos, discuss some of the following questions:

- How was the road trip—a symbol of American freedom—affected by Jim Crow? What were the consequences for Black people who did not abide by the rules of the system?
- What were Black people forced to do to navigate and cope with segregation on the road?
- What did Francine mean when she said that her father “did what no man was supposed to do at that time”?
- When they were forced to stop for gas, how did Francine’s father alter his behavior and appearance? How did this make five-year-old Francine feel and what did it teach her? How did it make you feel?
- In Francine’s experience, how have white and Black people reacted differently to her story? Does this match your reaction? What does this tell you about the ways in which different people see racism?
- What reaction did you have to Victor Green’s solution to racism on the road? What networks of support did he use to make *The Green Book* a success?

- How do you interpret the phrase by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “As long as our bodies are heavy with the fatigue of travel...”? What might he have meant both literally and figuratively?

7 Tell students that they will create a timeline of key events—like the publication of *The Green Book*—showing the ways in which Black Americans resisted oppression and asserted their humanity during the era of Jim Crow. Assign individuals or pairs a topic from the handout *Resistance to Jim Crow: Key Events*, or allow them to choose one they find interesting. Provide students with access to laptops or tablets for research.

8 Direct students to consult two or three sources and create a timeline record containing the following:

- The title and date(s) of the event
- A brief narrative summary of three to five sentences that names key people and explains why the event was significant
- An illustration or image that reflects an important aspect of the event

Have students create their record on a half-sheet of standard construction paper (6" x 9") or using a web-based application such as [Sutori](#) or [Timeline JS](#).

9 If students have created paper records, direct them to display their timelines in chronological order on the walls of the classroom. Once the timelines are ready to examine, have students conduct a gallery walk/view and read about the events their classmates researched. Answer any questions students have and discuss which events most surprised or inspired them. Conclude the lesson by discussing some of the questions on the following page.

NOTE

Direct students toward reliable sites as they research Black history. Suggestions include [Blackpast](#), [History.com](#), [Google Cultural Institute: Black History and Culture](#), [The Biography Channel: Black History](#), [The Kulture Kidz: African American History](#) and [Ducksters: Black History Month](#).

Discussion Questions

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + BrainPOP. "Jim Crow." <https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/jim-crow/>.
- + Thirteen/Educational Broadcasting Corporation. "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow." <https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/jimcrow/index.html>.
- + Ferris University. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. <https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow>.
- + WNYC. "Kids Talk About Segregation." May 19, 2016. YouTube video, 3:44. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sff2N8rez_8.

1

What is the origin of Jim Crow? Why is this term used to describe the era of legal segregation in the U.S.?

2

What features of life under Jim Crow most surprised or troubled you? Why?

3

How did these forms of segregation harm and limit opportunities for Black people?

4

How did many Black people show and maintain their humanity in the face of Jim Crow? What examples of resistance to Jim Crow stood out to you? Why?

5

Is segregation a problem in our community or nation today? If so, what forms does it take?

6

What can we do to resist segregation where it exists in our school or community?

Lesson Extensions

- Assign students to analyze the "Examples of Jim Crow Laws" by state at <http://bit.ly/2Nsidst> to determine the areas of day-to-day life that were most impacted by Jim Crow (e.g., education, transportation, etc.). Have them develop a report or presentation on the ways in which these laws harmed Black communities.
- Show students the video *Kids Talk About Segregation* (see Additional Resources), in which fifth graders from the Bronx comment on what segregation looks like today from their vantage points. Have students create their own video in which they interview community members and share their own views on segregation. Use the video to stimulate a dialogue about segregation in your community and what students can do to address it.



“Jim Crow Train” by Joshua White

Can't you hear that train whistle blow?
Can't you hear that train whistle blow?
Can't you hear that train whistle blow?
Lord, I wish that train wasn't Jim Crow

Stop the train so I can ride this train
Stop Jim Crow so I can ride this train
Stop Jim Crow so I can ride this train
Black and White folks ridin' side by side

Now hear that train whistle blow
Can't you hear that train whistle blow?
Can't you hear that train whistle blow?
Oh Lord, this train is Jim Crow



Joshua White (1914–1969) was an American musician, actor and civil rights activist who grew up in segregated South Carolina. He wrote and performed blues, gospel, jazz and folk music, and was also known for his social protest songs. “Jim Crow Train” is from the 1941 album “Southern Exposure,” which included six anti-segregationist songs and was subtitled “An Album of Jim Crow Blues.” White had a close personal relationship with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and influenced the president’s views on desegregation. His anti-segregationist and pro-civil rights views were later used to label him as a Communist and disrupt his career during the period of McCarthyism.



Growing up under Jim Crow

As you watch the video clip, take notes in each square below. On the back of this handout, record one quote from the video that really stood out to you.

VIDEO TITLE: _____

What specific forms did Jim Crow segregation take?

How was Jim Crow enforced?

How were Black people affected by Jim Crow?

How did Black people cope with or resist Jim Crow?



Resistance to Jim Crow: Key Events

This is a partial list of important events related to the struggle against Jim Crow.

1875	The Civil Rights Act of 1875 is passed
1881	Spelman College, the first college for Black women in the U.S., is founded
1892	Ida B. Wells launches her anti-lynching crusade
1898	Booker T. Washington speaks on race relations at the Cotton States and International Exposition
1903	<i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois is published
1903	<i>The Chicago Defender</i> , Chicago's first African American newspaper, is launched
1905	The Niagara Movement is formed
1909	The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) is formed
1910	<i>The Crisis</i> , the first Black civil rights magazine, is established
1911	The National Urban League is founded
1914	Marcus Garvey establishes the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)
1920	The Harlem Renaissance begins
1925	A. Philip Randolph organizes the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
1936	Jesse Owens wins four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics
1936	Victor Hugo Green publishes <i>The Green Book</i>
1939	Marian Anderson performs at the Lincoln Memorial
1942	The Congress of Racial Equality is organized
1943	The Tuskegee Airmen are the first Black flying squadron to deploy overseas
1947	Jackie Robinson breaks the color line in baseball
1948	Executive Order 9981 desegregates the U.S. Armed Forces
1952	Malcolm X becomes a minister of the Nation of Islam
1954	The court case <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> makes segregation in schools illegal
1955	The Montgomery Bus Boycott begins
1957	The Little Rock Nine desegregate Central High School in Arkansas
1957	The Civil Rights Act of 1957 is passed
1960	The Greensboro sit-ins take place in North Carolina
1960	The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded
1961	Freedom Riders challenge segregation in the South
1963	The March on Washington, D.C. takes place
1964	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is passed
1965	The march from Selma to Montgomery for voting rights and Bloody Sunday take place
1965	The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is passed

JIM CROW AND THE ROOTS OF MASS INCARCERATION



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How is mass incarceration of Black Americans a continuation of enslavement and Jim Crow?



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- List and define examples of Jim Crow.
- Describe the connections between Jim Crow and the mass incarceration of Black Americans today.
- Investigate the history of convict leasing through an analysis of primary source documents.
- Examine one way in which individuals are working to reform the criminal justice system today.



LEARNING STANDARDS

See the [standards alignment chart](#) to learn how this lesson supports New Jersey State Standards.



TIME NEEDED

100–130 minutes



MATERIALS

- AV equipment to show a video and handouts
- *Excerpts from Punching the Air* handout, one per student
- *The Story of Green Cottenham* handout, one per student
- *Excerpt of a Letter from a Convict Laborer to the Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, 1884* handout, one per student
- *Letter from a Federal Judge in Alabama to the U.S. Attorney General, 1903* handout, one per student



VOCABULARY

13 th Amendment	inequity	mass incarceration	segregation
chain gang	involuntary servitude	minstrel show	stereotype
convict leasing	Jim Crow	“new Jim Crow”	vagrancy

Procedures

PART I

The “New Jim Crow” (40 mins.)

- 1 Distribute the handout *Excerpts from Punching the Air* and read the introduction together with students, providing additional context as needed. Individually or in pairs, have students read the poems and choose one of the “Think About It” questions to respond to through writing or discussion.
- 2 Gather the class and ask for a few volunteers to share their reflections. Post the statistic below and allow students to react to it. If it feels safe and appropriate, ask students how mass incarceration of Black people impacts their communities or other communities they might know about.

Black people are 7 times more likely than white people to be wrongly convicted of murder, 3.5 times more likely of sexual assault and 12 times more likely of drug crimes.
- 3 Comment that the control of Black people through the criminal justice system today is referred to as the “new Jim Crow.” Ask students what the term *Jim Crow* means. Share the definitions below as needed.
 - **Jim Crow** was a fictional minstrel character created in the 1830s, depicting a clumsy and dim-witted enslaved man. The term Jim Crow became a common insult for Black people.
 - **Jim Crow** is also the name given to the system of segregation in the U.S. from 1876–1965. During that time, a series of laws were passed and brutally enforced that separated Black people from white people and limited their opportunity to vote, hold jobs, get an education and enjoy other freedoms.

NOTE

As an alternative to the “Think About It” questions, some students may want to write or speak about their personal experiences with the criminal justice system. This should be encouraged only if students choose to explore this option, and their responses should be kept confidential unless they wish to discuss them more openly. Be aware that this reflection may be emotionally difficult for some students. Allow those individuals to opt out if they wish, and seek support from a guidance counselor as needed.

NOTE

The following websites provide concrete examples of Jim Crow laws: Jim Crow Museum, “Examples of Jim Crow Laws,” <https://bit.ly/31Dgt3w>; National Park Service, “Jim Crow Laws,” <https://bit.ly/3cHBArJ>.

NOTE

From the Center for Law and Justice (<http://www.cflj.org/programs/new-jim-crow>): “More African Americans are under the control of the criminal justice system today—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850. Discrimination in housing, education, employment, and voting rights, which many Americans thought was wiped out by the civil rights laws of the 1960s, is now perfectly legal against anyone labeled a ‘felon.’ And since many more people of color than whites are made felons by the entire system of mass incarceration, racial discrimination remains as powerful as it was under slavery or under the post-slavery era of Jim Crow segregation.”

4

Follow up by asking: Can you think of ways in which mass incarceration today is connected to the Jim Crow of yesterday? Chart students’ examples. Share information from the note to the left and emphasize that while there has been progress toward racial equality, discrimination against Black people has never gone away—it has just evolved in different forms.

PART 2

Convict Leasing: The Reenslavement of Black Americans (60–90 mins.)

5

Tell students that there are many ways in which mass incarceration today is rooted in the eras of enslavement and Jim Crow, and they will explore one of those ways during this lesson. Explain that the example they will look at is related to a loophole in the 13th Amendment, which ended slavery in the U.S. Post the text of the amendment and challenge students—in pairs or small groups—to identify the loophole and its implications for Black Americans.

13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (ratified in 1865):
Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

6

Discuss students’ thoughts. Note that the phrase “except as a punishment for crime...” allowed the government to take advantage of people convicted of crimes by returning them to enslavement or involuntary servitude. Explain that in the period following the Civil War, Black codes and Jim Crow laws created many new types of offenses that sent Black people to prison at higher rates than ever before. Once convicted, these “criminals” could be reenslaved.

7

Share that the *convict leasing* system was one way in which this reenslavement occurred. Write the term on the board and allow students to share any prior knowledge they have about it. Then show the Black History in Two Minutes (or So) video, “Convict Leasing” {2:07}: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpZvTx5hIyI>. (Consider playing it a second time, as there is a lot of information packed into the two minutes.) Discuss some of the following questions with students:

- How did the convict leasing system work? Why did it disproportionately affect Black people?
- What was the economic incentive behind the system?

- Why does Kimberlé Crenshaw say that the “aftermath of slavery was in some ways worse than slavery itself”?
- How do you interpret the statement, “The pipeline from prison to profits in this country has deep roots”?
- How is today’s mass incarceration connected to the convict leasing system of the post-slavery/Jim Crow era?

8

Divide the class into small groups and distribute copies of the handouts below, which provide personal stories and primary source material exploring how the convict leasing system operated and affected real individuals.

- *The Story of Green Cottenham*
- *Excerpt of a Letter from a Convict Laborer to the Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, 1884*
- *Letter from a Federal Judge in Alabama to the U.S. Attorney General, 1903*

9

In their groups, have students read and annotate the handouts using the method below. Following their analysis, gather the class to review and discuss their reactions, insights and questions.

- *Underline* information that shows the incentives behind the convict leasing system during the Jim Crow era.
- *Circle* information that shows connections between convict leasing and the “new Jim Crow” or mass incarceration of Black people today.
- *Record margin notes* with your reactions and questions in response to the readings.

10

Bring the conversation back to the idea of the “new Jim Crow” by playing the *New York Times* opinion piece by Meek Mill titled “Do You Understand These Rights as I’ve Read Them to You?” [2:26]: <https://nyti.ms/3t48GYJ>. Afterwards, have students free write in response to the quote below from the video. Allow them to share their writing and thoughts in pairs or small groups.

Meek Mill: “The plantation and the prison are actually no different. The past is the present. It ain’t no coincidence.”

11

Conclude the lesson by discussing some of the questions on the following page.

NOTE

Meek Mill is an American rapper and songwriter from Philadelphia. He was convicted on gun and drug charges in 2008 (which Mill has claimed were trumped up). After his release, Mill battled with the court system for almost a decade over probation violations that resulted in harsh penalties, including additional jail time. The severity of the punishments in response to what was perceived as minor violations made Mill a national cause célèbre and an activist for criminal justice reform. The purpose of this exercise is not to debate Mill’s guilt or innocence, but to consider the arguments he presents in his opinion piece on the criminal justice system.



Discussion Questions

1

How did Black Americans reexperience enslavement during the Jim Crow era?

2

How does mass incarceration of Black Americans today function as “the new Jim Crow”?

3

What have been the economic incentives behind the mass incarceration of Black people?

4

How does the criminal justice system target those who are innocent as well as guilty of crimes?

5

How does the criminal justice system today deny rights to people even after they have served their sentences?

6

How has racial bias in the criminal justice system affected your community or you personally?

7

How are some people working to address the “new Jim Crow”? What reforms do you think are most important?

Lesson Extensions

- Have students conduct a close reading of the excerpt from *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander at <https://bit.ly/3cVXxmZ>. In small groups, have them participate in a “group annotation” in which they work together to attach comments to the reading indicating commonalities between the Jim Crow of yesterday and mass incarceration today.
- In 2018, an unmarked gravesite was discovered in Sugar Land, Texas, containing the remains of 95 African Americans who were part of Texas’s convict leasing system. Have students learn about the Sugar Land 95 by visiting the Convict Leasing and Labor Project website (<https://www.clptx.org>) and watching the video “Unearthing the Truth of the Sugar Land 95” (<https://bit.ly/3cVWMuk>). Since the Sugar Land 95 were not memorialized upon their death, assign students to create a marker honoring them with information about the convict leasing system and the unjust treatment of Black Americans during Jim Crow.
- Form student-led discussion groups around one of the following young adult books: *Just Mercy* or *Punching the Air* (see Additional Resources). Have students journal as they read, identifying key themes and questions for discussion. In small groups, have them work collaboratively to pose their questions and share insights.
- Share the story of Winfred Rembert (1945–2021), who turned his painful experiences with wrongful imprisonment and forced labor into beautiful works of art (see <https://winfredrembert.com>). Have students view examples of his artwork and write reflectively in response to one or more of the following questions:
 - ➔ What do you think Rembert is communicating through these works? What feelings do they convey?
 - ➔ Rembert survived a near-lynching and time on a chain gang. Are you surprised to learn these practices existed in this country until relatively recently? Explain.
 - ➔ Why do you think it was important to Rembert to preserve and share the stories of his past? How has his story affected you?
 - ➔ How are art and memory forms of activism? Describe other examples of this kind of social action.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Adrian, Christine. “The Convict-Lease System, 1866–1928.” *Middle Level Learning Number* 44 (May/June 2012): 2–16.
- + Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. New York: Anchor Books, 2008.
- + Coven, Rebecca. “Teaching About Mass Incarceration: The Ongoing Narrative of Racial Oppression.” *Learning for Justice*, December 11, 2018. <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/teaching-about-mass-incarceration-the-ongoing-narrative-of-racial-oppression>.
- + Salaam, Yusef and Zoboi, Ibi. *Punching the Air*. New York: HarperCollins, 2020.
- + Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy (Movie Tie-In Edition, Adapted for Young Adults)*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2018.
- + “Teaching the New Jim Crow.” *Learning for Justice*. <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/teaching-the-new-jim-crow>.
- + “Timeline of the Rise of the Modern American Prison System.” T’ruah. <http://www.truah.org/wp-content/uploads/MIH/MIH-18-20-timeline-modern-american-prison.pdf>.



Excerpts from *Punching the Air* by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam

Punching the Air is the fictional story of Amal, a 16-year-old Black boy who is convicted and sent to prison for a crime he didn't commit. Yusef Salaam, one of the authors, is a member of the Exonerated Five. In 1989, Salaam and four other Black and Latino boys were wrongly convicted of attacking a white woman in New York's Central Park, and served prison sentences ranging from 6 to 12 years. All five were cleared of the charges after a prison inmate confessed to the crime in 2002. Racial bias played a large role in the "Central Park jogger" case. Today, Salaam is a prison reform activist who works against racism and other forms of inequity in the criminal justice system.

COURTROOM

I know the courtroom ain't
the set of a music video, ain't
Coachella or the BET Awards, ain't
MTV, VH1, or the Grammys
But still

There's an audience
of fans, experts, and judges

Eyes watching through filtered screens
seeing every lie, reading every made-up word
like a black hoodie counts as a mask
like some s*** I do with my fingers
counts as gang signs
like a few fights counts as uncontrollable rage
like failing three classes
counts as being dumb as f***
like everything that I am, that I've ever been
counts as being
guilty

GRAY SUIT

Umi told me to wear a gray suit
Because optics

But that gray didn't make me any less black
My white lawyer didn't make me any less black

And words can paint black-and-white pictures, too

Maybe ideas have their own eyes
separating black from white as if the world
is some old, old TV show

Maybe ideas segregate like in the days of
Dr. King, and no matter how many marches
or Twitter hashtags or Justice for So-and-So

our mind's eyes and our eyes' minds
see the world as they want to
Everything already illustrated
in black and white

SOURCE: Salaam, Yusef and Zoboi, Ibi. *Punching the Air*. New York: HarperCollins, 2020.

THINK ABOUT IT...

- 1 What does the author mean by "eyes watching through filtered screens"? What "filters" affect the way we see certain people, specifically Black youth, in our society?
- 2 In what ways is Amal reduced to a stereotype in the courtroom and in his life in general?
- 3 What are "optics"? Why are the gray suit and other optics unable to change people's perceptions of Amal?
- 4 What are examples that illustrate the line, "ideas have their own eyes, separating black from white"?
- 5 The author suggests that racial bias persists as in the past, despite modern protest movements. Do you agree? Why or why not?



The Story of Green Cottenham

Green Cottenham's story is described in detail in the book *Slavery by Another Name* by Douglas A. Blackmon.

Cottenham was born in Shelby County, Alabama, in 1886. He was the youngest of nine children born to formerly enslaved parents. On March 30, 1908, 22-year-old Cottenham headed to the Columbiana train depot, a popular meeting spot for Black men looking for work or to socialize. There, he was arrested for "vagrancy," a vague charge used to detain Black people for not working, working at jobs unrecognized by whites or just gathering in public places.

After a speedy trial in which no evidence of wrong-doing was presented, Cottenham was found guilty and sentenced to 30 days of hard labor. He was also charged about \$38 in court fees, a small fortune for a poor Black man in 1908. These fees were said to cover the costs of the sheriff, his deputy, the court clerk and witnesses, but they amounted to just another way to profit from poor convicts. Cottenham was, of course, unable to pay the fees, so his sentence was extended to nearly a year.

At the turn of the 20th century, industry in the U.S. was booming and there was a tremendous need for resources such as coal and iron. The U.S. Steel Corporation, headquartered in New York, was one of the largest companies in the world. In 1907, the year before Cottenham's arrest, U.S. Steel purchased its biggest competitor, the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company. Tennessee Coal had relocated most of its business to Alabama in the late 1800s, and the city of Birmingham became the national center for iron and steel making.

Businesses like Tennessee Coal desired cheap labor to grow their industries and keep profits high. At the same time, southern states were desperate for funds to rebuild their economies in the decades following the Civil War. The passage of racist Jim Crow laws in those states led to the arrests of record numbers of Black people, who were



Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company furnaces, Ensley, Alabama

expensive to look after and increased states' financial burden. These trends led to the growth of *convict leasing*. The idea was ruthlessly simple: States provided prison labor to private businesses, like plantations and mining companies, for a set fee and a set period of time. The states profited from their prisoners and businesses obtained free labor in exchange for feeding and housing them. The cruel and dehumanizing treatment of mostly Black boys and men under this system led author Douglas A. Blackmon to call it "slavery by another name."

Cottenham was one of the hundreds of thousands of African Americans victimized by the convict leasing system. He was sold to Tennessee Coal for \$12 per month, and sent to the Pratt coal mines, where he labored in Slope No. 12. In the five years leading up to Cottenham's imprisonment, more than 1,000 mostly Black convicts were transported to these mines, including teenagers and children under the age of 10. The so-called crimes that brought them there included illegal voting, obscene language, selling cotton after sunset, disturbing females on a railroad car, riding a freight train without buying a ticket, having a relationship with a white woman and homosexuality.



The Story of Green Cottenham



Members of a southern chain gang, between 1900 and 1906.

In the mines, the prisoners performed back-breaking labor for six long days each week, and rarely saw the sun rise or set. People like Cottenham were forced to remove as much as eight tons of coal each day from the mines. Failure to meet this requirement led to severe punishments, including dozens of lashes with a whip that ripped the skin from the backs of its victims. At night, the prisoners were locked in a wooden barracks, 200 worn-out bodies chained to one another in a single chamber. Those who tried to escape were fixed with iron shackles, cuffs, collars, balls and chains.

In the crowded, filthy and airless environment of the mines, disease spread rapidly. Those who didn't succumb to the beatings, fires and gas explosions fell victim to dysentery, pneumonia, tuberculosis, typhoid and yellow fever. Others collapsed from exhaustion and malnutrition. In the first month after Cottenham arrived at Pratt, six people died. By the year's end, 60 had perished. Records from the years 1888–1889 show that 18 percent of the laborers at the mine died. The bodies of these mostly Black boys and men were dumped into nearby shallow graves or incinerated in coal ovens.

Sadly, Cottenham was among those lost. Four months after his arrest, he died of tuberculosis in a work-camp hospital run by Tennessee Coal. In a cruel twist of fate, a child born to the first generation of free Black people in his family died in bondage 43 years after the passage of the 13th Amendment, banning slavery and involuntary servitude throughout the United States.

SOURCES

Blackmon, Douglas A., *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 84–115.

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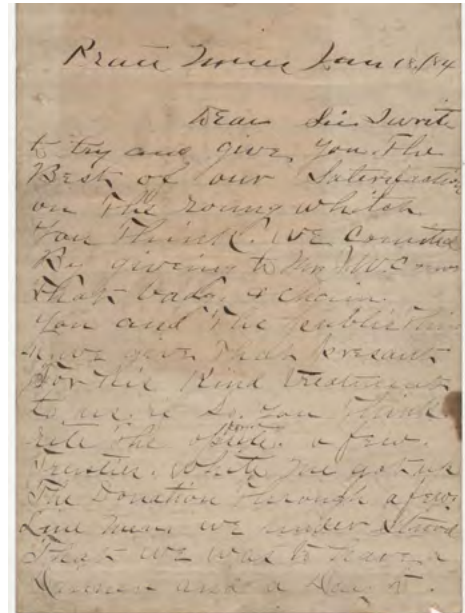
"The Untold History of Post-Civil War 'Neoslavery,'" NPR Talk of the Nation, March 25, 2008, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89051115>.



Excerpt of a Letter from a Convict Laborer to the Alabama Board of Inspectors of Convicts, 1884

"[Our living quarters are] filled with filth and vermin. ... [Gunpowder cans were used to hold human waste that periodically] would fill up and run over on bed [where some prisoners were shackled in place at night].

... Every Day some one of us were carried to our last resting, the grave. Day after day we looked Death in the face & was afraid to speak. ... Fate seems to curse a convict. Death seems to summon us hence. ... Comer is a hard man. I have seen men come to him with their shirts a solid scab on their back and beg him to help them and he would say [']let the hide grow back and take it off again.['] I have seen him hit men 100 and 160 [times] with a ten prong strop [sic], then say they was not whiped [sic]. He would go off after an escape man come one day with him and dig his grave the same day. We go to cell wet, go to bed wet and arise wet the following morning and evry [sic] guard knocking[,] beating[,] yelling[,] Keep [sic] in line Jumping Ditches [sic]."



Guards watch over a group of convict-lease prisoners in Birmingham. Alabama's convict-lease system existed from 1875–1928.

SOURCES

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Birmingham Public Library Archives and Encyclopedia of Alabama, "Convict-Lease System," <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1346>.

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Letter from a Federal Judge in Alabama to the U.S. Attorney General, 1903

Sir: Some witnesses before the Grand Jury here have developed the fact that in Shelby County [Alabama] in this District, and in this Coosa County in the Middle district, a systematic scheme of depriving negroes of their liberty, and hiring them out, has been practiced for some time.

The plan is to accuse the negro of some petty offense, and then require him, in order to escape conviction, to enter into an agreement to pay his accuser so much money, and sign a contract, under the terms of which his bondsmen can hire him out until he pays a certain sum. The negro is made to believe he is a convict, and treated as such. It is said that thirty negroes were in the stockade at one time.

Thursday, a negro witness who had been summoned here, and testified before the Grand Jury, was taken from the train by force, and imprisoned on account of his testimony; but finally his captors became frightened and turned him loose. The grand jury found indictments against nine of the parties. I deemed it essential to the safety of the negro that a deputy marshal should protect him while in that county, and while here giving testimony; and that the accused parties should be promptly arrested and held to bail, in order to deter them, at least, from further violence to the negro....

—Yours Truly, T. G. Jones



Juvenile convicts at work in the fields, 1903

SOURCES

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Excerpt of Bobby Seale Speech

Kaleidoscope Theater Los Angeles

April 16, 1968



Bobby Seale (born 1936) was co-founder and chairman of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and a leader of the Black Power movement. Seale and Huey P. Newton founded the party in Oakland, California, in 1966, and drafted a 10-point program ("What we want! What we believe") outlining the goals of the party.

In this 1968 speech, Seale spoke in defense of Newton, who had been jailed for the murder of Oakland police officer John Frey. In 1971, after two years in prison, the charges against Newton were dismissed.

"...Do I have to lay out to you again the platform of the program of the Black Panther Party? Do I have to get you to understand what we mean by black liberation in this country? Do we have to get you to understand the necessity of black people taking up arms to defend themselves against racist attack in this country? Well damn it if I have to do it, we're going to do it. Here we are, alright, come on now!

Listen, in our program it states, if you haven't read it you begin to read it you begin to understand it. This program is not outlined for the white community, it's outlined for the black community. Now, number one: we want power to determine our own destiny in our own black communities. Number two: we want full employment for our people. Number three: we want decent housing fit for shelter of human beings. Number four: we want an end to the robbery by the white men to the black people in the black communities. Number five: we want decent education that teaches us about the true nature of this racist decadent system and education that

teaches us about our true history and our role in society in the world. Number six: we want all black men to be exempt from military service. Number seven: we want immediate end of police brutality and murder of black people. Number eight: we want all black men and women to be released from county jails, prisons, federal, state, what-have-you because they have not had fair trial, they have been tried by all white juries. Number nine: we want all people when brought to trial to be tried in a court by their peer groups or people from their black community as defined by your jive Constitution of the United States. Number ten: and in summarization, we want some land, we want some bread, we want some clothing, we want some education, we want some justice, and we want some damn peace.

If I say I want peace, then you say, 'You should put down your gun.' But hasn't it occurred to you by now after 400 years of being brutalized and murdered and lynched and maimed by guns and force on the part of racists and the racist power structure in this



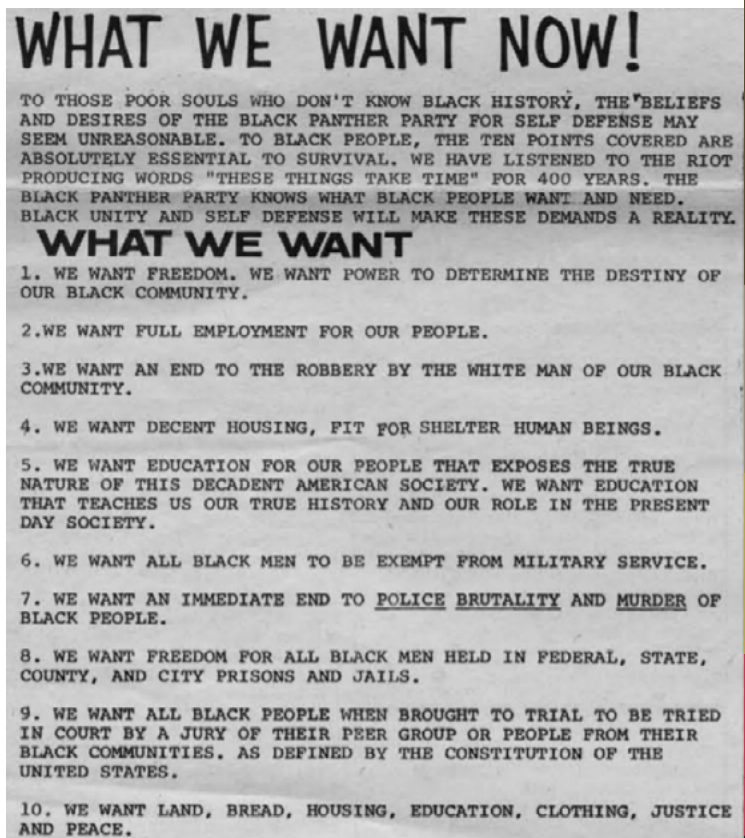
EXCERPT OF BOBBY SEALE SPEECH (CONTINUED)

country; it's damn near time we picked up the gun to try to begin to get some peace, to defend ourselves and our community from racist attacks by the pigs,²³ to defend ourselves against racist attacks by bird giant saw, Minuteman or Ku Klux Klansman or what have you?

Hasn't it occurred to you that it's damn near time we organize ourselves in some fashion to have some ability to begin to make racists and the racist power structure act in a desired manner as we define the functional definition of what power is? The ability to define the situation and we have been defining it, now we must organize our black communities to also make the power structure of racism act in a desired manner.

And what is that desired manner? Politics, what is politics? What is politics? You think politics start with a seat in the assembly, no it doesn't. It's related to it but it doesn't start there. Politics starts with a hungry stomach. Politics starts with a pig crushing us across our skull and murdering our people. Politics starts with the fact that we get a rotten education and we get brainwashed and fooled in a trick notion and trick knowledge and everything else that goes on in terms of the exploitation that goes down.

Politics starts with the fact that you want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings, now this is where politics starts. And black people now understand with the Black Panther Party that we are going to relate to politics in a real fashion. We are not going for no more jive verbal sincerity—at all. Don't give me Robert F. Kennedy your jive shuck, 'I think it is necessary here, that we come forth.' I don't want to hear it..."



From an early edition of *The Black Panther Black Community News Service*, Vol. 1, No. 2, May 15, 1967. <https://bit.ly/3wAkX88>.

TEXT SOURCE: American Public Media. *Bobby Seale: Speech delivered at the Kaleidoscope Theater, Los Angeles, California—April 16, 1968.* <https://bit.ly/2VDPYez>.

IMAGE SOURCE: Michiganensian. *Bobby Seale at John Sinclair Freedom Rally at Crisler Arena in Ann Arbor, Michigan, December 10, 1971.* University of Michigan yearbook, 1972. <https://bit.ly/3yQi1pk>.

²³ The Black Panthers deliberately and provocatively used the term "pig" to describe police officers of any race who were part of the oppression of Black people. They defined pig as "a low natured beast, that has no regard for law or justice, or the rights of the people, bites the hand that feeds it, usually masquerades as the victim of an unprovoked attack."



Pedagogy to Consider When Teaching about Black History and Racism



“Steer clear” of these practices:

- 1 Never use simulations and games:** They often trivialize horrific events, reproduce hate-based power dynamics and cause emotional distress.
- 2 Don’t make Eurocentric perspectives dominant:** Center narratives around the voices and experiences of Black people, and teach about African history and civilizations.
- 3 Avoid putting students on the spot:** Do not ask Black students to speak for all Black people or to share their experiences as Black people without their permission.
- 4 Resist a “heroes and holidays” approach:** Try not to limit instruction to special days/months, cultural celebrations or just one part of the curriculum. Look for points of integration across the curriculum and school year that bring depth and complexity.
- 5 Take care not to “virtue-signal”:** Be careful not to share your values in ways that might be construed as self-important or insincere. Demonstrate positive values by the way you treat others and put student behaviors at the center of the conversation.



Pedagogy to Consider When Teaching about Black History and Racism



Move “full speed ahead” with these practices:

- 1 **Assess prior knowledge:** Create space to reflect on personal preconceptions and biases as part of discussions about race and racism.
- 2 **Create “brave spaces”:** Establish community norms that help students to manage discomfort and hard conversations with courage and openness.
- 3 **Teach skills for positive dialogue:** Practice social and emotional skills that support constructive dialogue, such as using inclusive language and managing conflict.
- 4 **Determine a starting point:** Meet students where they are, but don’t leave them there. Challenge stereotypes and biases in ways that draw them in rather than call them out.
- 5 **Connect the dots:** Focus on the ongoing and structural nature of racism. Avoid presenting issues or stories in isolated or unconnected ways.
- 6 **Teach with primary sources:** Feature the voices, perspectives and experiences of real people.
- 7 **Focus on agency and resistance:** Present narratives that show how Black people made change rather than only highlighting their victimhood.
- 8 **Emphasize social and emotional dimensions:** Discussions about Black history and racism are not just academic exercises; they reflect the lived experiences of people in your community. Beyond learning names and dates, make space to process feelings, discuss the impact of racism and participate in social action.
- 9 **Engage in reflection:** Learning about complex issues such as race requires metacognitive exercises that promote self-awareness and allow students to clarify their own thinking, such as guided journaling and small group discussion.
- 10 **Encourage personal responsibility:** Help students to translate classroom lessons into real-world actions. Guide them in exploring how they might respond to problems like prejudice and discrimination in their own communities and more broadly.



List of Activities and Media

TITLE	TYPE	GRADE LEVEL	UNIT	LESSON
<i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i>	Video	9–12	1	The Social Construction of Race
Color Blindness	Activity	9–12	1	The Social Construction of Race
What's in a Word?	Activity	9–12	2	Slavery's Enduring Myths and Misconceptions
Selma	Video	6–8	1	Suppressing the Black Vote
Voter Literacy Test	Activity	6–8	1	Suppressing the Black Vote
Fountain Hughes	Audio clip	6–8	2	The Worth of a Slave
La Amistad: A Child's Journey	Sample lesson	3–5	2	La Amistad: A Child's Journey
The Worth of a Slave	Sample lesson	6–8	2	The Worth of a Slave
Slavery Built Our Region	Sample lesson	9–12	2	Slavery Built Our Region
Africa or Not?	Activity	9–12	1	Africa: Global Perception, Humanity's Connection
African Under the Skin	Poem	3–5	1	Uncovering our African Past through Tracks and Bones
Myth or Fact?	Activity	9–12	2	Slavery's Enduring Myths and Misconceptions
Michelle Obama Remarks	Video	3–5	2	Slavery Built America



List of Activities and Media

TITLE	TYPE	GRADE LEVEL	UNIT	LESSON
<i>Understanding Juneteenth</i>	Activity/ Discussion	3–5	3	From Juneteenth to Reconstruction: The Promise of Equality
The Story of Reconstruction	Video	6–8	3	The Monumental Achievements of Reconstruction
From Juneteenth to Reconstruction: The Promise of Equality	Sample Lesson	3–5	3	From Juneteenth to Reconstruction: The Promise of Equality
The Monumental Achievements of Reconstruction	Sample Lesson	6–8	3	The Monumental Achievements of Reconstruction
Reconstruction: When Freedom Broke	Sample Lesson	9–12	3	Reconstruction: When Freedom Broke
Stereotypes	Activity	3–5	4	The Cruelty of Jim Crow Segregation
Growing Up Under Jim Crow in Piedmont, WV and Chattanooga, TN	Video	6–8	4	The Struggle Against Jim Crow Segregation
The Cruelty of Jim Crow Segregation	Sample Lesson	3–5	4	The Cruelty of Jim Crow Segregation
The Struggle Against Jim Crow Segregation	Sample Lesson	6–8	4	The Struggle Against Jim Crow Segregation
Jim Crow and the Roots of Mass Incarceration	Sample Lesson	9–12	4	Jim Crow and the Roots of Mass Incarceration
Marginalized Within the Movement (Women of the Movement)	Activity/ Discussion	9–12	5	Nonviolence to Black Power: The Evolution of the Movement
Lynching: A Tool of Terror (Understanding Lynching)	Activity/ Discussion	9–12	5	Emmett Till's Legacy
Black Panther Party Ten Point Platform	Handout/ Discussion	9–12	5	Nonviolence to Black Power: The Evolution of the Movement



The 2002 “Amistad Bill” calls on educators to:

- Teach African American history as American history
- “Place Africans and African Americans at the center of the narrative as agents rather than as bystanders or victims who live on the margins of the United States and the world.”

The NJ State Bar Foundation and the Amistad Commission support one another in this important work

Overview of Units



- Background: Ancient African Civilizations
- Unit 1: What is Race? What is a Social Construct?
- Unit 2: Dehumanization – Enslaved People
- Unit 3: The Reconstruction Era
- Unit 4: Jim Crow and the Great Migration
- Unit 5: The Dawning of the Modern Civil Rights Movement
- Unit 6: The Media Impact on Race and Social Justice



New Jersey State Bar Foundation

PARTICIPANT REFLECTION

*Use this form when you feel yourself getting activated in a training or conversation.
It may help you respond with care rather than react without thinking.*

1. What am I thinking right now?
2. What am I feeling in my body right now?
3. What emotions are coming up for me right now?
4. What do I believe caused these thoughts, body sensations, and emotions?
5. What outcome am I hoping for?
6. What might happen if I react without thinking?
7. What might happen if I take a few moments to reflect and reset?
8. What can I do right now to reflect and reset?