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Deborah Dean, and Chris Crowe

Mississippi Trial, 1955: Tangling with Text through Reading, Discussion, and Writing

The authors proffer practical critical-reading strategies for teaching *Mississippi Trial, 1955* to increase students' vocabulary, comprehension, and background knowledge of historical eras. They use nonfiction, a PBS documentary, the Web, folklore, and picture books among other tools for inciting thoughtful discussion and writing.

This article turns the tables on me (Chris Crowe). For years, I've written about other people's books and how they might be used in secondary English classrooms, but recently three of my colleagues convinced me to join them in an article about my historical novel, *Mississippi Trial, 1955*. Their invitation flattered me—after all, a novelist's first goal is simply to finish the blasted manuscript. Anything after that, including publication, is gravy, and the most luscious gravy of all is discovering that teachers and students have found the book worth reading and discussing.

Though my ego would like me to believe otherwise, I know that the real significance in *Mississippi Trial, 1955* lies not in my writing style nor my storytelling skills but in the novel's historical framework: the kidnapping and murder of Emmett Till and the trial and acquittal of his killers. In English language arts classrooms, my novel—and, for that matter, any novel—is merely a vehicle for engaging students in a rich variety of language arts experiences: discussing history and humanity, improving reading skills, increasing vocabulary, practicing critical thinking, improving writing, and many of the other sorts of activities that take place in an effective English class. My three colleagues offer some practical suggestions for using *Mississippi Trial, 1955*, suggestions that have surprised and impressed me because when I was writing the story, I never dreamed it might be used in

the ways they describe. Of course, as a teacher myself, I also know that their teaching suggestions shouldn't be limited to my book. They can easily be adapted to almost any text, and their use will enliven reading and discussion and will support national and state standards for English language arts instruction.

Sirpa Grierson: Critical Reading of Historical Fiction

Louise M. Rosenblatt's *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* reminds us that reading is a process of making meaning: "We peel off layer after layer of concerns brought to bear—social, biographical, historical, linguistic, textual—and at the center we find the inescapable transactional events between readers and texts" (175). Mining these layers in the text of *Mississippi Trial, 1955* is easy when teachers use critical-reading strategies that enhance students' background knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Traveling back to the Mississippi Delta of the 1950s requires a basic understanding of historical facts and issues from this era in US history. Assessing what students know before they read and building on this background knowledge calls for a prereading strategy such as a KWHL (What I Know, What I Want to learn, How will I find out? and What I have Learned) organizer. The KWHL reveals connections that students can make to the

novel. This student-produced list can generate personal questions that make for more purposeful reading of the novel. The following are three examples of possible "What I Want to learn" questions:

- > What was it like to be an African American boy from Chicago visiting a community such as Greenwood, Mississippi?
- > How does our society differ from the society of the 1950s?
- > Why were some Southern people so opposed to civil rights for African Americans?

Learning about Jim Crow laws, the White Citizens Councils, or the NAACP builds valuable background knowledge that enables students to discuss issues that surface during subsequent reading(s) of the novel. Assigning individual research projects that would lead to short presentations on these and related topics will help students make text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections as they read.

Students can consult a variety of resources to enrich their reading experience of *Mississippi Trial, 1955*. Crowe's nonfiction book, *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*, and books by Clenora Hudson-Weems, Christopher Metress, Mamie Till-Mobley and Christopher Benson, Marilyn Nelson, and Stephen J. Whitfield provide plenty of historical background. The PBS documentary, *The Murder of Emmett Till*, and its accompanying Web site offer material of interest to students and teachers. Students can also review magazines, photographs, music, and movies from the 1950s. For additional resources, go to the *Mississippi Trial, 1955* link on the Novelinks Web site (<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/Mississippi%20Trial%201955.htm>).

After students have made initial connections to the text through use of the KWHL activity and the brief ensuing discussion to stimulate interest, they have built some helpful background for reading the novel. During their reading, students should "tangle" with the text, choosing to annotate, to leave sticky notes in pertinent places, or to keep a double-entry journal with selected quotations and ideas. Assigning chapters to be read and requiring students to come to class with questions and comments about the story will considerably enrich discussion.

During reading, it is critical to address the language of the time, and Crowe's novel is rich in regional and historical expressions; "cotton gin community," "peckerwoods," "rednecks," "stringers," and "tar paper shanties" are just a few examples. Looking up the origins of these words can evoke vivid pictures in the students' imaginations and help to move the words from merely "seen" in a text to "known." Phrases such as "stubborn as a stump" (41), "keep the Romeos away" (80), and "more miserable than a crawdad in a stew-pot" (94) provide opportunities for students to research and discuss dialect and regional expressions.

Comprehension can be enhanced by using the Semantic Feature Analysis Organizer, a categorization strategy derived from the theoretical construct of cognitive structure described by Frank Smith. (Instructions and an organizer frame are available at *EJ* on the Web at <http://www.englishjournal.colostate.edu/Extensions/extensionsmain.htm>.) Using this matrix, students can examine interrelationships among the characters. The following example leads readers to understand the Hillburn men better:

- > Compare and contrast Hiram, Harlan, and Earl, the three generations of Hillburn men, by examining character traits (pride, honor, and so on) as well as attitudes toward family, racial segregation, and the South. Have students record their ideas on a simple matrix chart with character names in a column, listing the character traits and attitudes in a row at the top of the page. A simple +/- analysis determines whether they share traits or features in common. In class discussion, students use their findings from the individual charts to develop understanding.

Two other examples of tasks that could use Semantic Feature Analysis are the following:

- > Which characters in the story are based in fact and which are fictional?
- > List attributes of the major characters in the novel. Decide which attributes are most valued by each.

During their reading, students should "tangle" with the text, choosing to annotate, to leave sticky notes in pertinent places, or to keep a double-entry journal with selected quotations and ideas.

When reading is approached as a recursive process with students reading, analyzing, discussing, and revisiting the text to revise and clarify their ideas, a novel yields surprising riches. During and after reading, students can review the novel to discuss selected quotations, including the following:

- > “Just remember who you are, Hiram Hillburn, and be sure you do what is right no matter what.” (120)
- > “He was a colored boy who didn’t know his place.” (135)
- > “Nothing any jury can do to bring Emmett back, but they sure can let folks in the Delta know that things are changing. Changing at last.” (139)
- > “This is not an issue of Negro versus white. This is not an issue of North versus South. This is a simple issue of law: Two men murdered a child. You have no other choice but to convict them for murder.” (188)

To nudge students into grappling with the ideas they encounter through reading, purposeful engagement, and word investigation, teacher modeling and support are necessary. This supported form of enriched understanding creates a “muscular encounter” (Ratner 8) wherein students do not merely read the text but vicariously live within its pages as they walk the streets of Greenwood, Mississippi, and its environs with Hiram Hillburn.

Jacqueline S. Thursby: Folkloric Literary Discussion

Mark Turner, in *The Literary Mind*, suggests that “the understanding of a complex of objects, events, and actors [is] organized by our knowledge of *story*” (5; italics in original). Chris Crowe’s fictional narrative of Emmett Till’s tragic murder in the mid-1950s contextualizes the objects, events, and actors in an account that opens another time and place to today’s young adult readers. It is through story and the elements of narrative, frequently folkloric, that students learn more about the realities and prejudices of the world in which they live.

Literary discussion, a potential forum for understanding through communicative sharing, is often a hit-or-miss experience for students and their teachers. By approaching a text such as *Mississippi*

Trial, 1955 from a folkloric point of view, the students can attain a deeper understanding of story elements, why they were used, and what they mean.

A few basic components of folklore need to be understood for effective use of folkloric methods in teaching and discussing literature. Basic to the elements are the twin laws of folklore: *conservatism* and *dynamism*. Folklorist Barre Toelken explains that “*Conservatism* refers to all those processes, forces, and attitudes that result in the *retaining* of certain information *Dynamism*, at the other extreme, comprises all those elements that function to alter features, contents, meanings, styles, [and] performance” (39–40; italics in original). To demonstrate the twin laws of folklore, students can make paper airplanes and sail them to the front of the room. The basic idea of the paper plane represents the *conservative* element; the students’ varied interpretations of the concept demonstrate the *dynamic* element.

In “Documenting Folklore,” William A. Wilson explained the folkloric elements. The first basic element used in folkloristic studies is oral, that is, things people say. The category can include ballads, taunts, labels, insults, retorts, epics, folktales, jokes, gossip, proverbs, oaths, curses, and more. There is an example of oral folklore on the first page of *Mississippi Trial, 1955*: “faster than a rattlesnake.” Another simile, “tall like a preacher,” an oral cliché, could fall into the same category. On page 5, the African American fieldworkers are referred to as “boys.” Here again is an example of oral folklore in the form of prejudicial labeling. Students can work together in small groups to identify examples of oral folklore for comparative discussion of their own vernacular usage.

As the story develops, Crowe uses material folklore (things people make) to create the physical context of Greenwood, Mississippi. The discussion of cotton fields and their traditional rows on pages 7 and 8, the “cold lemonade” and other foods mentioned on pages 8 and 9, the porch swing mentioned on page 10, and other material examples work together to create an authentic setting for the story. Students may recognize and identify specifically with items mentioned, and the discussion may lead to shared experiences about these and similar items.

Customary behaviors (things people do) are evident throughout the book. The behaviors range from myriad examples of institutionalized prejudice

to “Gramma insisted we ‘eat proper in the dining room’” on page 10. Students looking for related research topics might find the example, “bent over their hoes chopping weeds,” interesting in relation to Cesar Chávez’s 1960s and 1970s Chicano movement (Meier and Ribera n.p.). Among other Chicano issues, there were campaigns to rid oppressed Mexican American fieldworkers of the short, back-breaking hoes that African Americans had been forced to use for centuries.

The folklore of belief includes many categories: folk religion and superstitions, as well as other cultural and social constructions repeated often enough in society to become reified or falsely factual. On page 8, there is a remark by Grandpa: “God made Negroes to work the land. They don’t feel the heat like we do; they can work all day long in the most hellish weather. They’re strong people, good with their hands.” A discussion touching on several folkloric constructions evident in that sentence would provide opportunity for increased student understanding on many levels. Have students lead the discussion on controversial statements throughout the story; many layers of understanding and misunderstanding will be revealed, discussed, and perhaps even remembered.

The folkloric method of literary discussion opens opportunity for response to the written story and to the students’ lived experience. It can serve as a segue to research and writing as students examine cross-cultural similarities and links, author strategies, research and methodology, and authentic and corroborative evidence of the lore used in the narrative through comparative research of the time and place. It is a nonthreatening, inclusive strategy to help even reluctant discussants reveal a little of themselves, their responses to the literature, and their realities.

Deborah Dean: Writing from the Text and Beyond

Thoughtful teachers use the writing/reading relationship strategically with students, carefully considering the respective strengths of the two processes to help students develop as readers and writers. How can that relationship benefit students when they read this novel? The general answer is not so different from what most teachers have for using writing with any literature:

- > Writing helps students get into and connect to the text.
- > Writing helps students reflect on and extend the ideas in the text.
- > Reading improves student writing.

Writing is one avenue *into* a text. As Peter Elbow notes, “Starting with writing rather than reading highlights how learning and thinking work best: as a process of hypothesis making and hypothesis adjustment in which the mind is active rather than passive” (12). Using writing to promote this active connection makes sense, and obvious tasks are freewriting or journals. Writing prompts such as the following effectively engage students’ thinking prior to reading:

Have students lead the discussion on controversial statements throughout the story; many layers of understanding and misunderstanding will be revealed, discussed, and perhaps even remembered.

- > Before Chapter 1: Write about a time you really wanted something or anticipated something and when you got it or it happened, it turned out to be nothing like you thought it would be. Why might that have happened?
- > Before Chapter 16: How would you feel if you thought someone you knew had done something wrong? Would you do anything about it? Would it make a difference in how you acted around that person?

Writing can also encourage students to reflect on and extend the ideas in the novel. Thinking about sensitive issues through writing can help some students consider ideas they might not have the chance or inclination to explore during a whole-class discussion and thus help them gain deeper insights into the ideas the novel presents. Some reflective questions that could help students make these personal connections after reading the novel include the following:

- > After Chapter 1: What other groups do you know of that are stereotyped the way Hiram’s grandpa stereotypes his workers? If you’re part of one of those groups, how does it feel? Why do people stereotype?

- > After Chapter 13: On page 152, Mr. Paul says, "Other than making the decision harder, being scared wouldn't matter one way or the other." What do you think? Does being scared cause us to make different decisions? Why or why not? Should it?

In addition to informal writing, teachers can encourage other reflective writing that allows more time for thinking. For example, before reading *Mississippi Trial, 1955*, teachers could read students the picture book *Courage* by Bernard Waber. It begins, "There are many kinds of courage. Awesome kinds. And everyday kinds. Still, courage is courage—what-

ever kind" (3–8). This introduction is followed by specific examples of courage from the author: "Courage is tasting the vegetable before making a face. Courage is not peeking at the last pages of your whodunit book to find out who did it. Courage is being the first to make up after an argument" (14–15). Although the exam-

ples in the book are not elaborated on, students could use the book as a prompt to get them started on their definition of courage in all its ramifications and then write their ideas as a first draft of an essay. After reading *Mississippi Trial, 1955*, students can reconsider courage as it appears in the novel and, using some ideas and quotations from it, revise their draft for a finished paper that personally defines courage.

Another piece of reflective writing could be based on a statement Mrs. Till made a month after the trial, which is found at the end of the nonfiction companion book: "Two months ago I had a nice apartment in Chicago. I had a good job. I had a son. When something happened to the Negroes in the South, I said, 'That's their business, not mine.' Now I know how wrong I was. The murder of my son has shown me that what happens to any of us, anywhere in the world, had better be the business of us all" (Crowe, *Getting* 120–21). After discussing the implications of this comment, students could consider current events from all over the world, choose one that matters to them, and research it. They could write a paper that shows how that event matters to them personally, tells how it should be the business of all of us, and then proposes a solution to address

some part of the problem, even if it's just to raise awareness of it to others.

Mississippi Trial, 1955 can help students improve writing, too, if teachers use it as a model for genre and for language. Because the story is based on historical documents, it is a perfect avenue for students to learn about genres: How is the novel different from the nonfiction book that accompanies it? What does that teach us about genres? Using *Getting Away with Murder*, or through research, students could study how the facts about the Emmett Till story find their way into a fictional story. How do writers use historical evidence when they tell a story? Examining this question explores genre expectations, building genre awareness in students. Teachers might reinforce this exploration of historical fiction by having students research an event and write about it, or write a poem based on a news event, again exploring how different genres both allow and constrain ideas.

Crowe's book also provides many examples teachers could use to teach elements of writing, including effective dialogue; show, not tell; and sentence fluency. Here are some examples:

- > Effective dialogue: Read page 11. Have students consider how dialogue can reveal character and not just pass on information. Have them think of a person they know and write a short dialogue that reveals one aspect of the person by having that person converse on something else, in other words—through the dialogue.
- > Show, not tell: Read page 17. Ask students how Hiram felt after the trick RC had played on the Remingtons. Because they can answer with such clarity, we know the text shows more than tells in that spot. Why would that incident be an important place to show rather than tell? Students can practice show, not tell writing by thinking of a time they felt a certain way and then showing it but not telling it. See if a partner can figure out correctly how they felt. On page 10, there is an example of show, not tell of a different pattern. In that example, the paragraph begins with a generality—the telling sentence—and then gives unique and specific details so that we can see it as the telling sentence described it: "It's the most comfortable place in the world." The details are not only visual but also emotional. Students could use that pattern to practice additional descriptive writing.

Thinking about sensitive issues through writing can help some students consider ideas they might not have the chance or inclination to explore during a whole-class discussion.

- > Sentence fluency: Many sentences from this novel could be used for imitation to help students build sentence skills. Here is an interesting sentence structure: "Mom and some neighbor women stayed busy in the kitchen keeping food coming out into the dining room, washing dishes, and finding space for the plates of sliced ham and roast beef, the bowls of potato salad, the peach pies and chocolate cakes, and the loaves of bread that people brought over" (28). It could be imitated this way: Teachers and students worked together in the class writing stories about the event, talking over their choices, and giving feedback on the ideas and content, the organization of the stories, the word choice and sentence fluency, and the overall impact the stories might have on the people who would read them.

Teachers can find numerous ways to use writing about and with this novel to improve students' reading and writing skills. The two processes can reinforce each other in students' learning if teachers use them in that way.

Chris Crowe: Afterword

As I said at the beginning, I never imagined that *Mississippi Trial, 1955* had so many learning possibilities, but my colleagues—knowledgeable and experienced teachers—have shown that there are several fruitful ways to use this novel in an English language arts course. It's gratifying to read their various teaching ideas, and their contributions remind me why we are English teachers. We all love to read, of course, but even more than that, we love helping students make connections to texts in ways that sharpen their

skills, expand their minds, and deepen their character. As my colleagues have just shown, in the hands of enthusiastic and capable teachers, almost any book, even mine, can enrich a student's life.

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READWRITETHINK CONNECTION

To see more teaching ideas by Deborah Dean, please visit her Author Page on the ReadWriteThink site at http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/author_detail.asp?authorid=225.

TITLE OF LESSON PLAN:

The Civil Rights Movement

LENGTH OF LESSON:

Two class periods

GRADE LEVEL:

6-8

SUBJECT AREA:

U.S. History

CREDIT:

Tish Raff, assistant principal, member of the associate faculty of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, educational consultant, and freelance writer.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will understand the following:

1. Beyond the famous leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, ordinary men and women struggled for their beliefs.
2. All the participants—famous and not so famous—deserve to have their stories told.
3. Older people have a responsibility to pass on these stories to younger people.

MATERIALS:

For this lesson, you will need:

Multiple reference sources that treat the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain to students that forty and fifty years after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, some participants are very well remembered and some less so. Some participants have been written about frequently; others, even others who lost their lives in the struggle, have received scant recognition. Tell students that for a class project they are going to do research and create a single volume to be titled *A Children's Encyclopedia of the Civil Rights Movement*. The book, which will be for first-graders, will include alphabetical articles about some of the leaders and the ordinary people who made a difference in the movement.

2. Ask students to describe the characteristics of an encyclopedia that they use in the classroom, in the library, or at home.

3. Ask students how they will have to modify the characteristics of an encyclopedia so that first-graders can understand and enjoy one. For example, bring out the point that the writers of the *Children's Encyclopedia* won't be able to use a term such as *poll tax* without explaining it.

4. Ask students to suggest names of people they think belong in their encyclopedia. Start a list, which eventually may include some or all of the following names. The asterisks indicate people about whom much material exists; it will be harder but not impossible to find some information about the players without asterisks. (You may want to set maximum word counts for entries on the more well-known and well-documented subjects.)

- Ralph Abernathy
- Oliver Brown
- James Chaney*
- Eldridge Cleaver*
- Medgar Evers*
- Andrew Goodman*
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Martin Luther King Jr.*
- Viola Greg Liuzzo
- Malcolm X*
- Thurgood Marshall*
- James Meredith
- Huey P. Newton
- A. Philip Randolph*
- Rosa Parks*
- Michael Schwerner*
- Bobby Seale

- Fred Shuttlesworth
- Emmett Till

5. Assign subjects to students. If you want students to work together in small groups, you can consider giving several subjects to each group.

6. Discuss with your students where they can find biographical information about their subjects: textbooks, nonfiction books of various kinds, already published encyclopedias, videos, Web sites. Indicate that wherever possible students should check more than one source for each person they are researching.

7. Go over the fundamentals of taking notes from other sources. Stress that the sentences and paragraphs in the students' encyclopedia will have to be original—not quotations from other sources.

8.

Another factor to consider before writing begins is format for the encyclopedia articles. In doing research, students will have found more biographical details about some subjects than others; they will have to decide whether to use blanks or question marks to indicate missing information. When birth and death dates and places are reported, consider the option of setting them off instead of running that information into the prose of the article. You may use the following format, for example:

Martin Luther King

Born [place] [date]

Died [place] [date]

[Main text of encyclopedia entry begins here.]

Looking at encyclopedias you have available, discuss with students the option of starting an entry with a phrase rather than a complete sentence—for example:

American cleric committed to nonviolent tactics during the Civil Rights Movement.

9. Set up a revising-editing-proofreading system so that both students and you have a chance to improve articles for the encyclopedia. Then consider having all the articles typed or word processed in the same type style and size, with the same line length, and paginated so that when bound, the end product will look professional. Ask your students for suggestions for the cover of the encyclopedia. If possible, make a copy of the finished encyclopedia for each student in your class. Work with first-grade teachers to create an opportunity for your students and the younger ones to meet and share the encyclopedia.

ADAPTATIONS:

Adaptations for Older Students:

Suggest that students prepare their encyclopedia as a functioning, electronic data base in which users can search for a term. Students can set up their data base using a commercially available program.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does racism still exist? What are some of the steps that would be necessary to eliminate racism, not only in the United States, but also in other parts of the world?
2. Why was segregation still practiced in southern states in the middle of the 20th century, despite the passage of constitutional amendments prohibiting segregation following the Civil War? To what extent were things different in northern states, and why?
3. What was the impact of the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* on life in the United States? Discuss the implications of this decision for the martyrs of the civil rights movement. Consider whether this decision continues to have an effect on civil rights in America.
4. The families of civil rights martyrs like Medgar Evers and Vernon Dahmer played an important role in their efforts. Analyze their participation, and consider the extent to which you would have offered similar support had your family members been involved in this way.
5. The Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, is said to have separated “the world of what was from the world of what could be.” Looking back, it is easy to see why—the bridge was a symbol of the hugely unequal and highly segregated worlds of blacks and whites on different sides of the river in Selma during the 1960s. Looking ahead to the 21st century, consider what separates “the world of what was from the world of what could be” in the United States today. What are the obstacles we face, and what changes could help provide a “bridge” to a better, more equal society?
6. The Reverend Jesse Jackson said, “Freedom is more valuable than life. . . . Dignity was more important than a comfort zone.” Explain what he meant by this statement. To what extent do you agree or disagree with it?
7. Many of our country's civil rights heroes have commented that hate is destructive. Compare the role that hatred has played in the civil rights movement in the United States

and in human rights violations around the world, such as in Kosovo, Chechnya, and Sierra Leone. (You can find information at the Web site of the Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org>.) Analyze the role of hatred in these arenas, and discuss possible ways for resolving some of the issues you discover.

8. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Given the lengthy period of time it took to convict some of the murderers in the civil rights movement, evaluate whether justice was actually served. What are the effects of a long delay in prosecution on the victims' families, the perpetrators, and society?

9. Many people see protecting civil rights as a political problem, but many of the causes of racism and prejudice are personal and societal as well as political. Compare the strengths and weaknesses of personal, societal, and political solutions to civil rights problems. Which are most effective and why?

EVALUATION:

You can evaluate each encyclopedia entry using the three-point rubric:

- **Three points:**comprehensive content (based on available sources); coherent and unified paragraphs; error-free grammar, usage, and mechanics
- **Two points:**adequate content; paragraphs occasionally lacking coherence and unity; some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- **One point:**insufficient content; weak paragraphs; many errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

You can ask your students to contribute to the assessment rubric by determining how many facts should be required for “comprehensive content.”

EXTENSION:

Symbol of Civility

Remind your students of the power of a symbol by considering some of the more familiar and forceful symbols throughout history and in today's world. Discuss such symbols as the peace symbol, the cross, the star of David, the Nazi swastika, the Black Panther fist, the burning cross, and the red AIDS ribbon. Talk about the ways in which messages are conveyed by symbols. (You may also consider some familiar commercial logos, which communicate without words—for example, McDonald's arches and the Nike swoosh.) Ask your students to create their own symbol to represent the idea of carrying the campaign for civil rights into the twenty-first century. Have them write descriptive paragraphs explaining the elements of their symbols.

Would He Still Have a Dream?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is perhaps the most well known figure of the Civil Rights Movement in America, and his "I Have a Dream" speech, as it is commonly known, is one of America's most heralded speeches. Ask your students to read or listen to that speech. You might want to have students take turns reading each section aloud so that they can dramatize the energy of King's words. When the reading is complete, ask your students to analyze and discuss the essential elements of his message.

What key images and phrases did he choose?

What was the overall emotional tone of his words?

After the discussion, ask your students to imagine that Dr. King has returned to today's world. Invite them to write the speech he might deliver today.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Bayard Rustin: Behind the Scenes of the Civil Rights Movement

James Haskins. Hyperion, 1997.

In this moving biography, Haskins tells the story of civil rights leader Bayard Rustin and personalizes more than 50 years of U.S. history. It is an excellent resource for high school research featuring a bibliography, an index, and an insert containing black and white photographs.

The Civil Rights Movement

Peter B. Levy. Greenwood Press, 1998.

This one-stop reference is ideal for student research of the civil rights movement. It contains an index, glossary of terms, speeches by George Wallace and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and biographies of civil rights leaders. It includes the stories of martyrs killed for their active involvement in the cause such as Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, and James Chaney.

WEB LINKS:

The National Civil Rights Museum

The National Civil Rights Museum offers a virtual tour which examines the complete history of civil rights in the United States.

<http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/>

Southern Poverty Law Center

The Southern Poverty Law Center is a non-profit organization, whose programs include Teaching Tolerance and the Intelligence Project. The Center sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which celebrates the memory of 40 individuals who died during the Civil Rights Movement

<http://www.splcenter.org/>

We Shall Overcome: Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement

This site provides extensive information and photographs for 41 significant places in the civil rights movement

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/index.htm>

Timeline of the American Civil Rights Movement

Created to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., these pages provide descriptions and pictures of the key elements of the American Civil Rights Movement.

<http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/>

Encyclopedia Britannica: Eras in Black History, 1954 - Present

This site offers detailed factual and pictorial information about black history during this time period

<http://blackhistory.eb.com/timeline.html>

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

This site offers a journey from the era of segregation to the birth of the Civil Rights Movement and the worldwide struggle for civil and human rights.

<http://bcri.bham.al.us/>

VOCABULARY:

civil rights

The nonpolitical rights of a citizen; the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution and by acts of Congress.

Context:

The civil rights movement was an effort to establish citizenship rights for blacks—rights that whites took for granted, such as voting and freely using public facilities.

discrimination

The act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually; prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment.

Context:

The 15th Amendment prohibited racial discrimination in voting.

hate crime

Any of various crimes (as assault or defacement of property) when motivated by hostility

to the victim as a member of a group (as one based on color, creed, gender, or sexual orientation).

Context:

Federal hate crime laws were used to bring some of the murderers in the civil rights movement to justice, since state criminal courts had failed to do so.

martyr

A person who sacrifices something of great value and especially life itself for the sake of principle.

Context:

Perhaps the most famous martyr of the civil rights movement was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose life was taken so early.

poll tax

A tax of a fixed amount per person levied on adults.

Context:

The poll tax was a voting fee charged to reduce the number of blacks that were eligible to vote.

segregation

The separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means.

Context:

The state-sanctioned segregation in the South was intended to keep the races apart, particularly in Alabama, where Birmingham was the most segregated city in the South.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS:

Grade Level:

6-8, 9-12

Subject Area:

United States history

Standard:

Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark 6-8:

Understands individual and institutional influences on the civil rights movement (e.g., the origins of the postwar civil rights movement; the role of the NAACP in the legal assault on segregation; the leadership and ideologies of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X; the effects of the constitutional steps taken in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government; the shift from de jure to de facto segregation; important

milestones in the civil rights movement between 1954 and 1965; Eisenhower's reasons for dispatching federal troops to Little Rock in 1957).

Benchmark 9-12:

Understands how diverse groups united during the civil rights movement (e.g., the escalation from civil disobedience to more radical protest; issues that led to the development of the Asian Civil Rights Movement and the Native American Civil Rights Movement; the issues and goals of the farm labor movement and La Raza Unida).

Benchmark 9-12:

Understands significant influences on the civil rights movement (e.g., the social and constitutional issues involved in the *Plessy v. Ferguson*(1896) and *Brown v. Board of Education*(1954) court cases; the connection between legislative acts, Supreme Court decisions, and the civil rights movement; the role of women in the civil rights movement and in shaping the struggle for civil rights).

Grade Level:

6-8, 9-12

Subject Area:

United States history

Standard:

Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark 6-8:

Understands how different groups attempted to achieve their goals (e.g., the grievances of racial and ethnic minorities and their reference to the nation's charter documents to rectify past injustices; local community efforts to adapt facilities for the disabled).

Benchmark 9-12:

Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved (e.g., the current debate over affirmative action and to what degree affirmative action policies have reached their goals; the evolution of government support for the rights of the disabled; the emergence of the Gay Liberation Movement and civil rights of gay Americans; continuing debates over multiculturalism, bilingual education, and group identity and rights vs. individual rights and identity; successes and failures of the modern feminist movement).

Grade Level:

6-8, 9-12

Subject Area:

civics

Standard:

Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark 6-8:

Knows major conflicts in American society that have arisen from diversity (e.g., North/South conflict; conflict about land, suffrage, and other rights of Native Americans; Catholic/Protestant conflicts in the 19th century; conflict about civil rights of minorities and women; present day ethnic conflict in urban settings).

Benchmark 9-12:

Knows examples of conflicts stemming from diversity, and understands how some conflicts have been managed and why some of them have not yet been successfully resolved.

Benchmark 9-12:

Knows how the racial, religious, socioeconomic, regional, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of American society has influenced American politics through time.

Grade Level:

6-8, 9-12

Subject Area:

civics

Standard:

Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life.

Benchmarks:

Benchmark 6-8:

Knows some of the efforts that have been put forth to reduce discrepancies between ideals and the reality of American public life (e.g., abolition, suffrage, civil rights, environmental protection movements).

Benchmark 9-12:

Knows historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and reality in American public life (e.g., union movements, government programs such as Head Start, civil rights legislation and enforcement).

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The New York Times Learning Network

Lesson Plan

Developed in Partnership with The Bank Street College of Education in New York City <http://www.nytimes.com/learning>

To print document select "Print" from the "File" menu on your browser.

Meting Out Justice

Exploring the Murder of Emmett Till

Related New York Times Article "A Hate Crime That Refuses to Give Up Its Ghosts", By RICK BRAGG, December 2, 2002

Author(s)

Michelle Sale, The New York Times Learning Network
Tanya Yasmin Chin, The Bank Street College of Education in New York City

Grades: 6-8, 9-12

Subjects: American History, Civics, Language Arts

Overview of Lesson Plan: In this lesson, students will learn about the murder case of Emmett Till and identify the missing pieces from the case. Through research, they will then work to fill in the gaps to create a basis for examining how justice might be served anew in this controversial murder.

Suggested Time Allowance: 1 hour

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Examine the meaning of justice by analyzing a quotation from Greek philosopher Plato.
2. Explore the forty-seven year-old murder case of Emmett Till by reading and discussing the article, "A Hate Crime That Refuses to Give Up Its Ghosts."
3. Research issues surrounding Emmett Till's murder, including statute of limitations and alternate theories of how the crime was committed.
4. Reflect upon their personal beliefs about justice and honor as outlined by Emmett Till's case.

Resources / Materials:

- student journals
- pens/pencils
- paper
- classroom blackboard
- copies of "A Hate Crime That Refuses to Give Up Its Ghosts" (one per student)
- large pieces of paper (one per group)
- resources with information about the American justice system and the Emmett Till case (civics textbooks, encyclopedias, library resources,

http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20021202monday_print.html

computers with Internet access)

Activities / Procedures:

1. **WARM-UP/DO-NOW:** Students respond to the following prompt in their journals, written on the board prior to class: "The Greek philosopher Plato said: What I say is that 'just' or 'right' means nothing but what is in the interest of the stronger party. What does this statement mean to you? Give an example to illustrate your reasoning." After a few minutes, allow students to share their responses. Then discuss the following: What does justice mean? What does it mean to be fair? How is justice served in the American criminal court system? How can people influence what is "just" or "right"? Give examples of how groups of people have helped to create an outcome or atmosphere where a certain action or behavior was unfair.

2. As a class, read and discuss the article, "A Hate Crime That Refuses to Give Up Its Ghosts," focusing on the following questions:

- a. How does the author describe Money, Mississippi?
- b. What happened 47 years ago in the store described in the article?
- c. According to the author, what does the store look like?
- d. What happened to the white men who were accused of killing the boy?
- e. According to legend, why was Emmett Till murdered?
- f. Who is Mamie Till Mobley?
- g. Why does Mrs. Mobley enjoy living?
- h. For what image is this case known?
- i. Why is the case getting new attention?
- j. What discrepancies exist regarding the facts surrounding who killed Emmett Till?
- k. Why does Mrs. Mobley think Emmett was whistling?
- l. According to Keith Beauchamp, how many people were involved in Emmett's murder?
- m. According to Mr. Beauchamp, why did the black men participate in this crime?

3. Divide the class into groups of four. Explain that each group will be researching the facts of Emmett Till's case by evaluating several different aspects of the case. This information will help the class to create a "master timeline," outlining the facts and theories surrounding Emmett Till's death.

Each group should begin by completing the following assignment (written on the board or copied in a handout for easier student access):

"Using the information in the article read in class, create a rough outline of the Emmett Till case, answering the following:

- Who is involved?
- Where did this happen?
- When did this happen?
- Why did this happen?
- How did this impact the American civil rights movement?
- How did this happen?"

After completing a rough outline on a large piece of paper, each group

should brainstorm questions that will help them "fill in the blanks" to get a deeper understanding of Emmett Till's murder and a trial that led to no convictions.

Next, ask students in each group to number off one to four. Ask all "1's" to take "Task 1," all the "2's" to take "Task 2," etc. Students may work on their tasks individually or in new groups. Then, after completing their tasks, students will report back to their original groups to share their findings before the large class discussion at the end of class.

Task 1: In order to better understand the system that tried Emmett Till's case, look up the definitions for the following vocabulary words: statute of limitations, conviction, appeal, verdict, criminal court, due process, trial by jury, first-degree murder, sentence, plaintiff, defense. Using the information in the article, how do these terms apply to the case? Make as many connections as possible for each definition, and when applicable, list the facts of the case.

Task 2: Research Mississippi's laws. What is the statute of limitation for murder? What laws could be used to reopen and retry Emmett Till's case? What circumstances determine the length of time for the applicable statute?

Task 3: Research the trial of J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant. What was the verdict in their case? What were the arguments behind the verdict? Was this decision appealed? Why or why not?

Task 4: The article mentions theories about other people being involved in Emmett's murder, as well as a reason why Emmett may have been whistling. Hypothesize and try to support through research alternative theories that might further develop the case.

Once students have completed their task research, allow time for students to report back to their original groups to share their findings.

Finally, as a class, revisit the rough outline of the case created by each group at the beginning of the lesson. Post the four group outlines on the walls of the classroom, then create a "master timeline" on the blackboard of the events gathered from the article, and allow each group time to "fill in the blanks" for the Emmett Till case. For multiple theories of what happened, include as many different ideas as possible. Use the definitions to help label and explain the different parts of the case. Discuss how the context in which this murder happened may have shaped the investigation, trial, and outcome of this particular case.

4. WRAP-UP/HOMEWORK: Individually, students will write a reflective essay examining their opinions about the Emmett Till case. Ask students to answer one or more of the following questions in their essays (written on the board for students to copy before leaving class): "Do you feel justice was or was not served? Why? What reparations, if any, should be made in memory of Emmett Till and in honor of the work his mother is doing? In this particular case, what would justice look like? What is the value of recognizing past crimes?"

Further Questions for Discussion:

- What impact did this case have on the civil rights movement?
- Why do you think this case the first internationally covered case of the civil rights movement?
- How did an open casket at Emmett Till's funeral affect the importance of his death?
- What message did this case send to other American children during the 1960s?
- Under what circumstances can a murder case be reopened?
- What happens when a criminal is convicted after his or her death?

Evaluation / Assessment:

Students will be evaluated based on thoughtful journal entries, thoughtful participation in class and group discussion, thorough completion of research and thoughtful completion of a reflective essay outlining their opinions about the Emmett Till case.s

Vocabulary:

petering, dapples, elicit, defies, rutabagas, martyr, lynching, abducted, evangelism, quarantine, cresting

Extension Activities:

1. Read "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee and write a comparative essay studying the crime described in the article and the crime described in the novel.
2. According to Chris Benson, a Chicago lawyer and writer cited in the article, "...the one name everyone remembers is Emmett Till ... It burned the race problem into our consciousness, the first international coverage, the fist real media event of the modern civil rights movement. And no one ever had to pay." Write an article exploring whether or not you think there is still a "race problem" today. Based on examples from your own personal experience, are there still problems between people of different ethnicities? Explain what the causes of these problems are, and propose some possible cures. Cite recent media events or court cases to support your argument.
3. Create a poster illustrating the growth and success of a famous American civil rights organization, such as the NAACP, SNCC, SCLC, or CORE. Who began these organizations? What did they contribute to the civil rights movement? Are they still in existence? If so, how has their mission changed to meet the needs of modern times? If not, why did they fizzle out?
4. Read "I Dream a World" by Brian Lanker. Choose a quotation stated by one of the African-American women profiled in the book, and write a personal statement based on that quotation. How do you relate to the author of this statement? What do these words mean to you? How can these words inspire or shape your life?
5. Write a report explaining the purpose for statute of limitations. Why do different crimes have different statutes of limitations? How does each statute compare to murder? (Research crimes such as rape, arson, drugs, etc.) What are the minimum and maximum sentences for these crimes in

your state?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Global History- Write a research paper exploring the civil rights movement in a country different from your own. Who is involved? What are the major issues? How does this issue connect to larger global issues?

Journalism- Write a narrative news piece that illustrates the descriptive language used in the article, "A Hate Crime That Refuses to Give Up Its Ghosts." Submit your piece to your school or local newspaper.

Academic Content Standards:

McREL This lesson plan may be used to address the academic standards listed below. These standards are drawn from Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education: 2nd Edition and have been provided courtesy of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning in Aurora, Colorado.



In addition, this lesson plan may be used to address the academic standards of a specific state. Links are provided where available from each McREL standard to the Achieve website containing state standards for over 40 states. The state standards are from Achieve's National Standards Clearinghouse and have been provided courtesy of Achieve, Inc. in Cambridge Massachusetts and Washington, DC.

Grades 6-8

United States History Standard 29- Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties. Benchmark: Understands individual and institutional influences on the civil rights movement

(CTSS - 'social', '6-8', 'us10')

United States History Standard 31- Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States. Benchmarks: Understands various influences on American culture; Understands how different groups attempted to achieve their goals

(CTSS - 'social', '6-8', 'us11')

Civics Standard 14- Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life.

Benchmarks: Knows some important American ideals; Knows some of the discrepancies that have arisen between American ideals and the realities of political and social life in the United States; Knows some of the efforts that have been put forth to reduce discrepancies between ideals and the reality of American public life

(CTSS - 'social', '6-8', 'civ2')

Civics Standard 18- Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights. Benchmarks: Understands the importance of the rule of law in establishing limits on both those who govern and the governed, protecting individual rights, and promoting the common good; Knows historical and contemporary examples of the rule of law; Understands the basic concept of due process of law

(CTSS - 'social', '6-8', 'civ3')

Language Arts Standard 1- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process. Benchmarks: Uses style and

structure appropriate for specific audiences and purposes; Writes expository compositions; Writes persuasive compositions; Writes compositions that speculate on problems/solutions

(CTSS - 'english', '6-8', '1')

Language Arts Standard 4- Gathers and uses information for research purposes. Benchmark: Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics

(CTSS - 'english', '6-8', '4')

Language Arts Standard 8- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning. Benchmarks: Plays a variety of roles in group discussions; Asks questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas; Listens in order to understand a speaker's topic, purpose, and perspective; Conveys a clear main point when speaking to others and stays on the topic being discussed

(CTSS - 'english', '6-8', '8')

Grades 9-12

United States History Standard 29- Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties. Benchmarks: Understands how diverse groups united during the civil rights movement; Understands significant influences on the civil rights movement

(CTSS - 'social', '9-12', 'us10')

United States History Standard 31- Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States. Benchmark: Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved

(CTSS - 'social', '9-12', 'us11')

Civics Standard 14- Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life.

Benchmarks: Knows discrepancies between American ideals and the realities of American social and political life; Knows historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and reality in American public life

(CTSS - 'social', '9-12', 'civ2')

Civics Standard 18- Understands the role and importance of law in the American constitutional system and issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights. Benchmarks: Knows historical and contemporary practices that illustrate the central place of the rule of law; Knows historical and contemporary events and practices that illustrate the absence or breakdown of the rule of law; Knows historical and contemporary illustrations of the idea of equal protection of the laws for all persons; Knows historical and contemporary instances in which judicial protections have not been extended to all persons and instances in which judicial protections have been extended to those deprived of them in the past

(CTSS - 'social', '9-12', 'civ3')

Language Arts Standard 1- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process. Benchmarks: Writes compositions that are focused for different audiences; Writes compositions that fulfill different purposes; Writes expository compositions; Writes persuasive compositions that evaluate, interpret, and speculate about problems/solutions and causes and effects; Writes reflective compositions

(CTSS - 'english', '9-12', '1')

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Language Arts Standard 4- Gathers and uses information for research purposes. Benchmark: Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics

(CTSS - 'english', '9-12', '4')

Language Arts Standard 8- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning. Benchmarks: Asks questions as a way to broaden and enrich classroom discussions; Adjusts message wording and delivery to particular audiences and for particular purposes

(CTSS - 'english', '9-12', '8')

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ASSIGNMENT DISCOVERY ONLINE CURRICULUM

Lesson Title:

Racism: Law and Attitude

Grade Level:

11-12, with adaptation for younger students

Subject Area:

United States History, Civics

Duration:

Two days

Objectives:

Students will

1. understand the difference between *de facto* and *de jure* discrimination in the United States, and
2. understand the challenges in creating and enforcing laws that make certain racist actions and speech illegal.

Materials:

- Reference materials on the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, and de jure and de facto racism
- Writing materials
- Internet access (if accessible)
- Take-Home Activity Sheet: Fighting De Facto Racism

Procedures:

1. In order for students to begin to understand that racism (the idea and racist practices) is contrary to the ideals set forth by the founders of the United States, it is important for them to know what those ideals are. Read the famous second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence to the class. Ask students to listen carefully and write down key words (such as *equal*, *life*, *liberty*, and the *pursuit of happiness*) that describe the ideals our founding fathers sought to create in an independent democracy.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to

abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

2. Now discuss with students whether they believe that all people in the United States have equal rights as defined in the Declaration of Independence? Even when the law seems to grant full and equal rights to all people, how are some groups of people disenfranchised or discriminated against? Why do you think this happens?
3. As a class, define racism. (For example: "Racism is the belief that certain races of people are by nature superior to others. Racism can also be discrimination based on race.") Ask students to provide examples of racism in our nation's history. Student examples might include slavery, segregation, hate groups, hate crimes, racial profiling, affirmative action, and employment discrimination. Once the class has generated a list of examples of racism, ask them to divide the list into those practices of racism that are illegal and those that are wrong but not currently illegal. (Slavery, segregation, and hate crimes are all illegal, while the existence of hate groups, racist Web sites, racist song lyrics, or other racist publications are not illegal.)
4. Explain to students that racism can be described in two ways: **de jure** (that which is a matter of law) and **de facto** (that which is in reality or evidenced by human attitude). Slavery, segregation, and hate crimes are considered de jure discrimination because they are illegal. Hate groups, racist Web sites, and other racist publications are considered de facto; they might contradict the ideals that the founding fathers of the United States proclaimed, but they are not punishable by law.
5. Ask students to talk about the effects of de facto racism. (For example, are there any consequences to racist Web sites? If so, what are they?) Can de facto racism be controlled by acts of law? Should they be? Why or why not? Do you think there's a connection between de facto racism and hate crimes? Why or why not?
6. Now introduce the Bill of Rights to your students. (This document is available online at <http://www.constitutionfacts.com/amendments.shtml>.) Remind students that the Bill of Rights contains the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. These amendments were added in 1791 to protect the rights of individuals. Have students read the First Amendment:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Ask students to discuss the meaning of this amendment. Why is this amendment so important? What everyday rights would be taken away if we didn't have this amendment? How would our nation be different? (You may want to discuss the

consequences in a nation that does not have freedom of speech.) Now ask students to consider this: Does this amendment protect some forms of de facto racism? If so, how? Discuss with students the challenges of creating legislation that both protects free speech and expression while protecting people from acts of racism.

7. Pass out copies of the Take Home Activity Sheet: Fighting De Facto Racism. In this homework assignment, students will review the terms *de jure* and *de facto* and provide examples for each. They will then compose an essay on what they believe to be the best strategy to overcoming de facto racism.

Adaptation for grades 9-10

Rather than prepare individual essays, have the students contact their state legislator's office to learn about historical or current legislation passed in their state that deals directly with racist behaviors or attitudes. The class as a whole might read the legislation and discuss whether or not they believe it has proven effective in their state. In addition, discuss which nonlegislative efforts have proven effective (such as education, marches, and parenting).

Questions:

1. What does the word *racism* mean to you? What behaviors and attitudes does a racist person display?
2. Discuss the challenges that we face in dissolving racism in the United States.
3. Do racist publications, such as song lyrics or Web sites, influence people's opinions and attitudes toward others? How do they make you feel?
4. How is racism like sexism? Ageism? How is it different? How have we as a country prioritized each of these forms of discrimination?
5. What is a hate crime? Discuss one hate crime that has made the national news in recent years. How did it make you feel?
6. Should laws be created that increase the punishment of criminal acts proven to be motivated by discrimination? Do you think hate crime legislation helps decrease or at least deter acts of racism that lead to violence? Why or why not?

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate an understanding of the differences between de jure and de facto racism, as well as their ability to communicate (through class discussion and essay writing) their opinions as to how de facto racism can be fought.

Three points: Student has actively participated in classroom discussions, was able to provide examples of different types of racism in the activity sheet, and has completed a thoughtful, well-constructed essay on how he or she believes de facto racism can be overcome.

Two points: Student has participated to some degree in the classroom discussions, was able to offer at least one example of both types of racism, and

completed a fairly clear essay on how he or she believes de facto racism can be overcome.

One point: Student was attentive during classroom discussions, but was unable to provide a sufficient definition or examples for de jure and de facto racism, and had difficulty constructing a clearly written essay.

Extensions

Examining the Law

Have students select a form of racism that has become illegal (de jure) and research the laws that were written to address it. Students may choose to research the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery; the Fifteenth Amendment, which made it illegal to deny people the right to vote based on the color of their skin or their religion; or the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans discrimination because of a person's color, race, national origin, religion, or sex. Students may also choose to research hate crime legislation that has been passed in their state. Have students outline the legislation they have studied by answering questions such as: What is the law? When was it passed? Why was it passed? What does it say? Has it been effective? Why or why not?

Web Links:

Enriching the Focus on Ethnicity and Race

American Psychological Associations' Task Force on Diversity Issues at the Precollege and Undergraduate Levels of Education in Psychology offers this interesting article geared for teachers dealing with ethnicity and race.

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/mar98/dial.html>

United States Census

Lesson plans provided to examine the latest Census which could be a great starting point in examining "A question of Race."

<http://www.census.gov/>

American Anthropological Association Statement on "Race"

American Anthropological Association attempts to represent the generally held thoughts and scholarly positions of a majority of anthropologists on the issue of race. This statement could be used as an interesting point of discussion.

<http://www.ameranthassn.org/stmts/racepp.htm>

Hidden Racism Requires Super Sleuthing

Take an International look at hate as Discovery Channel Europe takes a look at hate in America and Ireland. An extensive list of links to learn more about Personal and Institutional Racism are included.

<http://www.discoveryeurope.com/hateandviolence/usahate/usahatehome.html>

Vocabulary:

de facto

Definition: In reality or fact.

Context sentence: **De facto** racism will exist even if we find a way to make racism illegal.

de jure

Definition: According to law.

Context sentence: When slavery was abolished, the United States eliminated one form of **de jure** racism.

discriminate

Definition: To make distinctions on the basis of class or category without regard to individual merit; to show preference or prejudice.

Context sentence: It is unlawful to **discriminate** against someone based upon his or her race, religion, or sex.

legislate

Definition: To create or pass laws.

Context sentence: It is one thing to **legislate** against racism, while it is another to do away with it.

race

Definition: A categorization of people based on shared biological traits, such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape.

Context sentence: Some question whether humans are all a part of a single **race** or from a variety of races.

racism

Definition: belief that certain races of people are superior to others; discrimination based on race

Context: Many people believed that the crime was driven by **racism**.

Academic Standards:

Grade Level:

9-12

Subject Area:

Civics

Standard:

Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society.

Benchmark:

Knows examples of conflicts stemming from diversity and understands how some conflicts have been managed and why some of them have not yet been successfully resolved.

Grade Level:

9-12

Subject Area:

Civics

Standard:

Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good.

Benchmark:

Knows alternative ideas about the purposes and functions of law (e.g., regulating relationships among people and between people and their government; providing order, predictability, security, and established procedures for the management of conflict; regulating social and economic relationships in civil society).

Credit

Christine LaPlaca Burrows, former secondary school social studies teacher and current educational consultant.

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Fighting De Facto Racism

1. Explain the differences between de facto and de jure racism. Provide examples of both:

2. Compose an essay on what you believe to be the best strategy to fighting de facto racism in the 21st century. In your essay, address some or all of the following questions: Can de facto racism be overcome? Should laws be made to control de facto racism? Why or why not? Should more emphasis be placed on educating people about bias and racism? Should parents become more involved in teaching their children tolerance? What other ways can you fight de facto racism in a society? Provide examples when possible.