



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2014 Volume III: Race and American Law, 1850-Present

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## **The NAACP: Then and Now**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.03.04  
by Pamela Kelley

I teach U.S. History and Civics to students in grades 11 and 12 at a predominantly African American high school. This is an inclusive educational environment, and my role as a PPT chairperson is to provide support for special needs students with challenging behaviors and low academic performance. This is an alternative placement, where students come from "sending schools" throughout the district, where they have experienced very little success in their educational environments. Our school's vision is that our students can grow to higher levels of achievement in spite of various challenges that they face.

The purpose of this curriculum unit is to assist students in determining the relevancy of the NAACP. The students will learn about how African American people were in crisis and the NAACP came to their rescue. Many of the activities will address the question of whether the organization's assistance is still necessary. This curriculum unit is relevant to the students that I teach, because of the lack of knowledge and disconnect that they have exhibited about the struggles and liberties of the past. The students may see threats to some of the same freedoms that the NAACP fought for over the past century. This curriculum will be used to ignite a dialogue around the question, "Is the NAACP needed at this time, in its efforts toward the elimination of racial discrimination through lobbying, legal action, and education?" This unit will explore the history of the NAACP's landmark cases concerning racial injustice in education and mass incarceration. The students will determine the present needs of the organization, if any, and debate whether the organization is necessary at this time.

(Recommended for U.S. History, grades 9-12)

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