



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2021 Volume II: Developing Anti-Racist Curriculum and Pedagogy

Recentering Humanity: An Anti-Racist Approach to Narrative Writing

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.02.04
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The current English Language arts classroom consists of futile attempts to teach the TikTok generation to sound like Henry David Thoreau. Working in tandem with oppressive educational frameworks, the mainstream practices in teaching narrative consists of methods purposed toward a singular goal: mastering the craft and structures of what's considered Standard English. By design, on both the teacher and student end, narratives that can be translated into formulaic structures that take precedence over all other personal experience, subduing the creative, cultural, and academic value that comes with storytelling. This curricular unit has two major functions. The first is to identify and analyze dominant methods and practices that uphold the current structures of teaching narrative writing. This analysis includes unearthing American Literature's past and present relationship with White Supremacy and its operation as a subtle construct of systemic racism. The second is to curate sustainable, structural, and easily implementable solutions, by way of anti-racist pedagogy, to directly counter dominant practices, and at the same time, bolster the engagement, academic rigor and collective joy that comes with creative writing. In other words, it's my intent to create space and agency for students to develop a personal narrative that is actually *personal*.

(Developed for Literature, grades 11-12; recommended for Literature, grades 9-12)

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