



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

Invisible Incidences in America-The Great Migration and Destruction of Thriving Black Communities

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.02.10
by Felicia Fountain

Social Studies is the study of the interactions of people, events, geography, economics, and society. What happens when the training and content that many history and social studies teachers have used contains deep fault line fissures and misrepresentations? In this four to six-week curriculum unit designed for 8th graders, students will explore and research events in history from 1910 to the 1970s. Many of these events are rarely mentioned in most Social Studies textbooks, curricula, or resources.

Essential questions for this unit are:

- How can social studies investigate a history of racism?
- What is anti-racist education?
- How can educators and students work to remix our current social studies curriculum to emphasize anti-racist learning?
- How are people affected by marginalization and erasure?
- How does a dominant narrative develop?

Students will engage in viewing and researching videos and artifacts about thriving black communities that developed in the early 20th century amidst the violence of Jim Crow. The dominant narrative about US History from the end of Reconstruction to the mid-20th century has often portrayed Black people as hopeless and destitute. In reality, many Black people left the south, moved north or Midwest to establish flourishing communities. Black communities in Tulsa, Knoxville and Chicago were making great progress in the first two decades of the 20th century. But during the Red Summer of 1919, the aforementioned communities and others were burned down by white mobs and never rebuilt. One community was burned down and filled in with water, later becoming a lake. These mobs murdered blacks, decimated their townships, and then attempted to conceal this history, often erasing it entirely from history books.

Students' culminating project is research, documentation, and presentation of their findings through a student-led Community Action Event.

(Developed for Social Studies, grade 8; recommended for American History, African American Studies, and Black and LatinX Studies, grades 9-12, and U.S. History, grade 8)

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2021 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>