



American History - LGBTQ Figures and Voices

Curriculum Unit 23.03.01, published September 2023
by Felicia Fountain

“If I wait for someone else to validate my existence, it will mean that I’m shortchanging myself.”

- Zanele Muholi, South African artist and activist

“Equality means more than passing laws. The struggle is really won in the hearts and minds of the community, where it really counts.”

- Barbara Gittings, American activist for the LGBTQ population

“My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you.”

- Audre Lorde, poet

“We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers.”

- Bayard Rustin, Lawyer, and Civil Rights Movement Activist

Introduction

I am a Social Studies teacher to seventh and eighth-grade students at a K-8 magnet-themed school for the New Haven Public School District located in New Haven, Connecticut. My school has a population of more than 700 students—many started out in our early elementary program. The majority of the students live in urban and neighborhood communities, with some suburban students from surrounding towns. My background is in instruction with the greater part of my years as a language arts teacher and work experiences in curriculum and instruction and journalism.

This unit is designed to fit in with American History lessons. It will bring people, places and events of

American History that have caused ripples, waves and even major shifts throughout society and the world. Students will explore the voices and faces behind movements that changed the way that we live today. They will research and discuss events that were influenced by events and people significant to the LGBTQ community. While many of the people's sexual orientation was unknown, their influence and impact on American events and history has more than likely been felt in some way or the other. A few of the students may be familiar with or have slight knowledge of the important people, places and events along the American history timeline. However, more than likely most students have not ever heard of the people, many of whom kept their orientation or ties to the LGBTQ community hidden.

Historical events from as early as the 6th century to the mid-1900s will be part of this unit.

Background

As students and teachers of history become researchers, they will find artifacts, stories, and pieces of history that have yet to be unearthed. Some artifacts have been excavated, but their proper place in history has not yet been determined. This unit will allow students and teachers to become archaeologists, to gently sweep away the dirt that has covered these artifacts and finally become curators of history.

Teachers of history search the cause and effects of events as well as for dates and facts. However, they must research beyond obvious dates, colonization, wars and presidents, etc. Many people are familiar with the study of white American origins as this information has heavily populated history books since the earliest times, probably second only to geography-rich books or those dedicated to the explanation of religious freedoms and formations of nations through colonization to "civilize" the world.

This unit will allow students to discover how the LGBTQ community has always been woven into the fabric of the American quilt of history as well as the world's quilt. As students participate in the activities and lessons, student learning will include the use of primary and secondary sources. Interviews, letters, diary entries and other items will be used to support and deepen student learning. While this unit is history and social studies based, music and other artistic representations will also be used to teach and gain access to historical events that were influenced or caused by people who are LGBTQ community members as well those who are or were advocates for the community.

This is a middle school to high school unit. Aspects of this unit that can be adapted for students in lower or higher-grade levels. Many of the activities in this unit will allow the learner to develop skills in the areas of research, data collection and analysis, problem solving and writing through the vehicle of peer collaboration.

During this lesson light geography skills can be gleaned from the unit. A specific focus can be placed on "movement" of ideas and factors that impact economy and social change. Students will read and analyze various texts and other media. Throughout all activities, the use of the Common Core skills of writing, speaking and listening will be utilized.

When one considers the subject of history or social studies, one must consider all of the things that have been included in history, as well as the things that have not been included. Years and decades have been made secret from society and hidden in history. What can be more surprising is the role of others to disguise their

involvement and actions. While many align the Black Lives Matter movement, along with issues related to the LGBTQ community struggle – both should be respected in their own rights. Comparison is always helpful and supportive and provides strength when calling into account the inaccuracies and failures of society. However, each cause is important enough to stand on its own.

The issue with erasure is that if the contributions, actions and plight of a people are not documented – then the people may have a tendency not to believe it. There have been documented cases of historical erasure. For example, the Holocaust is a major event. However it is a prime example of how beliefs can be swayed— even with solid irrefutable proof and even millions of dead bodies documented through death records, heaps, and piles of bones and ashes. If groups of people can suggest or claim did not exist-- even with evidence. experiencing the erasure of their issues are nonexistent.

What is erasure?

According to the dictionary, “erasure” is defined as the removal of writing, recorded material, or data. Part of this definition is also considered the removal of all evidence or traces of an item or something – in other words, complete obliteration.

And almost every side of peoples or culture or group of people, it’s history is its foundation. The accomplishments and existence along the lines of one’s historical context establishes it. For example, approximately 30 state legislatures in the United States have introduced bills to silence and practically stop educators from discussing racial history and several subtopics related to race, according to the American Civil Liberties Union podcast titled, *“The Movement to Erase Black History and Culture.”* The podcast released in February 2022 discusses the tactics of political and racial fear mongering. If one is not able to trace its origin or document, its historical lineage, that would seem to lead self to the thought that it never existed or that it is not valid. That is why the issue of erasure – especially with the context of social studies and history and almost any other subject must be addressed. For centuries, the oral traditions and history of a people were recorded. If the people who are tied to that culture are no longer able to pass down the oral traditions, or if that sort of people cannot find itself in books, or in the histories recorded by those of the majority – then it runs the risk of being wiped out, or in other words erased.

Almost as important as the issue of erasure is the lens of research within the subject of social studies and history’s and almost any other subject as mentioned earlier. Well, it may be difficult for the classroom teacher to research it is totally possible for the classroom teacher or professor to be the impetus for research. There are some terms that educators may want to make themselves familiar with as they teach this unit, as well as for the expansion of their educational toolboxes.

Cultural Genocide

Cultural genocide is the demolition or destruction of artifacts, statues, practices of a group of people that is implemented or carried out by a dominant group of people. In some cases, the cultural genocide occurs through a systematic process of practices implemented by the dominant group – the group that is slowly and systematically being wiped out, is often unaware. Many of these practices are discovered, after generations of monitoring and research, and looking at patterns and practices of those in the dominant group.

Cultural Suppression

Cultural suppression is another important term. It is also known as ethnocide. The people continue to live however, their culture is stripped from them. According to Americanbar.org, this term was first used in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin, who was of Polish background, was a lawyer, and he first began to use that term in relation to the struggles of the Armenian people.

The Harlem Renaissance and Black Queer Society

The Harlem Renaissance was more than a time or movement that included the growth and birth of arts and artistic freedom. It included a cultural explosion. For many it allowed people to experience and, in some cases, express lifestyle changes. The Harlem renaissance allowed the birth of African American arts and poetry for artists of all types.

According to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture’s Collection Story, called The Harlem Renaissance in Black Queer History the most prominent and respected leaders of Harlem and its queer community were black queer thinkers, scholars and artists. People like James Baldwin and Langston Hughes were key parts of this cultural surge that quickly became a movement. To avoid arrest and being shunned by the larger part of society, they were “closeted” or hid their identities and or gender preferences. During this time in America concealing, one’s identity –even as people mixed heritage “passed” to conceal their black ethnicity was popular and accepted. This happened before the 1800s and into the 20th century. Some people of mixed ethnicities continue to pass today. According to the site’s collection story, many popular figures of the time had secretly kept “off-line lives to hide same gender relationships” and many portrayed hetero socially acceptable roles. Some of them include Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Bessie Smith, and Alain Locke—all of whom are believed to have had same-sex relationships in their personal lives, which were of course different from their public personas. They did this to keep favor with mainstream audiences.

Writers

During the 1920s and 30s Harlem was a safe haven for popular black queer writers. While some of them never addressed their private lives or intimate relationship preferences, influential people like Wallace Thurman and Langston Hughes never spoke publicly about their intimate relationships. However, generations after their deaths details about their private lives began to surface. Confirmations would come via their diary entries, correspondence and unpublished works. Later generations of scholars and biographers have drawn

conclusions by examining their private documents and comments from their contemporaries. Some writers of the period included themes that did not align or in some cases were exactly opposite to their opinions about same-sex romantic relationships—in their work.

Entertainers

The nightclubs have always been places where people who had hidden lives were able to be their true selves. Harlem’s nightclubs kept their closeted secrets and were places that black queer artists felt comfortable and began to gain a huge following. At times some of their performances addressed mainstream society “masculine” and “feminine” behavior and ideas of gender specific types of clothing according to the mainstream majority. New York City laws and enforcement during the 1920s at times specifically addressed and at other times ignored the black queer residents of the city. The Committee of Fourteen, a citizens’ organization worked with the city police and courts to enforce *anti-vice laws*. Because the committee ignored many of the black queer community, a lively LGBTQ+ nightlife existed in Harlem and people did not have to worry about being arrested. This was not the same outside of Harlem. Some of the popular clubs, Hot-Cha and Clam House were homes to queer entertainers, like as Jimmie Daniels and Gladys Bentley at the Clam House, found success in this relatively lenient environment.

Gladys Bentley, known for gender bending performances while openly flouting the gender and sexuality constraints of the 1920s and 30s. Bentley became famous for performing in men’s clothing. She was known for singing raunchy songs about her interactions with women and even regularly flirted with women in the audience.

In 1931, Bentley married her then-girlfriend, a white woman. Bentley’s marriage was not hidden from the public—later in 1931 her popularity declined due to her marriage. Bentley’s artistry and boldness, she was considered an early twentieth LGBTQ history icon.

Blueswomen

The term *blueswomen* refers to black queer women who performed and sang what was also called “the lesbian blues.” This style of music was popular during the 1920s with stars like blues” era Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Alberta Hunter. Many of the aforementioned were involved in same-sex relationships at different points in their lives. In keeping with the practices during the time, they never commented publicly on their lesbian or bisexual identities. Although their personal lives were common knowledge, they were relatively open with their colleagues in the entertainment industry. Hints about some of their intimate preferences can be found in the lyrics of their songs. For example, Ma Rainey’s 1928, “Prove It On Me Blues,” refers to lesbian relationships. *Blueswomen* including Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter, and Ethel Waters were influential not only in Harlem’s cultural landscape, but their bold lyrics woven through the blues impacted music and the work of Langston Hughes and other Harlem Renaissance writers.

Essential questions

Questions students and teachers can consider during this lesson:

- What is erasure?

- How have cultural, social and political forces shaped interactions with or impacted the lives of those who are a part of the LGBTQ community?
- Who is responsible for erasure?
- What might erasure look like?
- How high the LGBTQ experience been represented in your classes?
- How well has the LGBTQ experience or accomplishments been discussed in your social studies or history classes?
- How is the LGBTQ community represented in society?
- What areas of the United States are open to/promote LGBTQ rights?
- What areas of the United States are closed to/against LGBTQ rights?
- Who or what determines how the LGBTQ rights are established?
- Do all Americans have the same rights?
- What are some of the things that influence the LGBTQ community?
- What are some of the things that positively and negatively influence the LGBTQ community?
- What changes in governmental laws practices have gone into place to support the LGBTQ community?
- How were laws used to halt or impede the LGBTQ community?
- What events have influenced the LGBTQ plus community/ movement?
- Why do you think that the LGBTQ experience has been represented in a particular way?
- In your opinion, how does society feel about the LGBTQ experience?
- How does the LGBTQ experience compare from the Harlem renaissance era to the 1970s era?
- How does the LGBTQ experience of today compare to the 1800s?
- What are reasons that the involvement of the LGBTQ community, like the influences of minority groups left out of the history books?
- How can erasure be used as a weapon?
- What are the attitudes that support or promote erasure? Can those attitudes still be found in society today?
- How have attitudes surrounding the LGBTQ community changed?
- What were the attitudes toward race, gender and the LGBTQ community during this period in history?
- What was the opinion of LGBTQ+ people at the time of this event (a particular event studied during the year and unit) that was influenced or caused by this person?

Suggested Learning targets / Goal statements.

Key: SWBAT = Students will be able to...

- SWBAT identify and analyze the components and characteristics of erasure.
- SWBAT discuss and analyze the characteristics of American society compared to LGBTQ community life/society.
- SWBAT compare poems, essays and articles written by people closely or loosely associated with the LGBTQ community.
- SWBAT research and compare issues of power and LGBTQ erasure during the Harlem Renaissance.
- SWBAT to compare poetry written by popular poets/writers closely or loosely associated with the LGBTQ community.
- SWBAT compare and contrast the narratives or poems by authors or writers who were “out” with the

works of “closeted” writers or others who were closely associated with but never identified.

- SWBAT discuss and analyze the impact of major historical events, writings, led by or influenced by.
- SWBAT to analyze the historical influences from people closely or loosely associated with the LGBTQ community.
- SWBAT to analyze the social influences from people closely or loosely associated with the LGBTQ community.
- SWBAT to analyze the historical, social and political influences on/affecting people closely or loosely associated with the LGBTQ community.

Suggested Activities

Introduction activities

Intro Activity #1

Activity: Poetry Reading by Audre Lorde

1. Students do a close reading of the poem, *Power* by Audre Lorde and provide analysis
 2. Students do a paired reading of the poem. (Special Note to teacher: This poem does contain one curse word that the teacher may need to go in and submit symbols for prior to the activity.)
 3. Have students discuss and analyze its meanings. (Whole class activity, led by the teacher or students may be broken up into small groups, and students will be responsible for helping to guide their own lesson.)
- Variation or an additional activity: have the poem, printed down the left side of the paper, and have the other vertical side of the paper blank, so that students may write reactions and questions on that side.

Questions to consider for this activity:

- When do you think this poem was written? Why do you think this poem was written? What messages does this poem give you about society?
- Final steps of this activity: do an author/poet study of Audre Lorde, looking at her background, and influences as well as life choices, then redo the previous questions and see if student thinking and answers
- Revisit the questions again:

Questions to consider for this activity:

When do you think this poem was written? Why do you think this poem was written? What messages does this poem give you about society?

Intro Activity #2

Activity: Discussion

This may be done as a whole class /Team format discussion.

Topic: How have the rights of the LGBTQ+ community been represented in history?

Teacher Role: Facilitator -chart responses from all individuals or groups

Note taking/ chart responses on Smartboard in a Google doc/ Giant chart paper/ Whiteboard, etc.

Option: Written Activity / K-W-L charts

The K-W-L charts may be done individually or in the team format (K-W-L charts done on giant chart paper

Intro Activity #3

Activity: Discussion

This may be done as a whole class /Team format discussion.

Topic: Are the rights of all represented in the history of America?

Teacher Role: Facilitator -chart responses from all individuals or groups

Note taking/ chart responses on Smartboard in a Google doc/ Giant chart paper/ Whiteboard, etc.

Activity: Introduction Activity to the Stonewall Uprising

Word Houdini: You can also ask students to guess what Stonewall is. Their answers would be written on paper or on a whiteboard. You can have students work in pairs. The addition of a timer can make it a game or race.

Intro Activity #4 (This assignment has two parts.)

Part 1

Activity: Quote interpretations: Students can be given quotes to interpret in writing or their journals and or spark peer-to-peer, whole class or small group conversations.

Part 2

Additional option for this activity: Students should suggest possible answers for the following:

Era / Time period that the quote made.

Time period that the quote relates to.

Why the statement/quote was made.

Students should be prepared to support their reasons with factual and historical evidence.

Quote 1

“If I wait for someone else to validate my existence, it will mean that I’m shortchanging myself.” – Zanele

Muholi, South African artist and activist

Quote 2

“Equality means more than passing laws. The struggle is really won in the hearts and minds of the community, where it really counts.”

- Barbara Gittings, American activist for the LGBTQ population

Quote 3

“My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you.”

- Audre Lorde, poet

Quote 4

“We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers.”

- Bayard Rustin, Lawyer, and Civil Rights Movement Activist

Additional Suggested Unit Activities:

Activity: Create a poster or design a web page that might have been used during of the Stonewall Uprising. Students can explain their poster work web page with a brief description (7-10 sentences) of their product.

Activity: Class discussion or Writing Prompt Topic

How was New York affected by the Stonewall Uprising? Discuss the before and after.

Activity: Class discussion or Writing Prompt Topic

Identify and analyze the cause and effect of the Stonewall Uprising. Cite two-three examples or pieces of evidence to support your opinion.

Activity: Class discussion or Writing Prompt Topic

Why do you think the Stonewall Uprising is not mentioned in your history books?

Discussion questions:

How might Bayard Rustin’s private life have impacted his political decisions?

What were the attitudes toward race, gender and the LGBTQ community during this period (teacher decides the time period) in history?

Activity: Modified Gallery Walk and Discussion

The objective is to view a series of artifacts, some of these can include pictures, copies of documents (primary and secondary sources, etc.); realia and other objects that can be linked to a person or an event. Setup can be done on walls, tables and other unique displays. Students will walk through the gallery and take

notes/observations and document questions. The teacher will have students report out their observations and questions. Teacher will reveal the event and its importance to American History impacted by contributions and influences of the LGBTQ+ community. Peer to peer discussions will occur as teachers reveals additional information related to the artifacts and realia.

Activity Bayard Rustin Reading and discussion:

Pass the following excerpt out to students. Do a close reading of the section with students and discuss what the excerpt may be about. Next have students focus on the portion that mentions “reactionaries in the south.”

Excerpt from Bayard Rustin’s Letter found at Stanford University Transcription Online documents Letter dated: March 10, 1958

“In regard to King’s book and my name being left out-this was my decision and a very sound one, I believe. I do not know if you know that the reactionaries in the south have distributed several pieces of literature accusing King of being a Communist and linking me ‘a Communist agitator’ with him. I did not feel that he should bear this kind of burden. . . . For your information, the first draft of King’s book listed the tremendous help which I had given him and the movement. I mention this only because I would not want you to think that Martin is the kind of person who would take my name out because of fear. I want you to know that I insisted that he do so.”

Activity: Debate Topics/ Simulation Activities / Writing Prompt Topics / Research Topics

RAFT cards: The goal of this activity is for students to recognize the impact Bayard Rustin, a lawyer and member of the LGBTQ + community, had not only on the Civil Rights Movement but on America. These cards can be used as a discussion topic card or a writing card. The R(role), A (audience), F (format) and T (topic). These cards can be given as students walk into the room and they can be introduced to a historical event in America. As students are given these cards as they walk into the classroom, they will begin the activity based on your desire for either a quick write to be done or quick discussion or “turn n talk” to happen. The cards can be used by individual students, in pairs or with small groups given one card each. RAFT cards can be used for debates or even as a research prompt. (Special Note to the teacher: Email format did not exist during the time frame of these RAFT exercises. However, it may be useful to allow this format to be used for these assignments.)

Night before the March on Washington		
R (role)	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Bayard Rustin
A (audience)	Bayard Rustin	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
F (format)	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call
T (topic)	Night before the March on Washington	Night before the March on Washington

Day after the March on Washington		
R (role)	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Bayard Rustin

A (audience)	Bayard Rustin	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
F (format)	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call
T (topic)	Day after the March on Washington	Day after the March on Washington

Before the start of the bus boycott in Montgomery 1955		
R (role)	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Bayard Rustin
A (audience)	Bayard Rustin	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
F (format)	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call
T (topic)	Before the start of the bus boycott in Montgomery 1955 & 1956	Before the start of the bus boycott in Montgomery 1955

After the 13-month Montgomery bus boycotts 1957		
R (role)	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Bayard Rustin
A (audience)	Bayard Rustin	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
F (format)	Email, Letter, Simulated Phone Call	Plans/ Brain Web/ Notes
T (topic)	After the 13-month Montgomery bus boycotts 1957	After the 13-month Montgomery bus boycotts 1957

Weeks before the Selma March on the Edmund Pettus Bridge			
R (role)	Government officials	Bayard Rustin	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
A (audience)	Whites who lived in Selma and other southern towns or states	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Blacks who lived in Selma and other southern towns or states
F (format)	Email/Letter, Simulated Phone Call	Email/Letter, Simulated Phone Call/ Plans/ Brain Web/ Notes	Speeches/ Simulated Phone Call
T (topic)	Weeks before the Selma March on the Edmund Pettus Bridge	Weeks before the Selma March on the Edmund Pettus Bridge	Weeks before the Selma March on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

Additional RAFT ideas

After the Selma March (Bloody Sunday) on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

R (role) - Government officials

A (audience) - Whites who lived in Selma and other southern towns or states

F (format) - Neighborhood meetings, Email/ Letter, Simulated Phone Call

T (topic) - After Selma March (Bloody Sunday) on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

R (role) - Bayard Rustin

A (audience) - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

F (format) - Email/Letter, Simulated Phone Call/Notes

T (topic) - After Selma March (Bloody Sunday) on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

R (role) - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

A (audience) - Blacks who lived in Selma and other southern towns or states

F (format) - Neighborhood meetings, Simulated Phone Call

T (topic) - After Selma March (Bloody Sunday) on the Edmund Pettus Bridge

Activities related to Geography Skills:

Activity: Mapping

Map the location of the Stonewall Riots

Find the latitude and longitude coordinates of the Stonewall Riots

Activity: Identify and analyze the Five Themes of Geography

Analyze the 5 themes of Geography to any of the events discussed in this unit.

Vocabulary:

erasure

queer

fear-monger

Jim Crow

Harlem Renaissance

Stonewall Uprising / Stonewall Movement

The Stonewall Inn

Homophobia

“passing”

Closeted

Harvey Milk

LGBTQ +

Suggested Readings and Resources

Suggested List of Readings

Right Side of History: 100 Years of LGBTQI Activism by Adrian Brooks

History of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Social Movements by Bonnie J. Morris, PhD
George Washington University Washington, D.C.

A Queer History of the United States by Michael Bronski and Adriana Herrera

A Queer History of the United States for Young People (ReVisioning History for Young People) by Michael Bronski; adapted by Richie Chevat

Resources

The History Channel

How the Stonewall Riots Sparked a Movement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9wdMjmuBIA&pp=ygUPc3RvbmV3YWxsIHJpb3Rz>

The Harlem Renaissance

<https://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/harlem-renaissance>

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/harlem-renaissance-black-queer-history>

Podcast/article on Bayard Rustin: <https://makinggayhistory.com/podcast/bayard-rustin/>

Primary source on the lavender

scare: <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2016/summer/lavender.html>

Teaching activities about Pauli Murray: <https://www.paulimurraycenter.com/for-teachers-families>

Stanford University - The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

Bayard Rustin

Curriculum Unit 23.03.01

Appendix on Implementing District Standards

Standards CT Social Studies Framework:

INQ 6–8.10 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments

HIST 8.4 Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time (e.g., American Revolution, slavery, labor, the role of women).

HIST 8.5 Analyze how people’s perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.

Standards, Skills, and Areas of Knowledge

During this unit students will have lessons, discussions and activities that touch the following areas:

Historical Knowledge and Understanding; Historical Thinking: The study of the contributions of all people to the development of our heritage. There is particular attention to cultivation of key inquiry skills through the historical skills strand, with focus on critical thinking, the analysis of primary resources, historical interpretation, and contestability.

Government/Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities: The study of foundational constitutional principles, the concepts of rights and responsibilities, and the importance of civic participation in the democratic process.

Geography: The study of cultures and interactions of peoples with each other and the environment. The well-informed student will be able to apply an understanding of the meaning of the arrangement of things in space as it relates life situations.

Economics: The study of how economic systems provide for the needs of people and how these systems interact with each other, the environment, and changing political and historical thought.

Diversity: The study of individuals and groups to enhance understanding of differences. There is particular attention to how individuals develop an identity responsive to diverse human and group behavior.

NCSS - The 10 Themes of Social Studies

1. Culture.

- Human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture.
- Cultures are dynamic and change over time.
- Through experience, observation, and reflection, students will identify elements of culture as well as similarities and differences among cultural groups across time and place.
- In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history,

sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum.

2. Time, Continuity, and Change

- Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time.
- Knowledge and understanding of the past enable us to analyze the causes and consequences of events and developments, and to place these in the context of the institutions, values and beliefs of the periods in which they took place.
- Knowing how to read, reconstruct and interpret the past allows us to answer questions
- Through a more formal study of history, students in the middle grades continue to expand their understanding of the past and are increasingly able to apply the research methods associated with historical inquiry.

3. People, Places, and Environments

- The study of people, places, and environments enables us to understand the relationship between human populations and the physical world.
- During their studies, learners develop an understanding of spatial perspectives, and examine changes in the relationship between peoples, places and environments.
- Today's social, cultural, economic and civic issues demand that students apply knowledge, skills, and understandings as they address questions
- In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, regional studies, and world cultures.

4. Individual Development and Identity

- Personal identity is shaped by an individual's culture, by groups, by institutional influences, and by lived experiences shared with people inside and outside the individual's own culture throughout her or his development.
- The study of individual development and identity will help students to describe factors important to the development of personal identity.

5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

- Institutions are the formal and informal political, economic, and social organizations that help us carry out, organize, and manage our daily affairs.
- It is important that students know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained or changed.

6. Power, Authority, and Governance

- The development of civic competence requires an understanding of the foundations of political thought, and the historical development of various structures of power, authority, and governance. It also requires knowledge of the evolving functions of these structures in contemporary U.S. society, as well as in other parts of the world.
- In exploring this theme, students confront questions such as:
 - Under what circumstances is the exercise of political power legitimate?
 - What are the proper scope and limits of authority?
 - How are individual rights protected and challenged within the context of majority rule?
 - What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a constitutional democracy?
- Through study of the dynamic relationships between individual rights and responsibilities, the needs of social groups, and concepts of a just society, learners become more effective problem-solvers and decision-makers when addressing the persistent issues and social problems encountered in public life.
- In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with government, politics,

political science, civics, history, law, and other social sciences.

7. Global Connections

- Global connections have intensified and accelerated the changes faced at the local, national, and international levels.
- In exploring this theme, students confront questions such as:
 - What are the different types of global connections?
 - What global connections have existed in the past, exist currently, and are likely in the future?
 - How do ideas spread between societies in today's interconnected world? How does this result in change in those societies?
 - How might people in different parts of the world have different perspectives on these benefits and problems?
- This theme typically appears in units or courses dealing with geography, culture, economics, history, political science, government, and technology but may also draw upon the natural and physical sciences and the humanities, including literature, the arts, and languages.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

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