



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume IV: The Minority Artist in America

Mosaic America Through Literary Art: The Civil Rights Movement via African Americans, Chicanos and Native Americans

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.04.05
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This unit develops a multicultural view of African Americans, Chicano Americans and Native Americans. It points out the similarities and contrasts of the activities that these three cultures have contributed to ensuring equality and justice for all citizens of the United States. At the end of this unit of study, the students will be able to identify leaders and methods used by each group in its own history of protest and hope from the Civil Rights Movement during the twentieth century.

This curriculum unit will begin with the premise that works of literary art are created by artists who live, experience and interpret various cultures. This approach to teaching assumes that the students belong to a culture or cultures and that they simultaneously share and/or rebel against the beliefs and prejudices that are part of their own culture.

Students will be asked not only to develop their own interpretations of what they read and see, but also to ask and answer the four W's (why, when, where, whom). Students will be encouraged to develop and use research, critical thinking, geography, vocabulary and organizational skills as they complete various individual and cooperative group activities. All of these skills will be targeted at expanding the students' ability to recognize and respect the beliefs and practices of other cultural groups and their roles in the development of the history of the United States during the Civil Rights Movement. At the completion of this unit, the students, working cooperatively, will publish a newsletter, compile a group portfolio, paint a collage, construct a time line and graph display, and write and produce a skit. These activities will demonstrate what the students have learned. The students will be a heterogeneous group of seventh graders in four classes reading at or below grade level. The planned activities will allow all to invest their special abilities as well as learn from peers.

It is my hope that the students will become more aware and appreciative of literature outside of the Western European tradition. This will be accomplished by challenging the students to include intellectual and philosophical achievements of African Americans, Chicano Americans and Native Americans. The unique aspects of these groups will be stressed, along with their commonalities, via lectures, videos, readings, oral discussions, role-playing, simulation games, dramatization, guest artists and field trips to museums.

(Recommended for History or Social Studies, Grades 7-12)

Key Words

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