



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1994 Volume IV: Racism and Nativism in American Political Culture

Mosaic America: Patterns of Racism

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.04.03
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A democratic society should recognize that every individual is unique, different from every other. Regardless of likenesses or differences, every man and woman is equal to every other in the rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” More than two centuries have passed since Thomas Jefferson wrote these words, but having them on paper does not mean that they are guaranteed. They have been contested and continue to challenge the courts and society to offer new interpretations that can expand or contract rights regardless of race, religion, or social background.

This curriculum will be used to motivate my seventh-grade urban American students to gather, to organize and to analyze information about the principles of the American political system. In addition, it is my hope that the students will be able to recognize and positively affect racism. This will be accomplished by involving students in individual and group experiments set up to allow them to experience racism. Students will be asked to develop a definition of racism, trace racism, that is included in the Constitution and other state and/or local laws, and identify racism in various forms. Students will be encouraged to use research, critical thinking, organizational and vocabulary skills as they complete individual and cooperative group activities. At the completion of this unit, students will write an essay, compile a work portfolio, write and produce a skit. These activities will demonstrate what the students have learned and/or experienced.

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 abilities as well as learn from peers.

(Recommended for Social Studies/History, grades 7-12)

Keywords

Racial Prejudice Afro-American Race Relations Civil Rights Supreme Court Law Mythology Native American Aztec Religion

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