



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

Changing Attitudes in America

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.04.04
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In spite of the progress that has been made in the United States since the Civil Rights Movement toward achieving racial justice, racism remains the single most destructive force in American society. Social problems such as poverty, unemployment, urban decay, deteriorating educational opportunities, crime and violence are all elevated by the persistence of racism in our society. To reduce all forms of discrimination including racism, it is important that we keep moving forward with the necessary legal reforms. But history reveals that we cannot legislate an end to racism. People must address racism in personal relationships and in their daily lives. Racism must be challenged in our workplace, schools, the media, and in every institution of our society.

The purpose of this unit on “Changing Attitudes in America” is to facilitate and foster greater interracial understanding, friendship and cooperation. It will include proactive projects and activities to reduce racism and build a community of citizenry. This unit is designed for grades five and six to allow students to discuss strategies for confronting destructive stereotypes and mythologies, as well as promoting racial understanding in children. The students will look at problems of African Americans stemming from racism. *Brown V. Topeka*, Kansas Board of Education, immigration and racial diversity put emphasis on America as a family working on common ground as a nation of diverse peoples. The unit’s vision is to help students understand their important roles in this society of immigrants, “the great experiment.”

The unit has content with specific objectives that give students skills to do critical thinking and problem solving, as well as vocabulary, a survey, lesson plans, a resource list that include field trips, speakers, reading materials and a bibliography. It is hoped that teachers and other educators might find this unit helpful in promoting cultural diversity among our youths and other adults. Let us begin our journey in discussing “Changing Attitudes in America.”

(Recommended for Social Development, grades 5-6)

Keywords

Race Relations Civil Rights Ethnicity

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