Teaching about Racism, Violence, Inequity and the Criminal Justice System

For the past several years, there have been incidents of police officers involved in the deaths of African-American and Latino men. In many of these cases, police officers were not indicted and/or convicted when brought to trial. These cases have brought about a wide range of emotions, conversations, policy proposals, protest and actions. Because this is an important conversation that teachers and parents and family members want to have with young people, below are relevant lesson plans, related curricula and additional anti-bias resources and strategies to help you discuss this topic with your youth in school and at home.

Curriculum Resources on Bias, Race and Injustice
Black Lives Matter: From Hashtag to Movement

This high school lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn more about Black Lives Matter and the activists involved, explore the controversy about using the term “All lives matter,” and posit their point of view in writing to a person of their choice.

Exploring Solutions to Address Racial Disparity Concerns

This high school lesson will help students reflect on some of the underlying problems and issues that have emerged from cases like those involving Eric Garner and Michael Brown, undertake research and present viable solutions.
Race and racism are topics that regularly come up in the news and populate our social media feeds. 5th-7th grade students explore race and racism using a range of young people's first encounter stories.

Lessons Plan:

**Experiences with Race and Racism**

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Race and racism are topics that regularly come up in the news and populate our social media feeds. 5th-7th grade students explore race and racism using a range of young people's first encounter stories.

**Freddie Gray & Baltimore Unrest: Exploring the Case Using Op-Eds**

**Loavesofbread**

**iStock**
This lesson provides an opportunity for high school students to discuss the case of Freddie Gray's death and the protests that took place in Baltimore and elsewhere. In the lesson, students will learn more about the case, read and analyze several op-eds about it and use what they learned to write their own argumentative essays with a specific point of view and evidence to support their positions.

LESSON PLAN

Privilege, Discrimination and Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to reflect on the killing of Michael Brown through the lens of race, privilege and power. Students will learn more about unearned privilege, examine the various levels of racial disparities in the criminal justice system and explore the role white privilege plays in the different interactions whites and people of color have with community service providers, such as law enforcement.
LESSON PLAN

**Self-Defense and Racial Profiling**

HIGH SCHOOL

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to discuss the homicide of Renisha McBride, who was shot to death while seeking help after being in a car accident. Students will analyze the role of self-defense and racial profiling.

LESSON PLAN

**Social Justice Poetry**

MIDDLE SCHOOL
This lesson provides an opportunity for middle school students to explore poetry and song about injustice, reflect on what social justice issues are important to them and write their own poems about social justice, using a variety of formats and finding creative ways to share their poetry with others.

![A derivative of Natalie Roberts / CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](image_url)

**LESSON PLAN**

**What is Happening in Ferguson, MO?**

HIGH SCHOOL

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn more about the killing of unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, grapple with their thoughts and feelings about the case, analyze the militarization of the police and reflect on activism in order to effect change.
LESSON PLAN

When Perception and Reality Collide: Implicit Bias and Race

HIGH SCHOOL

High school lesson plan to help students explore the role of implicit bias in perceptions of African-American boys and men.
As a society, public conversations about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity. Here are some suggestions and strategies for having classroom conversations with young people about these issues.

### Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism

When there are national news stories that involve incidents of bias and injustice, young people want to be part of the conversation.

### Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice

When there are national news stories that involve incidents of bias and injustice, young people want to be part of the conversation.
Tools, tips and strategies for what educators and family members can do to help young people discuss and deal with the aftermath of hate-inspired events.

## Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate (en Español)

Tools, tips and strategies for what educators and family members can do to help young people discuss and deal with the aftermath of hate-inspired events.

## How Should I Talk about Race in My Mostly White Classroom?

Strategies for discussing race and racism in classrooms of predominately white students.
Our country has a long history of youth-led movements that brought about significant social change. Young people have advocated for child labor laws, voting rights, civil rights,...

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

Our country has a long history of youth-led movements that brought about significant social change. Young people have advocated for child labor laws, voting rights, civil rights,...
In the wake of two grand jury decisions—in Ferguson, MO and Staten Island, NY—not to indict the police officers who were involved in the killing of black men, the time has come to...

BLOG

**When Injustice Goes Unchecked and Concealed, What Message Does This Send to Children?**

Thirteen months after Laquan McDonald was shot and killed by Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke, the recorded incident was released to the public. The day before ...

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BLOG

**Now More Than Ever: Why We Need to Address Inequity and Justice in Schools**

We live in an increasingly pluralistic, multicultural and connected world. In order to prepare students to live, learn and eventually work successfully in society, w...
It has been a rough summer as the topic of guns, violence, police and bias scream across the news headlines and our smart phones.

WEBINARS

Fulfilling the Promise of Brown: School Discipline, Education Equity and the Achievement Gap

Free webinar provides a legal overview of the released guidance, trends in school discipline today and educational best practices for addressing bias related issues in schools.
**Gun Violence and Mass Shootings**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about mass shootings, violence, guns and gun laws.

![Image of a memorial with flowers and candles](Bbjeter/CC BY-SA 3.0)

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**School Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

Behavior that once led to a trip to the principal’s office and a detention, now often leads to suspension, expulsion and/or arrest. Use these tips for parent/family roundtable discussion with youth about incidents of harsh school discipline.
What Should We Tell Our Children About Charleston?

As we grieve, protest and further investigate the horrific murder of nine African American parishioners at the historic Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, many people are aski...
The uneasy balance between two worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer.

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**CHILDREN’S LITERATURE**

**March: Book One**

Book One of this graphic novel trilogy spans Congressman John Lewis’ youth in rural Alabama, his life-changing meeting with Martin Luther King, Jr., the birth of the Nashville Student Movement and their battle to tear down segregation through nonviolent lunch counter sit-ins, building to a stunning climax on the steps of City Hall.
Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation

Sylvia Mendez and her brothers are excited to attend the neighborhood schools but are turned away and told they have to attend the Mexican school instead.