

# The Alt Right and White Supremacy

*Compelling Question: What is white supremacy and why is it intensifying?*

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-2	3-5	45 Minutes	Reading: R1 Writing: W1, W2, W7 Speaking & Listening: SL1 Language: L5, L6
MS	10-12		



## Web Related Connections

### Lessons

- [Swastikas and Other Hate Symbols](#)
- [Antisemitic Incidents: Being an Ally, Advocate and Activist](#)
- [What is Political Violence?](#)
- [The N-Word: Its Use, History and Impact](#)

### Other Resources

- [Violence and Hate Unite the Right](#)
- [Lessons to Teach and Learn from 'Unite the Right'](#)
- [Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism](#)
- [Defining Extremism: A Glossary of White Supremacist Terms, Movements and Philosophies](#)
- [Extreme Measures: How to Help Young People Counter Extremist Recruitment Are White Supremacists Coming for Your Teens?](#)

## Key Words

- [Defining Extremism: A Glossary of White Supremacist Terms, Movements and Philosophies](#)

adherent  
anti-establishment  
Confederacy

## LESSON OVERVIEW

On August 11 and 12, 2017, 'Unite the Right' convened one of the largest and most violent gatherings in the U.S. in decades that brought together white supremacist groups including the alt right, neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. The gathering's stated goal was to save the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, because like other places in the South, there is growing controversy about the symbolism and removal of public monuments celebrating leaders of the Confederacy. Hundreds gathered on Friday evening and Saturday to broadcast their viewpoints and ideologies, including chanting, "blood and soil" and "you will not replace us." They carried torches, homemade shields, weapons and Confederate and Nazi flags. Many brandished Nazi salutes. After continued clashes with their opponents, a car plowed into a crowd of peaceful counter-protesters, killing one person and injuring nineteen. A state of emergency was declared by Virginia's Governor.

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to understand what white supremacy is, including the alt right, explore historical and current day examples and reflect on their thoughts and feelings about it through a writing activity.

**[NOTE:** Since this lesson focuses on white supremacy which targets Jewish people, Black people and other groups, it is important to be mindful that seeing and discussing the topic could be upsetting for some or many of your students. Some students may feel comfortable or interested in discussing these issues in class and others may feel nervous, uncomfortable or angry talking about this topic. Prior to teaching the lesson, assess the maturity of your students in being able to handle this challenging content, review your classroom guidelines for [establishing a safe learning environment](#) and provide opportunities for students to share their feelings as the lesson proceeds.]

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand what white supremacy is, its history and how it manifests in modern society.
- Students will learn more about the alt right and how it has grown in recent
- Students will reflect upon white supremacy and the alt right through a writing assignment.

## MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- *Post-it*® Notes (3–5 per student)
- Background Information on White Supremacy and about the Events of August 11 and 12, 2017 (for teacher only)
- Alt Right: A Primer about the New White Supremacy (one copy for each student)

## PROCEDURES

### Warm-Up

1. Say the words “white supremacy,” “Ku Klux Klan” and “alt right” aloud and ask students to think about what words, phrases, thoughts and feelings come to mind when hearing those terms. Distribute *Post-it*® Notes (3–5 per student) and have students write down some of their thoughts, one per note.
2. Have students bring their post-it notes (one row or group at a time) to the board or a designated wall and post their notes there. As they are doing so and with time permitting, arrange the notes according to duplicates, themes and/or patterns. Then have students come up and look at all the post-it notes together or read aloud all of the words and phrases as students listen from their seats.
3. Ask students: *As you look at the words and phrases, what do you notice? What do you wonder?* Take a few comments but keep this discussion brief.

### Key Words (cont.)

conservatism  
disparage  
doctrine  
dominance  
egalitarian  
espouse  
extremist  
ideology  
implicit  
infiltrate  
mainstream  
multiculturalism  
pluralism  
propaganda  
radical  
revere  
think tank  
trolling



### Information Sharing: What is White Supremacy?

1. Ask students: *What is white supremacy?* Define white supremacy as follows:

**White supremacy** is a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following key tenets: 1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co- exist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own “culture” that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people.

Explain that as an ideology, white supremacy is far more encompassing than simple racism or bigotry. Most white supremacists today believe that the white race is in danger of extinction due to a rising “flood” of non-whites, who are controlled and manipulated by Jews, and that imminent action is needed to “save” the white race.

Explain that events such as lynching, hate crimes, racial slurs, swastikas and burning crosses are primarily what people think of as white supremacy. However, many believe that implicit forms of racism like racial profiling, the school-to-prison pipeline, employment discrimination, voter suppression and Confederate monuments create a culture that can give rise to white supremacy.

2. Then ask students: *Do you know what recently happened in Charlottesville, Virginia In August 2017?*
3. Share with students some of the background information on white supremacy and about the events of August 11 and 12, 2017.
4. Engage students in a brief discussion by asking:
  - What did you learn that you didn’t know before?
  - What surprises you about what you learned?
  - Why do you think white supremacy has persisted over all these years?
  - Who is impacted by white supremacy Who is harmed by white supremacy?
  - What more do you want to know?



## Reading Activity

1. Explain to students that they are going to learn more about the alt right through a reading activity. Distribute a copy of *Alt Right: A Primer* about the New White Supremacy to each student. Give students 10–15 minutes to read it silently. You may also want to assign the reading for homework on the previous night.
2. Engage students in a discussion by asking:
  - What did you learn that you didn't know before?
  - Did anything challenge your thinking about the alt right or white supremacy groups? Please explain.
  - What are some of the main principles that the alt right espouses?
  - What other questions do you have?
  - What do you think should be done about white supremacist groups?



## Writing Activity

1. Ask students: *What should we do about white supremacist and extremist groups?* What ideas do you have? Generate a list of ideas and record on the board/smart board. Explain to students that they will have the opportunity to explore their ideas in more depth through a writing activity. First, have them turn and talk with someone sitting next to them about an idea they want to pursue, one minute per person.
2. Have students then consider what writing format they will use to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about white supremacy and what to do about it. They can use one of the following strategies or another idea of their choosing: persuasive letter to the editor or a congressional representative, speech espousing their beliefs, plan for activism, research project, response to the reading, poem, journal entry, etc.
3. Assign the completion of their writing for homework.

## Closing

Have each student either read their essay aloud (if they are completed) or have them share what their ideas are and how they will be expressing them.

## ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- [Charlottesville and the Effort to Downplay Racism in America](#) (*The New Yorker*, August 13, 2017)
- [Charlottesville and the Face of White Supremacy](#) (*GQ*, August 13, 2017)
- [Ku Klux Klan](#) (History)
- [The 'alt-right' is just another word for white supremacy, study finds](#) (*The Washington Post*, August 16, 2017)
- ['The Fight for the White Race': What Some of the Charlottesville Rally Participants Stand For](#) (*The New York Times*, August 19, 2017)
- [When Does a Fringe Movement Stop Being Fringe?](#) (*The Atlantic*, August 12, 2017)
- [The Alt Right](#) (Wikipedia)
- [The Alt Right Political Movement](#) (Britannica)

## Common Core Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
Reading
R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
Writing
W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.
W7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
Speaking and Listening
SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Language
L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
L6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

## CASEL'S SEL Competencies

COMPETENCIES
Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
Responsible Decision-Making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.
Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.

## Background Information on White Supremacy and about the Events of August 11 and 12, 2017

- On August 11 and 12, 'Unite the Right' convened one of the largest and most violent gatherings in decades in the U.S. that brought together white supremacist groups including the alt-right, neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. The gathering's stated goal was to save the statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, but many of these extremists viewed it as an opportunity for a show of strength. Hundreds gathered on Friday evening and Saturday to broadcast their viewpoints and ideologies, including chanting, "blood and soil" and "you will not replace us." They carried torches, homemade shields, weapons and Confederate and Nazi flags. Many brandished Nazi salutes. After continued clashes with their opponents, a car plowed into a crowd of peaceful counter-protesters, killing one person and injuring nineteen. A state of emergency was declared by Virginia's Governor.
- There are a variety of groups under the umbrella of white supremacy including: the alt-right, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, "traditional" white supremacists; Christian Identity adherents; and white supremacist prison gangs. There are also many individuals who are not affiliated with an organized white supremacist group but are still considered to be white supremacists.
- Neo-Nazis are one of the main segments of the white supremacist movement in the U.S. and many other countries. They revere Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany and sometimes try to adopt some Nazi principles to their own times and geographic locations, though many neo-Nazis primarily adopt the trappings, symbols and mythology of the Third Reich.
- The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was founded in 1866 and was present in almost every state in the South by 1870. It became a vehicle for white southern resistance to the Reconstruction-era policies aimed at establishing political and economic equality for African Americans. Though Congress passed legislation designed to curb Klan terrorism, the organization saw its primary goal as the reestablishment of white supremacy fulfilled through Democratic victories in state legislatures across the South in the 1870s. After a period of decline, the Klan was revived in the early 20th century, burning crosses and staging rallies, parades and marches denouncing immigrants, Catholics, Jews, African Americans and organized labor. The civil rights movement of the 1960s also saw a surge of Ku Klux Klan activity, including bombings of African-American schools and churches and violence against black and white activists in the South.
- The alt right (short for "alternative right") is a segment of the white supremacist movement consisting of a loose network of racists and anti-Semites who reject mainstream conservatism in favor of politics that embrace implicit or explicit racism, anti-Semitism and white supremacy. Many sought to re-inject such bigoted ideas into the conservative movement in the U.S. The alt right also includes many racist users of online forums who enjoyed harassing or "trolling" people who disagree with their views. Since 2017, the alt right movement has been on the decline and is not relevant currently.

## Alt Right: A Primer on the New White Supremacy

- Alt right, short for “alternative right,” is a repackaging of white supremacy by extremists seeking to mainstream their ideology.
- The term emerged in 2010 and started to gain widespread traction in 2016.
- People who identify with the alt right regard mainstream or traditional conservatives as weak and impotent, largely because they do not adequately support white racial interests, or are not adequately racist or antisemitic.
- Some alt right adherents prefer other labels, such as the “New Right” and the “Dissident Right.”
- The alt right label explicitly avoids racial or racist language, and instead brings to mind rebellion or anti-establishment thinking – concepts that help attract young, new followers.

### Origins of the Term

White supremacist Richard Spencer, who is President and Creative Director at the National Policy Institute, a tiny white supremacist organization, coined the term “alternative right” in August 2008 in an article in Taki’s Magazine, a far-right publication.

At the time, Spencer was using “alternative right” to refer to people on the right who distinguished themselves from traditional conservatives by opposing, among other things, egalitarianism, multiculturalism and open immigration. That same year, Paul Gottfried, a Jewish paleo-conservative, employed the term “alternative right” when he gave a speech entitled, “The Decline and Rise of the Alternative Right,” at the H.L. Mencken Club’s Annual Meeting in November 2008. For this reason, some sources credit Gottfried with originating the term.

Spencer further popularized the term when he chose “Alternative Right” as the name for an online publication that debuted in 2010. Spencer shut the website down in 2013, but it was soon re-launched by Colin Liddell and Andy Nowicki, former writers for Alternative Right. Spencer went on to found another journal, Radix. Both Alternative Right (rebranded as Affirmative Right) and Radix are forums for racists, antisemites and others who identify with the alt right.

### What is the ideology of the Alt Right?

Alt right adherents identify with a range of different ideologies, all of which center on white identity. Many claim to be Identitarians, a term that originated in France with the founding of the Bloc Identitaire movement and its youth counterpart, Generation Identitaire. Identitarians espouse racism and intolerance under the guise of preserving the ethnic and cultural origins of their respective countries. American Identitarians, including Richard Spencer, claim to want to preserve European-American (i.e., white) culture in the U.S.

As Michael McGregor, a writer and editor for Radix, wrote in February 2015, Identitarians want “the preservation of our identity--the cultural and genetic heritage that makes us who we are.” Identitarians reject multiculturalism or pluralism in any form.

Others in the alt right identify as so-called radical traditionalists, people who want to preserve what they claim are traditional Christian values but from a uniquely white supremacist perspective. Some in the alt right identify as white nationalists who want to preserve the white majority in the U.S., claiming that whites losing their majority status is equivalent to “white genocide.” They issue mendacious propaganda on subjects like immigration and “black crime” as “evidence” of whites’ imperiled status.

Another segment of the alt right refers to themselves as neo-reactionaries (those who reject liberal democracy and ideas associated with the Enlightenment. Some neo-reactionaries refer to their theories as the “Dark Enlightenment.”) Others call themselves “race realists” or alternately “HBD” advocates, a reference to human biodiversity (a belief that one’s race governs traits such as behavior and intelligence—with non-whites being inferior to whites). However they define themselves, alt righters reject egalitarianism, democracy, universalism and multiculturalism.

Many alt righters are also blatantly antisemitic and blame Jews for allegedly promoting anti-white policies such as immigration and diversity.

In 2015, alt righters began disparaging members of the conservative movement with the derogatory term “cuckservative,” a combination of “conservative” and “cuckold,” that is used by white supremacists to describe a white conservative who putatively promotes the interests of Jews and non-whites over those of whites. The alt right also refers disparagingly to the mainstream conservative movement as Conservatism, Inc. or Conservative, Inc., in an effort to highlight its associations with wealthy donors (whom the white supremacists dismiss as pro-immigration globalists whose policies undermine white nationalism in America).

### Who makes up the Alt Right?

The alt right is an extremely loose movement, made up of different strands of people connected to white supremacy. One body of adherents is the ostensibly “intellectual” racists who create many of the doctrines and principles of the white supremacist movement. They seek to attract young, educated whites to the movement by highlighting the achievements and alleged intellectual and cultural superiority of whites. They run a number of small white supremacist enterprises, including organizations, online publications and publishing houses. These include National Policy Institute, run by Richard Spencer; Counter Currents Publishing, run by Greg Johnson; American Renaissance, run by Jared Taylor; and The Right Stuff, a website that features numerous podcasts with a number of contributors.

Alt righters use terms like “culture” as substitutes for more divisive terms such as “race,” and promote “Western Civilization” as a code word for white culture or identity. They tend to avoid explicit white supremacist references like the “14 words,” a slogan used by neo-Nazis and other hardcore white supremacists. While alt righters share the sentiment behind the “14 words” they’re more inclined to talk about preserving European-American identity.

The Groypers are the latest alt right group to grab media attention. This loose network of alt right figures want to normalize their racist and antisemitic views, and are undertaking an organized effort to publicly lambast mainstream conservative organizations like Turning Point USA (TPUSA) for failing to promote an “America First” agenda and for not being adequately “pro white.”

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For complete article, visit <https://www.adl.org/resources/background/alt-right-primer-new-white-supremacy>.