

## Evaluating *The 1619 Project's* Claims

Unit by African American History at Mastery Charter Schools,  
part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

### UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Length	Approx. 14 days or 3 weeks
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	9th Grade African American History
Unit Overview	<p>In this unit, students will evaluate key claims made in essays from <i>The 1619 Project</i> as well as writing that criticizes the project. They will discuss the legacy the year 1619 in the history of the United States and explain the social, economic, and political impact of slavery in a research paper. This unit specifically provides students with an opportunity to discuss the contributions Black people have made to America and controversy surrounding the teaching/legacy of slavery.</p> <p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ What was the social, economic, and political impact of the Atlantic Slave War?</li><li>→ What key claims does <i>The 1619 Project</i> make about the legacy of slavery?</li><li>→ What has caused resistance to <i>The 1619 Project</i>?</li></ul>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Articulate the difference between arguments made for American exceptionalism and the legacy of slavery in the U.S.</li><li>● Write a four-paragraph paper about the impact of slavery, citing evidence from primary sources discussed in class and from their notes taken during <i>1619 Project</i> discussion.</li><li>● Make connections between slavery and issues of race in the U.S. today.</li></ul>
Standards	<p><b>Common Core Standards for History/Social Studies:</b></p> <p><a href="#">RH.9-10.8</a> Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.</p>

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	<p><a href="#">RH.9-10.9</a> Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.</p> <p><a href="#">WHST.9-10.4</a> Produce clear and coherent writing which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>
Unit Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Relevant images from <i>The 1619 Project</i></li><li>→ Excerpt from <a href="#">“Why Can’t We Teach This?”</a> by Nikita Stewart</li><li>→ Excerpt from <a href="#">“The Idea of America”</a> by Nikole Hannah-Jones</li><li>→ <a href="#">“A Day to Celebrate American Promise”</a> by the editors at the <i>National Review</i></li><li>→ Excerpt from letter sent by parents from Bryn Mawr and Gilman School</li><li>→ <a href="#">James Baldwin vs. William Buckley Debate</a></li><li>→ <a href="#">“The Famous Baldwin-Buckley Debate Still Matters Today”</a> by Gabrielle Bellot</li><li>→ Excerpt from <a href="#">“Capitalism”</a> by Matthew Desmond</li><li>→ Map of the Whitney Plantation</li><li>→ Images of Whitney Plantation’s Cabins and Big House</li><li>→ Image of children on a Louisiana plantation</li><li>→ Excerpt from <a href="#">“Sugar”</a> by Khalil Gibran Muhammad</li><li>→ <a href="#">“Is Slavery’s Legacy in the Power Dynamics of Sports?”</a> by Kurt Streeter</li><li>→ Excerpts from “Justice” by Nikole Hannah-Jones in <i>The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story</i>*</li></ul> <p>*=text available exclusively in <a href="#">The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story</a></p>
Performance Task	<p>Students will write a four-five paragraph paper describing the social, political, and economic impact of slavery. They will be required to cite a minimum of two sources, drawing on primary source documents, class discussions of <i>The 1619 Project</i>, and other class readings.</p> <p><b>Implementation Suggestions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Leave two days for initial writing</li><li>2. Read first draft and provide comments</li><li>3. Return for students to write second draft</li></ol>

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<p>Assessment/Evaluation</p>	<p><b>Formative Assessments:</b> Throughout the unit, students will be asked to use sources explored in class and class discussions to write one-paragraph answers to the following questions. By storing their written responses in a paper or digital notebook, students can return to these paragraphs to help them craft the essay for their summative assessment.</p> <p><i>Questions for week one:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Summarize the key arguments Hannah-Jones makes about the importance of 1619.</li><li>→ What issues and claims in the Buckley/Baldwin debate are similar to conversations around <i>The 1619 Project</i>?</li><li>→ Today the richest 10% of Americans own over 75% of the country's wealth, with the top 1% owning well over a third." What does the legacy of slavery have to do with this statistic?</li></ul> <p><i>Questions for week two:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ After researching one of the plantation owners of the Whitney Plantation: How can you connect this person's wealth/life to key claims made in Khalil Gibran Muhammad's essay on sugar?</li><li>→ After exploring racist remarks by Donald Sterling and statements about the NFL by LeBron James: Do you agree or disagree with James' statements? Make connections and comparisons to Donald Sterling's statements.</li><li>→ Do you think the reparations in Illinois provide justice to Black Americans?</li></ul> <p><b>Summative Assessment:</b> Students write a research paper that answers the question: <i>What was the social and political impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade?</i> They must review all the sources used in this unit in preparation, and cite at least two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ <a href="#">Research paper rubric [.pdf]</a></li><li>→ <a href="#">Research paper rubric [.docx]</a></li></ul>
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UNIT PACING/DAILY LESSONS

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities	Lesson Materials
<i>Week 1</i>				
Day 1	<p><a href="#">Excerpt from “Why Can’t We Teach This?” by Nikita Stewart from <i>The 1619 Project</i> [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Excerpt from “Why Can’t We Teach This?” by Nikita Stewart from <i>The 1619 Project</i> [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">”The Geographical Reader, for the Dixie Children”</a> by Marinda Branson Moore</p> <p>Video: <a href="#">Nikole Hannah-Jones on <i>The 1619 Project</i>, Teaching Critical Race Theory &amp; White Supremacy on Trial</a></p>	<p>Students will be able to create a timeline of significant events in African American history starting from 1619.</p>	<p><b>Beginning:</b></p> <p>1. Provide an abbreviated list of dates and significant events in African American History. (Use this <a href="#">resource</a> for a larger list of significant dates.)</p> <p>2. Think Write Share: Which date is most important to you? Why?</p> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <p>1. Create a timeline of the following significant dates: 1619, 1776, 1861, 1865, 1877, 1945, 1963, 1965, 2001</p> <p>2. Direct students to explore excerpts from <a href="#">”The Geographical Reader, for the Dixie Children”</a> by Marinda Branson Moore.</p> <p><i>For student safety</i>, tell students before they read “The Geographical Reader” that what they are about to read is incredibly racist.</p>	<p>Student notebook (paper or digital)</p>

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			<p>3. Students read an <a href="#">excerpt from “Why Can’t We Teach This?” by Nikita Stewart</a> and discuss why slavery is mistaught</p> <p><b>End:</b> In their notebooks, students respond to the following question: <i>Why do you think teachers struggle to teach slavery?</i></p> <p><b>Homework/Formative Assessment:</b> Watch <a href="#">this video</a> about <i>The 1619 Project</i>. In one paragraph, summarize the key arguments Hannah-Jones makes about the importance of 1619.</p>	
<p>Days 2-4</p>	<p><a href="#">Excerpt from “The Idea of America” by Nikole Hannah-Jones from <i>The 1619 Project</i> [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Excerpt from “The Idea of America” by Nikole Hannah-Jones from <i>The 1619 Project</i> [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">“A Day to Celebrate American Promise” by the editors at the <i>National Review</i> [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">“A Day to Celebrate American Promise” by the editors at the <i>National Review</i> [.docx]</a></p>	<p>Students will be able to evaluate the controversy over <i>The 1619 Project</i>.</p>	<p><b>Beginning:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think Write Share: A mansion is being built. Do you want to meet the architect or the construction worker who is going to build it?</li> <li>2. Ask students a follow-up question: If something goes wrong with the house, who do you want to meet first?</li> </ol> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recap: Cold call on students for something they learned from the homework video.</li> <li>2. Divide students into two groups. Have one group read Hannah-Jones’s essay</li> </ol>	<p><a href="#">Slides for this lesson [.pptx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Slides for this lesson [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Example student notes on “The Idea of America” and the <i>National Review</i> article</a></p> <p>Student notebook (paper or digital)</p>

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	<p><a href="#">Excerpt from a letter sent by parents from Bryn Mawr and Gilman School [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Excerpt from a letter sent by parents from Bryn Mawr and Gilman School [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">James Baldwin vs. William Buckley Debate</a></p> <p><a href="#">“The Famous Baldwin-Buckley Debate Still Matters Today”</a> by Gabrielle Bellot</p>		<p>and the other read the piece from the <i>National Review</i>.</p> <p>3. Have students mini-debate which date is more important: 1619 or 1776.</p> <p>4. Have ALL students read the parent letter.</p> <p><b>End:</b> In their notebooks, students go back to the Think Write Share and answer the following question: <i>What is the analogy/metaphor being made in relation to the year 1619?</i></p> <p><b>Homework/Formative Assessment:</b> Watch <a href="#">Buckley vs. Baldwin debate</a>. In one paragraph, explain: what issues and claims are debated that are similar to conversations around <i>The 1619 Project</i>?</p>	
Day 5	<p><a href="#">Excerpt from “Capitalism” by Matthew Desmond [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Excerpt from “Capitalism” by Matthew Desmond [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Robert H. Stewart’s Cotton Account Book [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Robert H. Stewart’s Cotton Account Book [.docx]</a></p>	Students will be able to describe the role of cotton plantations in establishing American capitalism.	<p><b>Beginning:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think Write Share: What is something you own that means a lot to you?</li> <li>2. After students share out, ask them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ What would you do if your property is taken away?</li> <li>→ Why do you think owners considered other people property?</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show images of cotton labor camps.</li> </ol>	Student notebook (paper or digital)

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			<p>2. Analyze <a href="#">Robert H. Stewart's account book</a>. Compare and contrast Staten's account to key claims made in Desmond's essay.</p>	
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**Homework/Formative Assessment:**  
“Today the richest 10% of Americans own over 75% of the country's wealth, with the top 1% owning well over a third.” In one paragraph, what does the legacy of slavery have to do with this statistic?

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<i>Week 2</i>				
Days 1-2	<p><a href="#">Map of the Whitney Plantation [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Map of the Whitney Plantation [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Images of Whitney Plantation's Cabins and Big House</a></p> <p><a href="#">Children on a Louisiana plantation image [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Children on a Louisiana plantation image [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Plantation Owners of the Whitney Plantation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Excerpt from "Sugar" by Khalil Gibran Muhammad [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Excerpt from "Sugar" by Khalil Gibran Muhammad [.docx]</a></p>	<p>Students will be able to compare and contrast key claims and details made about slavery and sugar in primary and secondary source documents.</p>	<p><b>Beginning:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce a <a href="#">map of the Whitney Plantation</a> to students.</li> <li>2. Students list the type of work done at each of the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Kitchen</li> <li>→ The Big House</li> <li>→ Field</li> <li>→ Barn</li> <li>→ Blacksmith shop</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Students respond: What would cause someone to be put in "slave jail"?</li> </ol> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. See Think Wonder with <a href="#">images of the Whitney Plantation</a>, and then with the <a href="#">image of children on a Louisiana plantation</a>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ What do you see in the image (describe)?</li> <li>→ What do you think is going on in the image?</li> <li>→ What do you wonder? (What questions do you have?)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Student notebook (paper or digital)</p> <p><a href="#">Student work example: annotated map of the Whitney Plantation</a></p>



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			<p>2. Read excerpt from <a href="#">“Sugar”</a> for key claims made about sugar, slavery, and the Whitney Plantation.</p> <p><b>End:</b> Research one of the plantation owners of the Whitney Plantation, using <a href="#">this resource</a>. Connect their wealth/life to key claims made in Muhammad’s essay.</p>	
Day 3	<p><a href="#">“Is Slavery’s Legacy in the Power Dynamics of Sports?”</a> by Kurt Streeter</p> <p><a href="#">Donald Sterling video clip</a></p> <p>LeBron James’s statement about “ownership,” <a href="#">quoted in <i>The Washington Post</i></a></p>	<p>Students will be able to evaluate the response to Donald Sterling’s racist statements.</p>	<p><b>Beginning:</b> Think Write Share: If someone is the head of a business and says something racist, what should happen to that person?</p> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a brief timeline of Donald Sterling’s ownership.</li> <li>2. Show <a href="#">video clip from Time.com</a>.</li> <li>3. Read <a href="#">“Is Slavery’s Legacy in the Power Dynamics of Sports?”</a> by Kurt Streeter and evaluate/discuss key claims.</li> </ol> <p><b>End:</b> In their notebooks, students respond to the following question: <i>Do you agree with the response to Donald Sterling’s statements? Why or why not?</i></p> <p><b>Homework/Formative Assessment:</b> Read the article about</p>	<p>Student notebook (paper or digital)</p> <p><a href="#">Student work example: Notes taken on reflection questions and readings for this lesson</a></p>

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			LeBron James and his statements about the NFL. In one paragraph, explain: do you agree or disagree with James' statement? Make connections and comparisons to Donald Sterling's statements.	
Days 4-5	<p>Excerpts from "Justice" by Nikole Hannah-Jones, available exclusively in <a href="#">The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story</a></p> <p>(Another essay, "<a href="#">What Is Owed</a>" by Nikole Hannah-Jones, may be substituted)</p> <p><a href="#">"Evanston is the first U.S. city to issue slavery reparations. Experts say it's a noble start."</a> by Char Adams</p>	Students will be able to evaluate key claims made for reparations.	<p><b>Beginning:</b> Think Write Share: When someone causes you harm, what is your immediate response?</p> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students look back at their notes from previous lessons. Students come up with three moments that stick out to them in which Black people were caused harm.</li> <li>2. Review definitions of the words <i>justice</i>, <i>restitution</i>, and <i>reparations</i>.</li> <li>3. Provide examples of reparations in world history (e.g. German Holocaust survivors).</li> <li>4. Read for key claims made in Hannah-Jones's essay.</li> <li>5. Study <a href="#">Evanston, IL reparations case</a>.</li> </ol> <p><b>End:</b> Students respond to the following question in their notebooks: <i>Do you think the reparations in Illinois provide justice to Black Americans?</i></p>	Student notebook (paper or digital)

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<i>Week 3</i>				
Days 1-5	All unit resources to date	Students will be able to explain the social, economic, and political impact of the Atlantic slave Trade.	<p><b>Beginning:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce the <a href="#">research paper rubric</a>, and share the research question: <i>What was the social and political impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade?</i></li> <li>2. Brainstorm responses by having students set up three columns in their notes, one for each of the following: social, political, and economic. In each column, add the ways in which Black people were impacted by slavery.</li> </ol> <p><b>Middle:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review each source that was used in the unit. Have students list the column under which the document could appear (social, political, economic).</li> <li>2. Practice citing evidence from the documents/sources in making claims.</li> </ol> <p><b>End:</b> Provide students with time to write their first and second draft as needed.</p>	<p><a href="#">Research paper rubric [.pdf]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Research paper rubric [.docx]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Example student essay</a></p> <p><a href="#">Example student notes preparing for essay writing</a></p>