

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Length	Two week unit including 4, 90 minute lessons + time for student research and summative task
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	12th grade African American Studies 12th grade African American Literature
Unit Overview	<p>Our unit focuses on understanding American chattel slavery as key to understanding the Black experience in America. The goal is to explore how intergenerational trauma and systemic and institutional racism affect us today. Our essential question for the unit: <i>What are some of the lasting impacts of slavery in American society?</i></p> <p>Unit Narrative: From slavery to Jim Crow to mass incarceration, in this unit students learn the institutional oppressions inflicted on the Black community over centuries in America. By grappling with reparations, students stop viewing these racist structures as finite eras composed of racist events and instead must explore the ways in which history informs the present, the generational impacts of oppression on an individual, and the relationship between America’s morality and the Black community’s humanity.</p> <p>Students will enter this historic and ongoing conversation first through Lee’s 2019 overview of the wealth gap and, secondly from the narrative of Clyde Ross as told in Ta-Nehisi Coates’ 2014 piece in <i>The Atlantic</i>, “The Case for Reparations”. Through Ross’ story, students encounter the structures that justify arguments for reparations including Jim Crow, seizure of Black-owned land, lynchings, unfair creditor practices, and redlining. Beginning with Ross’ story serves the same purpose that it does in Coates’ exhaustive argument, to humanize what often begins as an economic discussion. Students will note the effects of institutional racism within generations of one family, its geographical movement effects from Mississippi to Chicago, and its prevailing detriment in one Chicago neighborhood.</p> <p>This inquiry process develops student-skills in research, analyzing argument structure, map reading, and rhetorical strategies. Following these lessons, students will continue to read Coates’ case before developing their own argumentative stance on reparations, including how their proposal may be logistically implemented individually, in their community, or nationally. Our aim is that students enter the conversation on reparations rather than view it from afar.</p>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine how intergenerational trauma and systemic and institutional racism affect us today. ● Examine arguments for and against reparations. ● Use the inquiry process to analyze arguments and evaluate historical maps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a written argument for or against reparations providing a detailed plan which addresses the social, historic, economic, and political needs of African Americans.
Standards	<p><u>CCSS ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7</u></p> <p>Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p> <p><u>C3 FRAMEWORK, D2.Eco.13.9-12</u></p> <p>Explain why advancements in technology and investments in capital goods and human capital increase economic growth and standards of living</p> <p><u>C3 FRAMEWORK, D2.Soc.17.9-12</u></p> <p>Analyze why the distribution of power and inequalities can result in conflict</p> <p><u>C3 FRAMEWORK, D2.Soc.18.9-12</u></p> <p>Propose and evaluate alternative responses to inequality</p> <p><u>NCSS Curriculum Standards for Social Studies</u></p> <p>VI. Power, Authority & Governance</p> <p>Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of <i>how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance</i>, so that the learner can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. recognize how groups and organizations encourage unity & deal with diversity to maintain order & security; H. recognize and give examples of the tensions between the wants and needs of individuals and groups, & concepts such as fairness, equity and justice.
Unit Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Homegoing</i> by Yaa Gyasi Kwame Nkrumah’s 1957 Independence Speech <u>“We Should All Be Feminists” a TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie</u> <u>“The Disappearance of a Distinctively Black Way to Mourn” by Tiffany Stanley, <i>The Atlantic</i></u> <u>“The Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates, <i>The Atlantic</i></u> <u>“Vast Wealth Gap, Driven by Segregation, Redlining, Evictions and Exclusion, Separates White and Black America” by Trymaine Lee, <i>The New York Times Magazine 1619 Project</i></u> <u>“Mapping Inequality.” American Panorama, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers</u>
Performance Task(s)	<p>Constructed Response: Construct a written argument that details a plan for/against reparations which addresses the social, historic, economic, and political needs of African Americans. This argument should answer the compelling question by developing claims and using specific evidence from both</p>

Is There a Case for Reparations

Unit by African American Studies Teachers in Columbia Public Schools,
part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

	<p>primary and secondary sources. It should also address and/or acknowledge arguments opposite the stance students took for/against reparations.</p> <p>Extension: Create a multimedia presentation that assesses and addresses the need(s) for reparations. This presentation should address the needs of the Black community as well as answer the primary strategies and the strengths & weaknesses used in this campaign for redress.</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p>Constructed Response Rubric.doc Constructed Response Rubric.pdf</p> <p>Speaking and Listening Rubric.doc Speaking and Listening Rubric.pdf</p>

LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Lesson 1: Defining Reparations

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
EQ: What are reparations? Why might people argue to receive them?
Lesson Materials & Resources
Guiding prompts for reflections and activities Materials for making charts Google Slides
Lesson Activities
<p>Background</p> <p>The staging of our compelling question does not begin with a definition of “reparations,” instead it is designed to provoke students to consider the connotations of words associated with arguments for and against reparations: owe, deserve, vulnerable, and right.</p> <p>Students will be prompted to write independently on a series of questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does it mean to <i>deserve</i> something?• What does it mean to <i>owe</i> something? What does it mean to be <i>vulnerable</i>?• How do you determine if something is <i>right</i> or wrong? <p>We will encourage students to take these broad questions and recall moments in which they felt deserving, owed, vulnerable, and righteous.</p> <p>Framing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student Volunteers will share answers aloud before we prompt them to apply each term to a scenario in an environment that they are familiar with and that, in many ways, reflects the obstacles, hierarchy, and populations of America: their school.2. Students will be asked to identify the most vulnerable group at their school. Anticipated answers are special needs students, ESL learners, illiterate students, impoverished students, and students of color. As a class, students will select one of these groups to apply to our scenario. <p>Learning Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. With a partner or small groups, students will define what makes the selected student population vulnerable specifically within the institution of their school. For example, students within the ESL population may encounter a language barrier when completing an English assignment on figurative language, which earns them a poor grade, denying them grade-based privileges at our school. (There are additional resources and student samples to assist with this in the unit folder)2. Students individually or in small groups, will create a chart composed of three columns, each

Is There a Case for Reparations

Unit by African American Studies Teachers in Columbia Public Schools,
part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

1619 | Education Network

containing a question:

- a. What does this vulnerable population *deserve* during their time at school?
- b. What is this vulnerable population *owed* by our school?
- c. What is the *right* thing for our school to do in regard to this vulnerable population?

This exercise will shed light on the similarities and differences between the language used in reparations arguments, which will serve students in their analyses of rhetoric, and it will provide us an opportunity to gauge student opinion.

Closing

Following the activity, students will be introduced to the definition of reparations and the author of our main text Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Lesson 2: Economic Discrimination & Injustices

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

EQ: What are reparations? Why might people argue to receive them?

Lesson Materials & Resources

The Atlantic's video: [“Inside the Battle for Fair Housing in 1960s Chicago”](#)

[The Case for Reparations Student Annotation Sheet.doc](#)

[The Case for Reparations Student Annotation Sheet.pdf](#)

[Coates, T. \(2014\) The case for reparations. *The Atlantic* 313\(5\), 54-71.](#) (Provide student hard copy for annotation)

[Lee, T. \(2019\). *The Wealth Gap. The 1619 Project. The New York Times Magazine, August 18, 2019.*](#)

[Nelson, R.K., Winling, L., Marciano, R., Connolly, N., et al., “Mapping Inequality.” *American Panorama*, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed June 12, 2018](#)

Lesson Activities

Background

In order to understand any argument for or against reparations, students must understand the institutional systems that have created centuries of injustice against the Black community. The case study of Elmore Bolling in Lee’s article provides an excellent introduction to the racial wealth gap that has existed between Black and white Americans for some time. The narrative of Clyde Ross in section I of Coates’ “The Case for Reparations” begins with Ross’ birth in Clarksdale, Mississippi in 1923 and chronicles his life up until his 1968 activism with The Contract Buyers League to fight housing discrimination in Chicago’s North Lawndale neighborhood. As students read this section, titled “So That’s Just One of My Losses”, they will track the systems Ross and his family encountered that left them at a disadvantage over the course of his life. Students will use AVID tracking strategies to annotate the text for these areas and indicate systems or events that can be defined as racial injustice.

While students will likely have an easy time noting the institutional racism of the Jim Crow South apparent in this section, the institutional racism of the Federal Housing Administration will be more difficult to grasp. To remedy this confusion and provide the necessary nuance in understanding fully the case for reparations, students will view two additional sources: *The Atlantic's* supplemental video “Inside the Battle for Fair Housing in 1960s Chicago” and the website, [“Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.”](#)

Learning Activity

Is There a Case for Reparations

Unit by African American Studies Teachers in Columbia Public Schools,
part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

1. Students read the section, titled “So That’s Just One of My Losses”, and track the systems Ross and his family encountered that left them at a disadvantage over the course of his life.
2. Students annotate the text for these areas and indicate systems or events that can be defined as racial injustice
3. Together, the class watches *The Atlantic’s* supplemental video “Inside the Battle for Fair Housing in 1960s Chicago”, which interviews Ross and other organizers of The Contract Buyers League.
 - a. The video ends with statistics on present-day North Lawndale including the high unemployment rate of the area, the percentage of residents living below the poverty line (nearly half), and the ratio of vacant to occupied homes (1 in 5).
 - b. Encourage students to take note of these statistics before introducing the next source.
4. Next, have students investigate the website, “[Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America](#)”, which is part of the *American Panorama* project at the Digital Scholarship Lab at the University of Richmond (VA).
 - a. This website offers a national collection of “security maps” from the federal government program, Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC). With over 150 maps of cities and larger towns across the United States, Mapping Inequality details the role of federal, state, and local agencies that worked together to use the practice of redlining to keep African Americans in certain neighborhood and out of others.
 - b. When coupled with the narrative of Clyde Ross, this resource will help students to understand the complexities of African American homeownership as well as the forces working against those same individuals seeking their slice of the “American dream.”
5. Finally, direct students to examine a municipality of their choosing (you can encourage them to look first at Chicago because of the connections with Mr. Ross’s experience) to understand the map and it’s rationale.

Closing

Exit Ticket: Have students make connections between the information provided and the Coates article to understand how and why African Americans were taken advantage of in real estate dealings. Students will refer to this information as the lesson progresses.

Lesson 3: Major Components of Institutional Racism

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
EQ1: What historic injustices do reparations seek to repair? EQ2: Can reparations repair these problems? Why or why not?
Lesson Materials & Resources
Students use readings, websites, maps, and information from previous lessons Group Brainstorm and Presentation Guide.doc Group Brainstorm and Presentation Guide.pdf
Lesson Activities
<p>Background</p> <p>Now that students have explored the issue of housing discrimination, they will focus on intersecting issues of institutional racism (outside of the example of housing already investigated) like access to various levels of education or training, prospects for and types of employment opportunities and how that impacts income, access to and availability of credit in developing wealth, access to and the affordability of healthcare and related health issues, the ability to exercise political power locally, statewide, and nationally, and issues surrounding the criminal justice system: (mass) incarceration, police harassment and/or violence. While students do not necessarily need to address every issue connected to institutional racism but the more nuanced their listing, the better.</p> <p>Lesson Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students work in small groups (3-5) and discuss the issues of institutional racism that arose in both the Coates article and their investigation of the Mapping Inequality website.2. From those discussions, students work to create a group list, which will eventually merge into a whole-class list, of issues/items of institutional racism not addressed in either the article or website. (Students have previous course readings and their own lived experiences to draw on)3. After identifying eight major components of institutional racism (education, employment, income, wealth, healthcare, political power, criminal justice, and housing), student groups will brainstorm a reparations proposal connected to one of the identified systems or institutions and present their findings to the class. Class members will have an opportunity to interact and question each other's reasoning, rationale, and/or evidence.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. During this discussion, students should be engaged in note taking while keeping their focus on using the discussion to help them to eventually answer the compelling question. <p>Closing</p> <p>Once the discussion is completed, students will compile their initial understandings of the effects of institutional racism on African Americans. This compilation will assist them in developing claims and gathering evidence for those claims during the next formative task.</p>

Lesson 4: Summary of Lesson Themes

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
EQ: What options concerning reparations have already been proposed and are they viable? How so?
Lesson Materials & Resources
Student Source Notes Worksheet.doc Student Source Notes Worksheet.pdf Sample Reparations Proposals
Lesson Activities
<p>Background</p> <p>After completing the other lessons, students will be directed to investigate various previously articulated reparations proposals. Students will select from a number of proposals - nine in all - which discuss varying aspects of reparations. Beginning chronologically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The multiple petitions of Belinda (Sutton) Royall, which is also detailed in the Coates article, from the late 18th Century offers students a glimpse at the first documented case for reparations. The Royall House & Slave Quarters Museum in Medford, MA offers a thorough explanation of the case and links to the original documents held by in the Massachusetts Archives Collection at Harvard University. • The “Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World” (1920) by the United Negro Improvement Association addresses the issues surrounding reparations and is the beginning point of activism for life long reparations advocate, Audley (Queen Mother) Moore. • Presented to the United Nations in 1951, the Civil Rights Congress document, “We Charge Genocide.” offers a comprehensive tallying of crimes committed against African Americans who sought redress from the United Nations instead of the US government. • The brief yet poignant, “What We Want, What We Believe,” party platform of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966 showcases the issue of reparations in the context of the beginnings of the Black Power movement. • Another Black Power advocate, the Republic of New Afrika’s 1969 “Declaration of Independence” outlines their program to create a Black nation in the southern United States. • James Forman’s famous 1969 speech, “The Black Manifesto,” seeks redress from White Christian churches and Jewish synagogues for the ravages of slavery. • “The Abuja Proclamation” of the Organization of African Unity in 1993 provides an international perspective about reparations. • “The Logistics of a Reparations Program in the United States” by Dania Francis gives an overview of past and current reparations movements in the United States and discusses the logistics of various

bills and programs laid out for policy makers.

- [N'COBRA's "The Reparations Campaign" \(2000\)](#) gives students a current voice in the fight for reparations.

While there are a number of additional or different sources that could be used for this lesson, the authors note that these sources reveal the development of arguments for reparations over time which is essential for students' understanding of the topic.

Lesson Activity

1. From the nine primary sources, students will select a minimum of three to investigate in-depthly and to ultimately use in their summative performance task.
 - a. While the choice of the sources is up to students, it may be important to help guide students in making selections or reduce the number of documents used in this activity.
 - b. Students will require a certain amount of background information on each source so that they can put it in proper historical perspective, using their source notes sheet.
2. After students have selected their sources, they should engage in combining the sources with their information from Formative Task #2. The goal of students in this process is to be able to begin crafting their own arguments and justifications about reparations...