

Multicultural Literature and Social Studies

Summary

This lesson plan is designed for students in the 3rd through 5th grades. In this lesson students will be introduced to the history of African-Americans in the United States. This lesson includes a discussion of the history of slavery, discrimination, and the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, students will have an opportunity to learn about more contemporary issues and challenges facing African-Americans in United States and Utah.

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 3rd Grade

[Standard 3 Objective 1](#)

Additional Core Ties

Social Studies - 4th Grade

[Standard 2 Objective 1](#)

Social Studies - 4th Grade

[Standard 2 Objective 2](#)

Social Studies - 5th Grade

[Standard 5 Objective 2](#)

Time Frame

5 class periods of 45 minutes each

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

Day One

Reading Rainbows VHS/DVD or Book
White Board/Markers or Chart Paper/Marker

Day Two

- [The Emancipation Proclamation](#)
- [Missing Stories Excerpts I](#)

Day Three

- [Missing Stories Excerpts II](#)

Day Four

- [Terry Lee Williams Story](#)

Day Five

- crayons, markers, paper
- [Smoky Night](#)

Background for Teachers

Teachers should have an understanding of the complex issues surrounding race relations in the United States, specifically between black and white communities. Teachers should know the various laws and legal systems that have created an unjust racial society in the United States. Teachers should be able to discuss these issues at a level appropriate for their classroom/students.

Student Prior Knowledge

Students should know the various groups living in their community (ethnic/racial, religious, cultural, etc). Students might know about the history of slavery, emancipation, and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, but this is not necessary for the lesson.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- Student will understand how African-Americans were brought against their will to the United States and were sold into slavery.
- Students will gain an understanding of how African-Americans suffered discrimination after being freed from slavery.
- Students will learn how African- Americans came to Utah and what some of their first experiences were like.
- Students will recognize the influence of beliefs, attitudes, and discrimination toward African-Americans in Utah.
- Students will be aware of how laws and beliefs have changed and what problems African-Americans still face today.
- Students will learn what they can do to lessen discrimination and prejudice in their community, school, classroom (for everyone).

Instructional Procedures

Day One

Begin the unit/class by writing "African-Americans" on the board, with the subheadings, "Don't Know" and "Think We Know" below.

Have the class spend a few minutes thinking about what they do and do not know about African-Americans. Once the students have had time to think of their answers, begin making a list. Leave the list for the remainder of the class.

There are three "Reading Rainbows" programs that address issues related to slavery in the United States. (Program 22: "The Patchwork Quilt"; Program 96: "Follow the Drinking Gourd"; Program 130: "The Carousel"). Resource material for each of these films can be found on the [Reading Rainbows](#) website. Some school library's might own VHS or DVDs of the episodes. Books are also available for each.

Discuss with the class what they have learning (from viewing or reading the story). See what items they might want to change on the "Don't Know" or "Think We Know" sides of the list the class made.

Homework

Have the students write (1 page) about whether they think it was easier or harder for African-Americans to live in Utah and why they feel this way.

Day Two

At the start of class post a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation on a wall in the classroom.

Read the document to the class and discuss what they learned from the reading. Be sure to remind the class that many slaves remained captive, because their owners did not release them. Discuss with the class why African-Americans came to Utah (work on the railroads, farm, escape prejudice and indentured servitude).

Reading Activity

Either read to the class or distribute copies of selected excerpts from [Missing Stories](#) . Discuss the stories with the class, relating what they learned from the readings to the material from the previous day/lesson.

Homework

Each student should pick a story (from [Missing Stories](#)), that they related to or were moved by. Write

(1 page) about why you feel this way. What was it about this story that you could relate to?

Day Three

Review the stories from the previous lesson. Discuss what the struggles/obstacles each individual faced and what was important to them (values).

Reading Activity

Read (as a class or individually) the second set of excerpts from [Missing Stories](#). These are stories from people living in Utah during/after WWII. Discuss what changed in society during that time period (African- Americans became important in the war effort, both at home and internationally). Discuss as a group how these stories are similar and different from the previous lesson. During this discussion, review the homework assignment from the previous day.

Which stories did the students relate to and why?

Homework

Write about what you personally could have done to make one of the storyteller's life a little brighter. (i.e. could have made a valentine for Doris Frye. What would you write on it?)

Day Four

Reading Activity

As a class or individually, read [Terry Lee Williams](#) story. Talk with the class about the Civil Rights Movement and what changes in U.S. culture have occurred in the past couple of decades. Discuss why it was important for everyone (not just African Americans) to have Martin Luther King Day celebrated in the United States and Utah.

Writing Activity

Have the students think about a time in their life when they, or someone they care about, was treated unfairly. Have the students create their own "missing story" from the other person's perspective or their own point of view.

Homework

Complete the writing of your own "missing story"

Day Five

Give the students time to draw a picture that can go along with their "missing story." Students will share their stories at the end of class.

Reading Activity

Read to the class, [Smoky Nights](#) by Eve Bunting, about the Los Angeles riots. Discuss the book with the class.

How does this story relate to the other stories they have read or the stories they wrote?

What did they learn from this reading?

How has what they know about the African American community changed/enhanced?

Group Activity

Have the students share their stories with the class and the pictures they drew. Once all the students have presented their stories, make a list of all the things they can do (as a class and individually) to help race problems/issues today and in the future. (This is also a productive closure activity for the lesson).

Bibliography

Bunting, E. (1994). [Smoky Night](#). Harcourt Children's Books.

Kelen, L.G, & Stone, E.H. (2000). [Missing Stories: An Oral History of Ethnic Minority Groups in Utah](#). Utah State University Press. Logan, UT.

Authors

[Mary Gould](#)

