


**Teaching Tip:** Unpacking the Directions and Assigning Handouts

Use the '[unpacking the directions](#)' document to easily access lesson targets, slide decks, and print or assign virtually, student handouts.

## Case Study 1: Restorative Circle (optional)

**Guiding Question:** How is my cultural identity impacted by systemic racism?

Students will participate in a restorative circle to share what they know about racism, prejudice, and racist policy. Students will examine their identities and contextualize definitions for Anti-Racist, Racist, and Systemic Racism.



**Learning Target:** I can examine and discuss the impact of racism on my life and those who are different from me.

**Teacher Resources**

[Day 1 Case Study](#)  
[Slide Deck for Day 1](#)

**Share with Students**

[Definitions Handout](#)  
[Exit Ticket](#)

## Case Study 2: Box Protocol – Mystery Source Analysis

**Guiding Question:** What have I learned after analyzing a mystery source?

## Case Study 3: Box Protocol – Mystery Source Analysis

**Guiding Question:** What role did the government play in segregating our community?

## Case Study 4: Box Protocol – Jigsaw Source Sets Analysis

**Guiding Question:** How have people responded to racism in Buffalo?

## Case Study 5: Restorative Circle

**Guiding Question:** How do we practice antiracist strategies?

# Case Study 1: Restorative Circle

Based on a 35–55 minute class.

**Guiding Question:** How is my cultural identity impacted by systemic racism?

## Social Studies Framework Reference

### Civic Participation

**8.5c** President Roosevelt issued the New Deal in an attempt to revive the economy and help Americans deal with the hardships of the Great Depression. These New Deal reforms had a long-lasting effect on the role of government in American society and its economic life, but did not resolve all of the hardships Americans faced.

- Students will identify key programs adopted under the New Deal and discuss the racist impact on individual and systemic levels.

**S.S. Practice: Civic Participation** -- Demonstrate respect for the rights of others in discussions and classroom debates regardless of whether one agrees with the other viewpoint. Use techniques and strategies to be an active and engaged member of class discussions of fellow classmates' views and statements.

## New York State Standards: English Language Arts

**8SL1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners; express ideas clearly and persuasively and build on those of others.

## Teaching Tolerance Standards

**Identity 2.** Students will develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups

**ID.3-5.2** I know about my family history and culture and about current and past contributions of people in my main identity groups.

**Justice 13.** Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.

**JU.6-8.13** I am aware that biased words and behaviors and unjust practices, laws and institutions limit the rights and freedoms of people based on their identity groups.



# Social Studies Practice: Civic Action

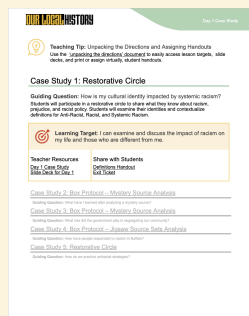
## Overview

Students will participate in a restorative circle where they will share their background knowledge and experiences with racism, systemic racism, and antiracism. Students will co-create and affirm group norms that will provide the framework for how to discuss racism and explore the way it has shaped our lives and community. This is also an opportunity for the teacher to understand more completely student sensitivity and understanding regarding issues of race and what questions they may have. The discussion can also inform next steps and how to introduce the boxing protocol and the primary source analysis.



**Learning Target:** I can examine and discuss the impact of racism on my life and those who are different from me.

### Teacher Resources



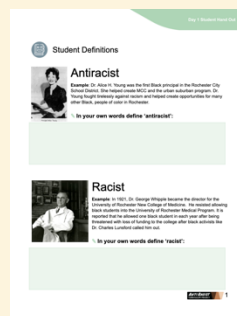
Day 1 Case Study

### Case Study #1

Restorative Circle and Definitions

Day 1 Case Study  
Slide Deck

### Share with Students



Student Definitions  
Handout



Day 1 Exit Ticket

## Sequence of Instruction

### Pre-Teaching/Introduction

Consider the following instructional strategies and suggestions as part of this Case Study. There is a Quizlet that could be used as part of this vocabulary focus and introduction.

## Vocabulary Teaching Tip



Students will co-create definitions in conjunction with definitions for Anti racist for “racist”, “antiracist”, and “identity”, and “systemic racism”.

Vocabulary		
Anti-Racist	Activist	Identity
Systemic Racism	Ethnicity	Negro

Remind students about the definitions from day 1. Emphasize ‘antiracist’. Ask them who they learned about in the jigsaw who was an anti-racist or a racist.



## Social-Emotional Teaching Tip

Relationships are key here! Authentic relationships create the critical context for more vulnerable and meaningful discussions. It is very important to begin the circle by asking each student to share what they need in order to feel supported but also challenged while discussing the difficult topic of racism. It might be helpful to share that racism is

something many people are uncomfortable talking about, but it is an unfortunate reality of our world. Share that in our class we believe that when we talk about hard things together we bring them out of the darkness and into the light. Hard things like racism are easier to face together rather than alone. We might not do it perfectly, it is ok to have big feelings, it is safe to ask questions, and finally as the great James Baldwin has said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced”. When we are uncomfortable is when change happens.



Figure 1: Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning. ©CASEL 2017

During the circle it is very important to monitor students closely by paying attention to their verbal and physical cues that reveal how they are feeling. It can be helpful to pause the circle and come back to it later. Before the circle, you can assess students when they self-assess how they are

feeling about having this conversation using the ‘fist to five’ strategy (fist-I’m uncomfortable 5-I’m ready to talk about this).

When you check in with the students, you can encourage them to cover their eyes or put their heads down so only you can see their hands. This gives students anonymity and provides some safety in sharing. It is important to check in throughout the circle using the same strategy. If a student is putting their head down, struggling with eye contact, or using a low or really quiet voice, offer them space, do not pressure them to share, and be sure to check in afterwards.

- 2A.2a. Identify verbal, physical, and situational cues that indicate how others may feel.  
2B.2b. Demonstrate how to interact positively with those who are different from oneself.



### Culturally Responsive Teaching Tip [Critical Step]

Before talking with students about racism, it is helpful to assess your own comfort level (see p. 20 of The Teaching Tolerance ‘Let’s Talk’ guide). Reflect on the implicit and explicit messages you were taught about racism growing up. Ask yourself “The hard part of talking about race/racism is ... The beneficial part of talking about race/racism is ...” Then plan for how you will stay engaged. Finally, commit to accepting that you don’t have to have all the answers. It is authentic and even helpful to learn with and from your students. It can be very powerful to tell students you do not know an answer, and that together we can explore an answer. Finally, it can be helpful to invite a trusted colleague to facilitate this lesson with you.

This restorative circle is designed to encourage students to learn more about other people’s lives and experiences and to know how to ask questions respectfully, listen carefully and non-judgmentally (Diversity 8). Each student will have the opportunity to share or pass in the circle about what they know about racism and segregation. It can be very helpful to communicate in advance to students of color about the lesson. Give them permission not to share and ask them what they need in order to feel supported in the conversation. It may help to show them the videos beforehand. It is also important to let them know that racist ideas will be corrected. Let them know that the goal of the circle will be to help everyone improve our conversations about challenging topics like racism.

Depending on your class it may be helpful to have students write anonymously on sticky notes any questions they have on race and racism. Another strategy is to use sticky notes to write questions during the circle. Once the teacher has a number of sticky notes, they can anonymously share the questions and provide the chance for other students to help answer. Students hear many perspectives and opinions at home that are not necessarily true. Giving them the chance to ask about it anonymously without reproach can be really helpful.

It is important to cultivate a classroom rooted in curiosity, of respectful listening and non-judgmental questioning (TT Diversity 8).

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### Class Activity 1/3: Warm-Up/Introduction

5–10 minutes

**Slide 4:** Introduce key definitions.

**Slide 5:** Students respond to quick write: What are your cultural identities?

**Slide 6:** Students will analyze the Learning Target for the Case Study. Teachers can guide this analysis by focusing on words and activities which are embedded in the Learning Target. Here is the Learning Target:

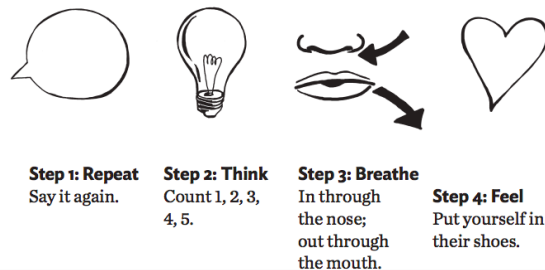


**Learning Target:** I can examine and discuss the impact of racism on my life and those who are different from me.

This target is an important, and often first, step to help students construct meaning, recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).

**Slide 7:** Let students know that we will be participating in a circle about racism. Use the Fist-to-Five strategy to check in with them and see how they're feeling about this. You can quickly gauge a number of things—readiness, mood, comprehension—by asking students to give you a “fist-to-five” signal with their hand. You may have students cover their eyes to allow for anonymity.

**Slide 8:** Introduce the Teaching Tolerance Strategy (see p. 9 of ‘Let’s Talk’):  
REPEAT•THINK•BREATHE•FEEL Explain these steps as a way to communicate while feeling difficult emotions. These steps won’t prevent or change the emotions students may feel, but they can help them self-regulate. Model the strategy with students.



## Class Activity 2/3: Restorative Circle

30 minutes

### Set-Up

Circle Protocol: Talking piece (only person allowed to talk is the one with the talking piece).

- For virtual circles, invite students to each come with a talking piece that represents safety and strength.

- Create agreed upon circle agreements or norms
- Facilitator goes first and then takes notes
- Create order so kids know when they're speaking
- Facilitator summarizes what everyone said at the end

**Slide 10:** Introduce students to the restorative circle protocol. Let students know that these group norms will be followed throughout these Case Studies and that the norms can be added to or adapted. Model a group norm that you need in order to feel supported and challenged during both the circle and for this whole unit then pass the talking piece around the circle.



### Teaching Tip

If you have already been doing restorative circles in your classroom and have a set of established group norms, it is still important to ask students if they have norms to add or adapt.

## Round 1

### How does your racial identity impact how you are treated in America?

**Slide 11:** Introduce the round 1 question and remind students of circle protocols and norms. Students may share personal experiences that are difficult. Honor them by listening and respecting their experiences. Remain in a stance of curiosity and gratitude as they share their stories.

The facilitator begins by sharing how their racial identity impacts how they have been treated throughout their lives in America. It is important to be prepared with a response that is honest, personal and vulnerable. Modeling this will create more safety during the circle. Then the talking stick is passed to the next student who has the option to share or pass. It is important that the facilitator offer affirmation to students by quickly reflecting back on what was shared without commenting on it. If a student shares something that breaks the group norms, it is important to gently remind them of the group norms and give them another chance to share. After all the students have shared, the facilitator uses their notes to reflect back what the students shared and highlight the themes and questions that emerged. If necessary the facilitator can make the decision to pass the talking piece back around the circle for a connection round where students can add to what they shared, ask questions, and answer one another's questions. This is not a time for the teacher to answer questions. The facilitator demonstrates a posture of curiosity, seriousness, and intention.



### Teaching Tip

White students might struggle with an answer to this question. It is important to set the tone of the circle by being vulnerable and personal when you share your



experiences with racism or systemic racism. Encourage students to think outside of their own perspectives and lived experiences. They may not have experiences with racism or may believe they are racist. Use the video as a way to prompt curiosity of various experiences for people of different races.



### Teaching Tip

It is ok if you don't get to all the circle questions. Choose a question that is going to help ground your students for the inquiry to come, help them build connection, and give you a picture of their understanding of the concepts surrounding race, systemic racism and antiracism. If the first round elicits the need for a connection round, don't hesitate to pass the talking piece back around the circle and have student share connections and additions to what they shared first.

## Round 2

### What do you know about racism and systemic racism?

**Slide 12:** Introduce the round 2 question 'what do you know about racism and systemic racism?' It is ok to let students know that this is a topic they will be exploring during the upcoming social studies unit. Begin by sharing the question and then playing the Act.tv video 'Systemic Racism Explained' that models for the students' possible ideas they might share, respond to, or connect with. Again, the facilitator goes first and enforces the circle protocol and group norms. After each student shares the facilitator restates their answers pulling out common themes and questions. Possible examples might include district hiring practices, school segregation, 32% of African Americans in Monroe County owning their own home compared to 77% of white folks own.



### Teaching Tip

Students often have much to share during this circle. If students do not, it is understandable. Do not pressure students to share or make them feel bad for not sharing. Instead reflect on why this might be and on how you can work on building a safe space in your classroom for these difficult but important conversations. It may be helpful to talk to a few students afterward about how they thought the circle went and what ideas they have to foster safety and encourage sharing. It is important to note, when checking in with students, the focus should not solely be on the students of color.

## Class Activity 3/3: Definitions

10 minutes



## Round 1

**Slide 13-14:** Hopefully students have touched on some of these words during the circle. Either way, read the words and definitions to the students. Use student examples from the circle to help build understanding.



### Teaching Tip

The words 'negro' or 'colored' are no longer acceptable to say aloud. We are introducing this word because it is used in some of the primary sources we will be examining. There is no need to read this word aloud. Let students know that it is a word we'll read in our head. It should go without saying that the 'N-word' also shouldn't be read or said out loud. It is very likely a student may mention the 'N-word' as a bad racist word during the restorative circle. Be sure to tell students this is a very harmful word that we never say aloud. For more on how to talk about the 'N-word' with students see Teaching Tolerance's guide 'Straight Talk About the N-Word'.

## Round 2

**Slides 15-17:** On each slide there is a real life example of the words antiracist, racist, and systemic racism. Invite students to work independently or in small groups to read the examples and define the words using their own language on the Student Handout.



### Teaching Tip

The first image depicts a racist advertisement from the 1940's. It is important to share with students that racism was perpetuated throughout the media. It was normal to see Black people dehumanized and portrayed as animalistic. These ads contributed to stereotypes that people still have today about Black people and other people of color. Be sure to let students know how harmful these ads were to all people in America.

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## Check for Understanding

### Exit Ticket

**Slide 18-19:** Exit Ticket: this can be done individually as an exit ticket handout or as a whole group check in. Students complete a "Word Match" with the important vocabulary terms and then respond to the following question: How is my cultural identity impacted by systemic racism? Or, how are people who are culturally different from me impacted by systemic racism?

### Slide 20: Optimistic Closure

Read the quote from former president Barack Obama

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” —President Barack Obama

Invite students to consider what the quote means to them. Invite students to identify what zone they are in or what feelings are coming up after the circle. You could have student record their zones on a sticky note, share with the class, or turn and talk to a friend. Another option could be to label each corner of the classroom a different color (Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red) and invite them to physically move to the color they are identifying with. Then invite students to share with a friend a tool or strategy they use when they are struggling that helps them keep going. Pay special attention to where students sort themselves and follow up with students in the blue and red zones.



### Teaching Tip

Planning to leave time for individual student reflection and time to debrief their answers collaboratively at tables and/or with the whole class can lead to rich insights and questions.

Finally, return to the Learning Target and students can write down questions that are raised through the discussion. The Optional Homework provides another opportunity to consider racism and antiracism through an interview with a family member, friend, or community member.