



Teaching Tip: Unpacking the Directions and Assigning Handouts

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

Case Study 1: Restorative Circle

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

Students will participate in a community circle to explore different levels of their cultural identity and how they might relate to their understanding of racism and civic action.



Learning Target: I can draw on my past and my cultural identity as well as those of others to understand racism, systematic racism, antiracism, and civic action.

Teacher Resources

[Letter for parents/guardians](#)
[Day 1 Case Study](#)
[Hammond's Culture Tree Q's](#)
[Slide Deck for Day 1](#)

Share with Students

[Class Handout: 4 A's Protocol](#) | [Constructing Definitions Handout: Antiracist](#) | [Constructing Definitions Handout: Racism](#) | [Exit Ticket](#) | [Forms of Civic Action Chart \(Optional\)](#)

Case Study 2: Box Protocol – Mystery Source Analysis

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

Case Study 3: Box Protocol – Common 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 Rochester?

Case Study 5: Academic Circle

Guiding Question: How do we participate in civic action?

Case Study 1: Restorative Circle

Based on a 30–45 minute class.

Guiding Question: What questions do I have after analyzing a mystery source?

New York State Standards: Social Studies Framework Reference

12.G2e Rights are not absolute; they vary with legal status, with location (as in schools and workplaces), and with circumstance. The different statuses of United States residency bring with them specific protections, rights, and responsibilities. Minors have specific rights in school, in the workplace, in the community, and in the family. The extension of rights across location, circumstance, age, and legal status is a subject of civic discourse.

12.G5 All levels of government—local, state, and federal are involved in shaping public policy and responding to public policy issues, all which influences our lives beyond what appears in the constitution. Engaged citizens understand how to find, monitor, evaluate, and respond to information on public policy issues

- Students will engage in forming restorative practices as preparation for civil discourse in discussing and synthesizing the meaning and definition of systemic racism through the lens of policy and principle

Government and Civics Practice: Connection Circle Norms -- Demonstrate respect, value, support, and non-judgemental behavior in discussions and classroom debates regardless of whether one agrees with the other viewpoint.

New York State Standards: English Language Arts

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL. 11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance premises, like among ideas, word choice, point of emphasis, and tone used

SL. 11-12.1 Seek to understand others perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from various backgrounds

R.I.11-12.9a Read, annotate, and analyze, informational texts on topics related to diverse and non-traditional cultures and viewpoints

Learning for Justice Standards

DI.9-12.7 I have the language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including myself) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups

DI.9-12.8 I respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.

DI.9-12.10 I understand that diversity includes the impact of unequal power relations on the development of group identities and cultures.

JU.9-12.12 I can recognize, describe and distinguish unfairness and injustice at different levels of society.

JU.9-12.14 I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages I have in society because of my membership in different identity groups, and I know how this has affected my life.

Social Studies Practice: Civic Participation

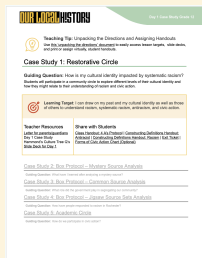
Overview

Students will participate in a community circle where they will share their understanding of and experiences with systemic racism, racists, antiracists, and activism (activists). Students will co-create and affirm group norms that will provide the framework for how to discuss systemic racism and explore the way it has shaped civil discourse. This is also an opportunity for the teacher to understand more completely students' experiences with systemic racism and how it has shaped their reality. The questions students may raise from the discussions can also inform next steps and how to introduce the boxing protocol and the primary source analysis.

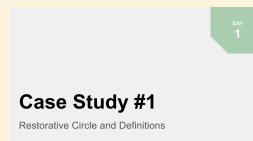


Learning Target: How is my cultural identity impacted by systematic racism?

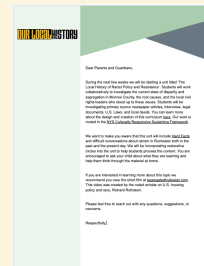
Teacher Resources



Day 1 Case Study



Slide Deck for Day 1

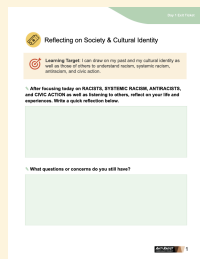


Letters for
parents/guardians



Hammond Culture
Tree Q's

Share with Students



Exit Ticket



Constructing Definitions Handout:
Antiracist/Racist



Forms of Civic Action Chart (optional)

Sequence of Instruction

Pre-Teaching/Introduction

Consider the following instructional strategies and suggestions as part of this Case Study.

Vocabulary Teaching Tip

Students will construct their own meaning of important concepts that will be further explored throughout the Case Studies: racism, systemic racism, antiracism, and activism.

Vocabulary		
Racist	Antiracist	Systematic Racism
	Civic Action	



Social-Emotional Learning Teaching Tip

The heart of this lesson is a connection circle designed to guide students in effectively engaging or participating in developing classroom connections and norms, within diverse environments, while exploring who they are and what that means to their everyday experience. This will help students navigate how to learn more about other people's lives and experiences and how that affects their livelihood in America.

It is incredibly important to begin the connection circle asking each student to share what they need in order to feel supported but also challenged in seeking opportunities for activism, especially in today's climate. While discussing the difficult topic of systemic racism, it might help to tell your students that systemic racism is something many people are uncomfortable talking about, but this is part of why we suffer, in this country, with equity, equal rights, and justice for all. Inform them that discussing systemic racism is our civic responsibility and our key attempt to overcome silence and identify opportunities for activism. Share that in our class we believe that when we talk about or engage in hard topics together we use it as a way to find connections among our diverse learning environment instead of easily pointing out differences. Sensitive discussions like systemic racism are easier to partake when it's in a safe and welcoming space. We might not do it perfectly, it is ok to have disagreements, it is safe to ask questions, it's ok to be naive, it's ok to feel vulnerable, it's ok to feel guilt, but most importantly... it's ok to activate (activism) understanding. As Clifford Geertz states, "it is not necessary to know everything in order to understand." When we're uncomfortable, that's when understanding (change/activism) happens.

During the connection circle it is very important to monitor students closely, 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. If a student is advertently sensitive, strongly opinionated, head down, struggling with eye

contact, or using a low or really quiet voice give them space, process, breathe and then choose the appropriate response, 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

Before talking to students about cultural identity and systemic racism it is helpful to assess your own knowledge of your identity and comfort level discussing racism. Consider thinking through your responses to the questions asked to students during the two connection circle rounds. Teaching Tolerance offers a self guided PD called '[Unpacking Identity](#)' that is very helpful. There is great power in affirming a student's cultural identity and validating their experiences with racism. In their Common Beliefs for Teaching Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students guide, Learning for Justice explains "When teachers say they are color blind, they are usually saying that they do not discriminate and that they treat all their students equally. Of course, being fair and treating each student with respect are essential to effective teaching. However, race and ethnicity often play important roles on children's identities, and contribute to their culture, their behavior, and their beliefs. When race and ethnicity are ignored, teachers miss opportunities to help students connect with what is being taught. Recognizing that a student's race and ethnicity influences their learning allows teachers to be responsive to individual differences. In some cases, ignoring a student's race and ethnicity may undermine a teacher's ability to understand student behavior and student confidence in doing well in a school culture where expectations and communication are unfamiliar. An individual's race and ethnicity are central to her or his sense of self but they are not the whole of personal identity. Moreover, how important an individual's race and ethnicity is to their identity will vary and teachers need to take that into account as they seek to learn more about their students." Read more at [Learning for Justice](#).

It is important to cultivate a classroom rooted in relating to and building connections with other people by showing them empathy, respect and understanding, regardless of our similarities or differences. (Diversity 9)

Class Activity 1/4: Introduction and Group Norms

5 minutes

Slide 4: Students will analyze the Learning Target for the Case Study. Teachers can guide this analysis by focusing on words and activities embedded in the Learning Target. Here is the Learning Target:



Learning Target: I can draw on my past and my cultural identity as well as those of others to understand racism, systemic racism, antiracism, and civic action.

This target is an important, and often first, step to help students construct meaning of unfairness and injustice at the institutional or systemic level.

Slide 5: Communicate that students will be participating in a circle about systemic racism and taking action to challenge it. Introduce scholars to the connection circle. Acknowledge that it can be hard to have these important conversations. Let students know they are welcome to take a break if needed. Introduce the Learning for Justice Strategy ([see p. 9 of 'Let's Talk'](#)): REITERATE•CONTEMPLATE•RESPIRE•COMMUNICATE. Explain these steps as a way to communicate understanding and meaning among each other. These steps won't prevent or change the emotions students may feel, but they can help them self-regulate. Model the strategy with students, so students could foster this technique more efficiently when disagreement or big feelings arise.

Class Activity 2/4: Community Circle (Group Norms Supported/Challenged)

30 minutes

Round 1: Community Circle Protocol and Norms

Slide 8: Introduce students to Connection Circle protocols. Let students know that these group norms will be followed throughout this Government and Civics unit 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. These group norms are helpful as a foundation:

- Use a talking piece (using the “one mic” model, the 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. For virtual circles construct a number order so students know when it will be their turn to share or pass.
- Create agreed upon circle agreements or norms
- Facilitator goes first and then takes notes
- Facilitator clarify and summarizing what everyone said at the end



Teacher Notes

If you have already been doing connection circles (restorative) in your classroom and have a set of established group norms it is still important to ask students if they have anything

they want to add or adapt. Culturally responsive teachers consistently invite students to evaluate and modify their class norms.

Round 2: Inside Outside Circle on Cultural Identity

Slide 9-10: In order to talk about racism we need to first examine our cultural identities. Read the following quote to students to introduce the term cultural identity. Teacher and Scholar Dr. Zaretta Hammond writes,

“I like to compare culture to a tree. A tree is a part of a bigger ecosystem that shapes and impacts its growth and development. Shallow culture is represented in the trunk and branches of the tree while we can think of surface culture as the observable fruit that the tree bears. Surface and shallow culture are not static; they change and shift over time resulting in a cultural mosaic just as the branches and fruit on a tree change in response to the seasons and its environment. Deep culture is like the root system of a tree. It is what grounds the individual and nourishes his mental health.”

This circle is designed to help students collaboratively construct the meaning of racism and systemic racism. To this end, the class will explore surface, shallow, and deeper level cultural identities. This also paves the way to answering the second question. Later, they will use this knowledge to construct definitions for an antiracist and racism.

Slide 11: Inside Outside Circle adapted from [Learning for Justice](#)'s Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education protocol:

- The Inside-Outside Discussion Circles strategy involves all students in processing or reviewing material.
 - The activity begins with students standing in pairs in two concentric circles.
 - The inside circle faces out; the outside circle faces in.
 - The teacher poses a question or assigns a brief task.
 - All students in the inside circle respond for a minute or two.
 - Then the students in the outside circle respond to the same question.
 - After each partner has had a turn, everyone from the inside circle moves one step to the right and the process is repeated with new partners.

Slides 12-14: Read selected questions. Teachers will choose questions that connect with their students. See Teacher Resource for all questions. 9 Boldface questions have been identified to narrow choices. Our team ultimately suggests these 3 questions (one question for Surface, one for Shallow, one for Deep):

- **What is your name? What does it mean?**
- **Are you allowed to question, talk back to adults? What would happen if you did?**
- **What is most important about who you are?**



Teacher Notes

Once you have selected the question(s), be sure the slides display your choices.

Encourage students to maintain an open mind, avoid judgment, seek to understand, and to practice empathy. Encourage them to restate in their words what their partner shared.

After each partner has had a turn, everyone from the inside circle moves one step to the right, and the process is repeated with new partners and questions; the teacher should read class engagement for the number of “turns” and questions. A class share-out can be used to review and synthesize key points. When facilitating this activity virtually (via Teams, Zoom, or Meet), teachers can utilize the breakout room tool. Place 2 students in each room. Shuffle and reassign every 2 minutes.

Class Activity 3/4: Data Analysis – Race/Ethnicity in Monroe County

Creating Definitions (10 minutes)

Definition for Antiracist

Slide 15-16: Students will construct definitions for **Antiracist** and **Racism** using the ‘Forms of Civic Action’ resource to guide their thinking. On **Slide 16** walk students through the three types of civic action that they will use to construct definitions.

Three examples are provided for Racism and for Antiracism on the Constructing Definitions Handout. Work as a whole class to unpack the examples for Racism on **slides 17-22**. Note that there are multiple civic actions in each example. **Slide 16** contains a useful reference that can be projected in class while students work individually or in small groups to identify and then classify the form of Civic Action. For example, Norman Huyck demonstrated racist action when he put racial covenants on hundreds of deeds that barred Black people from living in those homes. He demonstrated civic action by becoming president of the Rochester Builders Association, a special interest group and lobbying for racial covenants. Then students can use space on the Handout to take notes on each example that match the slides and then to construct their definition.



Slides 24-26 Invite students to work independently or in small groups to follow the same protocol in constructing a definition for **Antiracist**. All students or some students can share their definitions which can spark further discussions and develop deeper meaning. Students are invited to consider the definition on **slide 26** when constructing their own.



Teaching Tip

It is important to note here that focusing civic action for injustice will likely complicate a student’s understanding of participating in a democracy. However, it is critical to understand how some use civic action to work against equity and integration.

Class Activity 4/4: Check for Understanding

How well do you know the meaning?

Slide 28: This Exit Ticket provides the opportunity for students to reflect on their learning from the circles and their work constructing definitions. Encouraging students to reflect personally on their cultural identities can be critical as they make meaning of the concepts discussed and the experiences of their classmates. This might be best used as a Homework assignment not only considering time but also to offer students time and space to reflect and articulate their thinking.