

Social and Cultural Awareness: Understanding Power and Privilege

Lesson Length: One hour

Objective:

Students will be able to evaluate the federal response to the AIDS crisis and explain how this response reflects systems of power and privilege.

Standards:

Social and Cultural Awareness: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures and contexts. This includes the capacity to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings and recognize family, school and community resources and support.

SCA.9-11.6 Develops and expresses an understanding of how privilege, culture and background impacts groups and individuals

Driving Concept 8: Access to Democracy and Power from the 1980s-Present Day

US2.77 Evaluate the federal response to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and the strategies of activists and patient advocates to respond to the crisis.

Procedure:

As students arrive in the classroom, they independently explore the digital [AIDS Memorial Quilt](#) and record their thoughts related to the following questions (5 min):

- What do you notice first?
- What patterns do you see?
- How does this artwork make you feel?
- What questions do you have?

Class discusses their answers and questions. Teacher reviews key facts about [Quilt History](#) to segue into discussion of the AIDS epidemic in the US (5 min).

Class brainstorms what they already know about the AIDS epidemic in the US (5 min).

Students review [the AIDS timeline](#) (1981-1993) in groups of 3-4 and evaluate the US government's response using the following guiding questions (10 min):

- What do you notice about the timing of the US AIDS epidemic onset and the US government's response? Why do you think that happened?
- What criticism do you have of the US government's response?

Class discusses the US government's response to the AIDS epidemic (10 min).

Class watches [this video on ACT UP](#) and compares activists' strategies to other protest movements (10 min).

Review [current racial disparities](#) in HIV/AIDS cases and watch the first 4 min 22 sec of [Surviving Voices 2022 - The Black Community & AIDS](#) and discuss observations (15 min).

Sources:

[Analyze an Artwork \(National Archives\)](#)

[The Changing Response to AIDS \(Council on Foreign Relations\)](#)

[District of Columbia Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Standards \(OSSE\)](#)

[How ACT UP Flipped the Script on AIDS and Gay Rights](#)

[National AIDS Memorial](#)

[Surviving Voices 2022 - The Black Community & AIDS](#)

[US Statistics \(HIV.gov\)](#)

[Washington, DC K-12 Social Studies Standards \(OSSE\)](#)