

US Ethnic Race and Membership

Read the text closely (highlight, underline, write in the margins). Look for ways in which science and race inform definitions of citizenship.

Samuel George Morton, an American anthropologist in the mid-19th century, believed in polygenesis—the idea that each race is created separately. He also maintained [THOUGHT] that each race was fixed, intrinsically [BORN] different from all others, and incapable of being changed. Morton, a professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, held two medical degrees and served as president of the Academy of Natural Sciences. According to the *New York Tribune*, “Probably no scientific man in America enjoyed a higher reputation among scholars throughout the world.” **Like many scientists of his day, Morton believed that intelligence is linked to brain size. He therefore tried to rank the races according to skull size.** After measuring a vast number of skulls from around the world, he concluded that whites have larger skulls than other races and are therefore “superior.” **He was not sure if blacks were a separate race or a separate species, but he did insist that people of African descent are different from and inferior to whites.**

The following quotations are from Morton’s *Crania Americana*, published in 1839. They suggest how physical differences can become markers that predict a group’s intelligence, personality traits, even morality.

Europeans

*The Caucasian Race is characterized by a naturally fair skin, susceptible of every tint; hair fine, long and curling, and of various colors. The skull is large and oval, and its anterior portion full and elevated. The face is small in proportion to the head, of an oval form, with well- proportioned features. . . . **This race is distinguished for the facility with which it attains the highest intellectual endowments. . . .***

The spontaneous fertility of [the Caucasus] has rendered it the hive of many nations, which extending their migrations in every direction, have peopled the finest portions of the earth, and given birth to its fairest inhabitants. . . . [easily have children and create the best countries]

Asians

This great division of the human species is characterized by a sallow or olive colored skin, which appears to be drawn tight over the bones of the face; long black straight hair, and thin beard. The nose is broad, and short; the eyes are small, black, and obliquely placed, and the eyebrows are arched and linear; the lips are turned, the cheek bones broad and flat. . . . In their intellectual character the Mongolians are ingenious, imitative, and highly susceptible of cultivation [i.e. learning]. [can be easily trained]

So versatile are their feelings and actions, that they have been compared to the monkey race, whose attention is perpetually changing from one object to another. . . . [Lack focus]

Native Americans

The American Race is marked by a brown complexion; long, black, lank hair; and deficient beard. The eyes are black and deep set, the brow low, the cheek-bones high, the nose large and aquiline, the mouth large, and the lips tumid [swollen] and compressed. . . . In their mental character the Americans are averse to cultivation, and slow in acquiring knowledge; restless, revengeful, and fond of war, and wholly destitute of maritime adventure.

They are crafty [TRICKY], sensual [LOOK FOR PHYSICAL PLEASURE], ungrateful, obstinate [STUBBORN] and unfeeling, and much of their affection for their children may be traced to purely selfish motives. They devour the most disgusting [foods] uncooked and uncleaned, and seem to have no idea beyond providing for the present moment. . . . Their mental faculties, from infancy to old age, present a continued childhood. . . . [Indians] are not only averse to the restraints of education, but for the most part are incapable of a continued process of reasoning on abstract subjects. . . .

Africans

Characterized by a black complexion, and black, woolly hair; the eyes are large and prominent, the nose broad and flat, the lips thick, and the mouth wide; the head is long and narrow, the forehead low, the cheek-bones prominent, the jaws protruding, and the chin small. In disposition the Negro is joyous, flexible, and indolent; while the many nations which compose this race present a singular diversity of intellectual character, of which the far extreme is the lowest grade of humanity. . . .

The moral and intellectual character of the Africans is widely different in different nations. . . . The Negroes are proverbially fond of their amusements, in which they engage with great exuberance of spirit; and a day of toil is with them no bar to a night of revelry.

Like most other barbarous [SAVAGE, CRUEL, UNCIVILIZED] nations their institutions are not infrequently characterized by superstition and cruelty. They appear to be fond of warlike enterprises, and are not deficient in personal courage; but, once overcome, they yield to their destiny, and accommodate themselves with amazing facility to every change of circumstance.

The Negroes have little invention [NOT SMART], but strong powers of imitation, so that they readily acquire mechanic arts. They have a great talent for music, and all their external senses are remarkably acute.

Morton's ranking of the "races" had very real consequences. After meeting Morton and viewing his skull collection, Louis Agassiz, a noted biologist who joined the faculty of Harvard University in 1846, taught his students that Africans are a separate species. In evaluating Agassiz's career, anthropologist Lee D. Baker observes: "Agassiz's legacy is not only the statues, schools, streets, and museums in Cambridge [Massachusetts] emblazoned with his name but also the bevy of students who were under his tutelage at Harvard University. He trained virtually [ALMOST] all of the prominent U.S. professors of natural history during the second half of the nineteenth century."

Morton's rankings also shaped the way many politicians, journalists, and ministers viewed two of the most pressing social and political issues of the day: the expulsion [REMOVING] of Native Americans from their ancestral lands and the expansion of slavery. Between 1816 and 1850, over 100,000 Indians from 28 tribes were forced from their homes east of the Mississippi to western lands

that white Americans considered useless. At the same time, about 3.5 million African Americans were held in bondage [SLAVERY]. Their enslavement prompted a heated debate between slave-owners and an international community of abolitionists, opponents to slavery. **Morton's writings played a part in both debates by promoting the idea that the Constitution [HIGHEST LAW OF THE UNITED STATES] does not apply to Native Americans or Africans because they are not the sorts of people for whom the document was written.**

By the middle of the 1800s, the idea that some “races” are superior to others had become the “conventional wisdom.” Respected scientists like Samuel Morton gave racism legitimacy [make it seem true]. As a result, racist ideas were taught in universities, preached from pulpits [WHERE THE MINISTER IN A CHURCH STANDS], and reinforced in books, magazines, and newspapers. After surveying the leading publications of the day, historian Reginald Horsman notes, “One did not have to read obscure books to know that the Caucasians were innately [BORN] superior, and that they were responsible for civilization in the world, or to know that inferior races were destined to be overwhelmed or even to disappear. These ideas permeated [were everywhere] the main American periodicals and in the second half of the century formed part of the accepted truth of America’s school- books.” They also shaped the way Americans defined citizenship.

Immediately after the American Revolution, only three states—Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia—limited the right to vote to white men. **Until 1800, no northern state limited suffrage [VOTING RIGHTS] on the basis of race.** After 1800, however, every state that entered the Union with the exception of Maine placed restrictions on the right of African Americans to vote. States that permitted blacks to vote began to narrow or remove that right entirely. In 1837, a delegate to the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention justified [said it was okay] taking away voting rights from African American citizens by describing the United States as “a political community of white persons.” By the late 1850s, blacks could vote on the same basis as whites only in five states—all of them in New England.

In 1857, the language of exclusion reached the Supreme Court. [DECIDES THE MOST IMPORTANT LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES] In the Dred Scott decision, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ruled that blacks “had no rights which the white man was bound [must] to respect.” The American people, Taney argued, constituted a “political family” restricted to whites. Historian Eric Foner notes, **“It was a family of which blacks, descended from different ancestors and lacking a history of freedom, could never be a part. In effect, race had replaced class as the boundary separating which American men were entitled to enjoy political freedom and which were not.”**

As race increasingly defined citizenship, free blacks in the North and West as well as the South found themselves outside the nation’s “universe of obligation.” When they looked for work on the docks of New York City, they were attacked by white workers. When young African Americans applied for the

apprenticeships that would lead to good jobs in places like Cincinnati, Ohio, white mechanics blocked their every attempt. As one young black man complained,

"Why should I strive [try] hard and acquire all the constituents of a man, if the prevailing genius of the land admit me not as such, or but in an inferior degree! Pardon me if I feel insignificant and weak. . . . What are my prospects? To what shall I turn my hand? Shall I be a mechanic? No one will employ me; white boys won't work with me. . . . Drudgery and servitude, then, are my prospective portion."

Even the most educated African Americans experienced hostility [anger], prejudice, and discrimination at every turn. Historian Ronald Takaki relates the experiences of Martin Delany, the son of a slave father and free mother in Charles Town, Virginia (now Charleston, West Virginia), to suggest the breadth and depth of the shame and humiliation African Americans experienced in all parts of the nation in the early 1800s.

As a child, Martin learned that his membership in the black race made him the object of white scorn [hatred]. [His mother's] efforts to teach her children to read and write aroused angry opposition from white neighbors who were anxious to preserve their belief in black intellectual inferiority. . . . White resentment was so intense that she felt compelled [she had to] to move her family across the border to Pennsylvania.

But even north of slavery, racism was prevalent [normal everywhere]. As a young man studying in Pittsburgh during the 1830s, Delany experienced the brutality of anti-black riots led by mobs composed of white workers.

As a journalist and as an antislavery lecturer during the 1840s, Delany traveled widely throughout the North and often encountered racial hostility and violence. On one occasion, a white mob in Marseilles, Ohio, threatened to tar and feather [sticky black substance used to make roads, a form of torture] him and burn him alive. Delany found that white children, even while involved in play, were never too busy to notice a black passing by and scream "nigger." [we use the phrase "N-word" to talk about this in class because the word itself is considered very offensive and controversial]. . . . Delany found that the racial epithets were not only "an abuse of the feelings," but also "a blasting outrage on humanity."

His bitterness toward northern society was sharpened by an admissions controversy at Harvard Medical School. In 1850, Delany along with two other blacks were admitted to the school. Their admission, however, was conditional: upon graduation, they would have to emigrate and practice medicine in Africa. Even so, their presence at Harvard provoked protests from white students. Demanding the dismissal of the blacks [kicking them out], they argued that integration would lower the "reputation" of Harvard and "lessen the value" of their diploma. The whites refused to attend classes with the blacks. . .

The faculty quickly capitulated [gave in], ignoring a student counter-petition favoring the admission of the blacks. Deeming it "inexpedient" to allow blacks to attend lectures, the faculty defended their decision based on their commitment to teaching and academic excellence.

Two years after the incident at Harvard, Delany wrote a book that encouraged African Americans to return to Africa. He was convinced that even if slavery were abolished, blacks would not be accepted as equals in the United States. Yet even as he made plans to leave the country, he dedicated his book "to the American people, North and South. By their most devout and patriotic fellow- citizen, the author." He also reminded his readers of the contributions that blacks had made to the nation. "Among the highest claims that an individual has upon his country," he wrote, "is that of serving in its cause, and assisting to fight its battles." In 1861, when the Civil War began, he abandoned his dreams of Africa and volunteered for the Union Army. He served as a major in the 104th Regiment of the United States Colored Troops.

INSTRUCTIONS: Select one of 3 questions below. On a separate sheet of paper write a 5-8 sentence response.

- 1) According to scholar Leon Higginbotham, Jr., race was increasingly entwined with the idea of citizenship in the years just after the American Revolution. Increasingly, he writes, a citizen was a man who could help his neighbors put down slave rebellions or fight Indians.
 - a) How do notions about race shape the definition of citizen?
 - b) What should be included in the definition of citizen
- 2) A young African American quoted in this reading asks, "What are my prospects? To what shall I turn my hand?"
 - a) How do you think "race scientists" would answer his questions?
 - b) How might Martin Delany answer them?
 - c) How would you answer them?
 - d) What does Martin Delany's story suggest about the consequences of being an outsider or as the text puts it outside the "nation's universe of obligation"?
 - e) Why does he decide to stay in the United States?
- 3) How do you explain the change from a society that emphasizes equality to one that stresses differences? What role may education have played in that change? What were the potential roles of white allies here; what obstacles would they face?

Test 8

Notice the sample sentence: People *hear* with the *eyes ears nose mouth*

The correct word is *ears*, because it makes the truest sentence.

In each of the sentences below you have four choices for the last word. Only one of them is correct. In each sentence draw a line under the one of these four words which makes the truest sentence. If you can not be sure, guess. The two samples are already marked as they should be.

SAMPLES	People <i>hear</i> with the <i>eyes ears nose mouth</i>	
	France is in <u>Europe</u> <i>Asia Africa Australia</i>	
1.	The <i>apple</i> grows on a <i>shrub vine bush tree</i>	1
2.	<i>Five hundred</i> is played with <i>rackets pins cards dice</i>	2
3.	The <i>Percheron</i> is a kind of <i>goat horse cow sheep</i>	3
4.	The most prominent industry of <i>Gloucester</i> is <i>fishing packing</i> <i>brewing automobiles</i>	4
5.	<i>Sapphires</i> are usually <i>blue red green yellow</i>	5
6.	The <i>Rhode Island Red</i> is a kind of <i>horse granite cattle fowl</i>	6
7.	<i>Christie Mathewson</i> is famous as a <i>writer artist baseball player</i> <i>comedian</i>	7
8.	<i>Revolvers</i> are made by <i>Swift & Co. Smith & Wesson W. L. Douglas</i> <i>B. T. Babbitt</i>	8
9.	<i>Carrie Nation</i> is known as a <i>singer temperance agitator suffragist nurse</i>	9
10.	" <i>There's a reason</i> " is an "ad" for a <i>drink revolver flour cleanser</i>	10
11.	<i>Artichoke</i> is a kind of <i>hay corn vegetable fodder</i>	11
12.	<i>Chard</i> is a <i>fish lizard vegetable snake</i>	12
13.	<i>Cornell University</i> is at <i>Ithaca Cambridge Annapolis New Haven</i>	13
14.	<i>Buenos Aires</i> is a city of <i>Spain Brazil Portugal Argentina</i>	14
15.	<i>Ivory</i> is obtained from <i>elephants mines oysters reefs</i>	15
16.	<i>Alfred Noyes</i> is famous as a <i>painter poet musician sculptor</i>	16
17.	The <i>armadillo</i> is a kind of <i>ornamental shrub animal musical instrument</i> <i>dagger</i>	17
18.	The <i>tendon of Achilles</i> is in the <i>heel head shoulder abdomen</i>	18
19.	<i>Crisco</i> is a <i>patent medicine disinfectant tooth-paste food product</i>	19

Partial example of a Alpha test.

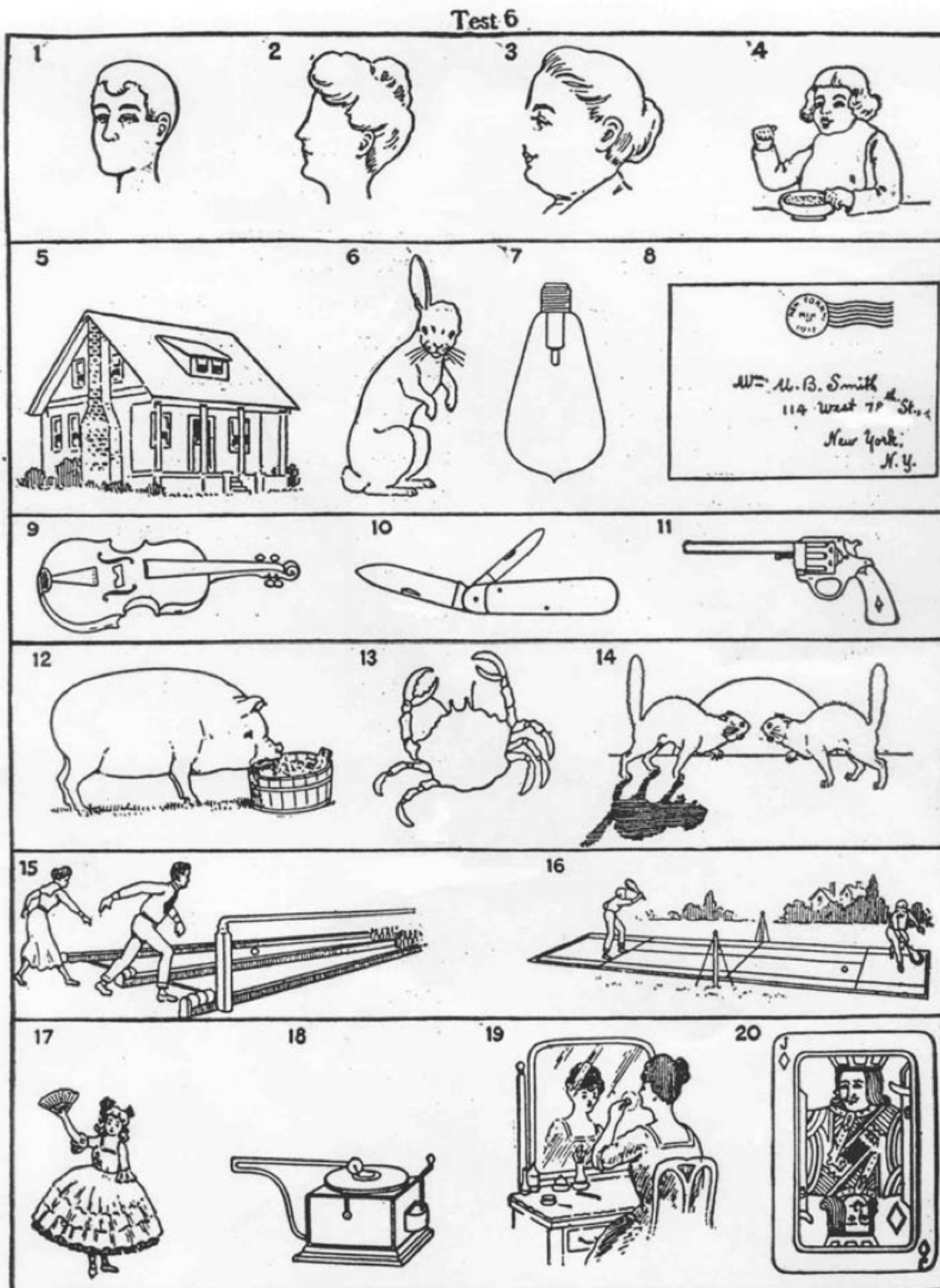


Fig. 63.—Group Examination Beta, Form G, Test 6, Picture Completion.

Example of a Beta test taken by army draftees in 1917.

"XYZ": The White Racial Slur We've All Been Waiting For
by Michael Mark Cohen 10/20/14

Note: This is an article about offensive language. It has offensive language in it, but makes an interesting point for us to consider in our dialogue about race. Please approach this content with the utmost of maturity; your job is to identify his point and evaluate the extent to which you agree or disagree. I have edited some text and language which seems unnecessarily graphic or possibly misogynistic.

I am a white, middle-class male professor at a big, public university, and every year I get up in front of 150 to 200 undergraduates in a class on the history of race in America and I ask them to shout white racial slurs at me. The results are usually disappointing.

First of all, everyone knows that saying anything overtly racist in front of strangers is totally taboo. Even so, most of these kids are not new to conversations about race; the majority of them are students of color, including loads of junior college transfers, student parents, vets, and a smattering of white kids, mostly freshmen. Of course some are just scared of speaking in front of so many people, no matter what the topic.

So I cajole a few of them into "cracker" and "redneck." We can usually get to "hillbilly" or "trailer trash" or "white trash," ... before folks recognize the ... pattern of class discrimination here. And being that we are at a top ranked West Coast university, not only do we all share basic middle-class aspirations, but we can feel pretty safe in the fact that there are no "rednecks" here to insult.

The '60s era black nationalist terms come out next, usually from one of the all too few black male students in the room, sometime from a student athlete. "Honky!" This gets a chuckle from the class. After all, it is a funny word to say out loud. "Whitey" and its weak hip hop variant "wigger" are voiced to more giggles. The black power aggression of "look out whitey" and "white devils" is only a memory of a failed black militancy.

Hispanic students find their way to "gringo," just as a student perhaps from Atlanta or Houston offers "Yankee." ... From this we learn that race is defined by place, and that where you are white matters. It is either a sign of their ongoing potency or proof of the decline in the category of ethnicity, but the old racial slurs for Italians, Irish, Greek, Jewish, Catholic, German, Polish, etc., never get spoken aloud. Is this silence because these groups are or are not white? Maybe these kids have never heard someone use the word "dago" or "wop" or "mick" before, apart from that Jewish movie guy in The Godfather?

The point of this sanctioned spewing of hate speech is that none of these words can hurt me. Because I am an individual. I can choose to not be offended. White racial slurs are not common in our colorblind age because they don't work on people who possess white privilege. When they do work, like "redneck" or "cracker," it's a matter of class politics. But rich white men enjoy the invisible power of being just people. Normal. Basic Humanity. Everyone else gets some version of discrimination.

The nonwhite racial slurs hurt because they both smear with dirt and deny human diversity. They reduce all members of a race to the same hated and debased categorization. Your skin, your blood and body are all that matters, the words say, and I hate you for it.

This is about when I run out of time and have to end class. As I am unplugging, a few of those white kids creep up to ask: So what should we do? If we want to be more than just not racist, if we want to be actually anti-racist, then how should we act? How do we deal with the burden of a privilege we did not earn?

Now I gotta get to another class half-way across campus, so I don't have time to tell them that so-called "liberal guilt" is not the answer and that empathy and solidarity are. I don't have time to explain that learning to share anger at injustice is the start of a common conversation, and that they can learn how to recognize where privilege resides in their own lives by reading about and listening to the experiences of others who do not have it...