



Why is it important to speak up about things that matter?

# The Danger of Silence

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# OVERVIEW



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01

# LESSON INTRO

WATCH THE VIDEOS & SHARE WHAT YOU THINK



# WHO CAN SAY THE N-WORD?



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**Context** and  
**identity** matter

*Please watch the video*

# TALKING ABOUT THE N-WORD

Directions: Choose **at least one box** below that best resonates with you to answer the questions in **3 complete sentences**.

<p><b><u>Emotional</u></b>: What is your emotional reaction when the N-word is used outside of its appropriate contexts? Why does its usage personally offend you?</p>	<p><b><u>Intellectual</u></b>: What do you think about non-Black people using the N-word? What questions do you need answered in order to better understand this issue?</p>	<p><b><u>Moral</u></b>: How does the wrongful use of the N-word go against your values of what you think is right or wrong? What values of yours does it contradict? (<u>examples</u>)</p>	<p><b><u>Social</u></b>: In order to make sure that the N-word is used in its proper context, what actions can you take to educate people? What can American society do? Be specific.</p>

*Feel free to answer as many boxes as your feel best apply to you!*

# THE DANGER OF SILENCE

“We spend so much time listening to the things people are saying that we rarely pay attention to the things they don't. Silence is the residue of fear. It is feeling your flaws gut-wrench guillotine your tongue. It is the air retreating from your chest because it doesn't feel safe in your lungs. Silence is Rwandan genocide. Silence is Katrina. It is what you hear when there aren't enough body bags left. It is the sound after the noose is already tied. It is charring. It is chains. It is privilege. It is pain. There is no time to pick your battles when your battles have already picked you.”



[Full text transcript](#)

# THE DANGER OF SILENCE

Freewrite: In the box, write a 4-5 sentence paragraph in response to all of the following questions:

- What are some injustices that you see in our country or in the world today? Why are they happening?
- Why is it dangerous to stay silent when injustices happen? What could the consequences be?
- Have you ever stood up & voiced your opinion in a moment of injustice? How? What happened? Have you ever



"I will live every day as if there were a microphone tucked under my tongue, a stage on the underside of my inhibition. Because who has to have a soapbox when all you've ever needed is your voice?" – Clint Smith



02

# BARACK OBAMA SPEECH

READ AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS







# BARACK OBAMA SPEECH

**Directions:** Read his speech [linked here](#) to answer the questions written below in complete sentences.

According to Obama, before a person can create change, what do they need to do first? (Answer is implied in the first 2 paragraphs)

According to Obama, why is awareness not enough? What else do you need to create lasting, structural changes in American society?

To what extent do you agree with Obama's speech? What do you disagree with? Why? Be specific so I know your point of view.



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# 03

## KINDS OF CITIZENS

DEFINING THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF ACTIVISM


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# THREE KINDS OF CITIZENS

The chart below lays out 3 different types of citizens that can exist within a society. Notice what makes each kind of citizen different.

	<b>Personally Responsible Citizen</b>	<b>Participatory Citizen</b>	<b>Justice-oriented Citizen</b>
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acts responsibly in their community</li><li>• Works and pays taxes</li><li>• Obeys laws</li><li>• Recycles</li><li>• Donates blood</li><li>• Volunteers to lend a hand in times of crisis</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active member of community organizations and/or improvement efforts</li><li>• Organize community efforts to care for those in need, promote economic development, and clean up environment</li><li>• Knows how government agencies work</li><li>• Knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Critically assesses social, political and economic structures to see beyond surface causes</li><li>• Seeks out and addresses areas of injustice</li><li>• Knows about social movements and how to effect systemic change</li></ul>
<b>Examples</b>	Contributes food to a food drive	Helps to organize a food drive	Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes
<b>Core Assumptions</b>	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens, must have honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community.	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures.	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time.



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“If we are not honest about our past, then we cannot have a clear direction towards our future.”


–TITUS KAPHAR, ARTIST




# CAN ART AMEND HISTORY?

ARTIST TITUS  
KAPHAR, 2017  
TED TALK


Please watch the video  
[\*\*linked here\*\*](#) & answer  
the questions in  
complete sentences.



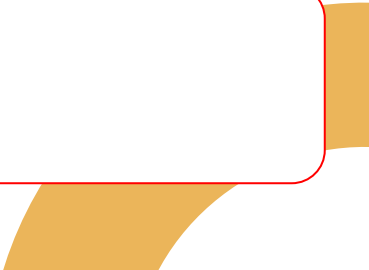
What happened in his art history class? How did that impact Titus and his goals as an artist?



In what ways does he change the painting on stage? Why? What point is he trying to make?



Look back at slide 11. What kind of citizen is Titus? Provide evidence from the Ted Talk.



# “ONA JUDGE PORTRAIT IN TAR,” TITUS KAPHAR (2016)

What do you see in this portrait? Identify 6-8 characteristics.

What historical narrative do you think Kaphar is trying to amend?

Write 2 questions about this portrait that you or a viewer might have about Kaphar’s message.



**Amend:** Change  
**Convey:** Show



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# 04

## REFLECTION

USE OUR NEW KNOWLEDGE TO ANSWER THE FOCUS QUESTION







# REFLECTION QUESTION

*Directions:* Use your new knowledge from this activity and **this article** **linked here** to answer the prompt below in **5-6 complete sentences.**

What problem has Titus identified in the art world? How is he using his power as an individual to speak up in order to solve that problem? What reasons does he give as to why he refuses to stay silent regarding this issue?

**OPTIONAL VIEWING:** I invite you to listen to Titus Kaphar getting interviewed about his activism through art. It can be viewed by **clicking here.**





At the end of the day, historians,  
we all have to choose for ourselves  
what kind of citizen we are going  
to be. I hope you choose to be a  
loving one!