

# Community-Engaged Anti-Racist Education Project



**RUTGERS**

Graduate School of Education  
COMMUNITY-SCHOOL  
PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

# The Community-Engaged Anti-Racist Education Project

# Introduction

## Backstory

The Rutgers University Graduate School of Education (GSE) is committed to fostering excellence and equity in education for all students. This commitment is embedded in the design of the GSE's Urban Social Justice Teacher Education Program, which includes deep partnerships with several local school districts as well as with anti-racist, equity-focused community-based organizations (CBOs) that, together with GSE faculty and students, make up the GSE Community School Partnership Network (GSE-CSPN). The GSE-CSPN is a mutually beneficial collaborative aimed at improving both the quality of preparation for GSE educator candidates and the educational experiences of the PK–12 students and families served by the GSE-CSPN member districts and CBOs.

The Community-Engaged Anti-Racist (CEAR) Education Project is a Rutgers-funded project developed in an effort to continue to strengthen and deepen the connections between and among GSE-CSPN members by engaging GSE, school district, and CBO members in developing a shared vision for teaching and learning that centers engagement with CBOs around anti-racist pedagogy and content.

This unique project brought together GSE faculty in Elementary Education and Language Education, K–5 teachers from five GSE-CSPN Partner Districts, and members from five CBOs as CEAR Education

Project Fellows. Our first efforts focused on community-building and professional development to collaboratively identify key principles and practices of community-engaged anti-racist education. Later, participants worked in six small teams to develop grade-specific curricular units that embrace and employ the CEAR Education Project Principles and Practices. These units were collaboratively developed, piloted by K–5 teachers, and revised for publication and sharing. The CEAR Education Project engaged the participation of school districts and community organizations around Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, all of which are designated as urban and serve economically, racially, and/or ethnically diverse students and families.

The curricular units included in the following pages reflect the collaborative work of Rutgers GSE faculty from the programs in Elementary Education and Language Education; teachers from North Brunswick Township Schools, Franklin Township Public Schools, Highland Park School District, New Brunswick Public Schools, and Bound Brook School District (all in New Jersey); and CBO members from New Brunswick Area NAACP, Black Community Watchline, New Labor, New Brunswick Civic League and New Brunswick Tomorrow. The complete list of individual participants can be found in the acknowledgments appendix.

# **CEAR Education Project Background and Vision**

The CEAR Education Project brought together faculty, teachers, and CBO leaders in collective curriculum development. The CEAR Education Project and curriculum were built upon our belief that when teachers and schools partner with community members, they learn with and from their students, students' families, and local communities, enabling them to honor, sustain, and expand community assets. While community-engaged anti-racist efforts begin with individual beliefs and dispositions, they require collective action to bring about changed practices and policies and build an anti-racist world.

Our collective work was grounded in the following shared core beliefs:

- A holistic education should center and build upon the community, family, and cultural knowledges that all students and families bring to the classroom and community spaces.
- Interrupting, disrupting, and dismantling racist practices and oppressive policies where we work is necessary.
- Being (or becoming) aware of race and other aspects of our identities is important to understanding privilege and oppression.
- Institutions in the United States, such as schools, tend to orient to values aligned with white supremacy. By engaging in anti-racist education, we push against these unquestioned norms to better support students and families in their learning.
- Learning about histories and counternarratives of power and oppression shapes our lives and understandings across our homes, schools, and communities.

## **Developing CEAR Education Project Principles and Practices**

A foundational aspect of this work was the development of the CEAR Education Project Principles and Practices. Fellows met weekly for several months, studied the work of critical educational scholars, and engaged in professional development with organizations committed to anti-racist education. From these meetings, Fellows developed a set of principles and practices that were used to guide the curriculum design. The CEAR Education Project Principles and Practices can be found on page 9.

# How We Use Language

As part of this approach, the CEAR Education Project team spent considerable time specifying the terms we would use in our work so that we shared a common language and understandings. Our goal is to center the assets of students and families of color, as so much of formal schooling frames students and families of color through a deficit lens. For example, schools commonly refer to students who are newer to English as *English language learners*. This term prioritizes English as the only goal and centers what students lack, ignoring their other language resources and how they could be used to deepen language and content learning. The CEAR Education Project team uses the term *emergent bilinguals* to describe students because it centers the assets and strength in developing bilingual and multilingual identities, and it acknowledges the value of all languages without privileging one language over another. We also include the concept of *translanguaging*, which describes the flexible use of student, family, and community linguistic resources in the practices of multilingual speakers and centers these practices as the norm. For more information about *emergent bilinguals* and *translanguaging*, we suggest this resource: *Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB guide for educators* | [www.cuny-nysieb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Translanguaging-Guide-March-2013.pdf](http://www.cuny-nysieb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Translanguaging-Guide-March-2013.pdf)

In other instances, we did not rename or change terminology, but we deliberately and intentionally defined terms. For example, the word *activist* can sometimes be defined as someone who helps others, which is partly true, but this definition positions one group as “helpers” and lacks the activist’s stance of challenging the political and social status quo. CEAR Education Project Fellows wanted to be certain that our discourse made the clear distinction that an *activist* works in and with communities to understand the local and historical context, name inequities, and take collective action to implement substantive policies and practices to address them. Therefore, an *activist* was collectively defined as “a person who engages in actions to address injustice and bring about social or political change.”

We intentionally use the term *equity* versus *equality*. *Equality* is about providing the same or equal resources for students without a careful understanding of the individual, community, and/or operating structures or systems. This is often seen in a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing concerns. *Equity* is about providing customized resources that address a student's or community's specific expressed strengths and needs and take local and historical contexts into account. CEAR Education Project materials strive for equity.

In framing unit plans and lessons, we refrain from referring to instances of injustice or oppression as *issues* or *problems*. While the latter words are familiar to elementary school students, we want to ensure we do not leave students with the impression that injustice is simply a “problem” that arises out of nowhere or is associated with deficit orientations of communities of color. Instead, lessons for younger students support them in understanding what is fair or unfair, and older students begin to be introduced to systems and structures that perpetuate injustice.

CEAR Education Project units raise awareness and deepen understanding of *systemic injustice* and make connections to local and historical contexts. Several units focus on how racism and other forms of discrimination are embedded in social institutions all around us, such as education, health care, and housing. These may be found and perpetuated in an organization's policies, programs, hiring practices, and everyday operations. Such policies or practices may not be explicitly stated as discriminatory, but their impact creates injustice and disadvantages groups of people based on their identities (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, etc.) while providing benefits for people with certain identities (most often those of the dominant group). These discriminatory policies or practices have likely not originated in our lifetime and aren't operating only in someone else's community. Often they have deep historical roots and have real implications for our local context. It is important that we support developing a deeper understanding of injustices and a responsibility for taking action, beginning with our youngest students.

For example, in one of our lessons, we discuss how individuals for whom English may be a new language often face discrimination or inequitable treatment. A focus on this as a systemic injustice supports students in understanding who this injustice has an impact on, who benefits from this injustice, how our local and/or national history is connected to this injustice, and how policies and practices in our schools may serve to perpetuate language injustice. We see this manifested in a

variety of ways in school spaces, including not recognizing the multilingualism of students and families as resources for learning; not allowing and sustaining students' home languages in the classroom or school communities; and promoting only one variety of English (the variety most associated with whiteness, often called "academic English"), to the exclusion of the many Englishes spoken in our communities.

## Language Objectives, Supports, and Vocabulary Development

We take an anti-racist approach to language, as we seek to create learning that invites, supports, and extends all students' language resources. We question the assumption that mainstream academic English is the only language that matters for learning and instead invite students to use their home languages, which include named languages, like Spanish (Espinosa, Ascenzi-Moreno & García, 2021; España & Herrera, 2020), American Sign Language, and varieties of English, such as Black Language (Baker-Bell, 2020). Our language objectives work toward two related goals. Some offer scaffolds and extensions for emergent bilinguals to make content accessible and practice new ways to use English for schooling. Others seek to explicitly invite in

students' full linguistic resources and extend them for learning, encouraging translanguaging. We believe every teacher should be a language teacher and intentionally include language objectives and supports in lessons to disrupt traditional notions of whose languages count for learning.

Examples of language supports within the curricular units include the use of multilingual resources; learning about student, family, and community language practices; inviting students to participate in activities in multiple languages; incorporating language objectives that support content objectives; and providing language scaffolds to make content accessible.



# Overview of CEAR Curriculum Units

## **UNIT ONE: Our Language Community**

**Grade Level: Kindergarten**

**Subjects: Language Arts and Social Studies**

To create a classroom and school community where all language resources are valued, Our Language Community, a unit designed for kindergarten students, aims to challenge and disrupt the following certain norms about language: 1) that one named language is more important or valuable than another (i.e., English in the United States); 2) that English needs to be the sole language of schooling; and 3) that there is only one correct way to write and speak any given language. The unit focuses on students' identities and language use, the diversity of community languages, and our love of our languages. Students conduct a survey to discover which languages their classmates speak at home and use this information to create multilingual home language posters and books. Through children's literature, students are empowered to use and be proud of all language tools at their disposal. After learning about the power and diversity of language, students create a welcoming and inclusive linguistic classroom community by conducting a Linguistic Landscape Action Project, in which they label classroom items in their many home languages. To act for change, the students and teacher collaborate on a letter to the school principal advocating for permission to label common school items and areas in the languages of the school community. This integrated unit meets New Jersey core content standards in English Language Arts and Social Studies.



## **UNIT TWO: Say Something: Our Fight for Fairness**

**Grade Level: 2**

**Subjects: Social Studies and Language Arts**

Say Something: Our Fight for Fairness is a unit designed for second-grade students that analyzes rules and laws for fairness and identifies ways to address rules and situations that are unfair. Through this process, students develop the understanding that each one of us has the power to make a change when things are unfair. Students are guided to think about our nation's history, including fair labor laws and school segregation laws, and those who have often been on the receiving end of unfair treatment based on their characteristics (race, class, ethnicity, language ability, etc.). The unit concludes with reflection and critical analysis of students' own immediate community. Students and their families identify instances of injustice or unfairness in their community; students then take action toward change by working collaboratively with peers on an advocacy project. This integrated unit meets New Jersey core content standards in English Language Arts and Social Studies.



**UNIT THREE: Becoming an Activist for Racial Justice**  
**Grade Level: 3**  
**Subjects: Language Arts, Math, and Social Studies**

Becoming an Activist for Racial Justice is a unit designed for third-grade students that explores anti-racist activism within students' local communities and invites students to become activists themselves. Teachers interested in using this unit will need to make connections with their own local CBOs that work for racial justice. Suggestions for doing so are included in the unit. This integrated unit meets New Jersey core content standards in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies.



**UNIT FOUR: The Power of Music for Social Movements**  
**Grade Levels: 3–5**  
**Subject: Music**

In this unit, The Power of Music for Social Movements, students in grades three through five analyze activist songs and look closely at their expressive qualities (mood, tempo, and lyrics) and the instruments used to better understand the intent of the song. As a class, students examine what constitutes an injustice and identify injustices in their classroom, school, and/or community. In small groups, students modify the lyrics of an existing activist song to communicate actions they wish to take in response to an injustice. Through this experience, students begin to develop an understanding of how music is an effective tool for bringing awareness to injustices and encouraging collective action. This integrated unit meets New Jersey core content standards in Visual and Performing Arts.



## **UNIT FIVE: Making Change through Activism**

**Grade Level: 5**

**Subjects: Language Arts and Social Studies**

Making Change through Activism is a unit designed for fifth-grade students to explore the concept of human rights and the use of activism when those rights are violated. Students examine historical activist movements and their foundations, leaders, goals, strategies, and achievements before making connections to current movements. The unit highlights social justice and centers marginalized BIPOC voices of empowerment and resistance through a close look at activist movements (including the migrant farm workers' movement, the Stonewall Riots, the Dakota Pipeline protests at Standing Rock, and Black Lives Matter) that have fought and are fighting for the rights of migrant farm workers and LGBTQ+, Black, and Indigenous populations. Students reflect upon important issues in their own communities and become agents of change as they develop an activist artifact. This integrated unit meets New Jersey core content standards in Language Arts and Social Studies.



## **UNIT SIX: Young People and Environmental Justice**

**Grade Level: 5**

**Subject: Science**

Young People and Environmental Justice is a unit designed for fifth-grade students to explore how to fight for environmental justice to protect the earth's resources and their communities. The unit is developed around videos and texts that examine environmental injustices—such as the differential impact of pollution based on race and wealth—and highlight youth activism for environmental justice. Importantly, environmental injustices are defined as the result of systemic policies and practices, not individual behavior. Students interview leaders in local CBOs and create action plans using resources and strategies shared by CBOs to hold communities accountable to the law and to protect BIPOC communities in the state of New Jersey. This integrated unit meets New Jersey core content standards in Science.





# Eight Principles for Community-Engaged Anti-Racist Curricula and Teaching

Principle 1: Embraces Intersectionality and Multiple Identities

Principle 2: Centers Student, Family, and Community Knowledge, Perspectives, and Experiences

Principle 3: Welcomes and Expands Students' Linguistic Resources

Principle 4: Implements Culturally and Historically Responsive Practices

Principle 5: Critically Analyzes and Disrupts Traditional Notions of Power and Knowledge

Principle 6: Counters Dominant Narratives

Principle 7: Cultivates and Celebrates Joy

Principle 8: Engages Students in Resistance and Action

Eight CEAR Principles

## Practices and Principles

RELEVANT PRINCIPLES (see above)

PRACTICES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Collaboratively Developed Classroom Norms and Shared Beliefs/Values	X	X			X			
Critical Literacy				X	X	X		X
Daily Reflection Tools	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Focus Groups for Collaboration		X		X	X			
Historical Connections to the Present		X		X	X	X		
Inquiry-Based Learning		X		X	X		X	X
Language Objectives for Each Lesson	X	X	X					
Multilingual Resources	X	X	X					
Partnerships with Community Members and Community-Based Organizations	X	X		X				
Planning Using Backwards Mapping								
Project and Problem-Based Learning		X		X	X	X		X
Radical Morning Meeting	X				X	X	X	
Small Group/Partner Work			X		X			
Student/Community Check-Ins	X	X			X			
Translanguaging Practices	X	X	X		X			
Varied Media and Texts	X			X		X	X	
Varied Forms of Expression (Dance, Art, Movement)	X	X					X	

Practices and Principles

# Reflection Questions

## Principle 1: Embraces Intersectionality and Multiple Identities

- Am I ensuring that my students feel safe in our classroom environment to share about their identities, especially when these identities are different from their peers?
- Were there identities that were silenced or missing in our classroom learning?
- Am I using an intersectional lens to recognize and disrupt multiple forms and scopes of oppression in our classrooms?

## Principle 2: Centers Student, Family, and Community Knowledge, Perspectives, and Experiences

- Am I acknowledging, centering, and celebrating students', families', and communities' cultures, languages, values, identities, and knowledge on a daily basis?
- Are we learning about community-based organizations and sharing this knowledge with students and families?
- Are we partnering with community-based organizations and learning from and with communities?

## Principle 3: Welcomes and Expands Students' Linguistic Resources

- Am I making language and content comprehensible (or accessible) to all students?
- Am I encouraging students to draw upon, use, sustain, and expand their full linguistic resources?
- Am I creating space for ways of speaking, reading, writing, and listening that go beyond mainstream (white) English, or the type of English that is often prioritized as "correct" in classrooms?
- Am I intentionally challenging the policing of language in my classroom?

## Principle 4: Implements Culturally and Historically Responsive Practices

- Am I encouraging students to challenge histories they've always been taught?
- Am I determining issues/injustices that matter to students, families, and their communities and collaborating on how to address or explore them meaningfully?
- Am I encouraging students to learn history from multiple perspectives and question white-centered histories and their intentions?



### **Principle 5: Critically Analyzes and Disrupts Traditional Notions of Power and Knowledge**

- Am I disrupting traditional ideas about who holds the knowledge and power?
- Am I challenging ideas of learning only happening in school contexts?
- Am I fostering opportunities to learn from knowledge-holders in students' families and communities?

### **Principle 6: Counters Dominant Narratives**

- Am I using literature, texts, and materials that reinforce dominant narratives or ones that provide counternarratives that reflect diverse experiences and perspectives, including, but not limited to, those of my students, their families, and communities?
- Am I using histories and stories to analyze whose voices have been and are silenced?
- Am I supporting students in developing strategies for how to present critiques in various spaces with various groups?

### **Principle 7: Cultivates and Celebrates Joy**

- Are moments of joy cultivated in this lesson?
- Am I creating opportunities to share joy in people's stories and experiences instead of focusing solely on pain and suffering?
- Am I creating an ongoing curiosity, appreciation, and recognition of students', families', and communities' identities and cultures?

### **Principle 8: Engages Students in Resistance and Action**

- Am I preparing students for resisting, thinking critically about, and challenging systems of oppression?
- Am I engaging students in activism and taking action in their schools and communities?
- Am I modeling resistance, taking action, and challenging systems of oppression?



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## Partners

**Philly Children's Movement** | [phillychildrensmovement.org](http://phillychildrensmovement.org)

The Philly Children's Movement knows that families and schools are critical spaces for building racially just communities. We envision a world in which all people are liberated, whole, and valued. We work to dismantle racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy. Our organizing for racial justice happens in schools, community events, child-centered activism, and racial justice campaigns.

**Radical Pedagogy Institute** | [radicalpedagogyinstitute.com](http://radicalpedagogyinstitute.com)

The Radical Pedagogy Institute is a collective of educators based in the greater New Jersey area (this includes NYC) who believe in the transformational power of radical pedagogy and local political organizing. But what exactly do we mean by radical pedagogy? Essentially, we view radical pedagogy as a pedagogy that uses tenets of critical pedagogies—queer, anti-racist, DisCrit, culturally relevant, and other liberatory pedagogies—to re/humanize educational experiences for all students.

**New Labor** | [newlabor.org](http://newlabor.org)

New Labor is an organization that educates, organizes, and fights for better work conditions and social justice in the workplace. With a base of around 4,000 members, New Labor organizes to empower its members and amplify their voices in the community, workplace, and political realm.

**New Brunswick Tomorrow** | [www.nbtomorrow.org](http://www.nbtomorrow.org)

New Brunswick Tomorrow is a social impact organization committed to moving people forward since 1975. We address the human issues that impact us all, including the conditions of the neighborhood you live in, your family's health and well-being, and your child's progress and ability to meet their fullest potential.

**New Brunswick Area Branch of the NAACP** | [nbanaacp.wordpress.com](http://nbanaacp.wordpress.com)

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. From the ballot box to the classroom, the thousands of dedicated workers, organizers, leaders, and members who make up the NAACP continue to fight for social justice for all Americans.

The New Brunswick Area Branch is one of over two thousand NAACP local units nationwide. The branch was chartered to serve the following municipalities: Bound Brook, East Brunswick, Franklin Township (Somerset County), Highland Park, Hillsborough, Middlesex Borough, Milltown, New Brunswick, North Brunswick, Piscataway, Sayreville, Somerville, South Brunswick, and South River.

**Black Community Watchline** | [www.blackcommunitywatchline.com](http://www.blackcommunitywatchline.com)

The Black Community Watchline was created to empower individuals to speak out and address instances of anti-Black violence, aggression, and bias. The Watchline provides a platform to report immediate threats of racial violence, microaggressions, and racially motivated experiences that undermine the respect, dignity, and fair treatment that Black people should receive.

The Black Community Watchline is committed to seeing that incidences of violence, harassment, and intimidation are not overlooked, dismissed, or mishandled by public servants, persons of influence, and individuals in positions of power.

**New Brunswick Civic League** | [www.civicleaguenb.com](http://www.civicleaguenb.com)

The Civic League of Greater New Brunswick is a not-for-profit community-based organization, operated to strengthen African American families and other minority family groups. This is accomplished by advocating, promoting, and providing community-based services that empower families and improve their quality of life.

The League supports and conducts programs in the areas of education, training, health care, employment, housing, and economic empowerment with the aim of enhancing the stability and growth of families within their communities. This aim is accomplished in conjunction with corporations, human service agencies, churches, community organizations, schools, and volunteers.

## Illustration

**Andrece Brady** is a fine artist, art educator, and curator from Newark, New Jersey. Passionate about rebuilding Black communities through art, Brady is a dynamic artist with a style that transforms through multiple mediums. At her core, Brady is moved by revolution and rebuilding Black communities through art. A multifaceted educator, Brady is a teaching artist and hosts art classes, workshops, and programs, and organizes interactive events for all ages. | [andrecebradyart.com](http://andrecebradyart.com)

## Graphic Design

**Shira Golding Evergreen** (she/they) is a queer creative based in Ithaca, New York, who collaborates with nonprofits, arts organizations, activists, and educators on projects focused on social and environmental justice. They live and work in a solar-powered, energy-efficient house with their partner, two young kids, and four former feral cats. Shira has designed Education for Liberation Network's annual social-justice planbook for educators, "Planning to Change the World," for over a decade and served as the Director of Education and Outreach for Arts Engine, where she directed the Media That Matters Film Festival (best nonprofit/green website SXSW 2005) and traveled around the country to speak about grassroots film distribution, youth filmmaking, and media justice. | [www.upliftedithaca.com](http://www.upliftedithaca.com)

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## UNIT THREE

# Becoming an Activist for Racial Justice





# UNIT THREE

## Becoming an Activist for Racial Justice

**Grade Level: Three**

**Subjects: Language Arts, Math & Social Studies**

**Suggested Length: 14-17 days (45-minute class sessions per day)**

### Unit Summary

The guiding question that drives this interdisciplinary thematic unit is “How can we recognize racial injustices and address them through activism?” Through this unit, students come to recognize that activism is not only historically relevant but also integral to driving change in contemporary times. The unit goal is to connect students with activism in their local communities and have them envision themselves as activists. Using skills linked to standards in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies, students explore how activists address discrimination, oppression, or injustice.

Students start by exploring what it means to be an activist and learn key vocabulary for the unit. They interpret current injustices through an analysis of literature and statistics. They then find community-based organizations (CBOs) who serve as models of activism. In small groups, students interview an activist from a CBO to gain more information using critical Language Arts skills. Lastly, students use Language Arts and media skills to develop presentations for their peers to bring awareness to racial injustices and how CBO members work to eradicate them.

# Community-Engaged Anti-Racist (CEAR) Principles in Unit Three

## **Principle 2: Centers Student, Family, and Community Knowledge, Perspectives and Experiences**

Through partnerships with CBOs, students learn from and about CBOs and share this knowledge with students and the school community.

## **Principle 3: Welcomes and Expands Students' Linguistic Resources**

Through the development of interview questions and the interview process, space is created for multiple ways of speaking, reading, writing, and listening that go beyond mainstream (white) English or the type of English that is often prioritized as “correct” in classrooms.

## **Principle 4: Implements Culturally and Historically Responsive Practices**

Students explore statistics about racial discrimination in schools; learn about injustices that matter to them, their families, and their communities; and collaborate on how to meaningfully address these injustices.

## **Principle 5: Critically Analyzes and Disrupts Traditional Notions of Power and Knowledge**

Students have opportunities to learn from knowledge-holders in their communities.

## **Principle 6: Counters Dominant Narratives**

Throughout the unit, students are exposed to a variety of read-alouds that highlight voices of people who have been oppressed and silenced. Students talk to community leaders who are countering dominant narratives in their local area.

## **Principle 7: Cultivates and Celebrates Joy**

This unit culminates in students sharing what they've learned through a chant, song, protest sign, etc., that the students create. Students practice the positive affirmation poem “I Am, Because You Are” as a class.

## **Principle 8: Engages Students in Resistance and Action**

This unit prepares students for resistance and thinking critically about and challenging systems of oppression. It engages students in taking action (activism) in their schools and communities.

## CEAR Practices

**Inquiry-Based Learning:** The teacher encourages students to ask noticing and wondering questions based on information presented in read-alouds. The unit also relies upon the Three-Act Task format (see Lesson 3), which encourages inquiry and critical thinking among students.

**Partnerships with Community Members and Community-Based Organizations:** Students learn more about local CBOs through interviews with community members and activists.

**Critical Literacy:** Students are encouraged to come to their own conclusions regarding injustice and the need for activism through collaborative discussions of read-alouds and other media sources.

**Collaboratively Developed Classroom Norms and Shared Beliefs:** Students collaboratively develop classroom norms and shared beliefs, which foster a strong classroom community. Throughout the unit, students and teachers refer to these norms and beliefs as they engage in challenging discussions.

**Historical Connections to the Present:** Teachers activate students' prior knowledge about activists from history through read-alouds. In addition, teachers use a variety of read-alouds to support students' discovery of contemporary and local activists and to discuss how many of the injustices from the read-alouds are still present today.

**Translanguaging Practices and Multilingual Resources:** Students can compose interview questions in their choice of languages. The Three-Act Task involves students interpreting a silent video with no written or stated words. Finally, students are encouraged to create posters in English and their home languages to share what they have learned.

## Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Distinguish between issues of social justice and the actions activists take. (Lesson 1)
- Answer open-ended questions about activism, injustice, and the role of individuals in social change. (Lesson 1)
- Recognize, identify, and name examples of racism and racial bias. (Lesson 2)
- Answer open-ended questions about activism, injustice, and the role of individuals in social change. (Lesson 2)
- Compare and contrast the data presented and inquire about what they notice. (Lesson 3)
- Draw conclusions about data presented by finding the difference between groups of students being suspended. (Lesson 3)
- Answer open-ended questions about activism, injustice, and the role of individuals in social change. (Lesson 3)
- Generate interview questions for activists from local community-based organizations (CBOs) to learn more about how activists oppose racism. (Lesson 4)
- Summarize the content derived from the interviews. (Lesson 4)
- Address a series of critical questions about the CBO activist that they interviewed. (Lesson 4)
- Synthesize information from their interviews and other activities to create a presentation for their peers that encourage their peers to become activists. (Lesson 5)

## Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Define key terms through collaborative conversation with peers. (Lesson 1)
- Use key terms during small group discussions to verbally explain examples of when activism is needed. (Lesson 1)
- Verbally elaborate how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to the written textual message using a sentence frame such as, "In this picture, I see \_\_\_\_\_ which makes me think \_\_\_\_\_." (Lesson 2)
- Discuss with a peer in any of their shared languages or language varieties what they notice and wonder after watching the brief silent video. (Lesson 3)
- Infer (verbally and in writing) about injustices in the number of school suspensions per race using the sentence frame, "I infer there will be \_\_\_\_\_ school suspensions for (racial group) because \_\_\_\_\_." (Lesson 3)
- Record questions (orally, written, or recorded on a digital platform of their choice) using languages shared with the person to be interviewed from a local CBO. (Lesson 4)
- Orally explain activism and racism in their own words and by using other visual and written formats. (Lesson 5)

## Essential Questions

- What is activism? (Lesson 1)
- How do we know when activism is needed? (Lesson 1)
- How can we recognize and identify patterns of racism? (Lesson 2)
- How can we identify how racism is present in our rules and laws? (Lesson 2)
- How is racism a system of advantage and disadvantage? (Lesson 3)
- What are the material effects of racism? (Lesson 3)
- How can fighting for racial justice improve the lives of people? (Lesson 3)
- How can one become an activist? (Lesson 4)
- Who are the activists in our community? (Lesson 4)
- What are the benefits of being an activist? (Lesson 4)
- How can we become activists ourselves? (Lesson 5)
- What have we learned about activism and racism that we can share with others? (Lesson 5)

## Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

This unit is relevant to students, families, and the community because it focuses on racial injustice, which directly or indirectly affects us all. The primary objective of this unit is to bring awareness to racial injustice and to provide ways to make a conscious effort through activism to create change. Students are faced with implicit racial injustices built into policies, rules, and ideals that control their everyday lives. This unit brings to light some examples of racial injustices that affect students and allows them to have a voice through activism. Through read-alouds and book analysis focused on varied views of injustice in a community, students investigate how individuals and communities fight against

oppression and for social justice. They brainstorm how injustice exists in their own communities as well as the country. In addition, students interpret data on the injustices students of color face in the school system and understand how they have agency to speak up and demand fair treatment in schools and throughout the communities that serve them. Students learn about organizations in their community that are working on activism and have the opportunity to interview these organizations to gain knowledge of how they fight injustices. This unit allows students to take action by sharing their newly found knowledge and experiences within their school communities.

# Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

Vocabulary is taught through an initial introduction in read-alouds, classroom discussions, visual word walls, and teacher discourse. These words will be referenced often and used during each lesson.

## Unit Vocabulary

- Activism
- Activist
- Difference (math)
- Discipline
- Equality
- Equity
- Exclusion
- Injustice
- Oppression
- Organizer
- Race
- Racial bias
- Racial identity
- Racism
- Social justice
- Stereotypes



Marin City Black Lives Matter-George Floyd Protest  
Marin County, California June 2, 2020 (Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

# Lessons Overview

## Lesson 1: Introduction to Activism

This lesson focuses on activating students' prior knowledge about what it means to be an activist. The students reflect upon previously read texts featuring activists (see Resources for Building Background) to investigate the question, "How do we know when activism is needed?" After listening to the read aloud, *The Little Book of Little Activists* by Penguin Young Readers and engaging in peer discussion, students sort words and pictures into causes versus actions for activism.

## Lesson 2: Racism and Racial Bias: Understanding and Identifying Examples

Through a read-aloud, students deepen their understanding of racism and examples of racial bias. Students also examine examples of biased beliefs, how racism is an unfair pattern, and how racial injustice still exists. Students discuss the benefits of diversity, how individuals should have pride in their racial identity, and how individual and collective action can bring about social change.

## Lesson 3: School Suspension: Fair or Unfair

In this critical mathematics lesson, students inquire about the number of students being disciplined in schools based on race. This is a cross-disciplinary lesson that gives students the opportunity to

use their mathematical skills to discover a disproportionate number of students being suspended when including their race. Students analyze and make sense of data as they draw conclusions about discipline in our schools and how they can be an agent for change for this common problem.

## Lesson 4: Interview an Activist

This lesson engages students in discussions of racial injustice and activism and has them acknowledge injustices that may exist in their community. In addition, students learn about organizations doing activism in their town. Students record their interview questions in any language and record their questions in their preferred format.

## Lesson 5: Presenting Our Learning and Taking Action

In this lesson, students present to their peers what they learned about activism to combat racism and racial bias. Using their interview and research, students take on the role of an activist within their classroom and school community by informing others about local CBOs. Through this demonstration of activism, students encourage their peers to become activists who work for racial justice.

# Assessment

Formative assessment includes observations of student participation in discussions and small-group work, and application of vocabulary and new concepts through activities such as visual sort, interpretation of illustrations from read-alouds, and turn-and-talks. Students participate in formative assessments through oral discussion, written response, or illustrations.

Summative assessment includes a two-part project. First, students summarize their interviews using

questions on a summary sheet. Students' responses should show an understanding of the CBO's role in the community as activists and advocates for change. Second, students work together in small groups to create definitions, examples, and visuals to share what they learned about anti-racist activism through a presentation. The definitions, examples, visuals, and presentation should reflect students' conceptual understanding about racism and activism and represent the information they learned from local community activists and experts.

# Alignment to Standards

## New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

RI.3.1: Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

SL.3.2: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

RL.3.7: Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. D. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

SLA.W7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

SLA.W10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SLSA.R7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

SA.SL: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

## New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.11: Explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all citizens exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels.

6.1.4.A.12: Explain the process of creating change at the local, state, or national level.

6.1.4.A.15: Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community, state, national, and global challenges.

6.1.4.A.10: Describe how the actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders served as catalysts for social change and inspired social activism in subsequent generations.

## New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Mathematics

3.OA.D.8: Solve two-step word problems using the four operations. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding.

3.OA.2: Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.



# Core Instructional Resources and Materials

## Texts

- Penguin Young Readers, (2017). *The Little Book of Little Activists*. Viking Books for Young Readers.
- Celano, M., Collins, M., & Hazzard, A. (2018). *Something happened in our town: A child's story about racial injustice*. Magination Press. (Multiple copies of book for small group work)
- Gorman, A. (2021). *Change sings: A children's anthem*. Viking Books for Young Readers.

## Videos

- Blisset, E. (2022). *My movie 11* [Video]. Google Drive. | [drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_eEt1wq93AHRY5ZrW6KOP2EjytZtbDot/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_eEt1wq93AHRY5ZrW6KOP2EjytZtbDot/view?usp=sharing)
- Blisset, E. (2022). *School suspension: Fair or unfair Act 2* [Video]. Google Drive. | [docs.google.com/presentation/d/1\\_5m6LYkG9UN0EdC7IK4PTrSquEDmk8DYXvDWqsiaKg/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_5m6LYkG9UN0EdC7IK4PTrSquEDmk8DYXvDWqsiaKg/edit?usp=sharing)
- Brinton, S. (2020, June 5). LIHerald.com. (2020). *What a little girl is teaching the world about racism* [Video]. LIHerald.com. | [www.liherald.com/stories/what-a-little-girl-is-teaching-the-world-about-racism,125677](http://www.liherald.com/stories/what-a-little-girl-is-teaching-the-world-about-racism,125677)
- Jbtemple. Philly Children's Movement. (2015, November 6). *I am, because you are* [Video]. Philly Children's Movement. YouTube. | [phillychildrensmovement.org/2015/11/i-am-because-you-are](https://phillychildrensmovement.org/2015/11/i-am-because-you-are)
- Penguin Kids. (2021, January 26). *Amanda Gorman | Change sings picture book* [Video]. YouTube. | [www.youtube.com/watch?v=M00O9FSYk8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M00O9FSYk8)
- Scholastic. (2010, October 21). *Ruby Bridges remembers* [Video]. YouTube. | [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CgTYGI2mi8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CgTYGI2mi8)
- Walt Disney Animation Studios. (2017, February 17). *"Gondola" clip -- Disney's Zootopia*. [Video]. YouTube. | [youtu.be/a6G8k5b01uE](https://youtu.be/a6G8k5b01uE)

## Online Resources

- Blisset, E. (2022). School suspension Act 3 [Google Slides]. | [docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ISeHnzbn1h8rTubB84panXa8fHdR9dOtPzUxKP\\_95s/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ISeHnzbn1h8rTubB84panXa8fHdR9dOtPzUxKP_95s/edit?usp=sharing)
- Celano, M., Collins, M., & Hazzard, A. (2022). *8 tips for talking to your child about racial injustice*. EmbraceRace. | [www.embracerace.org/resources/young-kids-racial-injustice](http://www.embracerace.org/resources/young-kids-racial-injustice)
- Civil Rights Data Collection. (2017). *Civil rights data collection*. (2017). Civil Rights Data Collection. | [ocrdata.ed.gov/profile/9/district/28314/summary](https://ocrdata.ed.gov/profile/9/district/28314/summary)
- EmbraceRace. (2022). *Addressing racial injustice with young children*. EmbraceRace. | [www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children](http://www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children)
- LiteracyFootprints.com. (n.d.). *Day 1 & 2 Something Happened in Our Town* [Read-aloud lesson card]. | [cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0071/0960/7481/files/LF-ReadAloud-LessonCards-Gr3-5\\_6-SomethingHappened-FINAL.pdf?v=1607608117](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0071/0960/7481/files/LF-ReadAloud-LessonCards-Gr3-5_6-SomethingHappened-FINAL.pdf?v=1607608117)
- Rollins, J. (2022). *Teacher Freebies*. Jazzrollins.com. | [www.jazzrollins.com](http://www.jazzrollins.com)
- Start with a Book. (n.d.). *Read aloud tips for educators*. Start with a Book. | [www.startwithabook.org/sites/default/files/441b228-read-aloud-tips.pdf](http://www.startwithabook.org/sites/default/files/441b228-read-aloud-tips.pdf)
- Reading Rockets. *Read aloud tips for educators*. Startwithabook. | [www.startwithabook.org/sites/default/files/441b228-read-aloud-tips.pdf](http://www.startwithabook.org/sites/default/files/441b228-read-aloud-tips.pdf)
- Tap into Teen Minds. (n.d.). *3 act math tip sheet: How to run a 3 act task without a hitch*. Tap into Teen Minds. | [tapintoteenminds.com/optin-3acttipsheet](https://tapintoteenminds.com/optin-3acttipsheet) "3 act math tip sheet: how to run a three act task without a hitch." TapIntoTeenMinds.com. | [math.sarasotacountyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/3-Act-Math-Tip-Sheet.pdf](https://math.sarasotacountyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/3-Act-Math-Tip-Sheet.pdf)
- University of California San Diego. (2022, September 14). *Anti-racism guide: Resources for education and activism*. University of California San Diego. | [ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism](https://ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism).

## Additional Materials

- Activist Sort
- Base ten blocks
- Cause vs. Action Anchor Chart
- Chart paper or sticky notes
- Key term anchor chart or word wall
- Chromebooks (with Google Suite access)
- Chromebooks (with access to Flipgrid or another platform to record student questions)
- Flipgrid
- Google Slides (or another format to share information about CBOs)
- “Lesson 2 Exit Slip” (Extension)
- “Lesson 3 Exit Ticket”
- Lesson 4 Summary Sheet (post interview)
- Materials to make bookmarks
- Notes from interviews and research (“Unit 3 Lesson 4 Summary Sheet”)
- Number line
- Paper
- Paper/recording sheet for questions
- Pen/pencil
- Poster board
- Sample Questions for CBOs
- School Discipline Fair or Unfair Recording Sheet
- Scissors
- Subtraction anchor chart
- What Are Activists? Summary Sheet 1
- What Is Racism? Summary Sheet 2
- How Can We Be Activists? Summary Sheet 3
- CBO Interview Summary Sheet 4
- Thick vs. Thin Anchor Chart
- Word Wall

# Suggested Read-Aloud List

## Activism

- *Enough! 20 Protesters Who Changed America*, by Emily Easton
- *The Pink Hat*, by Andrew Joyner
- *The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist*, by Cynthia Levinson
- *We Are Water Protectors*, by Carole Lindstrom
- *A Is for Activist*, by Innosanto Nagara
- *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag*, by Rob Sanders
- *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*, by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Undocumented: A Worker's Fight*, by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Malala's Magic Pencil*, by Malala Yousafzai

## Racial Identity, Race, and Ethnicity

- *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water*, by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson
- *The Colors of Us*, by Karen Katz
- *Let's Talk About Race*, by Julius Lester
- *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family*, by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali
- *Skin Like Mine*, by LaTashia M Perry

## Racism and Systemic Oppression

- *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box*, by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein
- *Let the Children March*, by Monica Clark-Robinson
- *White Socks Only*, by Evelyn Coleman
- *A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart*, by Zetta Elliott
- *What If We Were All the Same!: A Children's Book About Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion*, by C.M. Harris
- *What I See: Anti-Asian Racism from the Eyes of a Child*, by Christine T. Leung
- *Tar Beach*, by Faith Ringgold
- *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer: Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement*, by Carole Boston Weatherford
- *Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965*, by Jonah Winter and Shane W. Evans

## Slavery

- *Before She was Harriett*, by Lesa Cline-Ransome
- *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*, by Ellen Levine

# Extensions or Follow-Up Activities

**Lesson 1:** In preparation for interviews with activists from community-based organizations, students can practice revising “thin” questions (e.g., “Do you like being an activist?”) to “thick” questions (e.g., “What is the most rewarding part of being an activist?”).

**Lesson 5:** Students write thank you letters and make gifts for CBO representatives and, if possible, an invitation to a schoolwide assembly.

## Preparing to Teach

This unit is intended for third-grade students who have a general understanding of and experience reading texts about the following topics:

- Racism
- Slavery
- Stereotypes
- Racial identity/individual identity
- Systematic oppression (i.e., voter suppression)
- Social justice

Teachers preparing to teach this unit should expose students to as many of the suggested read-alouds above as possible. Teachers can integrate these into their daily read-aloud routines during this unit. This unit is not intended to be an introductory unit on understanding injustice. Instead, it is meant to introduce students to the ways that community members collectively and individually work to combat injustice.

Prior to this unit, teachers should do research and identify local CBOs that take on issues of racial justice. These are likely to be idiosyncratic to the local area. However, some suggestions for where to start include anti-racist coalitions, local La Raza groups, local NAACP chapters, Black Lives Matters organizations, Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Latinx and Black fraternities and sororities (i.e. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.), and local faith communities serving racially minoritized communities. Most organizations would likely welcome a partnership with a local teacher. Teachers should reach out to these organizations and form relationships early to prepare for this unit. A list of national organizations can be found in the “Anti-Racism Guide: Resources for Education and Action” | [ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism/getinvolved](https://ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism/getinvolved)

## Third Grade Rationale

Prior to third grade, students often talk about fairness, equality, and being kind to others. As third graders, New Jersey Student Learning Standard for Social Studies 6.1.4.A.11 expects students to understand and explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all community members exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels. The aforementioned New Jersey State Standard calls for third graders to move beyond advocating for kindness and equality to a push for equity and understanding that activists affect change.

This necessitates learning why activists work for change. The Amistad Bill (A1301) ([www.nj.gov/education/amistad/about/](http://www.nj.gov/education/amistad/about/)) requires attention to the history and experiences of African Americans and other marginalized groups. Additionally, the recognition of Juneteenth as an important day in U.S. history and the growing awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement means that students are cognizant of the fact that not every race is being treated fairly. Read-alouds chosen for this unit are written for elementary-aged students. Throughout the unit, students have the opportunity to receive information, respond, ask questions, and take action.

# UNIT THREE, LESSON ONE

## Introduction to Activism

**Grade Level: Three**

**Subjects: Language Arts**

**Suggested Length: 1-2 days (45-minute sessions per day)**

### Lesson Overview

This lesson focuses on activating students' prior knowledge about what it means to be an activist. Students reflect upon previously read texts featuring activists (see Resources for Building Background) to investigate the question, "How do we know when activism is needed?" After listening to the read-aloud, *The Little Book of Little Activists*, by Penguin Young Readers, and engaging in peer discussion, students will sort words and pictures into causes versus actions for activism.

### Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Distinguish between issues of social justice and the actions activists take.
- Answer open-ended questions about activism, injustice, and the role of individuals in social change.

### Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Define key terms through collaborative conversation with peers.
- Use key terms during small-group discussions to verbally explain examples of when activism is needed.

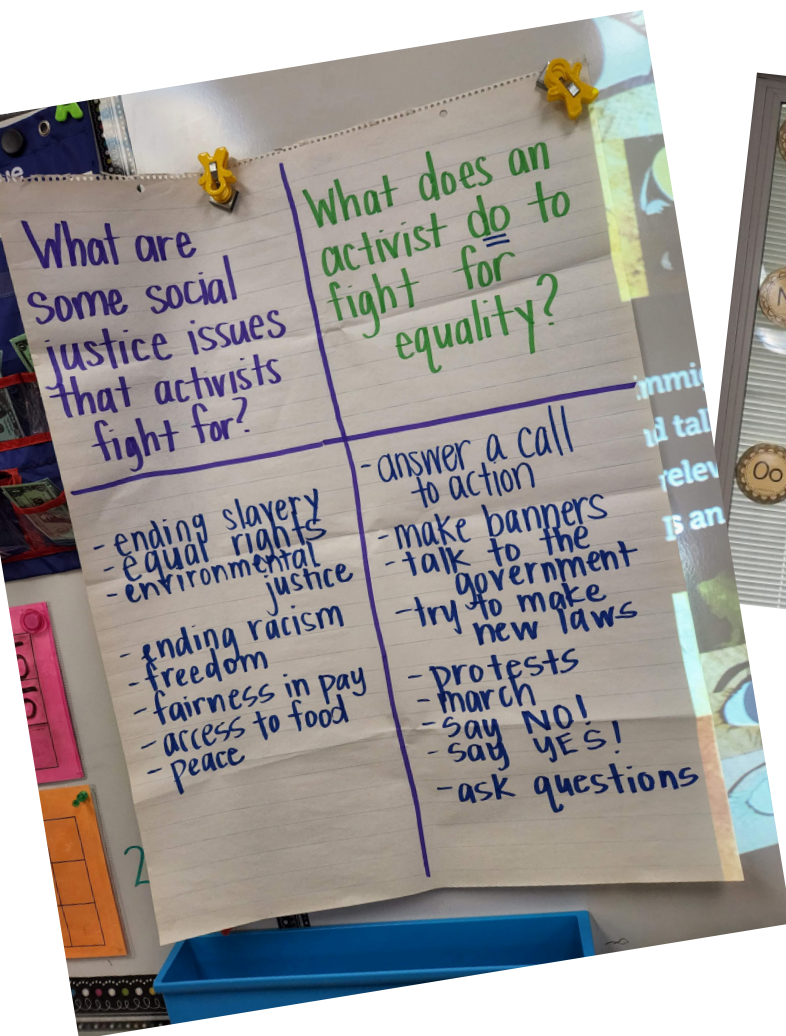
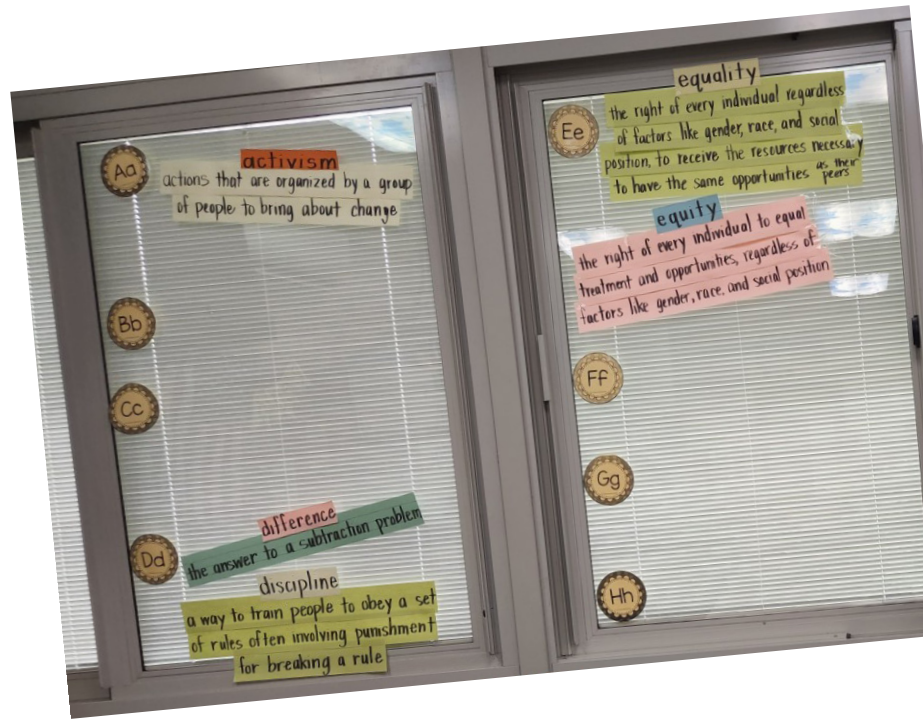
### Essential Questions

- What is activism?
- How do we know when activism is needed?



# Instructional Resources and Materials

- *The Little Book of Little Activists*, by Penguin Young Readers
- Document camera and projector (to ensure read-aloud text is visible to all students)
- “Key Term” anchor chart or word wall (see examples to the right)
- Scissors
- Pen/pencil
- Paper
- Display of previously discussed read-alouds (see list in Resources for Building Background)
- “Cause vs. Action” anchor chart (see example below)
- “Activist Sort” table and images
- “Exit Slip” handout



Above: “Word Wall” examples

Left: “Cause vs. Action” anchor chart example

## Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

Use the definitions below to create a “Key Term” anchor chart or word wall. (See example in Instructional Resources and Materials.)

**Activism:** Actions that are organized and designed by a group of people to bring about change in social norms or society.

**Social injustice:** When groups of people are denied rights and opportunities. People may be denied rights and opportunities based on characteristics, such as race (racism), age (ageism), gender (sexism), religion, sexual orientation (heterosexism), ability (ableism), language, national origin, or immigration status (xenophobia).

**Oppression:** When a person or group of people who have power use their power in a way that is unfair or cruel to others.

**Equality:** The right of every individual to equal treatment and opportunities regardless of factors like gender, race, and social position.

**Equity:** The right of every individual to receive the resources necessary to have the same opportunities as their peers, regardless of their gender, race, and social position.

## Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

In this lesson, students start to recognize how injustice exists in their own communities as well as the country. Teachers can ask themselves (and students, when applicable) the following questions:

- Who in their community works to make it better?
- How do they do that?
- Who are activists in your students’ families or community?
- What causes do they work for?

## Potential Challenges

Students may have a hard time understanding the nuances of activism. Often young people think kindness is adequate for combatting injustice. Teachers must be clear and purposeful about emphasizing the following conceptual understandings:

- Activism takes place in the present as well as the past. Activism happens in your own community. Activism goes beyond the more widely learned focus on individuals from the past.
- Activism serves to address injustice.
- Injustice appears in different ways.
- Activists work with others to bring about change, not just provide aid and/or support.
- Students may not be clear on the difference between “equality” and “equity.”
- In the read-aloud text, the Spanish word 'jicama' is written with the letter j but appears in the book under the letter H and sounds like the letter /h/ sound of English. This may confuse some students. It could be used as a moment in the text to help Spanish-English emergent bilingual students build their metalinguistic awareness about different grapheme-phoneme relationships between English and Spanish.
- The read-aloud features small text and images, so students may struggle to see the powerful images. A document camera and projector are suggested to increase students' visibility of images and text.



# Lesson Procedures

## Introduction

*Today we will take a look at some issues that cause people to take action. Before we do that, we need to make sure we understand some terms that are in a book we are reading today.*

**Be sure to have several familiar read-alouds displayed before reviewing the key terms.**

**Refer to the “Key Terms” anchor chart and/or word wall with pre-written key terms. Support students in reading, reviewing, and discussing each word.**

- *Take a look at the first word on the first page. (Activism). Who can read it? Have you heard this word before? What do you know about this word? Who knows or has heard about an activist?*

**Refer to *Malala’s Magic Pencil*, by Malala Yousafzai, or another previously read text.**

*As we read our book today, we will be gaining more information about and examples for the term “activism.”*

**Refer to additional past read-alouds about activists throughout history. Introduce the new read-aloud, *The Little Book of Little Activists*.**

*As I read, I want you to listen for the following two things:*

- *What are some social justice issues that activists fight for?*
- *What does an activist do to fight for equality?*

# Saying Something

Preselect three different places in the text that will be of interest to your students. When you arrive at these points in the text, ask students to turn and talk.

Strategically pair students based on home languages and encourage them to use all of their language resources in their turn and talk.

*Remember that when we talk with our partners, we can use all of the language resources we share, like if we both know Spanish or speak Black English, to talk about the book.*

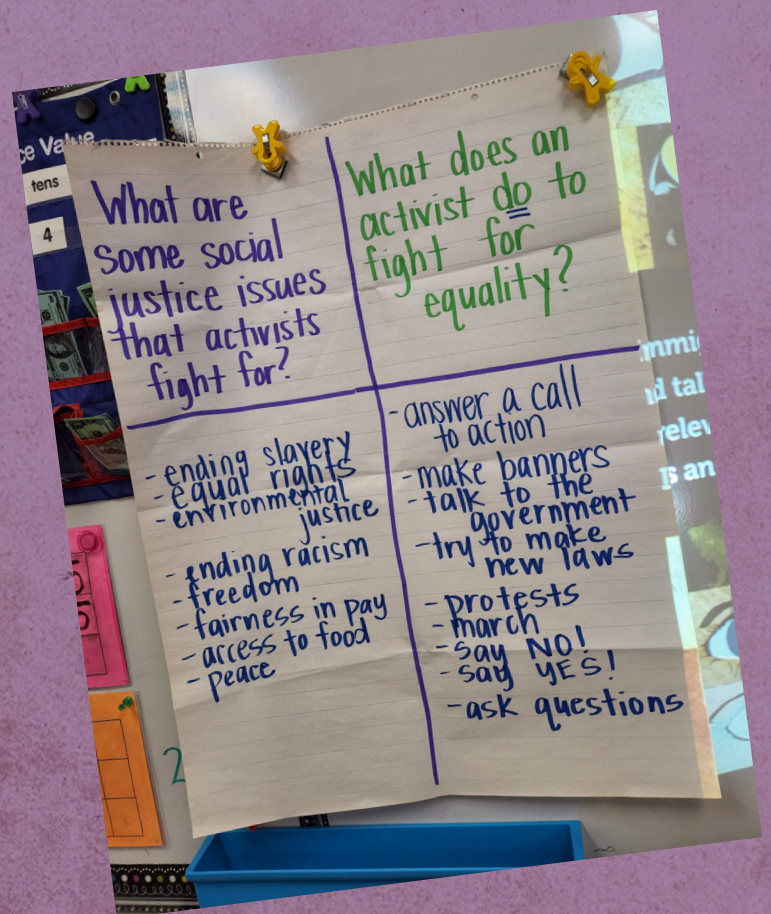
Encourage students to not only focus on the text, but also read the protest signs and look closely at the pictures. Have students discuss the following questions in their pairs:

- What message is this sign trying to tell others?
- Do you see any words being used repeatedly on the activists' signs?
- What are some social justice issues that activists fight for?
- What does an activist do to fight for equality?

Have several students share out. Fill out the Anchor Chart as they share.

Students in your classroom who share out may speak additional languages. Acknowledge students who choose to share in their home language. If a student shares in a home language that is not known by the entire class, ask another student to offer a translation. In the example below, Spanish is acknowledged.

*Thank you for sharing that in Spanish. I know we have many brilliant Spanish-English bilinguals in this classroom. Can someone volunteer to offer a translation of [student name]'s' contribution?*



# Activist Sort

Give students a copy of a blank two-column “Activist Sort” table with the same headers as the anchor chart. You can either copy the attached handouts or create your own tables for students.

Students cut out examples (access to food, fairness in pay, peace march, protest, say yes, say no, question, etc.) and glue them into the appropriate column on the table.

Below are examples of students’ completed Activist Sort tables:



# Activist Sort Activity

Cut out the activist and activism squares from the next page. Decide which are examples of causes that activists fight for and which are actions that activists take. Paste the squares into the “Cause” or “Action” column in the Activist Sort table below.

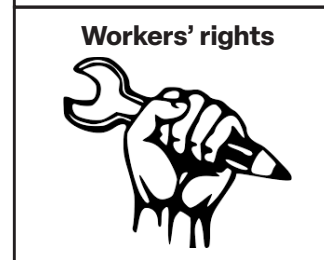
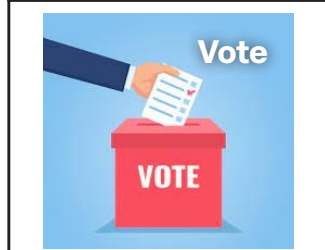
## CAUSE

What does an activist fight for?


## ACTION

What does an activist do?


Cut out the squares below. Decide which squares are examples of causes that activists fight for and which are actions that activists take. Paste the squares into the “Cause” or “Action” column on your “Activist Sort” table.

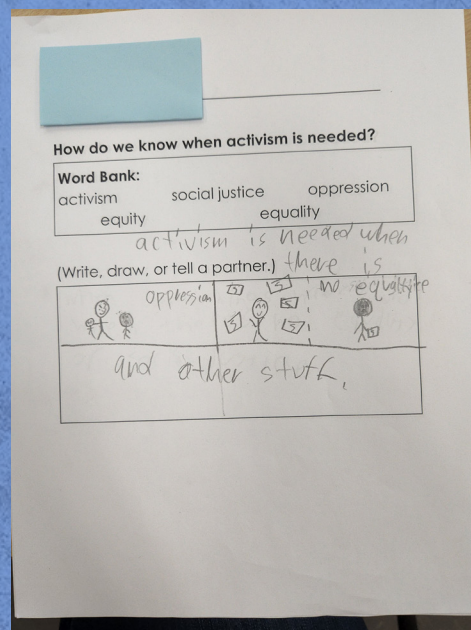
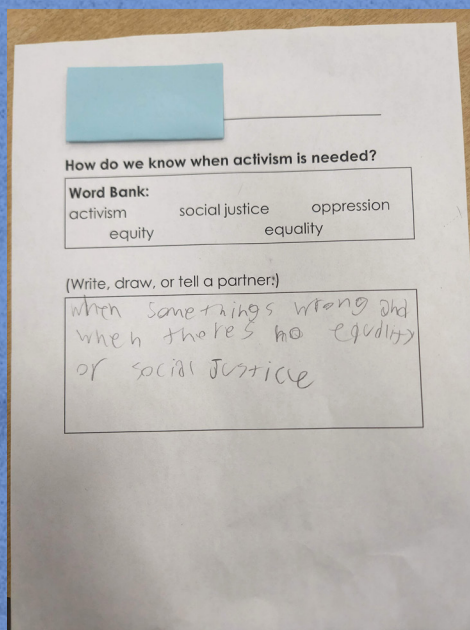
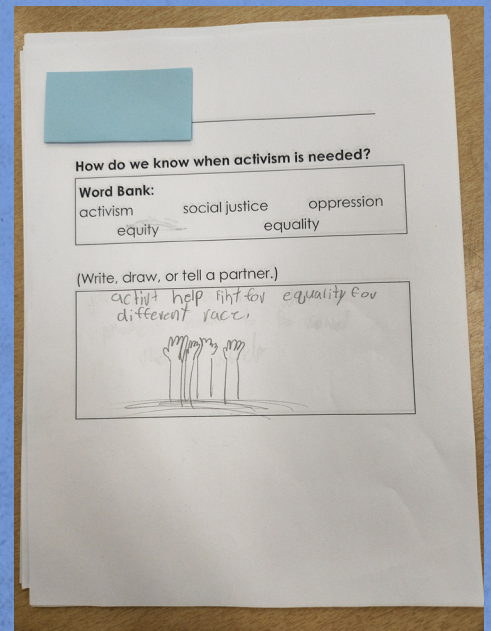
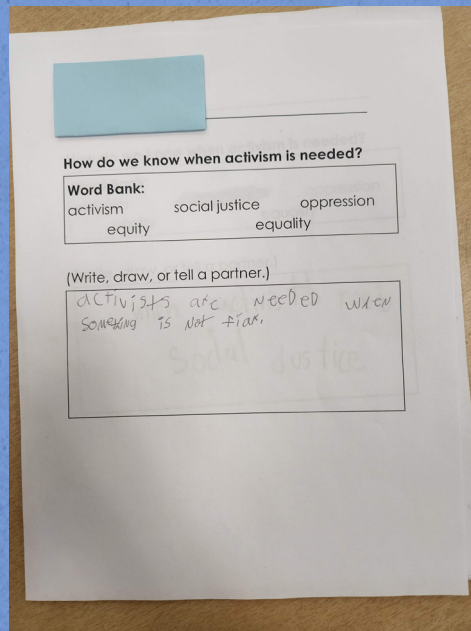
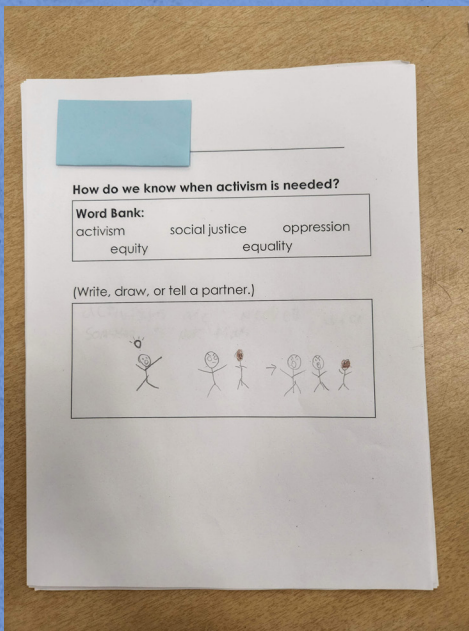


# Closure

How do we know that activism is needed? Think about explaining using some of the key terms on our anchor chart, word wall, or Exit Slip.

Pass out the Exit Slips. Students can respond orally or in writing. Note if students are using the key terms from the lesson.

Possible student responses:



## Assessment

As a formative assessment, students sort ideas into the “Cause” or “Action” columns. Students show evidence of understanding by correctly identifying issues and actions and stating a reason or justification for their choices.

As an additional formative assessment, students provide one reason (orally, in writing, or in pictures) that activism is needed. Students show evidence of understanding by completing an Exit Slip and answering the question, “How do we know that activism is needed?” with an appropriate response discussed in class.

## Alignment to Standards

### World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development

Standard 1: English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

Standard 5: English Language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

RI.3.1: Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

SL.3.2: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.11: Explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all citizens exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels.

6.1.4.A.12: Explain the process of creating change at the local, state, or national level.

6.1.4.A.15: Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community, state, national, and global challenges.

## Resources for Building Background

Rollins, J. (2022). *Classroom De Rollins*. Jazz Rollins. | [www.jazzrollins.com](http://www.jazzrollins.com) It is important that your students have a strong classroom community where each learner feels safe and able to speak their mind prior to beginning this unit. Educator Jazz Rollins provides printables to support a welcoming classroom community through

affirming classroom norms and principles. “CEAR Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds” list (see next page). It is critical that as many books on the CEAR Unit 3 suggested read-alouds list (or books with similar themes) are read to or by students prior to teaching this unit.

## Extensions (Optional)

In preparation for interviews with activists from community-based organizations, students can practice revising “thin” questions (e.g., “Do you like being an activist?”) to “thick” questions (e.g., “What is the most rewarding part of being an activist?”).

## References

Penguin Young Readers, (2017). *The little book of little activists*. Viking Books for Young Readers.



# Suggested Read-Aloud List

## Activism

- *Enough! 20 Protesters Who Changed America*, by Emily Easton
- *The Pink Hat*, by Andrew Joyner
- *The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist*, by Cynthia Levinson
- *We Are Water Protectors*, by Carole Lindstrom
- *A Is for Activist*, by Innosanto Nagara
- *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag*, by Rob Sanders
- *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*, by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Undocumented: A Worker's Fight*, by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Malala's Magic Pencil*, by Malala Yousafzai

## Racial Identity, Race, and Ethnicity

- *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water*, by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson
- *The Colors of Us*, by Karen Katz
- *Let's Talk About Race*, by Julius Lester
- *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family*, by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali
- *Skin Like Mine*, by LaTashia M Perry

## Racism and Systemic Oppression

- *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box*, by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein
- *Let the Children March*, by Monica Clark-Robinson
- *White Socks Only*, by Evelyn Coleman
- *A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart*, by Zetta Elliott
- *What If We Were All the Same!: A Children's Book About Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion*, by C.M. Harris
- *What I See: Anti-Asian Racism from the Eyes of a Child*, by Christine T. Leung
- *Tar Beach*, by Faith Ringgold
- *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer: Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement*, by Carole Boston Weatherford
- *Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965*, by Jonah Winter and Shane W. Evans

## Slavery

- *Before She Was Harriett*, by Lesa Cline-Ransome
- *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*, by Ellen Levine

# Exit Slip for Unit Three, Lesson One

Name \_\_\_\_\_

How do we know when activism is needed?

## WORD BANK

<b>activism</b>	<b>social justice</b>	<b>oppression</b>
<b>equity</b>		<b>equality</b>

Write, draw, or tell a partner.

# UNIT THREE, LESSON TWO

## Racism and Racial Bias: Understanding and Identifying Examples

**Grade Level: Three**

**Subjects: Language Arts**

**Suggested Length: 3 days (45-minute sessions per day)**

### Lesson Overview

Through a read-aloud, students deepen their understanding of racism and examples of racial bias. Students also examine examples of biased beliefs, how racism is an unfair pattern, and how racial injustice still exists. Students discuss the benefits of diversity, how individuals should have pride in their identity, and how individual and collective action can bring about social change.

### Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Recognize, identify, and name examples of racism and racial bias.
- Answer open-ended questions about activism, injustice, and the role of individuals in social change.

### Language Objectives

Students will be able to verbally elaborate on how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to the written textual message using a sentence frame such as, "In this picture, I see \_\_\_\_\_, which makes me think \_\_\_\_\_."

### Essential Questions

- How can we recognize and identify patterns of racism?
- How can we identify how racism is present in our rules and laws?

## Instructional Resources and Materials

- *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice*, by Marianne Celano, PhD, ABPP, Marietta Collins, PhD, and Ann Hazzard, PhD, ABPP, (multiple copies of the book for small-group work)
- Chart paper or sticky notes

## Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

**Exclusion:** Keeping or shutting someone out of something that is important or valuable.

**Race:** A way that people in a society sort humans into groups based on physical traits or ancestry. Racial categories are not permanent or biological. Societies make up racial categories for social purposes to distribute power to certain groups. Race can determine where people live, the schools they attend, their access to health care, and whether or how they receive other resources.

**Racial bias:** A positive or negative belief or attitude based on race and skin color.

**Racial identity:** The racial background you identify with and feel you can relate to best.

**Racism:** A system of disadvantage and advantage based on race and skin color.

# Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Through a read-aloud and analysis of the text focused on different community members' perceptions of a police shooting, teachers help students consider how their experience influences their perceptions. Teachers can ask students the following questions:

- Have you ever witnessed an injustice?
- What are some things that you perceive as unfair or unjust? Why?
- Do you think every person in your community thinks that same way? Why or why not?
- Do all people have the same experience of injustice?

Note that it will be helpful for teachers to consider these questions for themselves before doing this lesson. When teachers have clarity about how experience can inform perception, they will be better prepared to lead this lesson.

## Potential Challenges

Because many of the discussions in this lesson may be challenging, it is important to establish a set of community norms for discussion, active listening, and asking questions, etc. These norms should be established collaboratively as a community and reviewed frequently and as necessary during class discussions.

Some challenges during class discussions may include the following:

- Talking about police, police brutality, race, and racism may be triggering to students and/or adults.
- Students may share their own stories about police brutality.
- Students may not know that racism is a pattern and does not begin and end.
- Students may not have a full grasp of racial identity and the pride one can take in acknowledging their own racial identity.
- Students may have been told that race is not an issue that is current or relevant.

# Lesson Procedures

## Introduction

**Review the community norms for discussion, active listening, and asking questions prior to starting this lesson.**

*In the previous lesson, we talked about activists who have made change throughout history. Now let's focus on one big injustice that many activists are working to combat—racism. Racism is part of history in the United States and continues to be a problem today. What do you already know about racism?*

**Collect students' thoughts on chart paper or openly discuss.**

Minneapolis students walked out of school and met at Martin Luther King Jr. park for a protest against police killings of black people. Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 1, 2015. (Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)



## Read-Aloud

Introduce the read-aloud *Something Happened in Our Town*. Give background information (see the “Read Aloud Tips for Educators” in the Resources for Building Background section) and explain that the book covers some very serious issues that students may be hearing about in the news and in their families.

*Today we’re going to read Something Happened in Our Town. It’s about a very serious topic, that you may have heard people in your family or on the news talking about. The story is about how Josh, a Black boy, and Emma, a white girl, discuss with their families a police shooting of a Black man. We’ll read the story and find out how these families have important conversations about racial injustice.*

Read the story aloud. Engage students by asking questions to get clarity on their perspectives and using facts to answer their questions.

### Possible Student Findings:

- Characters are often colored in black or white, as are places around the world.
- Characters in one scene are playing with chess pieces, and a white piece knocks over a black piece. Why?
- A main character is illustrating pictures of police officers. Why?
- Students may notice characters’ faces and emotions during different parts of the story. For example, Josh looks super upset while his mother seems unfazed, almost unsurprised, about the shooting.
- Some characters make blanket statements, such as, “All police officers are good” or “All white people are racist.”

To help address students’ difficult statements, see “Addressing Racial Injustice with Young People” from the EmbraceRace website | [www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children](http://www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children) and “Read Aloud Tips for Educators” in the Resources for Building Background section.

## Activist Sort

Have students discuss with turn-and-talk partners. Use the “Read Aloud Tips for Educators” to determine the specific questions you will ask.

Stop to ask questions throughout and encourage students to ask questions of their own. Provide the following sentence starters as needed for conversation on wonderings:

- I wonder if...
- I wonder how...
- I wonder why...
- I want to know more about...

Provide the following sentence starters as needed for conversation on what they noticed:

- I noticed...
- I think that...
- I want to know more about...

Strategically pair students based on home languages and encourage them to use all of their language resources in their pair talk.

*Remember, we can use all of the language resources we share to talk about the book with our partners, like if we both know Spanish or speak Black English.*

Have several students share out, and acknowledge students who choose to share in their home language. If a student shares in a home language not known by the entire class, ask for another student to offer a translation. Note that students in your classroom who share out may speak additional languages that you can acknowledge. In the example below, Spanish is acknowledged.

*Thank you for sharing that in Spanish. I know we have many brilliant Spanish-English bilinguals in this classroom. Can someone volunteer to offer a translation of [student name's] contribution?*



## Textual Analysis and Group Work

Place students in small groups and give them one page of the text. (Give students a spread or two pages, if there are two pages that visually work together with text.) Give each small group different pages from the book as well as chart paper or sticky notes to record their observations and reactions. (If only one copy of the text is available, students can participate in a gallery walk around the classroom and use sticky notes.) Remind students that it is OK if they have different perspectives or don't agree with each other.

*Just as you may not agree with a classmate's answer during a math discussion, you may not agree with someone's point of view. Let's refer back to our group norms and practice how we could handle this type of situation.*

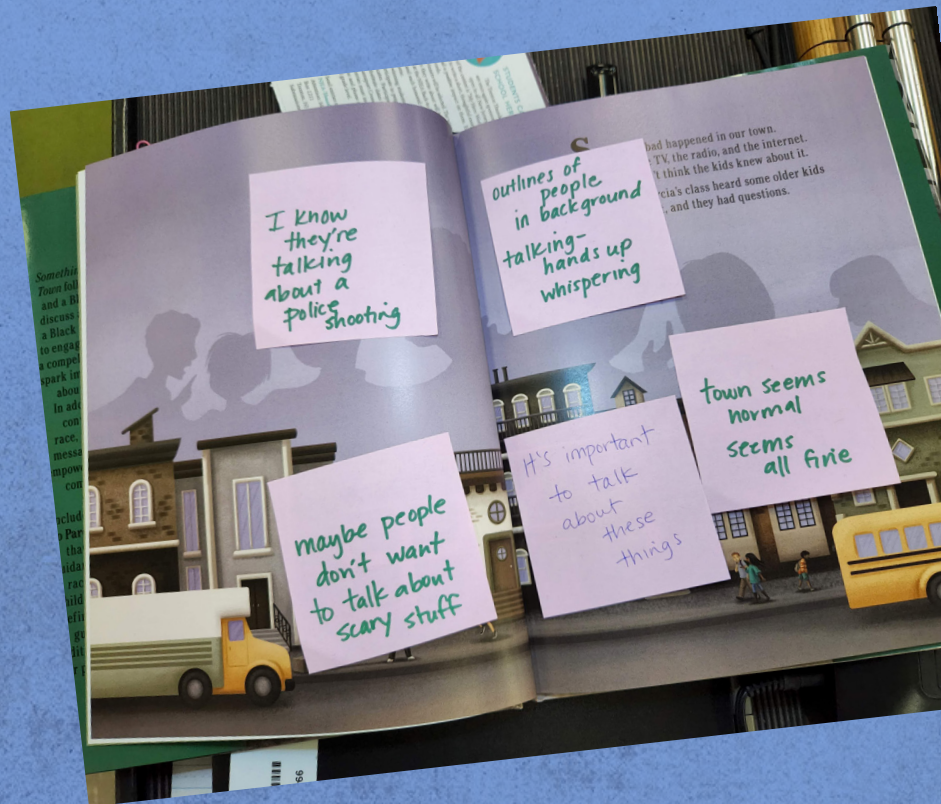
Provide the following sentence stem on an anchor chart:

*"In this picture, I see \_\_\_\_\_ which makes me think \_\_\_\_\_."*

Students discuss and then record with their group or on their own if their viewpoints differ.

Model with a page of your own.  
Here's an example:

*When I see this page, I notice the outlines of people in the background. I can tell they are all talking. Some have their hands up and others seem like they're whispering. I know they're talking about a police shooting. Even though they are talking about it, the town in the picture seems normal. Nothing seems out of place. To me, this page shows that sometimes people don't like to talk about these big, scary topics and want to pretend like nothing happened. I know though that it's important to talk about what's going on in the world around us.*





## Assessment

Formative assessment will include having students explain from their point of view how aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words. Students show evidence of understanding

by sharing their ideas about their illustration on a sticky note. Students can state a reason or justification using part of the illustration as evidence.

## Alignment to Standards

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

RL.3.7: Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.11: Explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all citizens exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels.

6.1.4.A.12: Explain the process of creating change at the local, state, or national level.

6.1.4.A.15: Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community, state, national, and global challenges.

### World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development

Standard 1: English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts

Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

## Resources for Building Background

Community Engaged Anti-Racist Education Project. (n.d.). *CEAR unit 3 suggested read-alouds*. Community School Partnership Network, Rutgers Graduate School of Education. | [docs.google.com/document/d/1S3yw-qMPljccx27MdC\\_hIphz7zHKR3CmyqYOCme-8wA/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1S3yw-qMPljccx27MdC_hIphz7zHKR3CmyqYOCme-8wA/edit) \*

EmbraceRace. (2022). *Addressing racial injustice with young children*. EmbraceRace. | [www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children](http://www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children)

Literacy Footprints. (n.d.). *Day 1: Something happened in our town: A child's story about racial injustice*. Literacy Footprints. | [cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0071/0960/7481/files/LF-ReadAloud-LessonCards-Gr3-5\\_6-SomethingHappened-FINAL.pdf?v=1607608117](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0071/0960/7481/files/LF-ReadAloud-LessonCards-Gr3-5_6-SomethingHappened-FINAL.pdf?v=1607608117)

Rollins, J. (2022). *Classroom de rollins: Teacher freebies*. Jazzrollins LLC. | [www.jazzrollins.com](http://www.jazzrollins.com) \*\*

Start with a Book. (n.d.). Read aloud tips for educators. Start with a Book. | [www.startwithabook.org/sites/default/files/441b228-read-aloud-tips.pdf](http://www.startwithabook.org/sites/default/files/441b228-read-aloud-tips.pdf)

\*It is critical that as many books on the “CEAR Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds” list (or books with similar themes) are read prior to teaching this unit.

\*\* Prior to teaching this unit, it is important that your students have a strong classroom community where each learner feels safe and able to speak their mind. These “Teacher Freebies” from educator Jazz Rollins are printables that support a welcoming classroom community through affirming classroom norms and principles.

## Extensions (Optional)

### Activity

Students will identify racism in a *Zootopia* clip.

*Can you identify racism in this video?*

Show the “Gondola’ clip – Disney’s Zootopia” video. | [youtu.be/a6G8k5b01uE](https://youtu.be/a6G8k5b01uE)

Students will submit an Exit Slip (from Lesson 2) , highlighting where they notice racism in the clip. Ask students to back up their responses with explicit examples from the video.

Provide the following sentence stem to support students:

*“In the video I saw \_\_\_\_\_, which makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Tell students that racism can mean a person is being unkind to someone because of their race. But it also means that people in power use laws, rules, and actions to hurt or oppress people of a certain race.

*Understanding racism is a first step, but what can we do about it? How can we be activists for the characters in the story?*

Students discuss as a class.

## References

Celano, M., Collins, M., & Hazzard, A. (2018). *Something happened in our town: A child’s story about racial injustice*. Magination Press.

Walt Disney Animation Studios. (2017, February 17). “Gondola” clip – *disney’s zootopia*. [Video]. YouTube. | [youtu.be/a6G8k5b01uE](https://youtu.be/a6G8k5b01uE)

# UNIT THREE, LESSON THREE

## School Discipline: Fair or Unfair

**Grade Level: Three**

**Subjects: Mathematics**

**Suggested Length: 2 days (45-minute sessions per day)**

### Lesson Overview

In this critical mathematics lesson, students inquire about the number of students being disciplined in schools based on race. This is a cross-disciplinary lesson that gives students the opportunity to use their mathematical skills to discover a disproportionate number of students being suspended when including their race. Students analyze and make sense of data as they draw conclusions about discipline in our schools and how they can be agents for change in addressing disparities in school discipline.

### Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Compare and contrast the data presented and inquire about their noticing.
- Draw conclusions about data presented by finding the difference between suspension rates of groups of students.
- Answer open-ended questions about activism, injustice, and the role of individuals in social change.

### Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Discuss with a peer in any of their shared languages what they notice and wonder after watching a brief silent video.
- Infer verbally and in writing about injustices in the number of school suspensions per groups of students of different races using a sentence frame, "I infer there will be \_\_\_\_ school suspensions for [racial group] because \_\_\_\_."

## Essential Questions

- How is racism a system of advantage and disadvantage?
- What are the material effects of racism?
- How can fighting for racial justice improve people's lives?

## Instructional Resources and Materials

- Base ten blocks
- Number line
- Word wall
- Subtraction anchor chart
- Read-aloud review
- “School Discipline Fair or Unfair Recording Sheet” handout
- Act 1 Video | [drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_eEt1wq93AHRY5ZrW6KOP2EjytZtbDot/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_eEt1wq93AHRY5ZrW6KOP2EjytZtbDot/view?usp=sharing)
- Act 2 Slides
- Act 3 Slides
- Lesson 3 Exit Ticket

## Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

**Difference (math):** The answer to a subtraction problem.

**Discipline:** A way to train people to obey a set of rules, often involving punishment for breaking a rule.

**Racial bias:** A positive or negative belief or attitude based on race and skin color.

**Racism:** A system of disadvantage and advantage based on race and skin color.

**Social injustice:** When groups of people are denied rights and opportunities. People may be denied rights and opportunities based on characteristics such as race (racism), age (ageism), gender (sexism), religion, sexual orientation (heterosexism), ability (ableism), or language, national origin, or immigration status (xenophobia).

# Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

This critical math lesson focuses on interpretation of data and the injustices that students may face in the school system. By examining the disproportionate number of students of color being disciplined, teachers should consider how students may speak up and demand fair treatment in school. Teachers can ask themselves (and students, when applicable) the following questions:

- Are there injustices right here at school?
- Can schools do racist things?
- How can we make change in our own school?

## Potential Challenges

Be aware of potential misconceptions and be prepared to counter them through questioning and reminders of examples from previously read texts, such as *The Little Book of Little Activists*, *Something Happened in Our Town*, and other suggested read-alouds: The following misconceptions may occur:

- Students may have the misconception that rules apply to everyone equally.
- Students may think that all rules have a purpose and should not be questioned.
- Students may not know how racism looks in systems and structures.

Students may have strong feelings about the issue of disciplinary disparity. It is important that teachers continue to focus on the actions that students can take to change things and help their classmates. Teachers should also provide language supports such as sentence frames to help students express what they wonder and notice.

Emergent bilinguals may be familiar with the term “difference” in terms of everyday use about not being the same, but not the mathematical use for subtraction.



# Lesson Procedures

Read the “3 Act Math Tip Sheet” prior to teaching the Three-Act Task.  
(See Resources for Building Background.)

## Introduction

Hand out the “School Discipline Fair or Unfair Recording Sheet” to each student.

*We are going to explore using math today. I’m not going to state our objective just yet because I want you to put on your discovery hats to figure out the task.*

*We have been learning about racism and activism. We’ve been identifying examples of racism and racial bias not only in the history of the United States but also in the present day. We’ve also been talking about how individual and collective action, or the work of groups of people, can bring about change.*

## Terminology Review

Review key terms for the lesson.

**Racism:** A system of disadvantage and advantage based on race and skin color.

**Racial bias:** A positive or negative belief or attitude based on race and skin color.

**Difference (math):** The answer to a subtraction problem.

**Social injustice:** When groups of people are denied rights and opportunities. People may be denied rights and opportunities based on characteristics, such as race (racism), age (ageism), gender (sexism), religion, sexual orientation (heterosexism), ability (ableism), or language, national origin, or immigration status (xenophobia).

**Discipline:** A way to train people to obey a set of rules often involving punishment for breaking a rule.

# Racism Review

Review how racism presents itself in the read-alouds and ask students where else in the real world they think racism exists. (Chart student ideas on the board or chart paper.)

Ask students the following questions:

- Remember reading *The Little Book of Little Activists*?
- What examples of racism were activists fighting against in that book?
- How do we know it was racism?
- How was *Something Happened in Our Town* about racism?
- What did we learn about racism from that book?
- What are the real noticeable effects of racism?
- How do we know when something is racist?
- Does racism exist in your life? Can you share some examples?
- What can we do about racism?

Students may mention individual or interpersonal experiences or observations of racism. In addition, ensure that students recognize the ways that racism systematically disadvantages or harms people of color and advantages white people.



Black Lives Matter, Anti-racism rally at Canada Place, June 5, 2020  
(Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

## **Task Act 1: Noticings and Wonderings**

*I'm going to show you a short video. Please pay attention to what you notice or see happening in the video. After watching the video, I am going to ask you to record what you noticed on the recording sheet.*

**Provide the following sentence starters for conversation on noticings as needed:**

- I noticed...
- I think that...
- I want to know more about...
- Something I'm confused about is...

**Play the Act 1 video. Choose a few students to highlight what they notice in the video.**

**Examples of Noticings**

- "I noticed there were four jars."
- "I think the jars had faces on them."
- "I want to know more about why all the jars were being filled with the same measuring cup."
- "I noticed that all the jars had different amounts of green liquid in them."

*Now I will show you the same video again. This time I want you to watch with a curious mind and tell me what you wonder or want to know about what you see. After the video, I will ask you to record your wonderings on the recording sheet. Replay the Act 1 video.*

**Choose a few students to highlight their wonderings. Record the wonderings on the board or on chart paper.**

**Provide the following sentence starters as needed for conversation on wonderings:**

- I wonder if...
- I wonder how...
- I wonder why...
- I want to know more about...

**Possible student wonderings include the following:**

- "I wonder why all the jars have faces?"
- "I want to know more about why the jars have different amounts of liquid."
- "I wonder how much more liquid is in the larger jar than all the other jars?"
- "I wonder how much more liquid do all the jars have in all?"

## Notice

- Each jar has more than the last jar filled.
- Each has a different amount of liquid.
- <sup>3rd</sup> Faces are different colors.
- The scooped is the same for each scoop

## Wonder

- How much more liquid does the red have than all the other combined?
- How much more does the last jar have than the first?
- How much together?
- How many scoops fill the jar?

These are all good questions that I hope we can answer. I'm going to choose one main question for us to investigate for now. "How much more liquid is in the larger jar compared to all the other jars?"

## Task Act 2: Group Work

Ask the following question to promote critical thinking:

- *What important information do you need in order to answer the main question?*

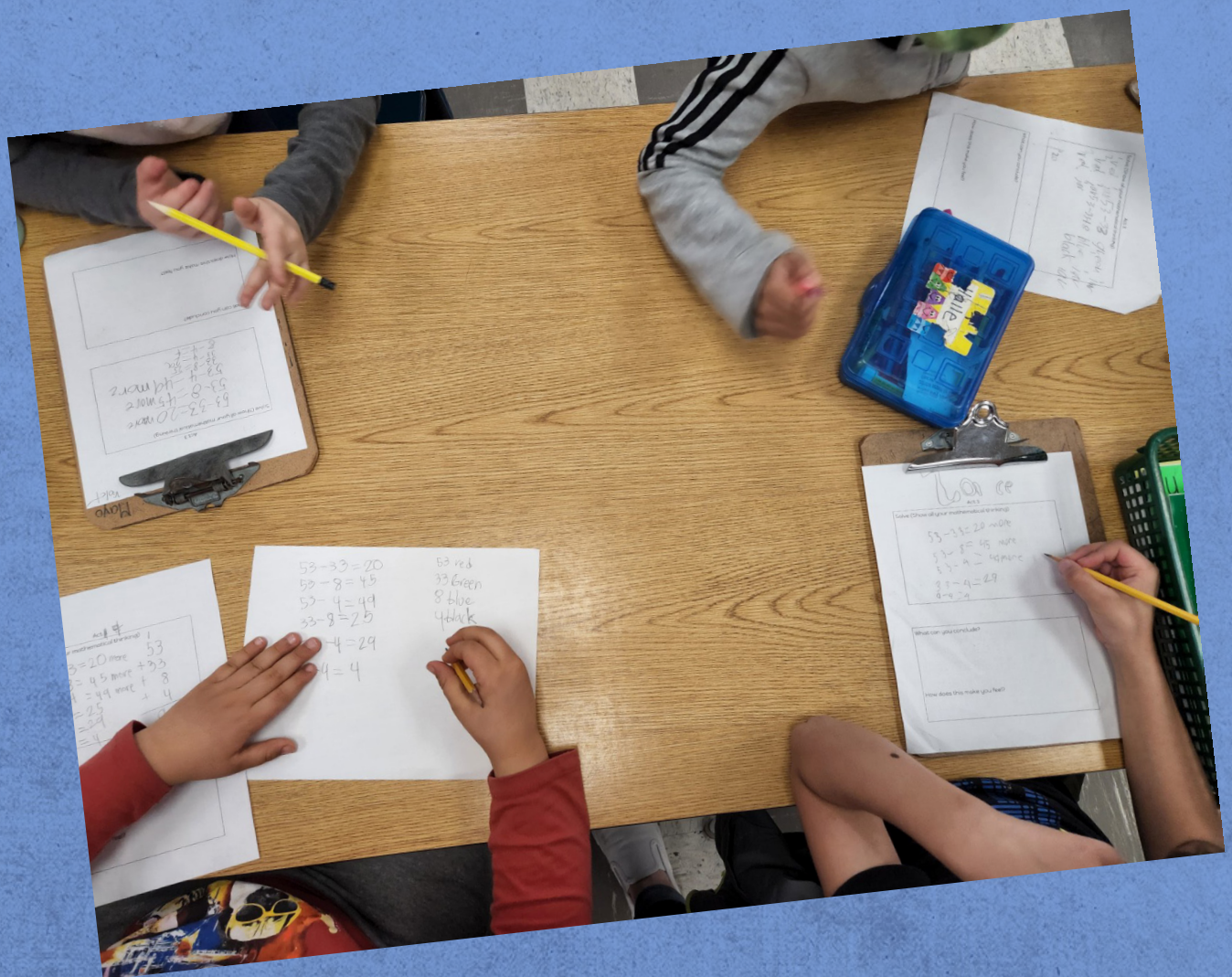
Have students work together or with partners based on home language and/or math level to make sure they have enough information to answer the main question. If students find they don't have enough information, have them ask you questions to gather more information.

Possible student inquiries include the following:

- "How much liquid is in each jar?"
- "How many scoops did each jar get?"

Present any missing information so that the task can be solved by showing the Act 3 slides. Students solve the main question on the recording sheet.

See the following image of student group work:



See the following images of completed task sheets:

What do you notice?  
I notice that...

4 jars

each get full and more full

What do you wonder?  
I wonder if...

~~the~~ the green liquid is money

I wonder why...

this they use green liquid

Act 2

Main Question

How much more liquid is in the fourth jar compared to all other jars

Act 3

What additional information is needed in order to answer the main question?

Solve (Show all your mathematical thinking)

$$\begin{array}{r} 213 \\ -4 \\ \hline 209 \end{array}$$

53 - 33 = 20 more

53 - 8 = 45 more

53 - 4 = 49 more

33 - 8 = 25 more

33 - 4 = 29 more

8 - 4 = 4 more

$$\begin{array}{r} 53 \\ + 33 \\ + 8 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 98 \end{array}$$

What can you conclude?

that black students are suspended 47% more than all of them

How does this make you feel?

combine

Act 1

What do you notice?  
I notice that...

- a scoop
- many jars
- a green ball
- a girl
- cutler
- scoop teal powder inside
- marble counter tops
- back back row
- heads

What do you wonder?  
I wonder if... the powder went money

I wonder why...

the faces were different colors

Act 2

Main Question

How much more liquid is in the fourth jar compared to all the other jars?

Act 3

What additional information is needed in order to answer the main question?

the amount in

Act 3

Solve (Show all your mathematical thinking)

$$\begin{array}{r} 53 \\ - 33 \\ \hline 20 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 53 \\ - 4 \\ \hline 49 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 53 \\ - 8 \\ \hline 45 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 33 \\ - 8 \\ \hline 25 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 33 \\ - 4 \\ \hline 29 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ - 4 \\ \hline 4 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 53 \\ + 33 \\ + 8 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 98 \end{array}$$

What can you conclude?

much more black kids get suspended than all the other kids

How does this make you feel?

upset confused

## Act 3 Whole-Group Discussion

Choose a few students with different strategies to present their work and have the class discuss how their strategy was the same or different. Provide the following sentence starters as needed for sharing:

- Our strategies are similar because...
- Our strategies are different because...
- My strategy is like \_\_\_\_\_'s strategy because...
- My strategy is different from \_\_\_\_\_'s strategy because...

Show the final Act 3 slides that reveal the differences in the amount of scoops for each jar. The Act 3 slide reveals the school suspension heading and the race for each jar.

After revealing the first slide, ask the following questions:

- *What does it mean to be suspended?*
- *What do you need to do to be suspended?*
- *How can reasons for being suspended be unfair?*

After sharing data, ask the following questions:

- *Why do you think the data looks so unfair?*
- *How can we be activists to help change this data?*
- *How can we be activists to help change the stereotypes or ideas about students that create these unfair suspension rates?*

## Day 2

Prior to class discussion, read “8 Tips for Talking to Your Child About Racial Injustice” (See Resources for Building Background.)

### Whole Group Contextualizing Student Suspensions

Show the Act 3 slides (see following pages).

*As you see from the slides, the liquid in the jars represent the number of students suspended in a year in a particular New Jersey school district. We see that out of the 100 students suspended*

- 53 were Black,
- 33 were Latinx,
- 8 were White, and
- 4 were Asian.

*Today we are going to infer about school discipline and race. Then we will discuss why our inferences may or may not be true and how we can be agents for change.*

*What do you notice after seeing these slides?*

**Possible student conclusions may include the following:**

- “I notice Asian students were suspended less than all other races.”
- “I notice more Black students were suspended than all other races.”
- “I notice Black and Latinx students were suspended more than white and Asian students.”

*How does this make you feel?*

**Students may express feelings of unfairness, anger, or confusion. Validate their feelings and encourage different points of view.**



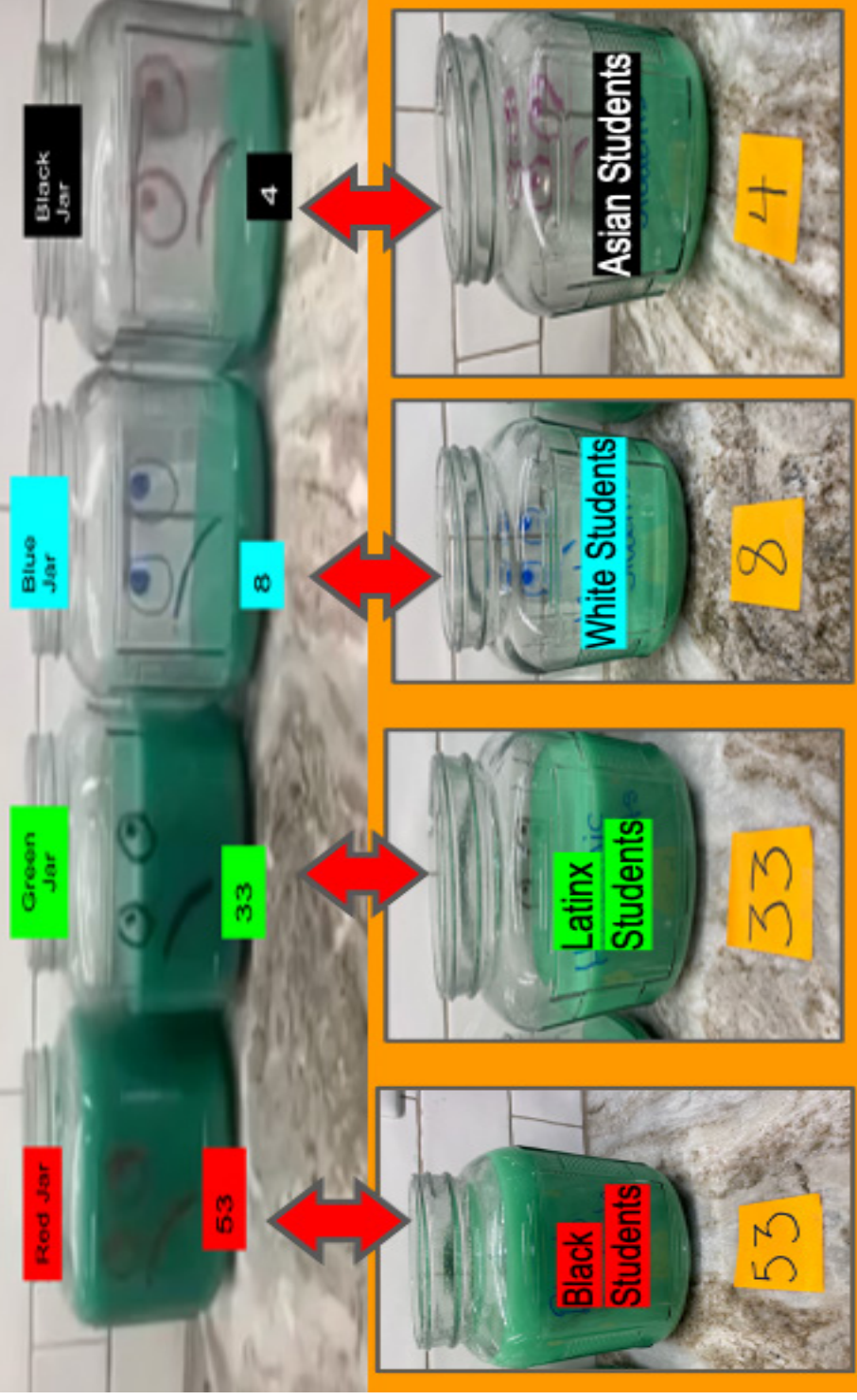
## Slide One

This task was all about  
school suspension.

What does it mean to be  
suspended from school?

# Slide Two

The number of liquid scoops in these jars represents the number of students suspended in a school year. Out of 100 students suspended...



# Slide Three



**45** more Black students are suspended from schools than white students.

# Slide Four



**49** more Black students are suspended from schools than Asian students

# Slide Five



**20** more Black students are suspended from schools than Latinx students

# Slide Six



**25** more Latinx students are suspended from schools than white students

# Slide Seven



**29** more Latinxx students are suspended from schools than Asian students

*Why do you think the difference in suspension for Black and Latinx students is so much greater than white and Asian students?*

**Possible student responses may include the following:**

- **School rules:** “School rules may be different from the rules in a student’s home or community. Some students grow up in families where it’s OK to speak your mind or greet everyone in the room. This behavior may be against school rules, and the students find it hard to adjust to school rules when their home culture is different.”
- **Racial bias:** “Some races are seen as problematic and therefore punished more harshly as a whole.”
- **Racial injustice:** “Students are being treated unfairly because of their race.”

## **Guided Discussion**

**Use the questions below to guide students through a discussion of how disparities are a result of bias, not actual group differences. Use various discussion techniques (turn and talk, small-group discussion, mix and mingle, or pair and share) to facilitate student engagement with the following questions:**

- *Do you think this seems fair?*
- *Do you think it is likely that students misbehave more or less based on race? Or do you think the difference is more likely a result of bias?*
- *Have you ever noticed me or another teacher discipline a behavior for one child that they would accept from another child?*
- *Are we teachers always fair?*
- *How might this relate to the numbers of suspensions we just looked at?*
- *Record some general-consensus answers on chart paper.*
- *Balance acknowledging the reality of racism with messages about hope for change.*
- *Even though you are students, you can help by being agents for change. What are some ways we can be an agent for change on this matter?*

**Possible student responses may include the following:**

- “Tell others or write letters to school administrators.”
- “Share stories of students who have been unfairly suspended.”

*What can we do about this? What can students do? What can teachers do?*

**On chart paper, record ways that students can be agents for change.**



# Closure

Students share their final understanding by completing the Exit Ticket.

Examples of student responses to the Exit Ticket:

**What have we learned from today's activity?**  
After watching the video and looking at the information, I learned...

A lot of black students got suspended!

**How can you be an agent for change?**  
I can be an agent for change by...

when I see someone being bullied by there race I should tell a adult!

**What have we learned from today's activity?**  
After watching the video and looking at the information, I learned... that even schools are racist

got suspended

**How can you be an agent for change?**  
I can be an agent for change by...

talking to the mayor

**What have we learned from today's activity?**  
After watching the video and looking at the information, I learned... black students are suspended more than latinx, white, and asian suspended combined

**How can you be an agent for change?**  
I can be an agent for change by... asking the person who was affected by the incident questions

# Exit Slip for Unit Three, Lesson Three

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**What have you learned from today's activity?**

After watching the video and looking at the information, I learned...

**How can you be an agent for change?**

I can be an agent for change by...

## Assessment

Students will compute data (accurate addition or subtraction) for each of the different groups represented in the video as well as any comparisons between groups. Evidence of student understanding includes the correct subtraction to find the difference between the groups being suspended.

Students will participate in collaborative conversations to come to a final inference based on the data. This final conclusion will be collected via an Exit Ticket. Evidence of student understanding includes student inferences based on the data from evidence of the differences found in Act 3.

## Alignment to Standards

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Mathematics

3.OA.D.8: Solve two-step word problems using the four operations. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding.

3.OA.2: Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.11: Explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all citizens exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels.

6.1.4.A.12: Explain the process of creating change at the local, state, or national level.

6.1.4.A.15: Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community state, national, and global challenges.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. A. Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. D. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

### World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development

Standard 1: English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

Standard 3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Mathematics.

Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

## Resources for Building Background

Celano, M., Collins, M., & Hazzard, A. (2022). *8 tips for talking to your child about racial injustice*. EmbraceRace. | [www.embracerace.org/resources/young-kids-racial-injustice](http://www.embracerace.org/resources/young-kids-racial-injustice)  
Community Engaged Anti-Racist Education Project. (n.d.). CEAR unit 3 suggested read-alouds. Community School Partnership Network, Rutgers Graduate School of Education. | [docs.google.com/document/d/1S3yw-qMPljccx27MdC\\_hIphz7zHKR3CmyqYOCme-8wA/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1S3yw-qMPljccx27MdC_hIphz7zHKR3CmyqYOCme-8wA/edit) \*

EmbraceRace. (2022). *Addressing racial injustice with young children*. EmbraceRace. | [www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children](http://www.embracerace.org/resources/something-happened-in-our-town-addressing-racial-injustice-with-young-children)  
Rollins, J. (2022). *Classroom de rollins: Teacher freebies*. Jazzrollins LLC. | [www.jazzrollins.com/](http://www.jazzrollins.com/) \*\*  
Tap into Teen Minds. (n.d.). *3 act math tip sheet: How to run a 3 act task without a hitch*. Tap into Teen Minds. | [tapintoteenminds.com/optin-3acttipsheet](http://tapintoteenminds.com/optin-3acttipsheet)

\* It is critical that as many books on the “CEAR Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds” list (or books with similar themes) are read prior to teaching this unit.

\*\* Prior to teaching this unit, it is important that your students have a strong classroom community where each learner feels safe and able to speak their mind. Jazz Rollins has printable materials that support a welcoming classroom community through affirming classroom norms and principles.

## References

Civil Rights Data Collection. (2017). Civil rights data collection. Civil Rights Data Collection. | [ocrdata.ed.gov/profile/9/district/28314/summary](http://ocrdata.ed.gov/profile/9/district/28314/summary)

# UNIT THREE, LESSON FOUR

## Interview an Activist

**Grade Level: Three**

**Subjects: Language Arts & Social Studies**

**Suggested Length: 3–4 days (45-minute sessions per day)**

### Lesson Overview

This lesson engages students in discussions of racial injustice and activism and takes students into their communities. Students learn about organizations in their towns that are working in activism. They record their interview questions in any language and record their questions in their preferred format.

### Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Generate interview questions for activists from local community-based organizations (CBOs) in order to learn more about how these activists address racism.
- Summarize the content derived from the interviews.
- Address a series of critical questions about the CBO activist that they interviewed.

### Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Record questions (orally, written, or recorded on a digital platform of their choice) using languages shared with the person to be interviewed from a local CBO.

### Essential Questions

- How can one become an activist?
- Who are the activists in our community?
- What are the benefits of being an activist?

## Instructional Resources and Materials

- Prior to this lesson, teachers should do research and identify local CBOs (see Notes for suggestions).
- Chromebooks (with access to Flipgrid or another platform to record student questions)
- Paper/recording sheet for questions
- “Ruby Bridges Remembers” video | [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CgTYGI2mi8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CgTYGI2mi8)
- Google Slides (or other format to share information about CBOs)
- “CBO Interview Summary Sheet 4” (post-interview handout)
- “Thick vs. Thin” anchor chart
- Sample Questions for CBOs

## Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

**Activism:** Actions that are organized and designed by a group of people to bring about change in social norms or society.

**Activist:** A person who organizes and takes action to bring about change in society.

**Organizer:** A person who organizes a group of people for a common cause or goal. The goal is often to help the community in some way.

**Social justice:** The belief that everyone deserves fair rights and opportunities.

**Stereotypes:** A fixed and oversimplified idea about a group of people based on some feature of that group (skin color, gender, height, etc.) that is often untrue or only partly true.

## Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Students learn about organizations in their town that are doing activist work. Students will work on questions to ask a local activist and synthesize the information that they gather. Teachers may want to consider the best ways to honor the community members who they invite to their classes, and it's important that students receive this person as an expert.

## Potential Challenges

Students may need extra reminders and ways of understanding that activists are more than just community helpers. “Activist,” “organizer,” and “volunteer” are terms that can be very different but also have overlapping definitions. A Venn diagram might help students distinguish the differences between these terms.

Not all CBOs work toward activism; some address an injustice through a charity/service lens and not by addressing policy. When teachers select the organizations, it is important to identify those that have some goals for changing systems or structural injustices. For example, some organizations provide a charitable service (e.g., food banks) and do not work to change the system that creates food insecurity. Other organizations work on issues like wages, food availability, etc., which are more focused on policy or structural change.

Teachers should make sure that students understand the following conceptual issues:

- It takes many people to bring about change.
- Activism serves to address an injustice.
- There are many different types of injustice.
- Change does not happen quickly.

As students develop questions in groups, emergent bilingual students may need additional support in the syntax of questions. Providing question frames can help those students be successful in this lesson. These question frames can include “When did you...?,” “Why did you...?,” or “How did you...?”

Students will have the opportunity to record their questions for interviews in any language and record their questions in a format with which they are comfortable. Teachers will need to consider how questions recorded in languages other than English will be translated so that they are comprehensible to community activists. Some possible ideas include the following:

- Identify students who can act as “translators.”
- Identify language-translation software.
- Set aside time to work with the group to translate questions.
- Reach out to families, educators, or other community resources to help translate questions.

# Lesson Procedures

Read the “3 Act Math Tip Sheet” prior to teaching the Three-Act Task.  
(See Resources for Building Background.)

## Introduction

Reflect on previous discussions and learning about racism. Transition to the focus of today’s class.

*We know about activists in the past, but what’s happening right here, where we live?*

Explain that the class will be able to interview three local CBOs about the work they are doing and that students will be official interviewers!

*Today you are going to watch as a child interviews Ruby Bridges, who at six years old was the first African-American child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana in 1960. As you watch, think about these questions:*

- *What does an interview look like?*
- *What do our questions need to sound like?*

## Understanding the Interview

Play the “Ruby Bridges Remembers” video so students can better understand the interview process. Elicit students’ observations about the interview and create an anchor chart listing the types of questions asked and other factors that made the interview go well. This list will serve as an anchor for the students to prepare for their interviews.

Students should ask questions about the following:

- The background of the person being interviewed (reason for joining the CBO).
- The purpose or goal of the organization.
- Changes that the organization has made or is working to make.

## Introduce CBOs

Use some basic background information to introduce the two to three CBOs that will be interviewed. This can be information on a Google slide, short video, or website if the CBO has one.

Group students based on their expressed interest and/or home language.



# Writing and Recording Questions

Assist students in brainstorming a list of questions worth asking, emphasizing “thick” questions rather than “thin.” “Thin” questions typically elicit a yes or no response, while “thick” questions are open-ended and elicit a more thorough response. Record the students’ questions on an anchor chart.

The following are examples of questions to ask during the brainstorming process:

- What do we want to know about the organization?
- What do we want to know about the person we are interviewing?
- What questions can we ask the CBO to help us understand racism better?

Based on students’ responses from the brainstorm, guide them away from yes-or-no questions and toward ones that focus on the activism in response to racism. Refer to the following chart to support students in rephrasing yes-or-no questions into open-ended questions.

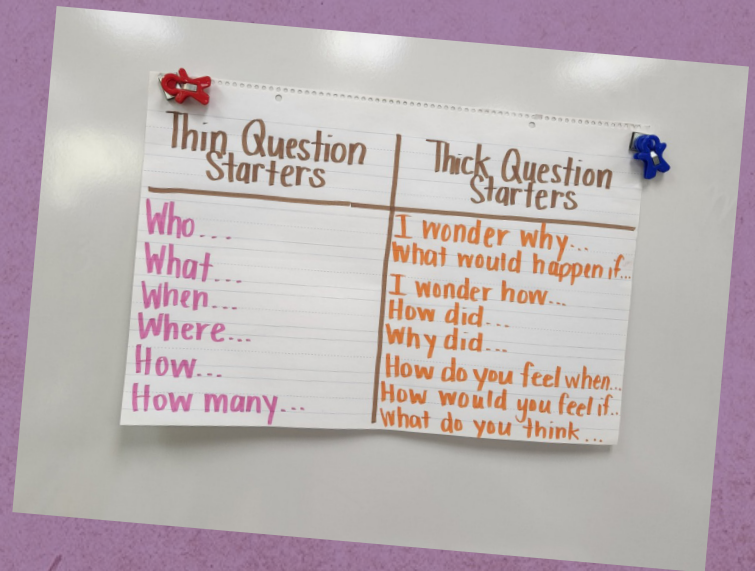
See the following sample anchor chart to the right.

Use the “I do, We do, You do” model to demonstrate an open-ended question. Do one or two together and then send students into groups to generate questions.

Examples of open-ended questions include the following:

- What are the issues that are most important to you and why?
- How does your work improve people’s lives or make our community more just or fair?
- What does a day of activism look like for you?
- What is something a student can do to take action?
- What is your organization focused on accomplishing?

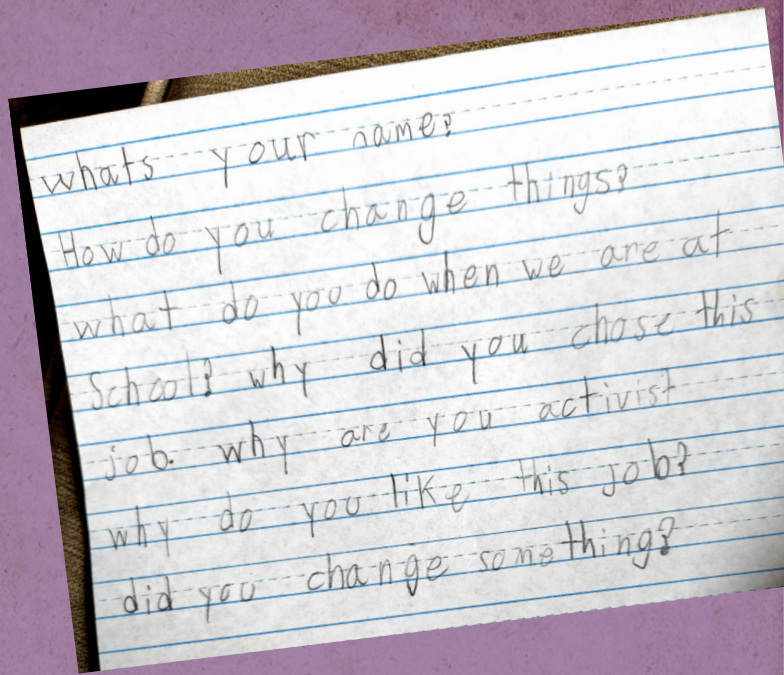
Students work in groups to draft questions. Encourage them to write their questions in English and/or their home languages. They can work together to translate the questions before sending them to the CBO or send them to the CBO in their home language. Students can record their questions on Flipgrid or another recording platform, write them on recording sheets, record the audio online, or use any other media.



See one student's brainstorm of questions to the right.

## Whole Group Check-In

Students regroup as a whole class and share out their brainstormed questions. Use questioning to narrow the questions down if needed, and redirect students to ensure that their questions will elicit the information that they need or want. Guide students' questions to help them learn about how the CBO demonstrates activism.

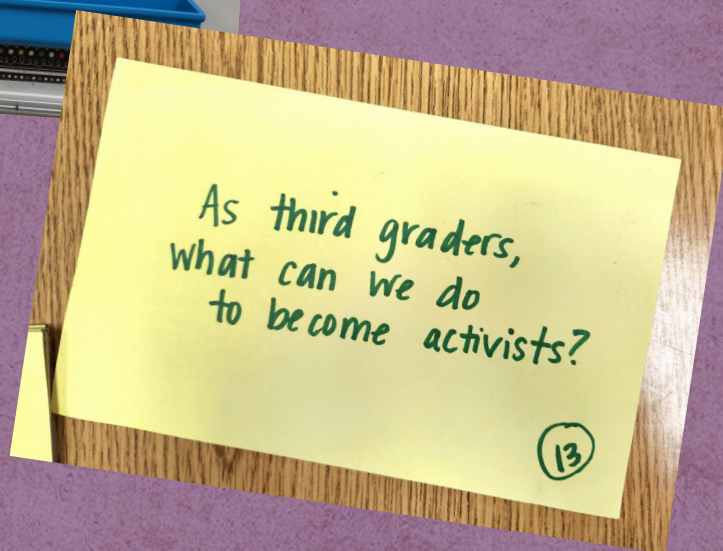
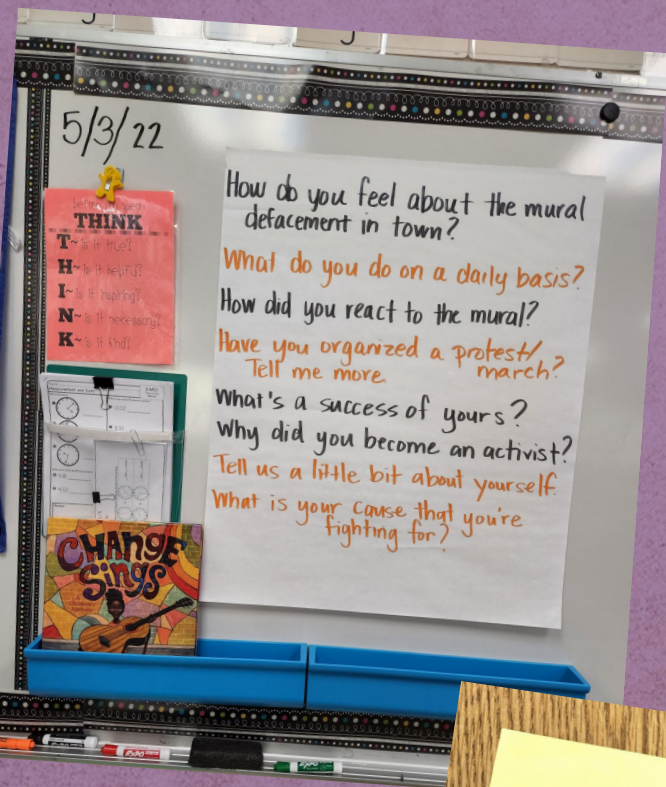


Choose a certain number of preplanned questions and number them for students to ask in a particular order. "Getting to know you" questions should come before ones about the CBO representative's activism.

See the example to the left of a class chart of brainstormed questions

If time allows, students can practice asking each other the questions in a mock interview. This could include reading them fluently or playing them via their chosen format.

See the example below of individual questions on a notecard for practice.



## **Interviewing a CBO**

**Schedule interviews in person or on another platform like Zoom or Google Meet, and prepare students for these interviews.**

**Student interviewers can be assigned roles, such as greeter, introducer, question-asker, notetaker, thanker, and closer. Generate a role sheet and a note-taking sheet based on the number of students in the group and the questions that were generated.**

## **Closure**

**After the completion of the interviews, students meet with their small groups to summarize their findings using the summary sheet.**

**Read questions on the summary sheet beforehand and model writing responses. Students work in small groups to complete the “Unit 3 Lesson 4 Summary Sheet.”**

**Reconvene the class as a whole group and have students share out their summary findings.**

# **Unit Three, Lesson Four CBO Interview Summary Sheet 4**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your community-based organization (CBO)? What do they do?**

**What does your CBO do to fight injustice?**

# **Unit Three, Lesson Four CBO Interview Summary Sheet 4, page 2**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Who does your CBO help fight for?**

**Who does your CBO work alongside to accomplish its goals?**

**What do you find most important to share with others about your CBO?**

# **Sample Questions for Community-Based Organizations**

- 1. When did you decide that you wanted to be an activist?**
- 2. How many members are in the New Brunswick Area NAACP?**
- 3. How long have you worked for the NAACP?**
- 4. How old is your youngest activist?**
- 5. Have you ever been treated unfairly?**
- 6. What was the most important problem you had to fix?**
- 7. Do you have any advice on how to start a protest?**
- 8. Have you ever been a part of any big changes? If so, what were they?**
- 9. Have you ever helped anyone who was treated unfairly when they tried to vote?**
- 10. How often do you have to speak up for others?**
- 11. How many people work for your organization?**
- 12. Why did you join Black Community Watchline?**
- 13. What racial incidents have you personally experienced?**
- 14. What are some example of calls you've received?**
- 15. About how many people has your organization helped?**
- 16. Are you able to help everyone who calls?**
- 17. How does it make you feel when people call you with bad reports?**
- 18. How often do you get calls?**
- 19. How can we plan to be advocates for racial justice?**
- 20. Do you think racism will ever end?**

## Assessment

Formative assessment includes students creating interview questions for a CBO. They show evidence of understanding by writing, in any language, at least two open-ended questions for a CBO.

Students summarize their interviews using questions on a summary sheet.

Students' responses should show an understanding of the CBO's role in the community as activists and advocates for change.

## Alignment to Standards

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

SLA.W7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

SLA.W10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SLSA.R7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

SLSA.SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.11: Explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all citizens exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels.

6.1.4.A.12: Explain the process of creating change at the local, state, or national level.

6.1.4.A.15: Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community state, national, and global challenges.

### World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development

Standard 1: English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

## Resources for Building Background

It is critical that as many books on the “CEAR Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds” list (or books with similar themes) are read prior to teaching this unit. | [docs.google.com/document/d/1S3yw-qMPljccx27MdC\\_hIphz7zHKR3CmyqYOCme-8wA/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1S3yw-qMPljccx27MdC_hIphz7zHKR3CmyqYOCme-8wA/edit)

Rollins, J. (2022). Teacher Freebies. Jazzrollins.com. | [www.jazzrollins.com](http://www.jazzrollins.com)

Before the unit begins, it is important that your students have a strong classroom community where each learner feels safe and able to speak their mind. Educator Jazz Rollins provides printables to support a welcoming classroom community through affirming classroom norms and principles.

## Notes

Some suggestions for CBOs include anti-racist coalitions, local NAACP chapters, Black Lives Matter organizations, Black fraternities and sororities (i.e., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.), and Black churches. Most organizations would likely welcome a partnership with a local teacher.

Consider reaching out to these organizations and forming relationships early to prepare for this unit. The “Anti-Racism Guide: Resources for Education and Activism” provides a list of national organizations | [ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism/getinvolved](https://ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism/getinvolved)

## References

Scholastic. (2010, October 21). *Ruby Bridges remembers* [Video]. YouTube. | [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CgTYGI2mi8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CgTYGI2mi8)

University of California San Diego. (2022, September 14). *Anti-racism guide: Resources for education and activism*. University of California San Diego. | [ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism](https://ucsd.libguides.com/antiracism)



# UNIT THREE, LESSON FIVE

## Presenting Our Learning and Taking Action

**Grade Level: Three**

**Subjects: Language Arts & Social Studies**

**Suggested Length: 5+ days (45-minute sessions per day)**

### Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students present to their peers what they learned about activism to combat racism and racial bias. Using their interview and research, students take on the role of activists within their classroom and school community by informing others about local community-based organizations (CBOs). Through this demonstration of activism, students encourage their peers to become activists who work for racial justice.

### Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Synthesize information from their interviews and other activities to create a presentation for their peers that encourages them to become activists.
- Explain the impact of an injustice in their community.
- Exercise their civic voice and responsibility by raising awareness of injustice and how the community might make positive change.

### Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Orally explain activism and racism in their own words and by using other visual and written formats.

### Essential Questions

- How can we become activists ourselves?
- How can we share with others that we've learned about activism and racism?

## Instructional Resources and Materials

- Poster board
- Markers
- Chromebooks (with Google Suite access)
- Flipgrid or other recording platform
- Notes from interviews and research (“Unit 3 Lesson 4 Summary Sheet”)
- *Change Sings: A Children’s Anthem*, by Amanda Gorman
- “Amanda Gorman | Change Sings” video | [www.youtube.com/watch?v=M00O9FSYk8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M00O9FSYk8)
- Short presentations from CBOs (this can be information on a Google slide or a short video if the CBO has one)
- What Are Activists? Summary Sheet 1
- What Is Racism? Summary Sheet 2
- How Can We Be Activists? Summary Sheet 3
- CBO Interview Summary Sheet 4
- Materials to make bookmarks
- “What a Little Girl is Teaching the World about Racism” video | [www.liherald.com/stories/what-a-little-girl-is-teaching-the-world-about-racism,125677](http://www.liherald.com/stories/what-a-little-girl-is-teaching-the-world-about-racism,125677)
- “I Am, Because You Are” video | [phillychildrensmovement.org/2015/11/i-am-because-you-are](http://phillychildrensmovement.org/2015/11/i-am-because-you-are)

## Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

**Activist:** A person who organizes and takes action to bring about change in society.

**Injustice:** a situation in which a person or a group of people are treated unfairly, ignored, or disrespected, and/or where a person is discriminated against based on their identity or membership in a particular group.

**Oppression:** When a person or group of people who have power use their power in a way that is unfair or cruel to others.

**Equality:** The right of every individual to equal treatment and opportunities regardless of factors like gender, race, and social position.

**Stereotypes:** A fixed and oversimplified idea about a group of people based on some feature of that group (skin color, gender, height, etc.) that is often untrue or only partly true.

## **Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences**

In this culminating activity, students take what they've learned throughout the unit and share their knowledge and experiences with their communities. Students have a voice in choosing the language and medium in which they present their work. Teachers should consider how they honor community knowledge and use these presentations to communicate and celebrate the expertise in the local community.

### **Potential Challenges**

Students may need extra reminders and ways of understanding that activists are more than just community helpers. “Activist,” “organizer,” and “volunteer” are all terms that can be very different, but also have overlapping definitions. A Venn diagram might help students distinguish the differences between these terms.

Not all CBOs work toward activism; some address an injustice through a charity or service lens and not by addressing policy. When teachers select the organizations, it is important to identify those that have some goals for changing systems or structural injustices. For example, some organizations provide a charitable service (e.g., food banks) and do not work to change the system that creates food insecurity. Other organizations work on issues like wages and food availability, which are more focused on policy or structural change.

In addition, teachers should make sure students understand the following conceptual issues:

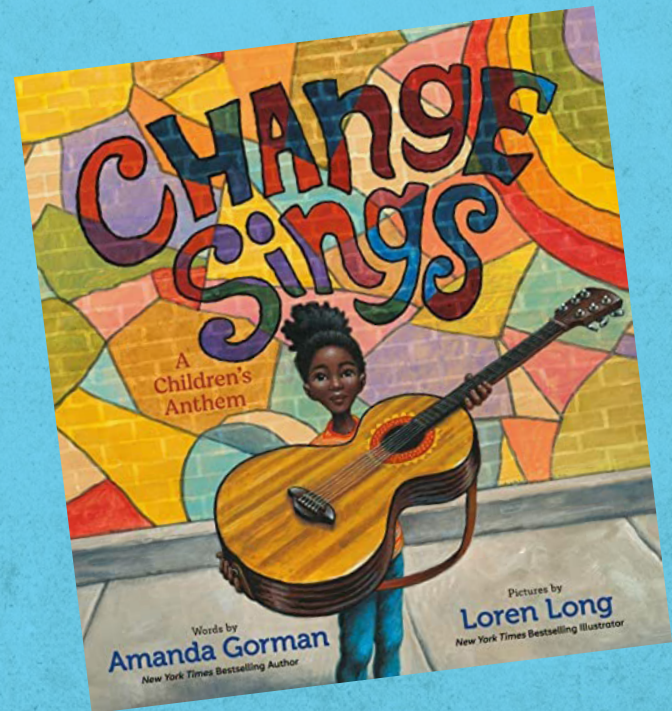
- It takes many people to bring about change.
- Activism serves to address an injustice.
- There are many different types of injustice.
- Change does not happen quickly.

# Lesson Procedures

## Introduction

Begin the lesson by sharing the “What a Little Girl is Teaching the World about Racism” video. Ask students the following questions:

- *What is this child chanting?*
- *What does it mean?*
- *Why is she chanting?*
- *How can we get the entire school interested in all that we have learned about racism and our local community organizations?*
- *What have you learned about racism?*
- *Why do you think it’s important to take action about racism?*



Explain that the students in the classroom can be activists themselves, sharing what they’ve learned with the school community. Let students know that they will be planning a way to share what they have learned with the school at a possible assembly. (See notes near the end of the lesson plan.)

Read aloud *Change Sings*, by Amanda Gorman, or watch the “Amanda Gorman | Change Sings” video as inspiration. Explain to students that the text will become a key part of their work.

*Each one of you has the ability to make a difference. As I read Change Sings, pay attention to the words and pictures for ways you can change the world. I hope it inspires you to know that all of us have the power to change the world.*

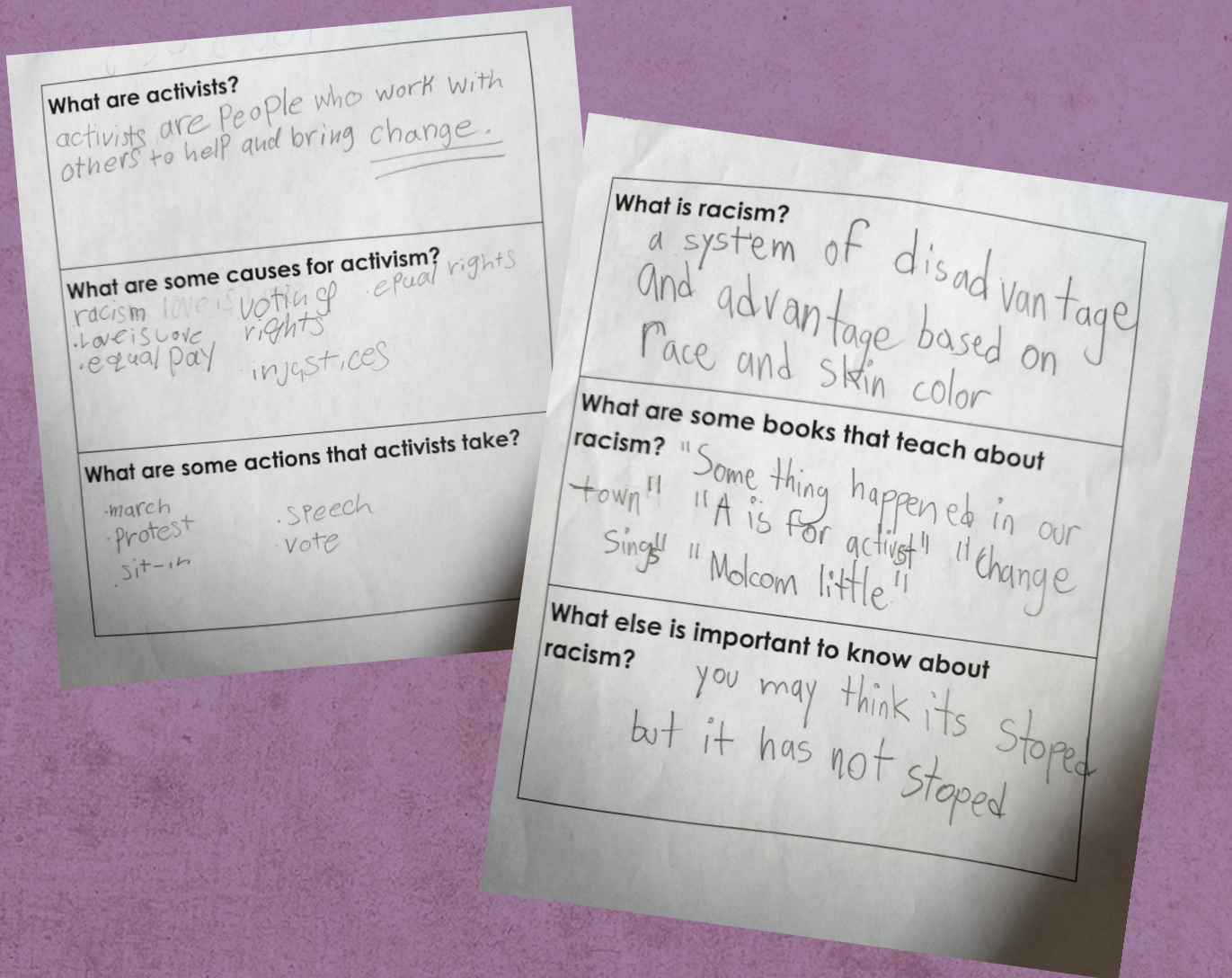
# Brainstorm Activist Actions

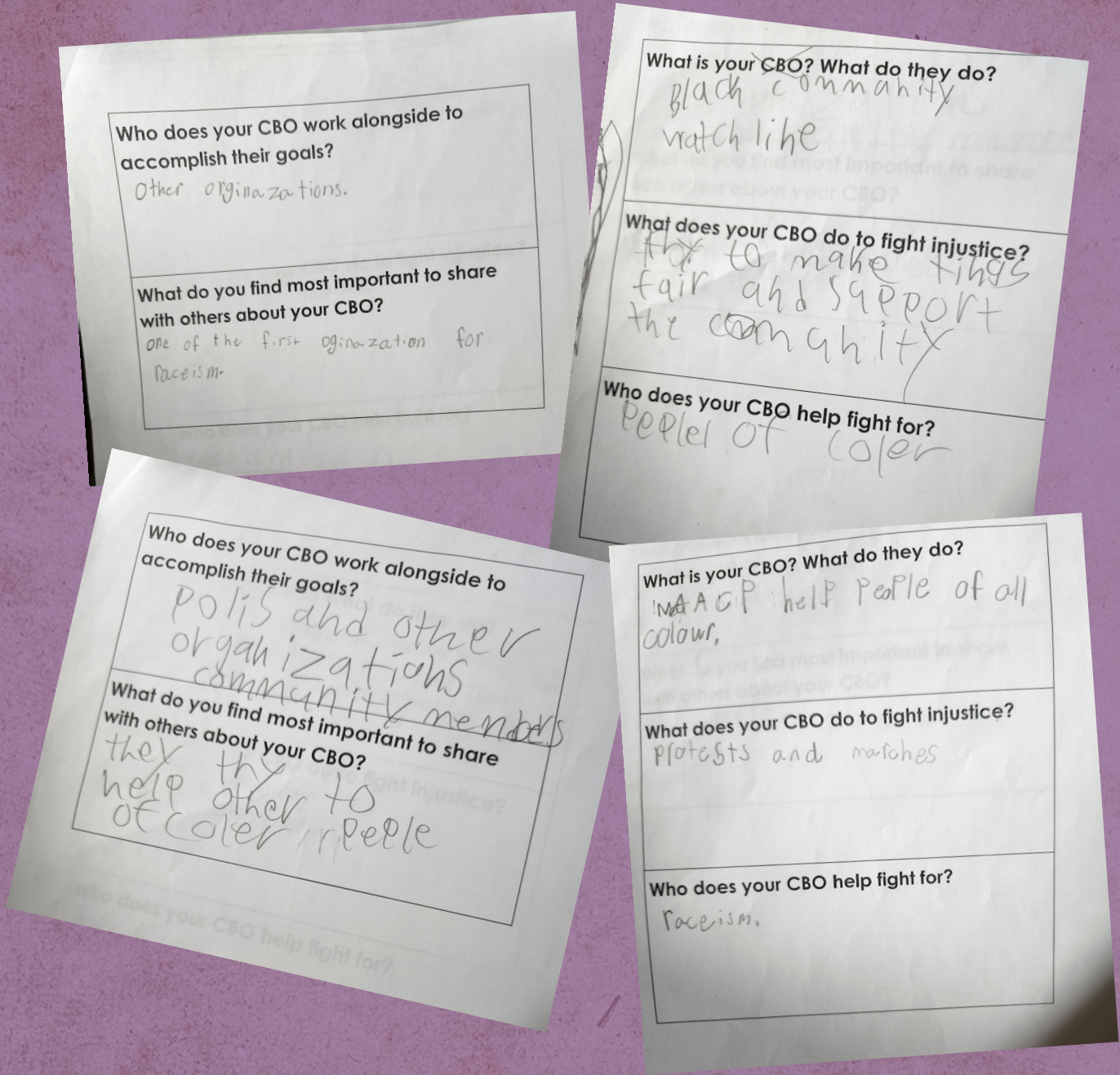
Have students brainstorm what they've learned and want to share with their peers. One suggested way to organize their shared learning is to group students into five themes:

- Activism
- Racism
- CBO Interview 1
- CBO Interview 2
- Taking Action Ourselves

Students can use the "Summary Sheets" to summarize what they've learned. See the Instructional Resources and Materials section for separate Summary Sheets.

See the following examples of completed student Summary Sheets:





Now that we've learned and want to share with others, how can we share this information with our school community?

Together each group of students will create a short summary of what they learned and a way to visually share this information at a schoolwide assembly or other public venue. For example, they can invite another class into their classroom. Students should be encouraged to use Google Slides, Flipgrid, video, skits, etc., to share their information.

# **Unit Three, Lesson Five**

## **What Are Activists? Summary Sheet 1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**What are activists?**

**What are some causes for activism?**

**What are some actions that activists take?**

# **Unit Three, Lesson Five**

## **What Is Racism? Summary Sheet 2**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**What is racism?**

**What are some books that teach about racism?**

**What else is important to know about racism?**



# **Unit Three, Lesson Five**

## **How Can We Be Activists? Summary Sheet 3**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**How can we be activists?**

**Design a bookmark in the rectangle below that we can share with other 3rd graders to inspire activism:**

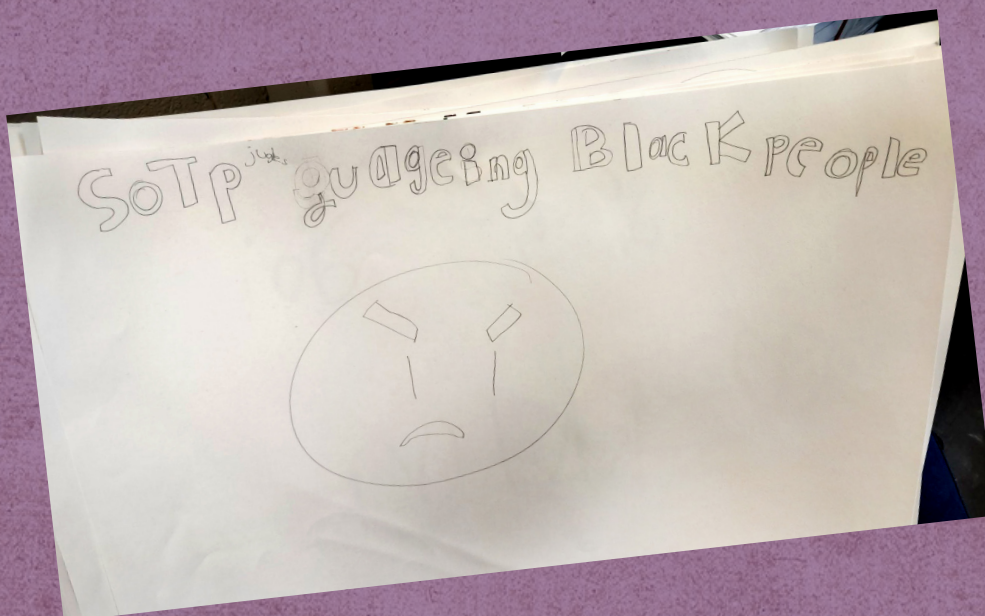
**What else is important to know about taking action?**

## Activist Materials Creation

Each group of students will create definitions, examples, and visuals (pictures, words, picket signs) to share what they learned about racism.

Teachers can refer back to previous read-alouds from the “CEAR Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds” (see Lesson 1) if students need examples of picket signs, protests, etc., for visual supports.

See the following examples of student-created protest signs:



## **Bookmark Creation**

Lastly, each student creates a bookmark to share ideas about how all students in the school can become activists. For example, students can protest to raise public awareness about an issue, distribute a survey, raise money, write a letter to public officials, create community service opportunities, or get the press involved.

Copy the bookmarks, which may be distributed to the peers who attend the presentations as a reminder of how students can be activists.

## **Closure**

Have students practice closing their presentation with readings from portions of the “Amanda Gorman | Change Sings” video and the motions and words of the “I Am, Because You Are” video affirmation from Philly Children’s Movement. Students will do the reading and affirmation performance to close the assembly or presentation.

## Assessment

For a summative assessment, students will work together in small groups to create definitions, examples, and visuals to share what they learned about anti-racist activism through a presentation. Formative assessment or evidence of student

understanding includes the definition/examples/visuals/presentation that reflect students' conceptual understanding about racism and activism and represent the information they learned from local community activists/experts.

## Alignment to Standards

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

RI.3.1: Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.10: Describe how the actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders served as catalysts for social change and inspired social activism in subsequent generations.

6.1.4.A.11: Explain how the fundamental rights of the individual and the common good of the country depend upon all citizens exercising their civic responsibilities at the community, state, national, and global levels.

6.1.4.A.12: Explain the process of creating change on a local, state, and national level.

### World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development

Standard 1: English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

## Resources for Building Background

Before the unit begins, it is important that your students have a strong classroom community where each learner feels safe and able to speak their mind. Educator Jazz Rollins provides printables to support a welcoming classroom community through affirming classroom norms and principles.

Rollins, J. (2022). Teacher Freebies. Jazzrollins.com.  
| [www.jazzrollins.com](http://www.jazzrollins.com)

It is critical that as many books on the “CEAR Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds” list (or books with similar themes) are read prior to teaching this unit.

## Extensions (Optional)

Students write thank you letters and make gifts for CBO representatives and, if possible, an invitation to a schoolwide assembly.

## Notes

If an assembly is not possible, the teacher may support students in finding ways to digitally share their work to the school community. Work can be shared via Zoom, Google Meet, recorded videos, or other formats, such as inviting other classes or community members into the classroom.

## References

- Brinton, S. (2020, June 5). What a little girl is teaching the world about racism. L.I. Herald.  
| [www.liherald.com/stories/what-a-little-girl-is-teaching-the-world-about-racism,125677](http://www.liherald.com/stories/what-a-little-girl-is-teaching-the-world-about-racism,125677)
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- Penguin Kids. (2021, January 26). Amanda Gorman | Change sings picture book [Video]. YouTube.  
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