

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

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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Acknowledgements

The Community-Engaged Anti-Racist (CEAR) Education Project wishes to acknowledge and thank the New Jersey teachers; members of community-based organizations (CBOs); Rutgers University, Graduate School of Education faculty from the programs in Elementary Education and Language Education; and the many partners who made these CEAR curricular units possible.

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Partners

Philly Children's Movement | 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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UNIT FOUR

The Power of Music for Social Movements



UNIT FOUR

The Power of Music for Social Movements

Grade Level: 3-5

Subjects: Music

Suggested Length: : 6-7 Days (45- to 60-minute lessons per day)

Unit Summary

This unit introduces students to songs that bring awareness to injustices and call for collective action. Through a series of lessons, they consider how music is uniquely effective in spreading messages and helping us organize collective action to address injustices in our communities.

Three examples of activist music are introduced from different social movements. Students listen to several examples of activist music and describe their emotions and thoughts. Through this experience, they begin to develop an understanding of how music is an effective tool for bringing awareness to injustices and encouraging collective action.

Students analyze activist songs with a particular focus on their expressive qualities (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) to better understand the intent of the song. They also build an understanding of what constitutes an injustice (as compared to something they simply do not like) and identify injustices in their classroom, school, and/or community. Finally, students work with a small group to modify the lyrics to a selected song in order to communicate an injustice upon which they wish to take action.



Community-Engaged Anti-Racist (CEAR) Principles in Unit Four

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

After exploring examples of activist music from several social movements, students identify injustices within their classroom, school, and/or communities.

Principle 3: Welcomes and Expands Students' Linguistic Resources

This unit includes language supports and encourages students to use their full linguistic repertoires. Additionally, at least one of the songs is offered in a language represented in the classroom community. Students are encouraged to write their lyrics in English and the home languages of students within their small group.

Principle 7: Cultivates and Celebrates Joy

Through the selection of songs using the *Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool*, students engage with songs that celebrate joy, empowerment, and taking action.

Principle 8: Engages Students in Resistance and Action

Students see music as a tool for resisting inequities and taking action by exposing themselves to and analyzing activist music, identifying inequities in their own community, and writing lyrics to raise awareness and take action.

CEAR Practices

Varied Media and Texts: The music selected represents different social movements, styles of music, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Varied Forms of Expression: Students listen to music, respond to it, and create their own lyrics.

Small-Group/Partner Work: Students work in partners or small groups during lessons to complete tasks and ultimately create their activist song.

Critical Literacy: Students discuss how we define injustice and how it is different from something we may not like. Issues of power and privilege and historical contexts are explored.

Historical Connections to the Present: Students begin to explore historical connections to the songs selected from different social movements (Civil Rights, Chicano Movement and United Farm Workers, and Standing Rock).

Language Objectives for Each Lesson: Language objectives are included in each lesson plan.

Planning Using Backwards Mapping: This unit was planned using backwards design.



Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Describe their thoughts and emotions when listening to activist music. (Lesson 1)
- Identify ways in which music uniquely spreads messages and inspires listeners to organize collective action. (Lesson 1)
- Analyze the expressive qualities (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) of a selected song. (Lesson 2)
- Identify the injustice(s) the songwriter is communicating through musical expression. (Lesson 2)
- Distinguish an injustice from something we just may not like and identify specific characteristics of injustices. (Lesson 3)
- Identify injustices within our classroom, school, and/or local communities. (Lessons 3)
- Rewrite two to three verses to “A Change Is Gonna Come” by Sam Cooke to address a local injustice collectively selected by their group. (Lesson 4)
- Use a preparation checklist to develop original verses to go along with the recording. (Lesson 4)
- Rehearse to prepare their original verses for performance. (Lesson 4)
- Perform self-written verses to “A Change Is Gonna Come.” (Lesson 5)
- Discuss factors that influence how audiences respond to protest songs. (Lesson 5)

Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Describe their emotions in response to the examples of activist music using feeling words (happy, angry, energized, etc.) and/or words to convey physical sensations (relaxed, tense, etc.) from a classroom-generated list. (My body felt_____. The song made me feel_____). (Lesson 1)
- Interpret the context of the song by responding to W questions (who, what, etc.) with the support of a *Question Words* chart. (Lesson 1)
- Interpret the meaning of the lyrics of activist songs by responding to W questions (who, what, etc.) with the support of a *Question Words* chart. (Lesson 2)
- Identify and describe injustices going on in their classroom, school, and/or the community by responding appropriately to question words (e.g., who does this affect, how does it affect people, why is it happening) with the support of a *Question Words* chart. (Lesson 3)
- Utilize full linguistics resources to include multiple languages in the writing of original lyrics to express advocacy for social change. (Lesson 4)
- Provide specific qualitative feedback to peers about their performances using sentence frames. (Lesson 5)

Essential Questions

- How can music be used as a tool for communicating messages and bringing people together for collective action? (Lesson 1)
- What is the relationship between music and the daily experiences of people in our communities? (Lesson 1)
- How do the elements of music (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) inform our understanding of the meaning of a song? (Lesson 2)
- How do we interpret the meaning of lyrics in activist music? (Lesson 2)
- What is the difference between an injustice and something we simply do not like? (Lesson 3)
- What injustices exist within our classroom, school, and/or community? (Lesson 3)
- What do we need to learn about injustices in our classroom, school, and/or local community to write lyrics to existing activist music? (Lesson 4)
- What do we need to consider when writing new lyrics for an existing song? (Lesson 4)
- How do we know when a performance is ready to present? (Lesson 4)
- What factors influence how audiences respond to activist music? (Lesson 5)

Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Teachers are encouraged to use the *Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool* to make choices about media and facilitate conversations about injustices that are historically and culturally responsive to students' backgrounds and experiences.

Each lesson includes reflection questions to support teachers in learning from and with

their students as they consider various injustices in activist music, identify injustices in our communities, and examine how activist music is used as a tool to encourage collective action.

Students have the opportunity to explore, write, sing about, and propose a solution to an injustice they identify in their community.

Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

Vocabulary is introduced and practiced through group discussion and connecting students to their own understanding of the words. In addition, and where applicable, more technical definitions will be provided. Students will learn the following vocabulary terms:

Unit Vocabulary

- Activist Music
- Collective Action
- Injustice
- Lyrics
- Mood
- Refrain
- Social Movement
- Stanza
- Syllabic Meter
- Tempo
- Verse



Sam Cooke (Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

Lessons Overview

Lesson 1: The Power of Music for Social Movements

Visual and/or performing arts can be used to amplify messages about injustices and promote collective action. In this lesson, students listen to an example of activist music and describe their emotions and thoughts. Through this experience, they begin to develop an understanding of how music can be used as an effective tool to bring awareness to injustices and encourage collective action.

Lesson 2: The Meaning of the Music: Analyzing Activist Music

Many examples of activist music raise awareness of an injustice and create opportunities for resistance and collective action within communities. In this lesson, students use “A Change Is Gonna Come,” introduced in Lesson 1, and a new song, “No nos moverán,” to analyze the expressive quality of songs (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) to better understand the intent of activist music as well as begin to identify the injustice(s) addressed within the songs.

Lesson 3: Injustices: A Closer Look

In this lesson, students discern between an injustice and something they simply do not like. They use

music and personal examples to collectively identify injustices in their school and local communities. In small groups, students brainstorm injustices that they can identify in their classroom, school, and/or community.

Lesson 4: “A Change Is Gonna Come”: Writing Our Own Lyrics

Students work in small groups to write new verses to Sam Cooke’s song “A Change Is Gonna Come” that will address classroom, school, and/or community injustices identified by the students. They will further explore the injustice, write the lyrics, and use a preparation checklist to prepare for their performance.

Lesson 5: “A Change Is Gonna Come”: Performing Our Songs

Students share and celebrate their new lyrics for “A Change Is Gonna Come.” Each group shares its verses by singing them for the class. Students give and receive feedback. Finally, the class sings the whole song together in a piece of activist performance art that represents the students’ concerns and hopes for their classroom, school, and/or local community.

Assessment

Formative assessment will include observations of student participation in whole- and small-group discussions; collectively completing lyrics analysis surveys; creating an *Identifying Injustices* chart; counting syllabic meter; responding to reflection questions; using the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist*; and participating in peer review using the *Audience Response Form*.

The summative assessment will include the creation of new lyrics to a selected song using the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist*. Based on the criteria on the performance rubric, students receive feedback on their lyrics and performance from the teacher.

Alignment to Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Anchor Standard 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.

1.3A.5.Pr5a: Apply teacher-provided and established criteria and feedback to evaluate the accuracy and expressiveness of ensemble and personal performance.

1.3A.5.Pr5b: Rehearse to refine technical accuracy and expressive qualities to address challenges and show improvement over time.

1.3A.5.Pr4d: Explain how context (e.g., personal, social, cultural, historical) informs performances.

Anchor Standard 6: Conveying meaning through art.

1.3A.5.Pr6a: Perform music, alone or with others, with expression, technical accuracy, and appropriate interpretation.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceiving and analyzing products.

1.3A.5.Re7b: Demonstrate and explain, citing evidence, how responses to music are informed by the structure, the use of the elements of music, and context (i.e., social, cultural, historical).

1.3A.5.Re9a: Demonstrate and explain how the expressive qualities (e.g., dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation) are used in performers' and personal interpretations to reflect expressive intent.

Anchor Standard 9: Interpreting intent and meaning.

1.3A.5.Re9a: Demonstrate and explain how the expressive qualities (e.g., dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation) are used in performers' and personal interpretations to reflect expressive intent.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.

1.3A.5.Cn11a: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Anchor Standard 11: Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

1.3A.5.Cn11a: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 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.

B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

C. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

D. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.3: Determine how "fairness," "equality," and the "common good" have influenced new laws and policies over time at the local and national levels of United States government.

6.1.4.A.9: The examination of individual experiences, historical narratives, and events promotes an understanding of individual and community responses to the violation of fundamental rights.

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

Core Instructional Resources and Materials

Texts

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (2005). *Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement*.

Videos

- Abramson, L. (n.d.). Meditation for kids – loose like spaghetti. [Video.] InsightTimer. | [insighttimer.com/lisaabramson/guided-meditations/loose-like-spaghetti-for-kids-and-young-children](https://www.insighttimer.com/lisaabramson/guided-meditations/loose-like-spaghetti-for-kids-and-young-children)
- Cole, A. (Producer). (2019). Mindfulness. (Season 1, Episode No. 4.) [Series episode]. *The mind: Explained*. Netflix. | www.netflix.com/title/81098586
- Cooke, S. (2016, January 22). *Sam cooke - a change is gonna come (official lyric video)*. YouTube. | www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOMKV4
- Crowder-Biearman, L. (n.d.). *Elevator breath*. [Video.] InsightTimer. | [insighttimer.com/mindfulleigh/guided-meditations/elevator-breath](https://www.insighttimer.com/mindfulleigh/guided-meditations/elevator-breath)
- Fitzgerald, I. M. (n.d.). *Full body scan meditation for kids*. [Video.] InsightTimer. | [insighttimer.com/isabellemaryfitzgerald/guided-meditations/full-bodyscan-guided-meditation-for-children](https://www.insighttimer.com/isabellemaryfitzgerald/guided-meditations/full-bodyscan-guided-meditation-for-children)
- GoNoodle. (2016, August 24). *Rainbow breath - learn to raise your energy: Meditation for kids: Breathing exercises*. [Video]. YouTube. | youtu.be/O29e4rRMrV4
- Zaragoza, R. (2017, October 31). *Raye zaragoza - in the river lyric* [Video.] YouTube. | youtu.be/1cloyBrCeil

Songs

- Cooke, S. (1964). *A change is gonna come* [Song]. On *Ain't that good news*. RCA Victor Records.
- La Rondalla Amerindia de Aztlán. (1974). *No nos moverán* [Song]. On *Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement*. Smithsonian Folkways Recording.
- Zaragoza, R. (2017). *Fight for you* [Song]. On *Fight for you*.

Additional Materials

- “A Change Is Gonna Come” PowerPoint
- “A Change Is Gonna Come” printable lyrics
- *Analyzing “A Change Is Gonna Come”* handout
- *Analyzing “No Nos Moverán”* handout
- *Audience Response Form* handout
- Audio devices to listen to “A Change Is Gonna Come” and “No Nos Moverán”
- Chart paper
- *Feedback Form for “A Change Is Gonna Come” Lyric Performance*
- “In the River” printable lyrics
- *Injustice Reflection Questions* handout
- Markers
- “No Nos Moverán” PowerPoint
- “No Nos Moverán” printable lyrics
- *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist*
- *Question Words*
- *Writing Our Own Lyrics* handout

Resources for Building Background

Highway Queens. (n.d.). *Album review: Raye zaragoza – fight for you.* | highwayqueens.com/2017/07/06/album-review-raye-zaragoza-fight-for-you

Ratcliffe, G. (2021, September 30). Raye zaragoza weaves indigenous and environmental activism into her music. *Broadview Magazine.* | broadview.org/raye-zaragoza-woman-in-color

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (n.d.). *Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement.* | folkways.si.edu/rolas-de-aztlan-songs-of-the-chicano-movement/american-folk-latin/music/album/smithsonian

We shall not be moved/no nos moverán. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2, 2022 | faculty.trinity.edu/dspener/no-nos-moveran/home_english.html

Zaragoza, R. (n.d.). Raye Zaragoza. | www.rayezaragoza.com

Extensions or Follow-Up Activities

This unit could be incorporated into and/or partnered with social studies lessons. This would encourage students to develop an understanding of the historical context and the social movements that led to the composition of these songs.

Notes

In preparation for this unit, it would be helpful for students to have some familiarity with the featured songs. Prior to beginning the unit, consider finding opportunities for students to listen to and engage with the songs.

UNIT FOUR, LESSON ONE

The Power of Music for Social Movements

Grade Level: 3-5

Subjects: Music

Suggested Length: 1 day (45- to 60-minute session)

Lesson Overview

Visual and/or performing arts can be used to amplify messages about injustices and promote collective action. In this lesson, students listen to an example of activist music and describe their emotions and thoughts. Through this experience, they begin to develop an understanding of how music can be used as an effective tool to bring awareness to injustices and encourage collective action.

Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Describe their thoughts and emotions when listening to activist music.
- Identify the ways in which music can uniquely spread messages and inspire listeners to organize collective action.

Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Describe their emotions in response to the examples of activist music using feeling words (happy, angry, energized, etc.) and/or words to convey physical sensations (relaxed, tense, etc.) from a classroom-generated list. (My body felt_____. The song made me feel_____).
- Interpret the context of the song by responding to W questions (who, what, etc.) with the support of a *Question Words* chart.



Jimi Hendrix (Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

Essential Questions

- How can music be used as a tool for communicating messages and bringing people together for collective action?
- What is the relationship between music and the daily experiences of people in our communities?

Instructional Resources and Materials

- Song 1: “A Change Is Gonna Come,” by Sam Cooke
- “A Change Is Gonna Come” video (with on-screen lyrics)
| www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4
- “A Change Is Gonna Come” printable lyrics
- *Question Words* chart
- “A Change Is Gonna Come” PowerPoint

Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

Activist Music: Music that highlights an injustice and brings people together to take collective action to make the world a more fair place

Collective Action: An action taken together by a group of people whose goal is to improve their condition and achieve a common objective

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

Social Movement: An effort by a large group of people to achieve a particular goal, usually a social or political one

Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Consider these questions and the *Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool* to make choices about media and facilitate discussions about injustices that are historically and culturally responsive to students' backgrounds and experiences.

- What global and/or national issues might my students be connected to?
- What languages are represented in my classroom?
- What experiences do my students have with activism and/or activist music?
- Have they been to protests?

Potential Challenges

Exposure to and/or appreciation for activist music will vary. Consider potential biases and/or preconceived ideas held by all learning-community members (i.e., educators, students, families, etc.) about certain types of music (hip-hop, rap, rock, reggae, etc.) that do not create space for acceptance, counternarratives, and appreciation.

Lesson Procedures

Introduction

Welcome students around the circle and explain that they will listen to a song while attendance is taken. Today we will be participating in a mindful listening exercise.

When I call your name for attendance, please respond with one word that describes your emotions or physical sensations after listening to the music.

Turn the classroom lights off. Then, invite students to lie on their backs with their eyes closed. Ask them to observe how their bodies feel prior to listening. Now, play a recording of “A Change Is Gonna Come.” While the music plays, use the following questions to invite student description:

- *How does your body feel as you listen to the music?*
- *What emotions do you feel?*
- *What images appear in your mind? OR What do you “see” as you listen?*

Use the following sentence frames as needed for support:

- **My body felt _____.**
- **The song made me feel _____.**

Introduce activist music to the students.

This song is an example of activist music. What is activist music? Does anyone have examples of activist music?

Possible student responses may include the following:

- **“Music that is about something important.”**
- **“Music that brings people together to accomplish something,” etc.**

Record the students’ ideas as well as the teacher-guided ones below on an anchor chart for later reference as a support for students. This conceptual understanding is key to the unit.

Invite students to define activist music.

Let’s use these ideas to define activist music as music that highlights an injustice and brings people together to take collective action to make the world a more fair place. Activist music has helped to enact meaningful change in various ways around the world.

Usually, activist music is connected to a social movement, an effort by a large group of people to achieve a particular goal, usually a social or political one.

Introduce the learning activity to students

Today we are going to listen to an activist song and consider why music is such an effective way of bringing people together to take collective action.

A Closer Look

Ask students to discuss music as a tool for awareness.

Let's talk about how music is a powerful tool for bringing awareness to injustices and encouraging collective action.

Place students into pairs or small groups and ask them to review the lyrics from “A Change Is Gonna Come” and use the following questions to discuss the ways in which the music/lyrics help amplify the activist message:

- *Imagine that you're a live-streamer on Twitch or YouTube. You've noticed an injustice in your community, and you want to tell your followers about it so they can help you make a change. What might be different if you also wrote a song about it?*
- *What is unique or special about music as a delivery method?*
- *How does music help improve the way that a message is communicated?*

Exploring the Context

Review question words using the *Question Words* chart if needed. Add additional languages spoken in your classroom to the chart. As you review the question words and questions for Lesson 1, encourage the use of students' full linguistic resources and write translations to support comprehension. As you move through the unit, consider adding additional questions that are used throughout the lessons and/or generated by students.

Use the “A Change Is Gonna Come” PowerPoint to facilitate a discussion using the questions and notes on the slides to support students' understanding of the relationship between music and the daily experiences of people in our communities. Reference the *Question Words* chart as needed.

Closure

Explain to students that they will be learning more about activist music.

Over the next four lessons, we will learn more about activist music and practice writing our own activist lyrics. Next lesson, we'll take a closer look at two activist songs and analyze their lyrics, tempo, mood, and instruments used.

Can you name any songs that share a message about bringing people together to make a change or raising awareness about an injustice in the community?

Share your answers on Google Classroom, and we'll share your responses with the class next lesson.

10 songs for social change

- Blowin' in the Wind – Bob Dylan. ...
- Fight The Power – Public Enemy. ...
- Strange Fruit – Billie Holiday. ...
- A Change is Gonna Come – Sam Cooke. ...
- Imagine – John Lennon. ...
- Redemption Song – Bob Marley. ...
- Man in the Mirror – Michael Jackson. ...
- One – U2.



Amnesty International

<https://www.amnesty.org.au> › What's new

10 songs for social change - Amnesty International

Assessment

Through whole- and small-group discussions, students describe their emotions and thoughts while listening to activist music. They share responses and

questions generated when exploring how music can be used as a tool to increase awareness of an injustice and taking collective action.

Alignment to Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Anchor Standard 11: Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

1.3A.5.Cn11a: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

SS 6.1.4.A.9: The examination of individual experiences, historical narratives, and events promotes an understanding of individual and community responses to the violation of fundamental rights.

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

Resources for Building Background

Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool

To support New Jersey visual and performing arts educators in selecting media that align to Community-Engaged Anti-Racist Principles and Practices and demonstrate the arts as a tool for change, please use this reflection tool. For media selections in which you answered no to any of these questions, consider how you will facilitate conversations with students that encourage critical thinking and the acknowledgment of these limitations.

Extensions (Optional)

This lesson (and the unit more broadly) could be incorporated into and/or partnered with social studies lessons. This would encourage students to develop an understanding of the historical context and social movements that led to the composition of activist songs.

Notes

This unit uses songs chosen by the curriculum developers. However, we encourage educators to use the Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool to consider the selection of songs that align with student interest and/or content standards.

References

- Cooke, S. (1964). A change is gonna come [Song]. On *Ain't that good news*. RCA Victor Records.
- Cooke, S. (2016, January 22). *Sam cooke - a change is gonna come* (official lyric video). YouTube.
| www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOMKV4

Community-Engaged Anti-Racist (CEAR) Education Project

Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media

Reflection Tool

The Arts as Communication

- Does the media include unique symbol systems and metaphors that convey and inform life experience?
- Does the media include multiple language options that are spoken/written by native speakers?
- Does the media include diverse representation of race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, language, gender identity, biological gender, gender expression, age, social classes, physical features, sexual orientation, and ability, reflecting today's diverse families?

The Arts as Creative Personal Realization

- Does the media highlight performers/presenters/producers and audience members demonstrating their creative capacity as a lifelong satisfaction?
- Is the media being performed or shared by the original creators? If not, do the performers or platforms have permissions or rights to perform or share?

The Arts as Culture, History, and Connectors

- Does the media highlight individuals and communities expressing their ideas, experiences, feelings, and deepest beliefs and insights into their own culture and society?
- Does the media challenge white supremacy and multiple forms of oppression and provide historical, social, and cultural context from a critical perspective?
- Does the media demonstrate relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life?

The Arts as Means to Well-Being

- Does the media include creators, performers/presenters/producers, and audience members (responders) taking action on issues that improve mental, physical, and emotional well-being?
- Does the media challenge dominant narratives and/or stereotypical representations of individuals or communities?
- Does the media create opportunities to share joy in people's stories and experiences instead of focusing solely on pain and suffering?

The Arts as Community Engagement

- Does the material selected demonstrate individuals collaborating and connecting with others on issues of importance?
- Does the media include a call to action and/or challenge an intended audience to take action?

The Community-Engaged Anti-Racist (CEAR) Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool was adapted from the National Core Arts Standards, 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards—Visual and Performing Arts, and Kids' Inclusive and Diverse Media Action Project. It was created as part of the Rutgers Graduate School of Education CEAR Education Project.

Haines, C., Mills, J. E., Kaldor, T., Clark, K., Donohue, C., Buckleitner, W., Christner, C., Grabarek, D., & Nemeth, K. (n.d.). *The DIG checklist for inclusive high-quality children's media*. Kids' Inclusive and Diverse Media Action Project. <https://www.joinkidmap.org/digchecklist>

National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. (2014). National core arts standards: Dance, grades pre-k to 12. National Coalition for Core Arts Standards.

New Jersey Department of Education. (2020, June). 2020 new jersey student learning standards —Visual and performing arts introduction. New Jersey Department of Education.

“A Change Is Gonna Come”

Written and Performed by Sam Cooke

From *Ain't That Good News*, 1964

I was born by the river,
In a little tent
Oh, and just like the river,
I've been running ever since.

It's been a long, a long time coming,
but I know, oh-oo-oh,
A change gonna come,
Oh, yes it will.

It's been too hard living
But I'm afraid to die
'Cause I don't know what's up there
Beyond the sky

It's been a long, a long time coming,
but I know, oh-oo-oh,
A change gonna come,
Oh, yes it will.

I go to the movie
And I go downtown.
Somebody keep telling me
don't hang around.

It's been a long, a long time coming,
but I know, oh-oo-oh,
A change gonna come,
Oh, yes it will.

Then I go to my brother
And I say, brother, help me please
But he winds up knockin' me
Back down on my knees

Oh, there been times that I thought
I couldn't last for long
But now I think I'm able, to carry on.

It's been a long
A long time coming
But I know, oh-oo-oh, a change gonna come
Oh, yes it will.

Question Words

What? ¿Qué?	Who? ¿Quién?	How? ¿Cómo?	When? ¿Cuándo?	Why? ¿Por qué?
Lesson 1 What is the Civil Rights Movement? What is racial segregation? What is racism?	Lesson 1 Who is Sam Cooke?	Lesson 1 How did segregation affect Sam Cooke?	Lesson 1 When did Sam Cooke write “A Change Is Gonna Come”?	
Lesson 2 What do you see? What are they doing? What is a strike?	Lesson 2 Who do you see?		Lesson 2 When have people sung “No Nos Moverán”?	Lesson 2 Why do people continue to sing this song?
Lesson 3 What makes something an injustice? What is the history of this injustice?	Lesson 3 Who does this injustice affect?	Lesson 3 How does this injustice impact people or groups of people differently?		Lesson 3 Why hasn't it changed? Why does this injustice impact some people but not everyone?

UNIT FOUR, LESSON TWO

The Meaning of the Music: Analyzing Activist Music

Grade Level: 3–5

Subject: Music

Suggested Length: 1 day (45- to 60-minute session)

Lesson Overview

Many examples of activist music raise awareness of an injustice and create opportunities for resistance and collective action within communities. In this lesson, students use “A Change Is Gonna Come,” introduced in Lesson 1, and a new song, “No Nos Moverán,” to analyze the expressive quality of songs (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) to better understand the intent of activist music as well as begin to identify the injustices addressed within the songs.

Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Analyze the expressive qualities (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) of a selected song.
- Identify the injustices the songwriter is communicating through musical expression.

Language Objectives

Students will be able to interpret the meaning of the lyrics of activist songs by responding to W questions (who, what, etc.) with the support of a Question Words chart (see Lesson 1).

Essential Questions

- How do the elements of music (mood, tempo, instruments used, lyrics) inform our understanding of the meaning of a song?
- How do we interpret the meaning of lyrics in activist music?

Instructional Resources and Materials

- Song 1: “A Change Is Gonna Come,” by Sam Cooke (from Lesson 1) video | www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4
- “A Change Is Gonna Come” printable lyrics (from Lesson 1)
- Song 2: “No Nos Moverán,” popularized by El Teatro Campesino and performed in this recording by La Rondalla Amerindia de Aztlán video | folkways.si.edu/rolas-de-aztlan-songs-of-the-chicano-movement/american-folk-latin/music/album/smithsonian
- “No Nos Moverán” printable lyrics
- Question Words chart (from Lesson 1)
- “No Nos Moverán” PowerPoint
- *Analyzing “No Nos Moverán”* handout (Projected and/or copies for all students.)
- *Analyzing “A Change Is Gonna Come”* handout (Copies for all students.)
- Pencil/clipboard or marker/whiteboard
- Audio devices to listen to “A Change Is Gonna Come” and “No Nos Moverán” in small groups

Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

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.

Lyrics: The words of a song.

Mood: The emotional feeling of a song (hopeful, happy, sad, stressful, peaceful).

Tempo: The speed of music (presto–fast, andante–medium, adagio–slow).

Andante grazioso (♩ = 120)

(Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Consider these questions and the *Selecting Visual and Performing Arts Media Reflection Tool* in making choices about media and discussions about injustices that are historically and culturally responsive to students' backgrounds and experiences.

- What music do my students listen to, and how might there be connections to activist music?
- Are the songs that I am choosing for this lesson and unit utilizing my students' languages?

Potential Challenges

As students listen to a song in Spanish and English, be prepared to facilitate important conversations that highlight multilingual music and connect it, if possible, to the multilingual classroom community. When prompted in future lessons, students will write their own lyrics in languages represented in their groups.



Lizzo (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Lesson Procedures

Introduction

As students enter the classroom, play “A Change Is Gonna Come.”

Welcome students and encourage them to make connections to the previous lesson. Reference the chart, if one was created, from the previous lesson.

What did we talk about in the last lesson?

Sample responses may include the following:

- “We listened to activist music”
- “We talked about how it made us feel,” etc.

Prompt students to reflect on the last lesson.

Yes, we listened to an example of activist music and talked about why music is such an effective way of bringing people together to take collective action. Did anyone think of songs that share a message about bringing people together to make a change or raising awareness about an issue in the community?

Explain to students what will happen during the lesson.

Today we are going to dig deeper into another song and focus on specific elements so we can understand the meaning of activist songs.

Before we can start analyzing the lyrics of an activist song, there are some words we need to be familiar with when talking about music. What are some of the elements that make up a song?

Sample responses may include “words or lyrics,” “instruments,” “tone,” or “tempo.”

Explain the importance of these elements.

Yes, all of these help us as listeners understand the intent and meaning of the song.

Song Analysis (Whole Group)

Introduce the activity.

Let's begin with a new song, "No Nos Moverán." Listen to the song and look at the lyrics.

Play the song with English/Spanish lyrics showing.

What do you notice about the song?

Sample responses may include the following statements:

- "It is in another language" (Spanish).
- "It is more upbeat and faster than 'A Change Is Gonna Come.'"
- "It has a variety of instruments."

What languages do you or people you know listen to music in?

Allow time for students to share their responses.

Introduce the background of the song.

Let's learn more about the context of where and when "No Nos Moverán" was sung.

Use the "No Nos Moverán" PowerPoint to facilitate a discussion using the questions and notes on the slides to support students' understanding of the relationship between music and the daily experiences of people in communities. Refer to the *Question Words chart* as needed (see Lesson 1).

Introduce the next activity.

Now that we explored a little bit about "No Nos Moverán" we will practice analyzing the lyrics for this song together.

Distribute the *Analyzing "No Nos Moverán"* handout and/or project it so all students can see it. Use this to support a whole-class discussion that can serve as a model for what students will do in their small groups for "A Change Is Gonna Come." The handout consists of open-ended questions with multiple possible responses.

As students answer the questions, use the responses to learn about their experience of the music and understanding of injustices to assess their relationship to the topic. (For example, if they can't identify the injustice, be prepared to use the resources provided below in "Resources for Building Background.")

While facilitating this discussion, use the following formal definitions to connect to students' informal definitions of the following vocabulary words from *Analyzing "No Nos Moverán"*:

- **Tempo:** The speed of music (presto–fast, andante–medium, adagio–slow).
- **Mood:** The emotional feeling of a song (hopeful, happy, sad, stressful, peaceful).
- **Lyrics:** The words of a song.
- **Injustice:** A situation in which a person or 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.

Chart students' responses and include translations, as needed, for most common home languages to support comprehension.

Song Analysis (Small Groups)

Form small groups of 3-5 students, taking into consideration the full linguistic resources of students and their ability to support one another effectively within each group. Students who may be more comfortable communicating in a language other than English will be partnered, when applicable, with another student who speaks their primary language to support the use of their full linguistic resources.

Students will need access to audio devices so they can collectively listen to the song for specific questions. Prompt students to work collaboratively to complete the analysis survey in *Analyzing "A Change Is Gonna Come."*

Whole Group Debrief/Sharing

Facilitate a whole class discussion using *Analyzing "No Nos Moverán"* and students' responses to focus the conversation.

Closure

Explain what students can expect in the coming sessions.

Over the next several lessons, we are going to identify the elements of an activist song and begin to think about injustices in our communities that we might want to bring attention to. We will write lyrics that include symbols to raise awareness about an injustice and consider ways to take action.

Let's keep thinking about this question: What are some injustices in our classroom, school, or local community that affect you or those you care about?



St. Paul, Minnesota, September 3, 2017, protest against systematic racism and state sanctioned police and corporate violence.
(Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

Assessment

By collectively completing an analysis survey, students demonstrate their understanding of the various elements of music: lyrics, mood, tempo, choice of instruments, and how these impact their interpretation of the song's meaning.

Through whole class and small group discussions, students identify the injustice(s) the songwriter is communicating through musical expression.

Alignment to Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Responding: Anchor Standard 7: Perceiving and Analyzing Products

1.3A.5.Re7b: Demonstrate and explain, citing evidence, how responses to music are informed by the structure, the use of the elements of music, and context (i.e., social, cultural, historical).

1.3A.5.Re9a: Demonstrate and explain how the expressive qualities (e.g., dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation) are used in performers' and personal interpretations to reflect expressive intent.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.9: The examination of individual experiences, historical narratives, and events promotes an understanding of individual and community responses to the violation of fundamental rights.

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

Resources for Building Background

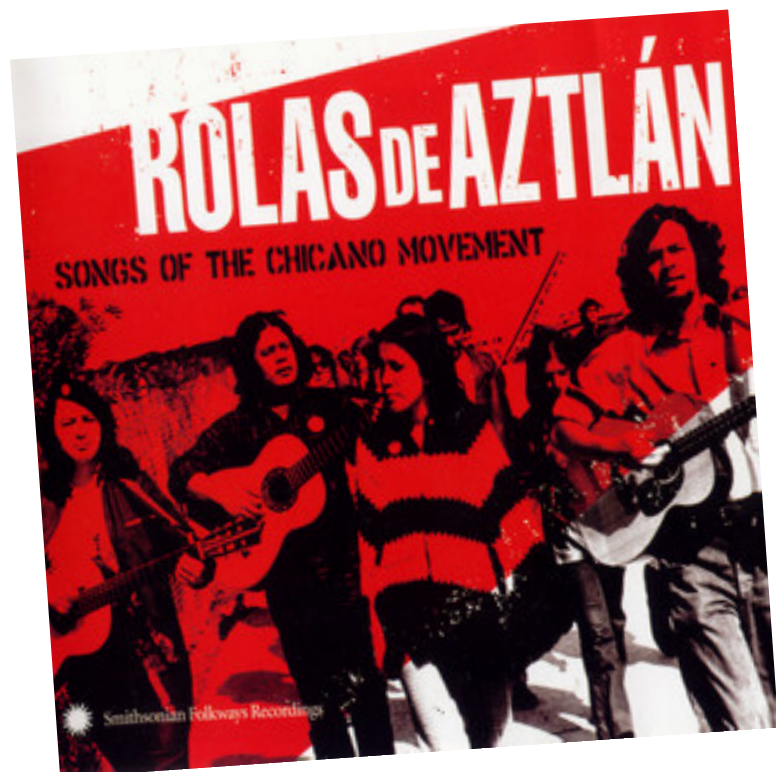
To learn more about the history and compositional context of “No Nos Moverán” or “We Shall Not Be Moved,” please see the webpage “We shall not be moved/No nos moverán” at | faculty.trinity.edu/dspener/no-nos-moveran/home_english.html

Refer to the “A Change Is Gonna Come” PowerPoint for additional building-background resources (see Lesson 1).

References

La Rondalla Amerindia de Aztlán. (1974). No nos moverán [Song]. On Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement. Smithsonian Folkways Recording.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (n.d.). Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement. | folkways.si.edu/rolas-de-aztlan-songs-of-the-chicano-movement/american-folk-latin/music/album/smithsonian



Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement. Smithsonian Folkways Recording.

“No Nos Moverán” (Traditional)

Performed by La Rondalla Amerindia de Aztlán
Translated into Spanish by Luis Valdéz and Agustín Lira
From *Gramática Cantada*, 1974

No, no, no nos moverán.
No, no, no nos moverán.
Como un árbol firme junto al río,
No nos moverán.

Unidos en la huelga,
No nos moverán.
Como un árbol firme junto al río,
No nos moverán.

Unidos en la lucha,
No nos moverán.
Como un árbol firme junto al río,
No nos moverán.

Unidos venceremos.
No nos moverán
Como un árbol firme junto al río,
No nos moverán.

No, no, no we shall not be moved.
No, no, no we shall not be moved.
Like a tree planted firmly next to the river,
We shall not be moved.

United in the strike,
We shall not be moved.
Like a tree planted firmly next to the river,
We shall not be moved.

United in the struggle,
We shall not be moved.
Like a tree planted firmly next to the river,
We shall not be moved.

United, we will triumph.
We shall not be moved.
Like a tree planted firmly next to the river,
We shall not be moved.

La Rondalla Amerindia de Aztlán. (1974). No nos moverán [Song]. On *Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement*. Smithsonian Folkways Recording.
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. (n.d.). *Rolas de aztlán: Songs of the chicano movement*.
| folkways.si.edu/rolas-de-aztlan-songs-of-the-chicano-movement/american-folk-latin/music/album/smithsonian

Analyzing “No Nos Moverán”

1. Listen to the song again and answer the following questions:

- **What** is the mood of the song? (hopeful, happy, sad, stressful, peaceful)?
- **What** instruments do you hear in the song?
- **How** would you describe the tempo of the song (presto, andante, adagio/running, walking, crawling)?
- **How** are the tempo and the mood of the song connected?

2. **What** is the meaning of the simile “Como un árbol firme junto al río, / No nos moverán. (Like a tree planted firmly next to the river, / We shall not be moved)”?

3. **What** is the central injustice identified in this song? **What** might help you learn more about the injustice?

4. Does the song inspire you to do anything about this injustice? If so, **how**?

“No Nos Moverán” (Traditional)
Performed by La Rondalla Amerindia de Aztlán
Translated into Spanish by Luis Valdéz and Agustín Lira
From Gramática Cantada, 1974

Analyzing “A Change Is Gonna Come”

1. Listen to the song again and answer the following questions:

- **What** is the mood of the song? (hopeful, happy, sad, stressful, peaceful)?
- **What** instruments do you hear in the song?
- **How** would you describe the tempo of the song (presto, andante, adagio/running, walking, crawling)?
- **How** are the tempo and the mood of the song connected?

2. **What** is the meaning of the following lines?

- “Oh, and just like the river / I’ve been running ever since.”
- “Then I go to my brother / And I say, brother, help me please / But he winds up knocking me / Back down on my knees.”

3. **What** is the central injustice identified in this song? **What** might help you learn more about the injustice?

4. Does the song inspire you to do anything about this injustice? If so, **how**?

“A Change Is Gonna Come”
Written and performed by Sam Cooke
From *Ain’t That Good News*, 1964

UNIT FOUR, LESSON THREE

Identifying Injustices

Grade Level: 3-5

Subjects: Music

Suggested Length: 1 day (45- to 60-minute session)

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students will discern between an injustice and something they simply do not like. They will use music and personal examples to collectively identify injustices in their school and local communities. In small groups, students will brainstorm injustices that they can identify in their classroom, school, and/or community.

Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Distinguish an injustice from something they just may not like and identify specific characteristics of injustices.
- Identify injustices within their classroom, school, and/or community.

Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Identify and describe injustices happening in their classroom, school, and/or the community by responding appropriately to questions (e.g., who does this affect?, how does it affect people?, why is it happening?) with the support of a *Question Words* chart (see Lesson 1).

Essential Questions

- What is the difference between an injustice and something we simply do not like?
- What injustices exist within our own classroom, school, and/or community?

Instructional Resources and Materials

- Chart paper (Use to co-create with students an *Identifying Injustices* chart)
- Markers
- Song 3: “In the River,” by Raye Zaragoza (with lyrics and context) video
| youtu.be/1cloyBrCeil
- “In the River” printable lyrics
- Mindful Minute, by Alex Brumel
| docs.google.com/document/d/1J2I-YI2eAkkkHijfcIQ4EWLRHLkG7RTf8iJW4hCONnY/edit
- *Question Words* chart (see Lesson 1)

Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

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.

Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Consider the following questions when making choices about injustices that are historically and culturally responsive to students’ backgrounds and experiences.

- What global and/or national issues might my students be connected to?
- Are there school or classroom injustices that are specific to my students?
- Are there injustices occurring in the community that my students or their families are aware of even if I am not?
- What languages are represented in my classroom?
- Do students in my class experience language discrimination? Do their families?

Potential Challenges

Students may struggle with the distinction between injustices and things they do not like or wish were different. The class will have and identify with different communities and backgrounds, and students may struggle to find a common injustice to explore.

Lesson Procedures

Introduction

Begin the class by leading a minute of mindfulness practice using the “Mindful Minute” Google Doc. Classroom mindfulness practice is one way to support students in conversations about injustice, which can be stressful, and enhance their attention skills.

An Injustice or Something That I Simply Do Not Like?

Next, discuss the meaning of an injustice. Let’s talk about the difference between an injustice and something we simply don’t like. Here’s an experience I recently had when I went to the coffee shop.

When I arrived at the coffee shop, there was a long, long line. I can get very impatient waiting in line. While I was waiting, I realized that the cashier taking the order was looking irritated and saying, “I don’t understand what you are saying. Can you speak English?” I listened closer and could hear the person ordering speak in English and also in a language I didn’t know. The cashier said, “I can’t help you; I don’t understand what you are saying.” The customer walked away in frustration.

Let’s think about this scenario. We have three people in the scenario.

Ask students the following questions, giving them an opportunity to respond. Possible responses to the questions are listed in parenthesis after each question:

- *Who are the three people? (The customer, me, and the cashier)*
- *Can you identify what it is that I didn’t like in this scenario? (Waiting in line. I get impatient, and most people don’t like waiting in line.)*
- *Who is experiencing the injustice? (The customer)*
- *What was the injustice they were experiencing? (They were being treated disrespectfully because they spoke a language other than English.)*
- *Who is being unjust? (The cashier, who is treating someone disrespectfully because they don’t speak a language they understand)*

Connect this experience to the topic of today's lesson.

In this scenario, I didn't like waiting in line, but the customer experienced an injustice. We will talk more today about what makes something an injustice as compared to something we just don't like.

Sometimes when you are observing an injustice, it can be difficult to act. Yet, taking action to address injustices is incredibly important. What are some actions I could have taken to stand up for the person experiencing the injustice?

Sample responses may include talking to the cashier and telling them they didn't treat the person justly or respectfully and should have worked to understand them better; asking the person experiencing the justice if they want support with their order.

A Closer Look at Injustices

Connect today's learning to the prior lesson.

Let's talk about what we've learned so far in activist music and see if we can identify what makes something an injustice.

(Chart responses with the title: "Identifying Injustices.")

What makes something an injustice?

Sample responses might include the following:

- **An injustice happens frequently over time (systemic and historical)**
- **People are treated unfairly because they are a member of a particular group or community**
- **The rules are set up unfairly (e.g., some people are allowed certain privileges and others have less) or are unfairly carried out (e.g., the rules are enforced differently for different groups)**
- **Injustices can affect groups of people, other living creatures, the environment, etc.**

Introduce the next activity.

Let's listen to "In the River," by Raye Zaragoza. | www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4eosRdP5gQ

After listening to the song, ask students,

Is this an injustice? Why or why not? We can use our ideas on the Identifying Injustices chart to help us.

Use any of the following guiding questions, as needed, to reinforce and reflect on the video and create a meaningful conversation. Use the Question Words chart as a resource, as needed, to review question words.

- *Can we specifically name the injustice?*
- *Who does this injustice affect?*
- *How does this injustice impact people or groups of people differently?*
- *What is the history of this injustice?*
- *Why hasn't it changed?*
- *Why does this impact some people but not everyone?*
- *What negative impact does the injustice have?*
- *Does it benefit anyone? How?*

Ask students to consider what we can all do about injustice. Use the following guiding questions:

- *Can people intervene or stand up against injustices?*
- *What does it take to correct injustices so that we live in a world that is fair and equitable?*
- *Can you think of a time when young people successfully challenged injustice and worked collectively for a more just world?*

Sample responses may include "Young people participating in sit-ins against segregation, children organizing against climate change, girls fighting to be allowed to play on Little League teams."

Brainstorming Injustices in Our Classroom, School, and/or Community

Our original activist music will bring awareness to an injustice in our classroom, school, and/or community. Let's make a list of your ideas about injustices in our classroom, school and/or community and use our Identifying Injustices chart to decide if it is an injustice. In small groups, you'll use the Identifying Injustices chart to better understand your own injustice and how we can collectively take action to change it.

Model the process with one idea using the *Identifying Injustices* chart from above. If possible, be prepared with an example that has affected the local community recently (e.g., have there been recent protests, concerns over health or safety, or local environmental issues?).

Use the guiding questions below to elicit possible injustices:

- *Is there something unjust or unfair happening in our school?*
- *Is there anything unjust or unfair for speakers for whom English might not be their first language?*
- *Is there anything that is unjust or unfair for people with disabilities?*
- *Does everyone have access to a safe place to play?*
- *What about our local community? Are there injustices that you have heard about in our community?*
- *Are there situations that are unequal for students in our class?*

Divide students into small groups to come up with one or two injustices. These will be the groups students work in for the rest of the unit to further understand their injustice and ideas for collective action and write their lyrics.

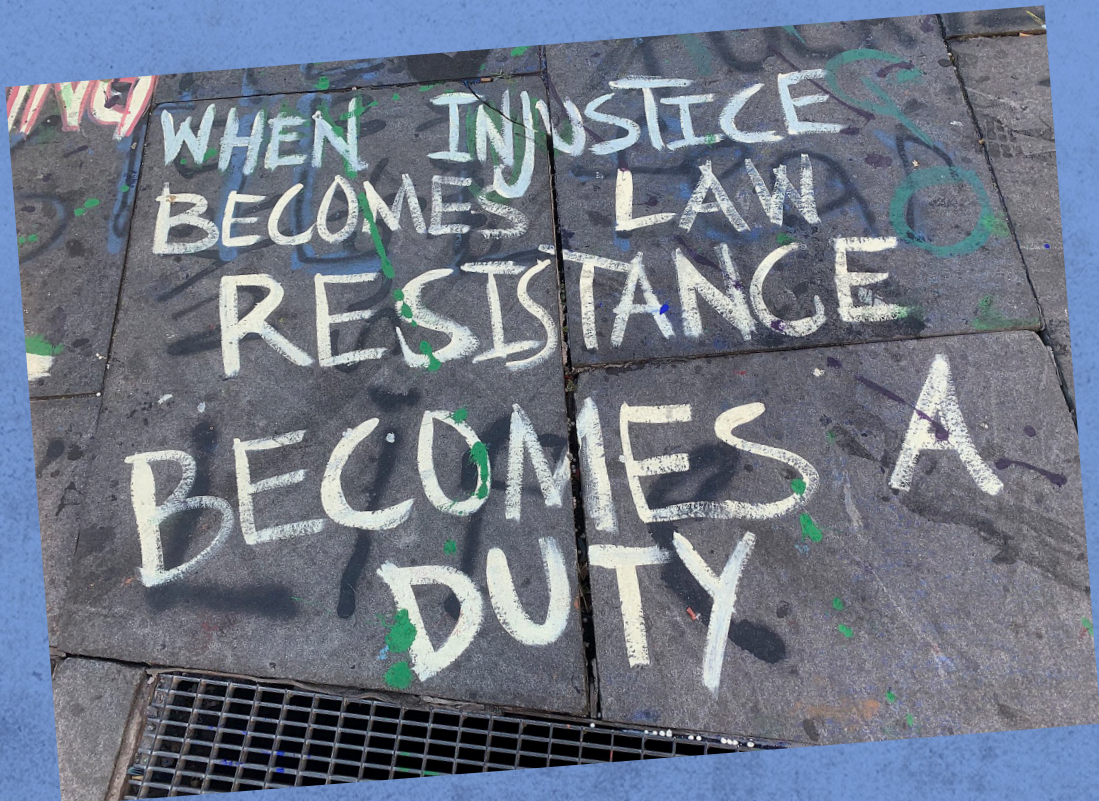
Bring students back to the whole group. Facilitate the creation of a complete list of injustices using the *Identifying Injustices* chart, which can be a starting place for Lesson 4.

Closure

Inform students what they can expect during the next session.

In our next class, you'll work in small groups to create songs about the injustices that you brainstormed today.

Before we leave class, let's practice using movement and words to bring awareness or express our feelings about this injustice. Let's take this one [insert an injustice from your list]. First you will take a few seconds to think about a pose that might express how you feel about this injustice. When I say go, everyone will strike a pose. Then if I call on you, if you'd like, you can share a phrase or make a sound (clap, snap, stomp) to express how you feel about this injustice. Acknowledge the different feelings students expressed. In our next class, we'll draw on these feelings to create our songs about the injustices you identified today.



(Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Assessment

Through the creation of an *Identifying Injustices* chart, with sample responses and guiding questions as support, students identify the characteristics and further clarify the meaning of an injustice.

Through the creation of a list of examples in alignment with the characteristics on the *Identifying Injustices* chart, students identify injustices in their school, classroom, and/or community.

Alignment to Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.

1.3A.5.Cn11a: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 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.
- B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- C. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
- D. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies

6.1.4.A.3: Determine how “fairness,” “equality,” and the “common good” have influenced new laws and policies over time at the local and national levels of United States government.

6.1.4.A.9: The examination of individual experiences, historical narratives, and events promotes an understanding of individual and community responses to the violation of fundamental rights.

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

Resources for Building Background

For more information about the artist Raye Zaragoza, review the following resources:

- Official website of Raye Zaragoza: | rayezaragoza.com
- Article: “Raye Zaragoza weaves indigenous and environmental activism into her music,” by Glynis Ratcliffe | broadview.org/raye-zaragoza-woman-in-color
- Album Review: “Raye Zaragoza – Fight for You” | highwayqueens.com/2017/07/06/album-review-raye-zaragoza-fight-for-you

References

Zaragoza, R. (2017, October 31). *Raye zaragoza - in the river lyric* [Video.] YouTube. | youtu.be/1cloyBrCeil



Raye Zaragoza (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

“In the River”

Written and Performed by Raye Zaragoza
From Fight for You, 2017

There's got to be some hope
There's got to be some hope
There's got to be some way
For you to send your dogs away
And to leave the land alone

It's got to be a crime
Somewhere in your heart you'll find
We're fighting for our right to keep our future bright
And protect the ones we love

In the river is our sisters and our brothers
We are camping out for each other
We are stronger when we band together
And we're standing up for the water
Don't poison the future away

You've got to have a soul
Mother Earth protects us all
If you treat her with disrespect
Then what message have you left
For your children and their home

In the river is our sisters and our brothers
We are camping out for each other
We are stronger when we band together
And we're standing up for the water
Don't poison the future away

How can you take, take, take and not appreciate the soil
Don't let this black snake contaminate our drinking water
This is for our sons and daughters
In the river is our sisters and our brothers

We are camping out for each other
We are stronger when we band together
And we're standing up for the water
Don't poison the future away

UNIT FOUR, LESSON FOUR

“A Change Is Gonna Come”: Writing Our Own Lyrics

Grade Level: 3–5

Subject: Music

Suggested Length: 2-3 days (45- to 60-minute sessions per day)

Lesson Overview

Students work in small groups to write new verses to Sam Cooke’s song “A Change Is Gonna Come” that will address classroom, school, and/or community injustices identified by the students. Students further explore the injustice, write the lyrics, and use a preparation checklist to prepare for their performance.

Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Rewrite two to three verses to “A Change Is Gonna Come” to address a local injustice collectively selected by the group.
- Use a preparation checklist to develop the verses along with the original recording.
- Rehearse to prepare original verses for performance.

Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Utilize full linguistics resources to include multiple languages in the writing of original lyrics to express advocacy for social change.

Essential Questions

- What do we need to learn about injustices in our classroom, school, and/or local community to write lyrics to existing activist music?
- What do we need to consider when writing new lyrics for an existing song?
- How do we know when a piece of music is ready to be performed?

Instructional Resources and Materials

- *Injustice Reflection Questions*
- *Writing Our Own Lyrics* handout
- Writing supplies (clipboard, paper, pencil, etc.)
- *Question Words* chart (see Lesson 1)
- *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist*

Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

Lyrics: The words of a song.

Syllabic Meter: The pattern of syllables that make up the rhythm of a poem or lyric.

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.

Verse: The “storytelling” sections of a song; the rhythm and melody do not change, but the lyrics do.

Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Consider these questions to encourage students to delve deeper into the injustices they selected and write their lyrics.

- Why is this injustice important to your group?
- What do you know about this injustice? What do you need to know?
- How might this injustice impact your group members differently?

Potential Challenges

To write lyrics, students need to have and/or develop a deep understanding of the injustice they identify and be familiar with the melody and form of “A Change Is Gonna Come.” They also need to have a functional understanding of syllabic meter or at least a sense of how to fit their lyrics to the existing rhythmic framework.

The injustices identified by students will impact members of the class community differently, so it is important to consider strategies for navigating those conversations based on the particular needs, interests, and experiences of the community.

Encourage students to think about the systemic nature of injustices (how injustices are reinforced through structures) in addition to how injustices harm individual people. Both are key to addressing injustices and taking collective action. We must not only focus on the individual level; we must push ourselves and our students to think about the structures that reproduce injustices.

Questions that can support this type of systemic thinking and discussion include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What might be the root causes of this injustice?
- How might this injustice have started?
- Can we go back in history and find specific laws or practices that are connected to this injustice?
- Are there policies or practices that might be continuing this injustice?

An example related to language discrimination is provided in this lesson with sample responses.



(Source: *Wikimedia Commons*)

Lesson Procedures

Prior to Lesson: Review the students' list of injustices from the previous lesson. Narrow it down to two or three injustices that you are prepared to support students in researching and exploring through writing their own lyrics. During this lesson, you can use the language discrimination example from Lesson 3 to facilitate a discussion of injustice or develop one based on an injustice students brainstormed.

Part 1 Introduction

Today we will begin a project to create our own lyrics that relate to an injustice we identified as a class. First we will review the process together. Then we will work together in our small groups and write two to three new verses to "A Change Is Gonna Come."

Modeling the Lyric-Writing Process: Understanding the Injustice

Let's go back to the injustice we discussed during our last class. I gave an example that focused on how someone who is becoming multilingual by learning English was treated in the coffee shop. Let's dig deeper into the roots of this injustice.

Facilitate a whole class discussion using the Injustice Reflection Questions resource and make connections to the Question Words chart you have been adding to throughout the unit. Introduce the questions to the class. Let's use these Injustice Reflection Questions to talk about the injustice.

Writing and Recording Questions

The following sample responses relate to the example in the coffee shop (from Lesson 3). Please adjust based on the injustice you select.

Who does this injustice affect? In what ways?

Sample responses may include the following:

- People who are learning a new language (in this example, English).
- People we may identify as having an accent.
- People who may speak varieties of English that differ from those we often learn in school.
- Some immigrant populations.

What do we know about the history of this injustice? What has caused the injustice (e.g., unfair laws, prejudice, fear)?

Sample responses may include the following:

- English-speaking countries sending individuals and armies to take over lands.
- Groups of people who have the power to decide what is the “correct” language.
- Lack of access to education that values varieties of English and/or languages other than English
- Educational systems where English is the preferred, valued, and only language used.

How long has the injustice been around?

Sample responses may include as long “as there have been people living” and/or “as long as we’ve had language.”

What do you want to know about the history of this injustice?

Sample responses may include “how language discrimination started” and/or “the history of language in my country or community.”

How could you find out more about the history of this injustice?

Sample responses may include the following:

- Learning more about how many people in the world speak other languages.
- Understanding the history of why English became the language of power in the United States and other countries.
- Understanding the languages of power in other countries.

Who could help you learn more about this injustice?

Sample responses may include the following:

- Language historians (people who study the history of languages).
- Our parents/guardians, grandparents and other family members, community members, librarians, and/or multilingual community-based organizations.

What rules, laws, or practices might keep this injustice in place?

Sample responses may include the following:

- Many states have English as their official language.
- Our society has prioritized mainstream English, even though many multilingual speakers have been here since the nation's beginning and even before, such as First Nation communities. (This includes varieties of languages, such as Black English, not often prioritized in our school or society).
- English-only educational systems

What negative impact does this injustice have?

Sample responses may include the following:

- People stop speaking the language they speak at home or their home language, if it's not English or the valued variety of English.
- People lose their home languages (if not seen as the correct English) and possibly the ability to communicate with parents and/or grandparents in one of the home languages.
- People having to hide their accent or a variety of language they speak at home, such as Black English, in places like school.
- People not bringing their whole self (identity) to places because of fear that they will face rejection or discrimination.

Does an injustice benefit anyone? How?

Sample responses may include the following:

- Those who speak mainstream English or the dominant language.
- People who speak English may be treated better and with more respect as well as served faster, as we saw in the example in the coffee shop.

What do we want to tell people about this injustice?

Sample responses may include the following:

- Being able to communicate in more than one language is an asset (something that is positive and helps you).
- English is not the only or best language of communication.
- There are many ways to speak English.
- No one should face discrimination because they know more than one language.

What actions can we take to intervene or stand up against this injustice?

Sample responses may include the following:

- Speaking up when we see a person being treated unjustly or disrespectfully.
- Advocating for multiple languages to be represented in our schools and local contexts.

Modeling the Lyric-Writing Process: Understanding Syllabic Meter

Introduce the syllabic meter activity.

To write our own lyrics to the song “A Change Is Gonna Come,” it is important that we understand how many syllables are in each line and then match that format exactly in our lyrics.

As a whole group, use the *How Many Syllables? Activity*, (in Part 1) of *Writing Our Own Lyrics*, to introduce and/or review syllabic meter.

Modeling the Lyric-Writing Process: Writing Our Lyrics

*Now let’s look at the ideas we discussed and these sample original lyrics. Let’s use the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist* to check the lyrics. We will need to sing it too.*

*When I go for my coffee
Injustice abounds
Oh, I hate how they treat folks
In my own little hometown*

(“A Change Is Gonna Come” chorus)

*’Cause when somebody speaks a
New language to you
It doesn’t mean their feelings
Aren’t valid or untrue*

(“A Change Is Gonna Come” chorus)

*We are all so deserving
Of love and respect
No matter where we come from
But we just aren’t there yet*

(“A Change Is Gonna Come” chorus)

After sharing the lyrics, discuss their connection to language.

These sample lyrics are only written in English. How could we incorporate the different languages in our classroom into these sample lyrics?

One possible student response may be to include words from different languages spoken by students in the classroom.

Identifying Our Small Group's Injustice

Finally let's look at two or three of the injustices that we brainstormed in class. Take a few minutes with your group to decide which one of the injustices you would like to work with. You will begin by using the Injustice Reflection Questions to learn more about the history of the injustice, what impact it has on our local community, and the collective action people are taking to address it.

Closure

In our next class, you will use what you've learned to write original lyrics to "A Change Is Gonna Come." You can write in any language you wish, including multiple languages (e.g., some words or lines in English and others in Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, etc.). In the meantime, you are encouraged to collaborate with your groupmates outside of school or during lunch/recess and ask me any questions that come up.

Part 2 Introduction

Musicians, we will have more time to work with our groups to write two or three original verses to “A Change Is Gonna Come.” I’ll be coming around to answer questions and support you as you use the Injustice Reflection Questions to learn more about the injustice your groups have identified and as you write your lyrics. You may find that you need to consult additional resources (community-based organizations, the Internet, etc.). Remember that your group can use multiple languages to write your lyrics.

Writing Lyrics in Small Groups

Each group will first use *Writing Our Own Lyrics* to reflect on the injustice they identified. They will use the Injustice Reflection Questions to guide their discussion about the injustice and research the injustice to learn more about it.

Small groups will then collaboratively write their own lyrics using the directions under *Our Group’s Lyrics* to guide them.

Finally they will use the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist* to help them prepare for the performance of their new lyrics.

Check in with and support groups in completing *Writing Our Own Lyrics*, using the questions to facilitate a deeper understanding of the injustice. Ensure students are correctly utilizing the appropriate rhyme scheme and meter in order to fit their lyrics to the song.

Closure

I’ll collect your lyrics to review them before our next class. I might make some suggestions for you to consider when we first get together. You’ll have some time to meet with your group for finishing touches and to practice singing your verse before we have our performance. I’m so proud of the work that you’ve all done and can’t wait for us to get to share our lyrics with each other next time!

Assessment

Students write their new lyrics using their understanding of syllabic meter and the reflection questions. During group time, teachers check in with groups and redirect students to the reflection questions and/or provide suggestions for resources.

Students reflect on their readiness for performing their lyrics by using the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist*.

Alignment to Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Performing: Anchor Standard 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.

1.3A.5.Pr5b: Rehearse to refine technical accuracy and expressive qualities to address challenges and show improvement over time.

1.3A.5.Pr5a: Apply teacher-provided and established criteria and feedback to evaluate the accuracy and expressiveness of ensemble and personal performance.

1.3A.5.Pr4d: Explain how context (e.g., personal, social, cultural, historical) informs performances.

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

Extensions (Optional)

This lesson (and the unit more broadly) could be incorporated into and/or partnered with social studies lessons. This would encourage students to develop an understanding of the historical context and the social movements that led to the composition of these songs.

Injustice Reflection Questions

What is the specific injustice we want to write about?

Who does this injustice affect? In what ways?

What do we know about the history of this injustice?

- What has caused the injustice? (e.g., unfair laws, prejudice, fear, etc.)
- How long has it been around?
- What do you want to know about the history of this injustice?
- How could you find out more about the history of this injustice?
- Who could help you learn more about this injustice?

What rules, laws or practices might keep this injustice in place?

What negative impact does it have?

Does it benefit anyone? How?

What do we want to tell people about this injustice?

What actions can we take to intervene or stand up against this injustice?

Writing Our Own Lyrics

Part 1: How Many Syllables?

Looking at the verse and chorus from “A Change Is Gonna Come” by Sam Cooke, how many syllables are in each line?

NUMBER OF
SYLLABLES

Verse

_____ **I was born by the river**
_____ **In a little tent**
_____ **Oh, and just like the river**
_____ **I’ve been running ever since**

Chorus

_____ **It’s been a long**
_____ **A long time coming**
_____ **But I know a change gonna come**
_____ **Oh, yes it will**

Sample Original Lyrics

Below is an example of some newly written verses to “A Change Is Gonna Come.” We will use the Preparing for Our Performance Checklist to determine if these lyrics are singable, amplify a message about injustice, and promote collective action. This is the same checklist that you and your group will use to assess the lyrics you write together.

**When I go for my coffee
Injustice abounds
Oh, I hate how they treat folks
In my own little hometown**

(“A Change Is Gonna Come” chorus)

**’Cause when somebody speaks a
New language to you
It doesn’t mean their feelings
Aren’t valid or untrue**

(“A Change Is Gonna Come” chorus)

**We are all so deserving
Of love and respect
No matter where we come from
But we just aren’t there yet**

(“A Change Is Gonna Come” chorus)

Writing Our Own Lyrics

Part 2: Injustice Reflection Questions

Use these questions to talk with your group and better understand the injustice before writing your lyrics.

What is the specific injustice we want to write about?

Who does this injustice affect? In what ways?

What do we know about the history of this injustice?

- **What has caused the injustice (e.g., unfair laws, prejudice, fear)?**
- **How long has it been around?**
- **What do you want to know about the history of this injustice?**
- **How could you find out more about the history of this injustice?**
- **Who could help you learn more about this injustice?**

What rules, laws, or practices might keep this injustice in place?

What negative impact does it have?

Does it benefit anyone? How?

What do we want to tell people about this injustice?

What actions can we take to intervene or stand up against this injustice?

Our Group's Lyrics

Review and listen to the lyrics of the song. Write your new lyrics below. Remember, just like any type of writing, it may take a couple of drafts to get your lyrics in a form where it is ready to share with others. Your lyrics can be written in the various languages of your group members. When you are finished, use the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist* to review your lyrics and make any needed changes.

Preparing for Our Performance Checklist

Use this checklist to help you prepare for your performance.

Our lyrics identify and communicate the injustice.

YES

NO

NOT
SURE

Our lyrics propose action we can take and/or explain why it might be difficult to take action.

YES

NO

NOT
SURE

Our lyrics are “singable” and have the same amount of syllables in each line as “A Change is Gonna Come.”

YES

NO

NOT
SURE

Our lyrics express a tone and emotion that is appropriate for our injustice.

YES

NO

NOT
SURE

Our group has practiced singing our lyrics and is ready to perform.

YES

NO

NOT
SURE

UNIT FOUR, LESSON FIVE

“A Change Is Gonna Come”: Performing Our Songs

Grade Level: 3–5

Subject: Music

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

Lesson Overview

Students share and celebrate their new lyrics for “A Change Is Gonna Come.” Each group shares its verses by singing them for the class. Students give and receive feedback. Finally the class sings the whole song together in a piece of activist performance art that represents the students’ concerns and hopes for their classroom, school, and/or local community.

Content Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Perform original verses to “A Change Is Gonna Come.”
- Discuss factors that influence how audiences respond to activist music.

Language Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Provide specific qualitative feedback to their peers about their performances using sentence frames.

Essential Questions

- What factors influence how audiences respond to activist music?

Instructional Resources and Materials

- *Writing Our Own Lyrics handout* (see Lesson 4)
- *Audience Response Form* (for students to provide feedback to each group)
- *Feedback Form for “A Change Is Gonna Come” Lyric Performance* (for the educator to provide feedback to each group)
- *Identifying Injustices* chart (see Lesson 3)

Vocabulary/Conceptual Development

Stanza: A section of a poem (like a paragraph in poetry).

Refrain: The line or lines that are repeated in a song or poem.

Activist Music: Music that highlights an injustice and brings people together to take collective action to make the world a more fair, equitable, and sustainable place.

Centering Student, Family, and Community Knowledge and Experiences

Consider these questions in encouraging students to consider the various injustices featured in the original lyrics:

- Is this an injustice you’ve heard about?
- What languages are represented in the lyrics?
- Are the languages spoken in our class represented in the new lyrics?
- What is something new we’ve learned about our communities from listening to the new lyrics?

Potential Challenges

Students may be unfamiliar with or personally unaffected by the injustices highlighted in the lyrics. Be prepared to support students in considering why injustices impact various individuals or groups differentially. Clearly name injustices and issues of power, and make connections to historical contexts.

Lesson Procedures

Introduction and Performance Preparation

Today we will rehearse with our groups for a few minutes, and then we will perform our new verses with one another. Please gather with your group, make any last edits that you'd like to make before presenting, and practice singing your verses a few times.

Encourage students to review the *Writing Our Own Lyrics* handout from the previous lessons. Ensure they have the final draft of their lyrics and have reviewed the *Preparing for Our Performance Checklist* on the *Writing Our Own Lyrics* handout.

Check in with each group to determine the order of performances (e.g., first, second, third, etc.).

Performance Time

Review the order of each group.

Now it's time to perform the lyrics from our original activist song. We will begin by singing the first verse and chorus as a class, and then our first group will perform. Each group will sing its first verse, then the class will sing a chorus together, then the group will sing its second (and possibly third) verse, and the class will sing a chorus together.

Pass out the *Audience Response Form*. Instruct students to use this form to provide written feedback to the groups. Review the questions they will respond to and how they will complete the *Audience Response Form*.

Provide musical accompaniment for each group with a guitar, piano, ukulele karaoke track, etc. After each group presents, lead a brief discussion about its song's theme(s) and execution. Challenge audience members to use the *Identifying Injustice* chart to name the injustice amplified in the group's song. Ask audience members to also discuss factors that influenced how they responded to it. (These may include students' identities, personal connections/experiences, mood, lyrics/word choice, a specific verse, etc.).

Use the *Audience Response Form* to guide the conversation. Use the following sentence frames, as needed, to help students provide feedback to their peers.

- What is the message of the verse(s)? "The message of the verse is _____."
- Did the new verses inspire you to learn more and/or take action? How so? If they did not, explain why not.
- Do you like how these lyrics fit into the song? Why or why not?
- "Yes, I do." "No, I don't." "I think that _____"

After each group has performed its verse, begin with the original first stanza and lead a choral sing-along of the whole song with all of the original lyrics.

Closure

At the end of next week's class, we will set aside a few minutes to receive our performance reviews for today's performances. I'll be providing feedback on your lyrics, performance, and activist messages. Thank you for your hard work and remember: Musical activism is only ONE way that we can take action in response to the injustices in the world around us. Let's all be activists every day, in every way that we can. I'm so proud of the musicians and activists that you all are.

Assessment

Using the *Audience Response Form*, students give and receive feedback to and from peers on their lyrics and performances.

As a class, students discuss factors (i.e. identity and experiences, mood, lyrics, specific verses, etc.)

that influenced how they responded to their peers' original activist songs.

Based on the criteria on the Feedback Forms for “A Change Is Gonna Come” Lyric Performance, students receive feedback on their lyrics and performance from the teacher.

Alignment to Standards

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Performing: Anchor Standard 5: Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.

1.3A.5.Pr5a: Apply teacher-provided and established criteria and feedback to evaluate the accuracy and expressiveness of ensemble and personal performance.

Performing: Anchor Standard 6: Conveying meaning through art.

1.3A.5.Pr6a: Perform music, alone or with others, with expression, technical accuracy, and appropriate interpretation.

Responding: Anchor Standard 9: Interpreting intent and meaning.

1.3A.5.Re9a: Demonstrate and explain how the expressive qualities (e.g., dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation) are used in performers' and personal interpretations to reflect expressive intent.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 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.
- B. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
- C. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
- D. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Group Name:

Group Members:

Feedback Form for "A Change Is Gonna Come" Lyric Performance

Aspect of performance	Things we did well	Things we could improve	Score from 1-5***	Questions for the teacher
Lyrics identify and communicate the injustice.				
Lyrics propose action we can take and/or why it might be difficult to take action.				
Lyrics are "singable" and have the same amount of syllables in each line as "A Change is Gonna Come."				
Performance expresses a tone and emotion that is appropriate for our injustice.				
Ensemble performed in an organized and musical fashion (we practiced!)				

Notes from teacher:

- *** Points summary:
 1 = We didn't do our work :(
 2 = We still need help (that's OK!)
 3 = We're starting to get it (practice makes perfect!)
 4 = We can do it (woo-hoo!)
 5 = We have mastered it and could teach a friend (wow!)

Audience Response Form

Read the questions in the top row and the sentence stems that will help you format your answer to each question. Keep the questions in mind as each group performs. After each group performs, write your answers to the questions in the corresponding row (Group 1, Group 2, etc.). Use the sentence stems in the top row to help you answer the questions for each group, entering your answers in the appropriate row.

Q: What is the message of the verse (s)?
A: The message of the verse is

Q: Did the new verses inspire you to learn more and/or take action? How so? If they did not, explain why not.
A: Yes, they did. No, they didn't.
I want to

Q: Do you like how these lyrics fit into the song? Why or why not?
A: Yes, I do. No, I don't.
I think the lyrics

Group 1				
Group 2				
Group 3				
Group 4				
Group 5				