Includes: Pre- and Post-Game Class Assignments, Safety Guidelines, Potentially Difficult Situations/Responses, and Resources

Developed and Written

by Kesa Kivel

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**Other Game Materials (Separate; Free)**
The link you received to download this document also provides you with other free game materials, including *Game Instructions.*
*Game Instructions* includes a glossary, handouts, worksheets, debriefing options, and a feedback form.

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PRE-GAME PREP

PRE-GAME PREP FOR FACILITATORS

Racism is difficult for most people to address and can seem overwhelming. Success with the game means being as openhearted and as knowledgeable as possible, not being perfect.

Below are some guidelines that may help you feel more comfortable with the topic.

To Consider:

- Play the game after your group has been meeting for a while and some trust has been established.
- Think about any personal experiences with racism that you might feel comfortable sharing. Your being vulnerable with the players, if appropriate, may inspire them to do the same.
- Reflect on your own racial biases and see if anything comes to mind. Unchecked biases might trigger unhealthy and unfair responses from you.
- Acknowledge that there are different dynamics/risks/preparations for teachers who are white and who are of color, as well as for teachers who are working with student bodies where a majority are of a different race/ethnicity from the teacher. What do you need to do to address the specific audience and dynamics of your class? Some suggestions:
  a) If there are mostly white students and only a few students of color in your classroom, cluster the students of color in groups of two per team, rather than placing one “token” student of color on a team. (This idea is from Beverly Daniel Tatum’s book Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation.)
  b) If you’re a white person facilitating the game in a mixed-race setting, it’s usually best for you rather than for a person of color (whether it’s a co-facilitator of color or a student of color) to explain why a situation is racist to a white player who doesn’t understand. It is not up to people of color to have to defend/explain how a situation affects their racial group.
  c) Many of the situations described in the Situation cards may unfortunately resonate with students of color, who may therefore need extra time for reflection and sharing.

To Do:

- Play the “Self-Directed” format of the game in advance with friends or colleagues to help familiarize yourself with all aspects of it. Then decide which format (Game Instructions, Self-Directed, p. 20, or Guided, p. 23) is appropriate for your particular group of players.
- Try to “lean into” any discomfort that arises with a spirit of curiosity and caring, and encourage players to do likewise.

  Practice taking on the role of a facilitator rather than an expert teacher who wants questions answered in a certain way. Ideally, for this activity you are creating space for conversations to flow, questions to be asked, and seeds of new ways of thinking to be planted.

  For instance, although you may think you have the right answer, the game is intended to be a catalyst for dialogue and exploration, not an instructional tool for conveying a specific, politically correct line. If a student expresses a racist idea during the conversation, it is the teacher’s role to simply facilitate the students’ discussion of this rather than to insert a definitive position. This is not always easy to do, but it’s important.
To respond to comments from students who may dispute that racism still exists, have some basic statistics on hand – for example, the racial pay gap in your state (Helpful Tips, p. 10).

Ask for assistance from an aide or colleague if you think you’ll need it. It would be ideal to facilitate this game in partnership with a colleague of a different race.

Role-play in advance how you might handle a heated discussion, especially in any area where you know you have strong feelings. Read “Potentially Difficult Situations/Responses” (Helpful Tips, p. 5) for on-the-spot responses to specific situations. You can also:
   a) Speak with the main person/s involved right after class.
   b) Postpone a difficult discussion about a particular topic for a later class to allow both yourself and the students time to prepare for it.

Allow sufficient time for the very important debriefing process after the game (Game Instructions, p. 28).

Talk to a colleague or friend afterward for your own debriefing. This is important to ensure that your needs are taken care of, as well as to get another perspective on what transpired during the game.
POTENTIALLY DIFFICULT SITUATIONS/RESPONSES

You’ll be able to handle most situations gracefully and easily. However, challenging situations may still arise, and some suggestions for handling them are offered below.

Please email me with any classroom experiences you’d like to share at www.roadtoracialjustice.org. I’d love to hear from you, and with your permission I may incorporate some of your experiences in the next edition of the guide.

- **Eye-rolling, smirking, laughter due to embarrassment**, etc. will provide you with information that some players feel uncomfortable. Notice these kinds of things, as well as awkward silences, and address them. You can say, “Talking about racism can feel awkward. What are you thinking and feeling right now?”

- **“All Arabs are...” “All Asians are....”** Response: Generalizations about a group of people are called stereotypes. How many people in this room have been stereotyped? Where do stereotypes come from? How do you suppose it makes a person or group who is stereotyped feel? Also, have you yourself ever generalized about a racial group based on one experience that you had?

- **“All white people are racist.”** Response: It’s best not to stereotype any group. Ignorance leading to racism by some white people does happen as a by-product of such things as negative media images of members of other races, poorly written school textbooks, and beliefs learned from parents. Also, some white people just make poor choices! However, historically there have been — and still are today — many white allies, including Lucretia Mott, Miles Horton, Howard Zinn, and Peggy McIntosh. Check out the list of activists (Helpful Tips, p. 18) for more people and organizations.

**NOTE:** Some people will say that the *majority* (rather than *everybody*) in a certain group is this way or that, but you can tell them this is still stereotyping. Unless they have a study (although studies can be problematic, too) that backs up their comment, they don’t really know what’s what. Ask them to consider the bigger question of how people or groups get labeled and, most importantly, the consequences of stereotyping.

- **“We shouldn’t focus on race. That’s just going to divide us.”** Response: Statistics show that we’re already divided by race in schools and in neighborhoods. According to a 2013 report from the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute, schools are more segregated now than they were in 1970. Schools with mostly students of color, on average, have fewer funds for textbooks, staff, building repairs, etc.

  Focusing on race helps us understand each other’s experiences, including the unfairness of school segregation, and will help to resolve racism.

- **“I’m afraid to speak up because I’ll be misinterpreted or thought to be racist.”** Response: Reassure players that expressing thoughts or doubts respectfully is a good way to check things out. They can phrase questions in this way: “Is it true that...?” But remind players that they cannot use a racial slur in their question.
Potentially Difficult Situations/Responses

• “I don’t notice a person’s race when I meet them.” Colorblindness is the idea that we should ignore racial differences and see everyone as the same. Response: While this may sound positive, if we ignore the differences, we’ll be ignoring the racism that people of color experience, and we won’t be addressing the issue. We would also be ignoring the distinct, positive aspects of each person that may well be influenced by that person’s racial/ethnic group.

• “If people of color only worked harder...” Response: Most people of color do work hard. What has kept them from succeeding despite their hard work is the individual and institutional racism that some white people have created to exploit them. Slavery is a good example. After slavery was abolished, people of color could not easily achieve success because of segregation and discrimination, so they often did not have property, businesses, and homes or transferable skills and social connections, which many white people had to pass on to their children. Many times when people of color did have property, businesses, and homes, these assets were destroyed or stolen by white people.

• “What about Oprah and Obama? They made it – so why can’t other Black people?” Response: A few people succeeding does not mean that all people of color have the same opportunities to succeed. Things like socioeconomic class, looks, personality, connections, talent, and education all play a role. Most Black people have huge hurdles to overcome. By highlighting the success of a few people of color, people promote, intentionally or not, the myth of widespread racial progress.

• “Why aren’t there situations in the game about white people?”
  “White people have been discriminated against, too!” (aka reverse racism)
  “As a white person, I’ve struggled, too.”
Response: There is a difference between those rare but hurtful acts and the systemic — or ongoing and widespread — oppression of people of color that has occurred throughout U.S. history because of racist laws, practices, and policies.
People of color are affected by racism in many areas of their lives, not just in a few hurtful experiences, and not just by the kinds of racism that may be reported in the media.
Hurtful acts against white people are wrong and not to be tolerated. It’s okay and natural for white people to be upset about them. Everyone should be treated with respect! But, again, individual acts against white people are different from the ongoing, widespread prejudice and discrimination against people of color.

• “You’re playing the race card.” (an accusation that a person of color is overreacting and calling something racist that is not) Response: Everyone overreacts at times, but more often than not a situation is, in fact, racist, so let’s give careful consideration to the facts of each situation, and also to the bigger picture.
White privilege can often lead white people to have a worldview in which race doesn’t seem to be a big deal, because they themselves are not affected by racism.
However, a person of color may have been racially profiled many times. They may have heard many racist jokes. They may have been discriminated against often. Multiple negative experiences based on race will naturally influence a person’s sensitivity to “yet another” racist situation.

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**Potentially Difficult Situations/Responses**

- **Players are staring at the one person of color in the room and expecting them to speak for their race/ethnicity.** Response: I notice we’re all looking at Tina to answer the question, as if all Native Americans — with their diverse ideas, thoughts, and beliefs — would respond in the same way that she will. (Idea from tolerance.org.)

- **“Black people use the N-word. Why can’t I?”** The N-word is not used in the game but might come up in discussion, which can cause Black students to cringe, anticipating the potential stereotyping and disrespect that might arise from such a conversation. Some possible responses:
  a) Some African Americans use the N-word, but many refuse to use it. There’s no one opinion on the subject.
  b) If you’ve never had the word used against you, you don’t know how painful it can be. So, we’re not going to open this up for everyone to discuss. (Idea from “Race: Some Teachable — and Uncomfortable — Moments,” by Heidi Tolentino; in Rethinking Multicultural Education, 2nd ed.)
  c) That word or variations of it have been used, and are still used, to put African Americans down. Why would we want use it then, no matter who else does?
  d) It’s a fair question, but we don’t have time to talk about situations that aren’t in the game. You can research the history of the word on your own.

- **“What about homophobia and other kinds of oppression?”** This game is focused on race, but many of these issues overlap with gender, sexuality, class, and religion. As we go through the game, let’s look for opportunities to bring in these other aspects of identity and make connections. For instance, many of the kinds of interventions described in the game can be used in other settings. (See glossary definition of intersectionality for another way to look at this in Game Instructions, p. 16.)

- **Miscellaneous**
  a) There will be times when you don’t agree with what a student has said. Even though you may strongly want to express your disagreement, you can instead say in a neutral tone of voice: “I can see that you feel strongly about what you are saying. Thank you.” Be sure to look directly at the student when you are speaking.
  
  I believe it’s important to acknowledge all comments, if possible.

  b) Invite further inquiry: “What makes you think that?” Or, “I don’t think that you meant to be offensive. Can you say that in another way?”

  c) Postpone the discussion or assign a writing, art, or research project to get more input for a later session.

**NOTE:** This is a reminder that many debriefing options are provided (Game Instructions, p. 28). In the debriefing, you will have further opportunities to discuss any challenging situation.
NOTES ON SPECIFIC SITUATION CARDS

The four situations below proved difficult for some of the players in the multi-racial “Road to Racial Justice” focus group to see as racist. I kept them in the Situation deck because even if players don’t fully grasp the issues now, understanding may develop over time.

• **Card #4 (uncle tells jokes about Asian Americans who aren’t present in the room)**
  Some players remarked: If the targeted person is not in the room, what’s the problem?
  
  **Response:** Explain that the people present, especially any children, are likely to internalize the racist messages they hear and are subsequently less likely to make Asian American friends and are more likely to harass Asian American people, even leading to physical violence.

  Or say, “Racist jokes foster the mindset of one racial group’s being superior to another racial group. Is that fair?”

• **Card #6 (spying by the New York Police Department on the Muslim community)**
  Some players remarked: The NYPD spying on the Muslim community was a good plan in order to keep us, and our loved ones, safe.

  **Response:** Ask players to consider that there are many white terrorists besides Timothy McVeigh (referred to on the card) who have committed terrorist acts in the U.S., acting as part of hate groups or individually. However, their demographic group (mostly white, Christian men) has not been demonized, as Muslims have been. There is, in fact, a double standard.

  (Idea from speech by Tim Wise at Emerson College, Boston, MA, April 2013.)

• **Card #9 (racial profiling in retail store)**
  Some players remarked: Teens of all races/ethnicities are followed around in stores.

  **Response:** Indeed, many teens are followed in retail stores. However, consider that security video has shown in many cases that white people shoplift more than people of color, but people of color are followed and arrested more often. This is a double standard, once again.

  This is a great place to point out the intersection between “adultism,” or the systematic mistreatment of young people by adults, and racism.

• **Card #27 (use of Native patterns on Navajo Hipster underwear)**
  Some players remarked: Fashion trends come and go, and it’s no big deal to incorporate Native designs in clothing.

  **Response:** Ask players to consider the cumulative effect of the oppression of Native Americans over time. Native Americans today are affected by the legacy of stolen lands and boarding schools, as well as the use of Native mascots, environmental racism, the cultural appropriation of sacred rituals, and negative media images. These things naturally affect a Native person’s reaction to “yet another” racist situation.

  “The most compelling context is that the U.S. government used the destruction of Native culture as a tool of colonization and control. Cutting their hair, forcing them to speak English, whipping them for practicing rituals, etc., and in light of that, Native Americans’ ability to reclaim and preserve their cultural heritage is a big deal.” (Quoted section above from Ariel Luckey.)
ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF HISTORIC OPPRESSION: Examples

These examples of racism will provide you with some helpful background information, and will be useful to students while playing the game or during the debriefing.

Note: Sharing too many facts about racial inequities can be demoralizing, so be thoughtful in how much you share with students at any one time. Include examples of resistance when possible (see next page).

Racial Cleansing
Black people in this country were once themselves considered property and so were not allowed to own land. When Black people were able to own land, they were sometimes run off. “Racial cleansing” conducted through mob violence and the actions of the Ku Klux Klan resulted in land theft that emptied entire counties of Black people in the North, Midwest, and South.

Despite the resistance of Black people, because of these kinds of racist historical events, white people more often than Black people have assets such as cash and homes to pass down to their children.

Land Grabs
Native Americans once lived on 98% of U.S. land but now live on 2%, due to land grabs (starting with Christopher Columbus), battles between U.S. forces and various tribes, the Dawes Act of 1887, and numerous broken treaties.

Despite the resistance of Native Americans, because of this history of land grabs, along with the notorious boarding school program and other acts against Native people, white people more often than Native Americans have assets such as cash, businesses, investments, and homes to pass down to their children.

"The antidote to feel-good history is not feel-bad history but honest and inclusive history.”
— James W. Loewen, Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong

Redlining
Adding to the discriminatory practices based on race that already existed, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) of 1934 established a policy of “redlining,” which denied or limited financial services such as housing loans and insurance to people in certain neighborhoods; the racial makeup of the neighborhood was often the sole reason.

Despite the resistance of Black, Latinx, and other people of color over the years, because of governmental and banking policies such as these, white homeowners more often than people of color have assets such as cash and homes to pass down to their children.

Social Security
The Social Security Act of 1935 guaranteed an income after retirement but excluded agricultural and domestic workers — who were mostly African American and Mexican American — from benefiting.

Because of governmental and banking policies such as these and despite the resistance of people of color and others, white homeowners more often than people of color have assets such as cash and homes to pass down to their children.
CURRENT RACIST POLICIES AND PRACTICES: Examples

Racial Profiling
Racial profiling violates the constitutional requirement that all persons be accorded equal protection of the law. In The Reality of Racial Profiling Report you can find statistics on the breach of this requirement (see page 10 of this publication found on the following website: http://www.civilrights.org/publications/reports/racial-profiling2011/racial_profiling2011.pdf).

For example, the number of searches in Illinois after traffic stops of African American and Latinx drivers was more than double the number of the same kind of searches for whites — who were actually twice as likely to have contraband, such as illegal substances.

Also, the Stop, Question, and Frisk policy in New York City has permitted police officers to stop pedestrians and frisk them for weapons and drugs, a practice that disproportionately affects people of color.

Resistance to Racial Profiling (examples):
- A class-action lawsuit against the Stop, Question and Frisk program has been filed.
- A free app has been developed for New Yorkers to monitor and report police misconduct.

Police and Vigilante Brutality
Although police brutality has been more in the public view because of recent media coverage, this injustice along racial lines has been constant over time.

Resistance to Police Brutality (example): Black Lives Matter, the organization and movement, was co-founded by three black activists — Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi — in response to the murder of African American youth Trayvon Martin in 2012 by a white Neighborhood Watch coordinator. Black Lives Matter works against police brutality and for racial justice in many arenas.

"Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal."
— Shirley Chisholm, first Black Congresswoman in the U.S., educator, author

Racial Wage Gap


Resistance to the Racial Wage Gap (example): The National Association of Colored People (NAACP), a historic group of African Americans, supports equal pay for equal work, among its many other campaigns.
PRE-GAME PREP FOR PLAYERS

In advance:
- Tell the players they will be playing an exciting, educational board game on racism in the next few weeks.
- Send out the optional “Talking Points for Parents and Educators” letter (Helpful Tips, p. 27).

Just before playing:
- State your intention for the game out loud, such as, “I’m envisioning respectful, healthy conversations in which everyone feels safe and learns a lot.”
- State the game’s goal and purpose: After responding to “Situation” cards, each of which describes a specific incident of racism, players move markers on the game board toward the finish line. Players will become more aware that racism exists in many everyday kinds of situations, learn why each situation is racist, and acquire tools to interrupt these situations.
- Share how the racist situations were chosen: The situations are about “everyday” kinds of racism that players may not always know about or notice, unlike racist incidents involving police brutality and the burning of mosques, etc., which most people are aware of through media exposure.
  To combat racism in ALL the places it exists, we need to understand just how widespread it is. Note to facilitator: If players aren’t aware of this, they may think the game trivializes racism by ignoring the most egregious kinds.
- Let the players know that all of the racist incidents in the Situation cards — without exception — are based on actual events, as unbelievable or outrageous as they may seem. This is very important to emphasize in order to show how pervasive and toxic racism is in our society.
- Players may hesitate in answering if they think they might be choosing the wrong intervention. Explain that there are no “bad” interventions described in the Situation cards, and that the way players choose to intervene will depend on their upbringing, personality, education, and other factors.
- Share the information from the mandatory “Framing the Content for Success with the Game” (Game Instructions, p. 9). Either: (a) have players pass this page around and take turns reading sections out loud, or (b) summarize the information for the students.

Safety Guidelines
Brainstorm specific safety guidelines with the players (or review guidelines if they have already been established in your class). Add the following if they weren’t included:

a) Listen to each other without interrupting.

b) Everyone will naturally have different ideas about the best way to respond to a particular situation, depending on a person’s race, gender, age, socioeconomic class, upbringing, environment, and so on. Remember to pause and breathe if you disagree with the views of another player, and try not to judge others.

c) Try not to judge yourself; you are not a bad person for any particular thought or action — we all have some bias or another. We are here to learn and grow by identifying and then changing any prejudicial thinking and discriminatory actions that we may discover.

d) Be open to dialogue with others about any comments that you make.
e) Say the word “Respect!” — or something else supportive — to the person who has shared something personal and revealing. It takes courage to be vulnerable.

f) If you disagree with what someone has said: Say “Ouch!” if a player says something that provokes you (or if a situation reminds you of a time in which you yourself have been hurt). It’s healthy to identify right then that you have a strong reaction rather than to bury it.

g) If someone says something you find offensive:
   • Question the person instead of attacking them. For example, you could calmly ask, “Is it fair to base your comment on just one experience that you’ve had?”
   • Talk about a specific action you disagree with rather than labeling a person “bad” or “wrong” for one thing they have said or done.

h) Make “I” statements, such as, “I have a different view of the situation.” “In my experience...” “I feel that...”

i) Never use racial slurs. Say nothing if you can’t say something neutral or constructive.

**PRE-GAME ACTIVITIES**

**UNITY-BUILDING ACTIVITY (optional)**

*Objective:* Encourages players to look for things they have in common with each other.

Just before playing the game, ask players to pair up with someone they don’t know well. Each pair has one minute to write down things they have in common as fast as they can. Prompt players to ask their partners about general categories in order to build a sense of unity. For instance, a player could ask their partner, “I like science fiction movies, do you?” instead of, “Have you seen Star Trek II, The Wrath of Khan?”

At the end of one minute, put two pairs of students together in a group of four, and give each group one minute to find things all four students have in common. Each group of four then presents the list of things its members have in common to the larger group.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS (optional)**

*Objective:* Provides inquiry questions that will help students find purpose in the game.

Students write a five-sentence paragraph describing their thoughts about one of the following topics before the game is played. Students write a second paragraph answering the original question after the game is played, then compare their responses.

- a) What causes racism?
- b) Do you think the problem of racism is serious in the U.S. today?
- c) On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “completely comfortable” and 5 being “completely uncomfortable,” what is your comfort level in talking about racism? Please explain.

**MINDFULNESS PRACTICE (optional)**

*Objective:* Encourage players to connect their minds, hearts, and bodies and bring their fully embodied selves to discussions about race, racism, and white privilege in order to foster empathy.

Improvise the guided mindfulness practice as needed.

*Close your eyes or lower your gaze, uncross your legs, and plant your feet firmly on the floor, imagining the earth rushing upward to support you. Take a few deep breaths, relaxing your legs, belly, chest, shoulders, and facial muscles. Take a few deep breaths, feeling your body relax even more. Imagine the word and sensation of kindness in your chest area. What does kindness feel like? Is it warm, expansive? Connect the feeling you have to the people around you, to your community, to the world. Take one more deep breath and open your eyes.*

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“I DON’T THINK THE SITUATION IS RACIST!”

**Objective:** Many people don’t believe that racism still exists, or they think some people are “just too sensitive” about the subject and are overreacting. The comment “I don’t think the situation is even racist” may be made about a situation described in a Situation card.

This pre-game activity ensures that there will be a broad conversation in which multiple perspectives are expressed. Having a discussion before the game may also prevent a lengthy discussion that derails the game as it is being played.

**Discussion**

Say: “You’ll be playing a game in which the situations described are considered to be racist.”

- *In real life, who gets to decide whether a situation is racist? The person who feels offended or threatened? Or the person who says or does something that someone else believes is racist?*

- *Should we take into account both the intent (e.g., "I didn’t mean to hurt anybody” or “I was just joking around”) and the impact (“I was deeply offended and embarrassed by your joke”)? Why or why not?*

- *Can a well-intentioned person cause harm? For instance, if you accidentally step on someone’s toe, does it still hurt?*

- *Are you responsible for the results of your words and actions? If someone responds that everybody is responsible for his/her own emotional reactions, follow with:*

  “Has anyone ever brushed off your feelings by saying ‘I didn’t mean anything by it’? How did the brush-off make you feel?”

  *Can we honor other people’s emotions, whomever you think is responsible for them?*

- *What if the person who makes a racist joke has more power or privilege than the person who was targeted in the joke? Is the situation more unfair? Is it likely that the joke stereotypes a group of people or furthers the oppression of them?*

Add: If you haven’t been discriminated against, it can be difficult to put yourself in the shoes of someone who has. However, as you play the game, try to consider that another person’s experience of a situation is as real to them as your experience of it is to you.

*CCSS.CCSS.SL. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.* Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

"Intent Versus Impact" Writing Assignment

Sometimes people will say they were “just joking” and that others should “lighten up” about the racist comments they make, even though we or others felt deeply offended by the comments.

- Which matters more, the intention behind someone’s action or the impact (that is, the consequence) of that action? Regardless of your personal belief about this, write a paragraph defending EACH position. Then write a third paragraph about the value of understanding both positions.

- Does it matter who tells a racist joke or uses a racist word? That is, if the person using the word or telling the joke is a member of that same race, does that make it okay?
POST-GAME ACTIVITIES

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.a
Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7,9
5. Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.
7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually and quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
9. Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.a-f
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

RESEARCH, WRITING, AND ACTION ASSIGNMENTS
Objective: Students will do research using primary and secondary sources, then present a well-reasoned written and oral report demonstrating knowledge of the subject matter.

Mascots
Research the controversy about the use of Native American mascots from multiple perspectives, examining such factors as sovereignty, cultural appropriation, free speech rights, and imagery. As part of your research, read a book such as Dancing at Halftime: Sports and the Controversy Over American Indian Mascots, by Carol Spindel, or Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy, edited by C. Richard King and Charles Fruehling Springwood. Write a paper about your research.

Research the Native American advocate and artist Charlene Teters using three different sources, and create an oral report.

Related Assignments About Native Americans
- Read a work of history such as the book Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West, by Dee Brown, and write a paper about it.
- Listen to the song "My Country, 'Tis of Thy People You’re Dying," by Buffy Sainte-Marie. Write a 5-stanza poem or song summing up the feelings expressed in Sainte-Marie’s song, as well as the information imparted in it.
- Create a vocabulary list of 10 or more words relating to Native American affairs, providing definitions. Use the words in a report about Charlene Teters.
- Write an essay (1½ pp.) on how film/TV portrayals of Native Americans are similar to or different from the true experiences of Native Americans, now and in the past.
- Research and write a report about the lawsuit filed by the Navajo Nation against the Urban Outfitters clothing retailer in 2012.

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Vietnam War

- Read and write a paper on *Fallen Angels*, by Walter Dean Myers, or *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O’Brien.
- Research and write a paragraph about one of the following: Muhammad Ali’s conscientious objection of the Vietnam War; Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s speeches against the Vietnam War; U.S. evacuation orders during the Fall of Saigon and the soldiers who went against the policy to try to help Vietnamese at risk.

Other Research Topics

*Write a one-and-a-half page essay on one of the topics below. Include a timeline. Come to class ready to lead a 10-15 minute discussion on your topic, having prepared written questions in advance.*

- Redlining; free trade agreements, such as NAFTA and CAFTA, and how these relate to current immigration issues.
- “Sundown towns” (possible research source: *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, by James W. Loewen); reparations to the descendants of people who were enslaved.
- Executive Order 9066 and the internment of Japanese Americans; the Chinese Exclusion Act and its aftereffects in terms of the numbers of Chinese immigrants permitted into the U.S. in relation to European immigrants.
- Manifest Destiny and the Homestead Act, and the effects of these on Native Americans then and now; Native American boarding schools; environmental racism; the exclusion of farmworkers, who are mostly non-white, from basic protections under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- The New York City Police Department’s policy of spying on the city’s Muslim community, and the effects of this on members of that community and on the larger community as well.
- Racial profiling; the banning of the Mexican American Studies (MAS) K-12 program in Arizona; the “school-to-prison pipeline.”

Other Writing Projects

Journal Writing

- The last 10 minutes of class could be set aside for free-form journal writing on game-related topics – for example, group dynamics, racial justice, or personal insights and feelings about playing the game.
- Students can also use one page to reflect on a particular card, with the card number and/or the situation noted at the top of the page.

The remainder of the page could be divided into two parts: in the first, students can write their thoughts/reflections; in the second part, the students can list any question(s) that have arisen from their thoughts/reflections.

Note: If you intend to have students share their entries out loud in class, let the students know this in advance.
Pair Game with a Book (English/language arts; history)
Choose a book or play with racial themes for students to read and review – for example:
- *Kindred*, by Octavia Butler
- *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, by Jamie Ford
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
- *A Raisin in the Sun* (play), by Lorraine Hansberry

Have students research and then write about the time period and underlying issues in the book they have read. Specifically, what historical practices, policies, and laws may have contributed to the specific conditions presented in the book and to some of the situations in the game?

Writing Inspired by Quotes (English/language arts; history)
Give students the “Quotes Activity” (*Helpful Tips*, p. 22). Ask them to select a quote they believe inspires a solution to the issues presented in the book and/or to one of the situations described on a game card. Then ask students to write at least a full paragraph explaining why they have chosen that quote.

Selected Topics for Research/Writing/Action Assignments
- **White History Month**: Topic: Why don’t we have a White History Month?

- **Ethnic Studies**
  Studies show that all students, especially students of color, benefit academically from learning about other people of color — their literature, inventions, and history, such as might be included in an ethnic studies class. However, these classes are seldom offered at the high school level and were recently banned in Arizona.

  Research, and then write two paragraphs, one for and one against having an ethnic studies class in your school. Interview members of different races/ethnicities and include some of their comments in your report. See “The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review,” by Christine E. Sleeter: [http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf)

- **Media Literacy to Understand and Combat Racism**
  Research media for racial stereotypes, then create a video exposing how media influences viewers on both conscious and unconscious levels.

- **“The River Story”**
  Use the following, adapted from “The River Story,” by Irving Zola, for a writing exercise. What action in the story seems most effective to you? Why? Have you ever intervened in any way to make life better for another person? Give an example.

  > Three friends picnicking at a river’s edge notice a baby floating in a river. Then more babies float by. Two of the friends jump into the river and start pulling babies to safety. They continue to pull them from the river—but one person takes off at a run. “Where are you going?” ask the others. “I’m heading upstream to see who is throwing babies into the river in the first place, and what might be done about that.”
• **Cultural Appropriation**
  Defined: The use — without permission or proper context — of the dress, music, art, traditions, or social behavior of an oppressed people by a group that is in a position of greater power.

  Write a one-page report on what you believe to be an example or examples of cultural appropriation in our society today. For instance, how might cultural appropriation apply to what you wear or to the music you listen to?

  As you reflect on the assignment, consider the cumulative effect of the oppression of people of color over time. This cumulative effect naturally affects a person of color’s reaction to “yet another” time when the dominant group takes over an aspect of an oppressed people, whether through a clothing style, such as saggy pants; a hairstyle, such as dreadlocks; or language.

  How is cultural appropriation different from cultural exchange or assimilation? What questions arise for you as you do this assignment? How easy or difficult is it to explain cultural appropriation to others? Why?

• **Who Is White?**
  Several ethnic groups, including Irish, Jewish, Greek, and Polish Americans, were at one time considered nonwhite and faced racial slurs; discrimination in housing, employment, and schooling; and violence, including beatings and murder (although never to the extent that African Americans and Native Americans did).

  Over time, these ethnic groups gradually “became white,” socially and legally, as racial groupings of people were manipulated over time by white people, the dominant group in the U.S. If descendants of all ancestors who experienced discrimination knew their own history, would they be more compassionate to those who face such discrimination now?

  **Assignment**
  Read the preceding paragraph. What do you know about the forced or voluntary arrival in the U.S. of your ancestors (or of people of your race/ethnicity in general), and of their subsequent treatment here? If you are Native American, what do you know about your ancestors, where they lived at different times and why, and how they were — and are — treated?

  Do you think the treatment of your ancestors has any effect today on your personal access to education and health care, the neighborhood in which you live, and your family’s access to home ownership? If so, how? Write a report based on your findings.

• **Community Service for Racial Justice**
  Choose a racism-related issue from the game or in your community that you feel strongly about, and take action. (Examples: gather signatures for a student-led petition; boycott a store; produce a public service announcement; write a theater piece; create an art show; support or oppose legislation; join an ongoing campaign; write a letter to your school newspaper; file a complaint; use social media; interrupt racist situations on campus; start a blog, etc.).
PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE
Assignment/Handout

a) Choose three people/organizations to write about and present an oral report to the class.
b) Research and write a paragraph about each of the three people/groups. Do they inspire you? How? What qualities do you have that you think are like theirs?
c) Think of three people/groups you believe deserve a spot on the list that are not already on it. In a paragraph, explain why you have chosen these three.

☐ ACLU (1920-) Nonprofit civil rights organization
☐ JOAN BAEZ (1941-) Bi-racial (Latinx-white) folksinger, activist
☐ JUAN MARI BRAS (1927-2010) Puerto Rican, Independence Movement activist
☐ CÉSAR CHÁVEZ (1927-1993) Latinx farm worker and civil rights leader
☐ FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1818-1895) African American, formerly enslaved abolitionist
☐ DREAM ACT ACTIVISTS (2001-) Latinx people, especially youth, who work to provide undocumented young people with a path to legalization through legislation called the Dream Act.
☐ VIRGINIA F. DURR (1903-1999) White civil rights activist
☐ WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON (1805-1879) White abolitionist and journalist
☐ MYLES HORTON (1905-1990) White civil rights activist and union organizer
☐ DOLORES HUERTA (1930-) Latinx farm worker and civil rights leader
☐ SARU JAYARAMAN (1976-) Indian American advocate for restaurant workers
☐ MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (1929-1968) African American civil rights leader
☐ YURI KOCHIYAMA (1921- ) Japanese American human rights activist
☐ WILMA MANKILLER (1945- ) First female chief of the Cherokee Nation
☐ MALDEF (1960-) Latinx legal civil rights organization
☐ NAACP (1909-) African American civil rights organization
☐ LUCRETIA MOTT (1793-1880) White abolitionist and women's rights activist
☐ ROSA PARKS (1913-2005) African American civil rights activist
☐ BAYARD RUSTIN (1912-1987) Gay, African American civil rights activist
☐ CHIEF SITTING BULL (1831-1890) Native American tribal chief who resisted U.S. government policies
☐ SOJOURNER TRUTH (1797-1883) African American, formerly enslaved abolitionist
☐ LUTHER STANDING BEAR (1888-1939) Influential Native American writer
☐ STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE (1960-1966) African American students who organized sit-ins at racially segregated lunch counters to protest racism.
☐ HARRIET TUBMAN (1820-1913) African American Underground Railroad “conductor”
Objective: Students pair up to research and analyze multiple perspectives of individuals experiencing the same situation at the same time, either in history or in contemporary times.

Activity
After researching the subject matter, each pair of students works together to write a 26-line “paired poem”* about two imaginary characters from different racial groups who are experiencing the very same situation and sharing their respective points of view.

NOTE: Students should work together on each character. If pairs are mixed in race and one of the races is white, do not allow the person of color to write the role of the oppressed person in each stanza of the poem. This will prevent revictimizing the person of color and will stimulate cooperative thinking.

Remind students of the definition of racism: Discrimination based on race by people or groups in power.

Remind students that white people in the room didn’t cause the problems that will be addressed, but that we can all be responsible for creating a more just and fair community. This comment is important because it’s true, and because it will help prevent any possible defensiveness among white people in the room who will be doing the activity.

Each beginning and ending stanza will have a line that is spoken by both characters in succession. (See example on the next page.)

In between, the voices of the characters alternate. For example, a line that voices the perspective of the white owner of a farm is followed by a line voicing the perspective of the same situation by a person of color working in the field on that same farm.

Option: Students write in three or more lines to include multiple perspectives.
An Example of the “Paired Poem” Format:

Note: **Latinx** (pronounced “La-teen-ex”) is a gender-neutral term, sometimes used instead of Latino or Latina, in order to include those outside of the male/female binary, such as transgender people.

Students will first present their research about the pairing they have chosen, followed by a recitation of their poem.

**White owner visiting his farm:**
*It’s hot out here in the field.*

**Latinx farmworker:**
*It’s hot out here in the field.*

**White owner visiting his farm:**
*My 12-year old son is taking a math test today. I hope he does well.*

**Latinx farmworker:**
*My 12-year old son doesn’t have time to study. I don’t get overtime pay, so he must work with me after school so that we can survive.*

**White owner visiting his farm:**
*My wife is expecting again. I hope it’s another healthy child.*

**Latinx farmworker:**
*My wife is expecting again. I hope the pesticides used on the crops don’t affect our new one.*

**White owner visiting his farm:**
*It’s hot out here in the field.*

**Latinx farmworker:**
*It’s hot out here in the field.*
Some Ideas for Paired Poems:

- Warden and Japanese American citizen in an internment camp during WWII.
  Research ideas: Fred Korematsu; experiences of interned women; Fair Play Committee at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming; 1942 Executive Order 9066

- White abolitionist trying to convince a disinclined relative to join an antislavery organization.
  Research ideas: Lucretia Mott; the Grimke sisters

- White farm owner and either a Latinx, Hmong, or Filipino/a farmworker.
  Research ideas: U.S. labor laws relating to farmworkers, especially the children of farmworkers; Dolores Huerta; Larry Dulay Itliong, a Filipino American labor leader; pesticide use on farms

- White person and Black person trying to register to vote at the same polling booth in 1965.
  Research ideas: Fannie Lou Hamer; the 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches; Louisiana literacy test: http://www.crmvet.org/info/la-littest-orig.pdf

- A Black sharecropper and a white carpenter each need to secure a loan to buy a home in the 1930s.
  Research ideas: New Deal; President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Social Security and the exclusion of cash tenants and sharecroppers, who were mostly Black, from the New Deal; NAACP response

- Army officer Richard H. Pratt visiting the first boarding school for Native Americans in Pennsylvania, and a Native American child in school there.
  Research ideas: Zitkala Ša; runaway boys and girls from boarding schools: http://jaie.asu.edu/v35/V35S3run.htm; effect of boarding schools on contemporary Native American life

- A young, white civil rights worker talking with his very worried mother about his summer plans to register Black voters in 1964 Mississippi.
  Research ideas: Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney

- After the fall of Saigon in 1975, a U.S. soldier is evacuated, but a Vietnamese member of his support team is left to face the North Vietnamese Army.
  Research ideas: broken peace accord; watch and review the film Last Days in Vietnam

- A white soldier and a Black soldier meet in a pub in Europe during WWII.
  Research ideas: discrimination against African American soldiers during World War II; the Tuskegee Airmen

* I wrote the content for this activity, which was inspired by the “Promoting Social Imagination Through Interior Monologues” lesson plan in Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice, edited by Bill Bigelow, Linda Christensen, Stan Karp, Barbara Miner, and Bob Peterson. www.rethinkingschools.org.

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Choose a quote below and explain its significance in a paragraph. If the quotes are paired with a book you are reading for class, select a quote you believe inspires a solution to the issues presented in the book, then write at least a five-sentence paragraph explaining why you have chosen that quote.

a) "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” — Alice Walker, writer and activist  
Hint: Can you accomplish more if you believe in yourself?

b) "Whatever we do to any other thing in the great web of life, we do to ourselves, for we are one.” — Brooke Medicine Eagle, author and singer/songwriter  
Hint: If we abuse one life form (animal, people, nature), will it affect other life forms?

c) “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” — Margaret Mead, anthropologist  
Hint: Can a small group of people motivate others?

d) "We are the ones we have been waiting for.” — June Jordan, poet/activist  
Hint: Should we wait for a parent, principal, or president to step in and save the day?

e) "In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” — Dr. Marin Luther King Jr., civil rights activist  
Hint: How important is it for us to stand up for our friends?

f) "Life is not what you alone make it.... We are all part of one another.” — Yuri Kochiyama, human rights activist  
Hint: In what ways are we mutually dependent on one another?

g) "To fly we have to have resistance.” — Maya Lin, artist, designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.  
Hint: Can a crisis be something that can motivate us in helpful ways?
RESOURCES

Films (preview before showing)

*Dear White People* (examines race relations with insight and humor)

*Good Hair* (comedian Chris Rock’s documentary on the $9 billion black hair industry)

*Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Movement 1954-1985* (a 14-hour documentary on the Civil Rights Movement in the United States)

*Free Land* (filmed hip-hop play about the Homestead Act and white privilege)

*Fruitvale Station* (a film about racial profiling, based on a real event)

*Harvest of Empire: The Untold Story of Latinos in America* (covers immigration and more)

*Latinos Beyond Reel* (a documentary that challenges media stereotypes of Latinx)

*March Point* (Native American youth standing up against environmental racism)

*Precious Knowledge* (a 2011 political documentary centered on the banning of the Mexican American Studies Program in the Tucson Unified School District of Arizona)

*Rabbit-Proof Fence* (In 1931, the West Australian government took half-caste children from their Aboriginal mothers "to save them from themselves."

*Smoke Signals* (based on Native author Sherman Alexie's short stories)

Online Essays


YouTube

“The Unequal Opportunity Race,” by Erica Pinto (animation) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY)

“A Land Called Paradise,” music by Kareen Salama; directed by Llena Khan (lovely music video that busts stereotypes about American Muslims) [A Land Called Paradise - #13F1AC](https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10152456634446701&pnref=story)

“How to Tell Someone They Sound Racist” [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoDvAlMYqU&list=PLKDnWDAe4RHz538NBXHJpcpPRHtvrggoF&index=18](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoDvAlMYqU&list=PLKDnWDAe4RHz538NBXHJpcpPRHtvrggoF&index=18)


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BOOKS

Nonfiction

A White Teacher Talks About Race, by Julie Landsman
Afraid of the Dark: What Whites and Blacks Need to Know About Each Other, by Jim Myers
Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, by James Weldon Johnson
Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, by Gloria Anzaldúa
Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America, by Elliot Jaspin
Can We Talk about Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation, by Beverly Daniel Tatum
Conflict Resolution in the High School: Skills for Classrooms, Skills for Life, by Carol Miller Lieber, Linda Lantieri, and Tom Roderick
Dancing at Halftime: Sports and the Controversy Over American Indian Mascots, by Carol Spindel
Games for Actors and Non-Actors (2nd ed.), by Augusto Boal
Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural, by Claudine C. O'Hearn
Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina, by Rosie Molinary
Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong, by James Loewen
Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing, by Joy DeGruy Leary, Ph,D.
Race and Membership in American History: The Eugenics Movement, by Facing History and Ourselves
Rethinking Multicultural Education: Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice (2nd ed.), edited by Wayne Au
Rethinking Our Classroom: Teaching for Equity and Justice, by Bill Bigelow et al.
Screaming Monkeys: Critiques of Asian American Images, by M. Evelina Galang
Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism, by James Loewen
Talking About Race: Alleviating the Fear, edited by Grineski et al.
Talking Race in the Classroom, by Jane Bolgatz
Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope, by bell hooks
Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy, edited by C. Richard King and Charles Fruehling Springwood
Theater of the Oppressed, by Augusto Boal
The Mis-Education of the Negro, by Carter Godwin Woodson
The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, by Michelle Alexander
Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice, by Paul Kivel
White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son, by Tim Wise
"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" and Other Conversations About Race, by Beverly Daniel Tatum, PH.D.

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Helpful Tips

**Biography**
*Enrique’s Journey: The True Story of a Boy Determined to Reunite with His Mother* (adapted for young people), by Sonia Nazario

**Memoir**
*Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America*, by Firoozeh Dumas

**Fiction**
*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
*Americanah*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
*Angel de la Luna and the 5th Glorious Mystery*, by M. Evelina Galang
*Black, White, Other: In Search of Nina Armstrong*, by Joan Steinau Lester
*Blue Horses Rush In: Poems and Stories*, by Luci Tapahonso
*Fallen Angels*, by Walter Dean Myers
*Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, by Jamie Ford
*Kindred*, by Octavia E. Butler
*Mexican WhiteBoy*, by Matt de la Peña
*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred D. Taylor
*Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust*, by Eve Bunting (a parable about standing up for others)

“The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” by Ursula Le Guin (short story)
“The Things They Carried,” by Tim O’Brien (short stories on the Vietnam War)
“Wilshire Bus,” by Hisaye Yamamoto (short story)

**Magazines**
Rethinking Schools-The Magazine
http://www.rethinkingschools.org//ProdDetails.asp?ID=RTSSUB
Teaching Tolerance http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/archives

**Poetry**
“A Belated Victory (For Us),” by Michele Serros, from *Chicana Falsa and Other Stories of Death, Identity, and Oxnard*

“A Puerto Rican Girl’s Sentimental Education,” by Johanna Vega, from *Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States*

“Citizen: An American Lyric,” book of poems (some on “microaggressions”) by Claudia Rankine

“ID Check,” by Ariel Luckey, from *Searching for White Folk Soul*

“I Am Everyone,” by Leonard Peltier, from *Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance*

“Race Politics,” by Luis J. Rodriguez

“Still I Rise,” by Maya Angelou

“The Low Road,” by Marge Piercy, from *The Moon Is Always Female*

“We the Dangerous,” by Janice Mirikitani, from *We The Dangerous: New and Selected Poems*
“We Would Like You to Know,” by Ana Castillo, from My Father Was a Toltec and Selected Poems
“Yes, We Are Not Invisible,” by Janice Mirikitani, from We The Dangerous
“And 2morrow,” from The Rose That Grew from Concrete, by Tupac Amaru Shakur
Also, poems by June Jordon, Langston Hughes, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Adrian C. Louis

Music
“My Country ‘Tis of Thy People You’re Dying,” by Buffy Sainte-Marie

Educational Websites
Colorlines: http://colorlines.com/
Facing History and Ourselves: https://www.facinghistory.org/
Showing Up for Racial Justice: http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/
Teaching for Change: http://www.teachingforchange.org/
Teaching Tolerance (excellent teaching resources), especially:
http://www.tolerance.org/search/apachesolr_search/talking about race
Tim Wise: http://www.timwise.org (white antiracist author and lecturer)
Understanding Race: www.understandingRACE.org
Zinn Education Project: https://zinnedproject.org/

Native American Websites
International Indian Treaty Council: http://www.iitic.org/
American Indian Movement: http://www.aimovement.org/
Indigenous Environmental Network: http://www.ienearth.org/nativeneewsonline.net | Ame#1AFE90

Social Justice Websites
National Farm Worker Ministry:
http://nfwm.org/education-center/farm-worker-issues/labor-laws/
Pineros y Campesinos Unidos: http://www.pcun.org/
United Farm Workers: http://www.ufw.org/
(info on farmworkers’ exposure to pesticides)

Conferences
Facing Race: https://facingrace.raceforward.org/ (racial justice conference)
National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME): http://nameorg.org/
White Privilege Conference: http://www.whiteprivilegeconference.com/
(annual conference for antiracist educators and activists)

Feedback is welcome: Please contact me at www.roadtoracialjustice.org with comments and suggestions so that I can make improvements to the game and guide. Suggestions from facilitators and players may be incorporated into later versions of these.

Email alerts: If you’d like to be alerted about significant changes to the game or guide, please contact me at my website with your request.
Each person is a vital piece of the puzzle that makes up our community. We are all diminished when the brilliance and magnificence of even one of us is denied.

Dear ________________,

Your child will be playing the “Road to Racial Justice” board game in class and be given related curricular materials on racism that meet Common Core State Standards.

The game addresses this difficult topic in a way that is challenging yet entertaining, using the setting of an imaginary alternate world called Terah.

On Terah, players help to stop the spread of a horrible disease called Superior-I-tis, which causes people in that world to act as if they are superior to those with a different skin color, nose shape, eye shape, or hair texture from theirs.

Players will:

- learn that racism exists in many everyday kinds of situations
- learn how to analyze the racist dynamics in different situations
- acquire tools to interrupt these situations through thoughtful, compassionate action

The kinds of interventions described in the game can also be used to stand up against homophobia, sexual harassment, and other kinds of injustice.

You can view the game and download game materials at www.roadtoracialjustice.org.

Please don’t hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

(Teacher name and signature, contact info)
HOW I CAME TO MAKE THE GAME

I volunteered for over a decade at the YWCA Santa Monica/Westside in Santa Monica, California, facilitating workshops for middle and high school girls on gender and racial issues.

I co-organized a “Rally for Racial Justice” as part of the local Y’s participation in the National YWCA "Stand Against Racism“ annual campaign in 2013 (http://www.standagainstracism.org/). I conceived of the game as a way to help rally participants learn something about racism before they “stood” against it. However, the game was not completed in time for the rally, and in fact took another three years to be completed to my satisfaction. For the rally, I hired an African American diversity consultant to teach participants about racism.

Prior to designing the game, I had already considered (and continue to think about) whether I, a white woman, should be writing about black history, race, and racism. The question first arose during the creation of the 2010 Underground Railroad project I developed at the YWCA, and it arose anew with the 2012 Never Give Up! Ama’s Journey to Freedom on the Underground Railroad film I directed, which was based on the earlier project. After a lot of self-reflection, I came up with three reasons why I thought my projects were OK to do.

• I formed a multiracial advisory focus groups comprised of individuals of various races and ethnicities for the project, film, and game, sought feedback from many other people, and did extensive research to learn about the topics. These pursuits gave me confidence that I could co-create useful projects.

• As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, I know something about feeling trapped and being totally dependent upon the person abusing me. I believe this helped me when creating the project and film to emotionally resonate with the institution of slavery and to empathize with the people who were enslaved. Doing research for those projects, I became more aware of the destructive legacy of racism in contemporary times, which motivated me to create the game.

• Even though I have been oppressed, through my experience with childhood abuse, as a white person I am also a member of a group of people that have oppressed people of color throughout U.S. history. I am someone who benefits — to the detriment of people of color — from systemic racism in our country, whether or not I myself have done anything intentionally racist. (See: “white privilege” definition in Game Instructions glossary, p. 16; “White Privilege” activity in Game Instructions, p. 10.)

I felt, and continue to feel, that I have a right and a responsibility to stand against racism wherever I can. Let’s stand together as educators, joining with the many individuals, organizations, and movements past and present in our efforts to create a more equitable world for all.
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I have written this guide on land once settled by the Tongva Native Americans, then taken from them by colonizing forces. In so many ways I have been the unconscious victor in a battle I did not fight. Racism is a part of my heritage as much as love is. Holding the blessing of the land and the sorrow of this knowledge, I hope my work honors the past and offers tools for creating a better tomorrow.