

# RACIAL BIAS

## Ohio Standards

### Connections:

#### STANDARD:

HISTORY, Grade 8:

#### **BENCHMARK G:**

Analyze the causes and consequences of Reconstruction with emphasis on the Ku Klux Klan and the enactment of black codes.

#### STANDARD:

PEOPLE IN SOCIETIES Grade 8:

#### **BENCHMARK:**

Analyze examples of interactions between cultural groups and explain the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict.

#### **GRADE LEVEL**

**INDICATOR 2A, 2B,**

**2C: *Describe and explain the social economic and political effects of stereotyping and prejudice, racism and discrimination, institutionalized racism and institutionalized discrimination.***

### Lesson Summary:

Students will read poetry, listen to music, and view images to develop an understanding of racial bias and violence in the United States in the twentieth century. Students will discuss the issues and horrors of violence and compare/contrast it to racial bias elsewhere.

### Estimated Duration:

Three-Six 50 minute sessions depending upon choice of optional connections.

### Commentary and Background Information:

The artwork attached to this lesson is not only linked by a common thread of graphic racial bias and violence in the United States but also represents a timeline of history prior to the civil rights movement. This movement is most closely associated with the 1960s. The artwork can be used to underscore

- a) the horrors of lynching,
- b) the fears associated with the Ku Klux Klan,
- c) the desolation of a soldier who is fighting in a segregated army for a country founded on liberty but allowing institutionalized discrimination,
- d) and the hatefulness of “words” and actions which seek to marginalize people.

The teacher should preview the images before presenting them to the class as the students may be greatly affected and perhaps disturbed by these images.

When seen as a progression, there is also a flicker of hope. By linking these images to history, literature, and music, students can see that the Civil Rights Movement did not begin in the 1960s but events had been building for a very long time. Each event furthered the movement toward the 1960s.

Though the name ‘Ku Klux Klan’ first appeared in print in 1868, the activities of terrorism had spread to all southern states by 1873. The Klan probably consisted of about 5,000 people, not the 30,000 to 40,000 members they claimed, when a bill for amnesty (to all who had been guilty of Ku Klux Klan violence)

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**STANDARD:**

**HISTORY:**

*Grades 9-10*

**BENCHMARK F:**

Identify major historical patterns in the domestic affairs of the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and explain their significance.

**GRADE LEVEL**

**INDICATOR 9D:**

*Analyze the major political, economic and social developments of the 1920s including immigration restrictions, nativism, race riots and the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan.*

**INDICATOR 11a.:**

*Analyze the impact of U.S. participation in World War II with emphasis on events on the home front to support the war effort, industrial mobilization, women and minorities in the workforce.*

**INDICATOR 14c.**

*Analyze the origins, major developments, controversies and consequences of the Civil Rights Movement with emphasis on the linkages between the Civil Rights Movement and movements to gain justice for other minority groups.*

was before the North Carolina legislature in 1873. The Klan worked to overthrow reconstruction governments and obtained a following based on the pre-Civil War fears of slave insurrections. Though both white and black communities were separated by custom, as much as by economics, there was a new legal distinction—that those enslaved now had the vote. It was important to the Klan that the ballot not become a protection for the personal or political rights of those who had been enslaved. Further, the Klan sought to deprive former slaves of education, property and experience that would make the ballot box useful.

The ‘empire’ of the Klan was a 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomena which was fed, in large part, by the technology of the time—mass produced books and movies. Thomas Dixon, Jr., a southern legislator, minister, and classmate of President Woodrow Wilson at Johns Hopkins University, wrote The Clansman and The Leopard’s Spots. These novels about Reconstruction glorified the Klan. He also wrote the screenplay that became D.W. Griffith’s movie, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Because the movie had a documentary look, audiences believed the Klan to be chivalrous and the black race criminal. In an era when movies cost a nickel, this movie commanded a \$2 admission fee. Fifty million Americans saw it. The movie was still being seen in movie houses 12 years later. It should be noted that it was shown in private screenings to members of Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Klan was reborn.

The new Klan, led by William Joseph Simmons, became “The Invisible Empire.” This organization was legally incorporated (not so invisible) and rededicated on Stone Mountain in 1915 under a burning cross. The new KKK expanded the 19<sup>th</sup> century enemy list to include Catholics, Jews and immigrants. During World War I, the organization grew because of an imaginary crisis that they created: an outpouring of popular literature for southern nostalgia and chivalry, general fears of the population about the war, and the addition of new goals—to be benevolent, patriotic and anti-Communist. It did not hurt that a business plan was devised which developed the Klan into a pyramid sales scheme, where new members sold subscriptions, keeping \$4 out of there \$5 earnings. This pyramid scheme had appeal since the 1920s did not ‘roar’ for everyone and there was a very high unemployment rate.

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### **STANDARD:**

PEOPLE IN  
SOCIETIES, GRADES  
9-10:

### **BENCHMARK A:**

Analyze the influence

of different cultural  
perspectives on the  
actions of groups.

### **GRADE LEVEL**

### **INDICATOR 1a:**

*Describe how the  
perspectives of cultural  
groups helped to create  
political action groups  
such as The National  
Association for the  
Advancement of  
Colored People  
(NAACP), and  
2. Analyze the  
perspectives that are  
evident in African-  
American, American  
Indian and Latino art,  
music, literature and  
media and how these  
contributions reflect  
and shape culture in  
the United States.*

### **BENCHMARK B:**

Analyze the  
consequences of  
oppression,  
discrimination and  
conflict between  
cultures.

### **GRADE LEVEL**

### **INDICATOR 2.:**

*Analyze the results of  
political, economic and  
social oppression and  
the violation of human  
rights.*

*3. Explain how Jim  
Crow laws legalized  
discrimination based*

The Klan feared the influence and ‘moral degeneracy’ of anyone they considered beneath them socially or economically—blacks, poor laborers, immigrants, foreigners, Jews, Communists, trade unions and even large corporations. Klan membership was made up mostly of small businessmen, craftsmen, carpenters, plumbers, mechanics, as well as, some doctors, lawyers, ministers and teachers. Wearing their \$5 white robes with red tassels (robes for Grand Dragons with orange satin trim and military braid might cost \$40), Klan members promoted themselves by marching into Protestant churches and making huge donations of money to collection plates to prove they were benevolent. Church members were often impressed.

By the end of the 1920s, the Klan had lost significant power. Various public agencies had been publishing accounts of how they had bought political campaigns, purchased expensive mansions and cars for only the elite leadership, and taken approximately 60,000,000 dollars from Americans. Klan leaders had been involved in personal scandals involving intoxication and rape. While they portrayed themselves as ‘benevolent,’ the Klan had attracted deviants and sadists who took part in whippings, brandings, tar and featherings, terrorizing and murdering victims with acid, pocket knives and the hangman’s rope.

### **Pre-Assessment:**

*Discussion:* What does it mean to be racially biased in America? How might we display our biases to the public? Are all of our biases made known to the public? Do we each have a racial bias? Have you heard of acts of violence against a person that is racially motivated? Is racially biased violence prevalent today? Was it more prevalent in the last century? What mechanisms of society help to control and eliminate racial bias and violence?

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

Explain that participation in the group discussion is required. If students are too uncomfortable to speak aloud the teacher may opt to ask students to respond to the questions in a daily journal or some other written format.

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*on race and*

**4. Analyze the struggle for racial and gender equality and its impact on the changing status of minorities since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.**

### **Post-Assessment:**

Using the following writing prompts students will write their choice of

- a) an essay,
- b) fictional character letters or diary entries,
- c) reply in poetry to Langston Hughes, Claude McKay or Paul Laurence Dunbar,
- d) letters to Ida B. Wells or Harry Truman,
- e) a song review for Billie Holiday,
- f) or a song of their own creation.

### **PROMPTS:**

Though the turning of a new (20<sup>th</sup>) century brought exciting and prosperous changes for Americans, the 1910s-20s did not ‘boom’ for everyone.

**“Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability, it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God...”** Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail

**“If I am not myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?”** Rabbi Hillel

**Scoring Guidelines:** Writing Rubric ( p.7)

### **Instructional Procedures:**

#### **DAY 1:**

Give each student a copy of the NAMES HANDOUT (p.10). Ask them to cut apart the names and arrange them in alphabetical order on their desk. The teacher may wish to personalize the lesson by editing the list to include names of students in the classroom. The handout provides 100 names. If there are 30 students in the class, then the total number of pieces of papers with one name each will be 3000.

“Think about each name. Each name here represents a real person. What do you visualize when you see each name? Which gender is represented more—men or women?”

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When students have worked on the project for a few minutes and are concentrating on the project, the teacher should go through the class with a trashcan, sweeping the names into the basket. Students might be upset by the fact that they have worked at a project only to have the papers disappear.

Ask students about their emotions at this moment. Three thousand names or 3000 people have been swept away in a fast and dramatic stroke. What colors would they use if they had to describe their feelings on paper? What images or symbols might they use?

The teacher should write the number 5000 on a blackboard or overhead. Explain that 5000 is the estimated number of men and women whose lives were lost between 1882 and 1968 at the hands of a lynch mob. Show the trash can with all the tiny name papers inside. Remember each of those papers represents a real person. Nearly two times the number of papers that we cut out in class today is the number of people who were violently murdered. Ninety percent of those lynched were African American and 95% occurred in the southern states. Lynchings were epidemic, averaging over 150 incidents per year. They were common enough that newspaper reports of lynchings were used as ‘filler’ news items in the north. Postcards of lynchings were frequently sold in southern states.

### DAY 2:

**BACKGROUND:** In 1895, a famous crusader for justice, Ida B. Wells, published *A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States*. The paper brought the issue to the public eye and brought pressure to the federal government. Artists, songwriters, and poets also used lynchings as subject matter. One well-known song is *Strange Fruit* by the Queen of Blues, Billie Holiday.

[http://www.idabwells.org/About\\_IdaBWells/AboutIdaBWells.htm](http://www.idabwells.org/About_IdaBWells/AboutIdaBWells.htm)

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aapmob.html>

Information about Ida B. Wells

Poetry handout (p. 11): Print the poems by Dunbar and McKay and share the poetry handout with the students. Read and discuss.

The links connect you to *The Haunted Oak* by Paul Laurence

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Dunbar (1872-1906) and *The Lynching* by Claude McKay (1889-1948). Another poem, *Ku Klux* by Langston Hughes (1902-1967) is included for older students.

Listen to the recordings of *Strange Fruit*. The words were written by a Jewish-American, Abel Meeropol, who wrote under the pseudonym of Lewis Allen.

### DISCUSS:

How do you believe the song was originally received?

What does the song say to you?

How does it make you feel?

The song was always associated with Billie Holiday. Additional questions for discussion are on handout page 13.

### DAY 3:

On the Columbus Museum's Art and Social Issues website ([www.artandsocialissues.com](http://www.artandsocialissues.com)) view the images listed in this packet with the students. Discuss the message each piece communicates to the viewer? In the journal, the students should write two paragraphs about each of the images the teacher shares. What do they see? What action is taking place? What figures or icons do they recognize? What is the idea the artist is communicating?

### **Differentiated Instructional Support**

Students that are unable to read may have an aide or student read the questions during the writing assignments. Students might opt to create a sculpture that expresses their ideas about the violence and racial biases instead of writing.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections**

**SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY:** Students will create an abbreviated timeline of events between 1895-1945 that mark relevant historic dates already mentioned, i.e. *The Birth of a Nation's* debut, the beginning and the rebirth of the Klan, and the birth dates of artists, writers, and musicians that were involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Students can speculate which historic events provoked other events. For example, the peak point of lynching and the start of WWI come before the urban race riots of the summer of 1919.

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An African American events Timeline created by the Library of Congress: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aap/timelin2.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aap/timelin3.html>

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** Using the images by Jones, Gorelick and Shahn on this CMA Art and Social Issues website plus the text below, students can work in groups or alone to discuss what similar historical events and circumstances were faced by American Jews and African Americans. With a Venn Diagram (page 12) list key points and issues of the two groups. Students may bring knowledge of the Old Testament such as, Exodus and Moses leading his people from slavery.

"The lynching of Leo Frank, an American Jew, who was wrongly accused of the rape of a young white girl (1915) created strong reactions among Jewish leaders. Some felt that by Jewish support of African-American outcries against lynching and discrimination, both African-American and Jewish-American interests would be strengthened. Some Jews felt particularly vulnerable because Frank had been accused on the testimony of an African-American janitor (a first in the history of the southern legal system). Some Jewish leaders now saw a reason to back the political philosophy of W.E.B. DuBois over that of Booker T. Washington; and others saw that with increased discrimination abroad (pogroms in Russia) and discrimination at home (Harvard and other schools now instituted a quota on Jewish American student enrollment). The interests of both groups would be best served by using Jewish philanthropy and their legal careers."

**LANGUAGE ARTS:** Using the picture and excerpts from *Crossing the Danger Water*, students can discuss and write what might possibly be going through the mind of the soldier in the work of Charles White. This work predates Executive Order 9981 (see link below for a copy). What is ironic?

<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/9981a.htm>



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### **Materials and Resources:**

*For teachers*

#### **Images:**

*Boris Gorelick* (1909(12?)-1984), *Strange Fruit*, 1939

*Joe Jones*, (1909-1963) *American Justice*, 1933 (White Justice)

*Joe Jones*, (1909-1963) *Southern Peonage*, 1930s

*Louis Lozowick*, (1892-1973) *Lynching*, 1936

*James Turnbull* (1909-1976), *Ride by Terror*

Handout with questions on poetry

[Birth of a Nation](#) (1915) DVD

[Strange Fruit](#) DVD ([DAY 2 Activity](#) )

**Additional reading:** *The African American Experience* (ed. Jack Salzman). New York: Macmillan Library Reference, 1998)  
Background information on lynching.

Biography of Ida B. Wells and an excerpt from *A Red Report* in *Crossing the Danger Water* (ed. Deidre Mullane, Doubleday New York, 1993)

Stuart Nicholson, *Billie Holiday, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1995*

Venn Diagram

*For students*

Day 1: handout and scissors

Day 2: Handouts of poems, Set of images



# RACIAL BIAS

## Key Vocabulary

***Bias***- An unfair preference for or dislike of something or to influence somebody or something unfairly or in a biased way

***Lynching***-hanging, execution; to seize somebody believed to have committed a crime and put him or her to death immediately and without trial, usually by hanging

***Violence***-rage, aggression, the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something

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## Technology Connections

Students will find additional information if they are able to access the internet for the Library of Congress, The Columbus Museum of Art and other suggested references.

## Research Connections

Research for all of the suggested activities will be augmented by consulting the internet, sites such as the Library of Congress ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)), the Ida B. Wells website and others.

## Attachments

Handouts for daily activities, Writing rubric

This lesson plan is based on the work of Doreen Uhas-Sauer, a teacher with Columbus Public Schools and Project Director for the Annenberg Foundation Civic Education Model in Columbus, Ohio.

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## NAMES HANDOUT

TOM	HENRY	NANCY	RACHEL	ELIZA	PAUL
DON	JOANN	BILL	WILLIAM	DAVID	WILMA
GLENN	MARTIN	ABRAHAM	LIONEL	RIVERS	LEON
GEORGE	CLARISSA	JOHN	JOE	TINA	HARRIET
CLARA	ANDREW	EMMETT	SONNY	CLARENCE	MOSES
OTIS	PAUL	REGGIE	OSWALD	GARRISON	PARKER
ISAAC	LUKE	CHARLES	STEVEN	RICHIE	ALLEN
BENJAMIN	PAUL	HENRY	HUBERT	WARD	OLIVER
MORRIS	ALVIN	AMOS	TOM	OWEN	REUBEN
TURNER	EDWARD	MICHAEL	SAMUEL	WARING	GERALD
RITA	LARRY	YUSEF	NEAL	JACK	EARL
LAMONT	GREGORY	GARTH	JEFFERSON	JAY	EARL
DANIEL	ERNST	ARTHUR	PETE	JONAH	AARON
LEO	LUCK	GLENN	RED	FRANKIE	JASON
DARELL	KYLE	OSCAR	MONETTE	LOUIS	AUSTIN
MAX	TEDDY	NAT	NATHANIEL	MONTE	ALBERT
LAWRENCE	NICHOLAS	ADAM	JIMMIE	ORRIN	WYNTON
ZACHARY	FREDDIE	STANLEY	FRED	DYLAN	DYREN
FREDERICK	VERNON	IVIE	AVIS	CY	HAL
RAYMOND	SIMONWYATT	TYLER	MARCUS	HOWARD	

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The teacher should print out copies of the following poems for class discussion.

### POETRY

**The Haunted Oak** by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

<http://www.bartleby.com/269/6.html>

**The Lynching** by Claude McKay (1889-1948)

<http://www.bartleby.com/269/73.html>

### QUESTIONS

*The Haunted Oak*

1. In *The Haunted Oak*, who is talking? What has happened at the tree? Give some examples from the poem that point to the incident.
2. What do you think is meant by “they charged him with the old, old crime...”?
3. What is the larger symbolism in the last stanza of the poem? How can ‘curse’ and ‘haunted’ be read as more than just a description of the tree?

*The Lynching*

4. In *The Lynching*, what do the use of phrases like “his spirit,” “his father,” “bidden him to his bosom” imply?
5. How do the endings of the two poems differ? Is one more chilling than the other? In what ways do the poets imply the legacy of the act lives on?

For further discussion:

**KU KLUX** By Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

[http://www.jotpuree.com/writing/langston\\_hughes/Ku\\_Klux.html](http://www.jotpuree.com/writing/langston_hughes/Ku_Klux.html)



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## STRANGE FRUIT

Listen to the music as sung by Billie Holliday. The words were written by a Jewish-American, Abel Meeropol, who wrote under the pseudonym of Lewis Allen.

What is the strange fruit to which the song is referring?

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What images are evoked when you hear the song?

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When you watch Billie Holliday performing this song what emotions do you feel? Did she accurately portray the words and meaning?

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Many contemporary artists such as Tori Amos and Jeff Buckley have recorded this song. How is this song pertinent today?

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## WRITING RUBRIC

- 5** Writing is exemplary as a model of composition and interesting piece of work. When appropriate the writing has a bibliography, quotes, historical facts and information about racially biased violence. The writer's voice is clear and displays a coherent, powerful and interesting point of view. Words are spelled accurately. Sentences and paragraphs are grammatically correct. The written piece has an engaging title.
- 4** Writing is well done as a model of composition and interesting piece of work. The writing has three (but not all) of the following required components: bibliography, quotes, historical facts and information about racially biased violence. The writer's voice is clear and displays an interesting point of view that makes sense. Words are spelled accurately. Sentences and paragraphs overall are grammatically correct. The written piece has a title.
- 3** Writing is good and has two of the following required components: bibliography, quotes, historical facts and information about racially biased violence. The writer's voice is generally clear and makes sense. Words are spelled accurately in most of the written piece. Sentences and paragraphs overall are grammatically correct. The written piece has a title.
- 2** Writing is unclear and is missing most of the following required components: bibliography, quotes, historical facts and information about racially biased violence. The writer's voice is not clear and does not always make sense. Spelling and grammar are often incorrect. The written piece has no title.
- 1** The student did not complete the written piece.