

# Unit 1: New Unit

Content Area: **Template**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Full Year**  
Length: **Full Year**  
Status: **Published**

## GOALS/PURPOSE

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### Purpose

The Amistad Commission ensures that the Department of Education and public schools of New Jersey implement materials and texts which integrate the history and contributions of African-Americans and the descendants of the African Diaspora.

### Goals

1. To infuse the history of Africans and African-Americans into the social studies curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete and inclusive history.
2. To ensure that New Jersey teachers are equipped to effectively teach the revised social studies core curriculum content standards.
3. To create and coordinate workshops, seminars, institutes, memorials and events which raise public awareness about the importance of the history of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in global context.

<https://www.nj.gov/education/amistad/about/>

ELA.RI.CR.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RI.CI.6.2	Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.RL.IT.6.3	Describe how a particular text's structure unfolds in a series of episodes and use textual evidence to describe how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
ELA.RL.TS.6.4	Analyze how a particular piece (e.g., sentence, chapter, scene, stanza, or section) fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas, theme, setting, or plot.
ELA.RL.PP.6.5	Determine how an author conveys or develops perspective in a text (through the narrator or speaker when appropriate).
ELA.RI.PP.6.5	Identify author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.
ELA.RL.MF.6.6	Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
ELA.RI.MF.6.6	Integrate information when presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

ELA.W.IW.6.2

Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

## **READ ALOUD TEXTS/EXCERPTS**

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Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives and Dreams Brought to Life by Ashley Bryan (book)

Using original slave auction and plantation estate documents, Ashley Bryan offers a moving and powerful picture book that contrasts the monetary value of a slave with the priceless value of life experiences and dreams that a slave owner could never take away.

This goes with the Unit: **The Worth of a Slave**

→ All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom by Angela Johnson (one copy of the book or access to [online read-aloud](#))

Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington by Jabari Asim (multiple copies of the book or access to [online read-aloud](#))

These go with the Unit: **FROM JUNETEENTH TO RECONSTRUCTION: THE PROMISE OF EQUALITY**

Thomas, Joyce Carol. Linda Brown, You Are Not Alone: The Brown vs. Board of Education Decision. New York: Hyperion Books, 2003.

When the Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools was handed down in 1954, the course of American history was forever changed. Here are personal reflections, stories, and poems from ten of today's most accomplished writers for children, all young people themselves at the time of the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Included are Michael Cart, Jean Craighead George, Eloise Greenfield, Lois Lowry, Katherine Paterson, Ishmael Reed, Jerry Spinelli, Quincy Troupe, Joyce Carol Thomas, and Leona Nicholas Welch. With a compelling introduction by editor Joyce Carol Thomas and stunning pastel artwork by Curtis E. James, this collection celebrates the hard-earned promise of equality in education.

### **Marley Dias Gets It Done and So Can You by Marley Dias**

*Marley Dias Gets it Done and So Can You!* is a nonfiction book by Marley Dias, addressing social activism and standing up against many of the issues facing contemporary society. Marley Dias is a 13 year old fighter for change and founder of #1000blackgirlbooks.

In this book, Dias tells readers of her experience standing up for more black girl representation in literature while also teaching readers how to do so themselves. This book is an inspiring story of how change cannot only be made by adults. Kids have the capability to bring about change and make the world a better place too.

(There are MANY extension activities for this book, and many videos with Marley Dias speaking about her motivation and influences)

Swim Team, written and illustrated by Jonnie Christmas

***“Combines wonderful characters and history to create a story that will make you want to dive right in!” JERRY CRAFT, author of the Newbery Medal–winning New Kid***

A splashy, contemporary middle grade graphic novel from bestselling comics creator Johnnie Christmas!

Bree can't wait for her first day at her new middle school, Enith Brightha, home to the Mighty Manatees—until she's stuck with the only elective that fits her schedule, the dreaded Swim 101. The thought of swimming makes Bree more than a little queasy, yet she's forced to dive headfirst into one of her greatest fears. Lucky for her, Etta, an elderly occupant of her apartment building and former swim team captain, is willing to help.

With Etta's training and a lot of hard work, Bree suddenly finds her swim-crazed community counting on her to turn the school's failing team around. But that's easier said than done, especially when their rival, the prestigious Holyoke Prep, has everything they need to leave the Mighty Manatees in their wake.

Can Bree defy the odds and guide her team to a state championship, or have the Manatees swum their last lap—for good?

*Praise for SWIM TEAM:*

**Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor**

**National Book Award Longlist**

**Kirkus Best Book of the Year**

**Harvey Award Best Children's or Young Adult Book Nominee**

**Partly Cloudy by Tanita S. Davis**

**From award-winning author Tanita S. Davis comes a nuanced exploration of the microaggressions of middle school and a young Black girl named Madalyn who learns that being a good friend means dealing with the blue skies and the rain—and having the tough conversations on days that are partly cloudy. Perfect for fans of *A Good Kind of Trouble* and *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*.**

Lightning couldn't strike twice, could it? After a terrible year, Madalyn needs clear skies desperately. Moving in with her great-uncle, Papa Lobo, and switching to a new school is just the first step.

It's not all rainbows and sunshine, though. Madalyn discovers she's the only Black girl in her class, and while most of her classmates are friendly, assumptions lead to some serious storms.

Papa Lobo's long-running feud with neighbor Mrs. Baylor brings wild weather of its own, and Madalyn wonders just how far things will go. But when fire threatens the community, Madalyn discovers that truly being neighborly means more than just staying on your side of the street—it means weathering tough conversations—and finding that together a family can pull through anything.

Award-winning author Tanita S. Davis shows us that life isn't always clear, and that partly cloudy days still contain a bit of blue worth celebrating.

### **Stuntboy, in the Meantime by Jason Reynolds**

#### **A Schneider Family Award Honor Book for Middle Grade**

**From Newbery Medal honoree and #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Jason Reynolds comes a hilarious, hopeful, and action-packed middle grade novel about the greatest young superhero you've never heard of, filled with illustrations by Raúl the Third!**

Portico Reeves's superpower is making sure all the other superheroes—like his parents and two best friends—stay super. And safe. Super safe. And he does this all in secret. No one in his civilian life knows he's actually...Stuntboy!

But his regular Portico identity is pretty cool, too. He lives in the biggest house on the block, maybe in the whole city, which basically makes it a castle. His mom calls where they live an apartment building. But a building with fifty doors just in the hallways is definitely a castle. And behind those fifty doors live a bunch of different people who Stuntboy saves all the time. In fact, he's the only reason the cat, New Name Every Day, has nine lives.

All this is swell except for Portico's other secret, his not-so-super secret. His parents are fighting *all* the time. They're trying to hide it by repeatedly telling Portico to go check on a neighbor "in the meantime." But Portico knows "meantime" means his parents are heading into the Mean Time which *means* they're about to get into it, and well, Portico's superhero responsibility is to save them, too—as soon as he figures out how.

Only, all these secrets give Portico the worry wiggles, the frets, which his mom calls anxiety. Plus, like all superheroes, Portico has an arch-nemesis who is determined to prove that there is nothing *super* about Portico at all.

## WONDER TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR AUTHOR: Heather Forest      ILLUSTRATOR: David Boston

Traditional stories have endured generation after generation because they resonate on a human scale. These 27 classic folktales remind us of wisdom so elemental it is often lost in the rush of everyday life. In these stories, sometimes common sense makes no sense at all.

READING LEVEL INTEREST: 3rd-6th / FOUNTAS & PINNELL: O / LEXILE: ISBN PAPERBACK: 978-0-874834-22-2 /

### **ARTICLES AND/OR VIDEO RESOURCES (FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES)**

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Please note: many lessons have EXTENSIVE resources including articles, youtube videos, etc connected to each topic. They are embedded with links and include handouts so please look there first for all resources! Even if you are not going to use the entire lesson, you can use the resources that connect to the topic so please check there first. They are organized well under lesson topics so it does not make sense to list them all here.

<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/marley-dias-the-13-year-old-activist-author>

Common Lit Activity about Marley Dias. There are a few texts that could also be paired with it that are shown.

This does not connect to any lessons but could be used connecting to the Marley Dias book and/or as a spotlight on representation in books, student activism, etc.

### **WEBSITES (FOR STUDENTS TO INTERACT WITH)**

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## **PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS (LESSON PLANS, REPRODUCIBLES, ETC.)**

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### **Helpful Websites**

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Helpful Websites:

- [Learning for Justice](#)
- [Morningside Center for Social Responsibility](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves](#)
- [Scott O'Dell Book Awards](#)
- [African American Museum of Philadelphia](#)
- [PBS Learning Media](#)

### **Lessons About Africa**

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Lessons about Africa

<https://africa.mrdonn.org/kingdomlessons.html>

Slideshows about Africa:

<https://africa.mrdonn.org/powerpoints.html>

### **Unit 5**

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#### **Unit 5: YOUTH MAKING CHANGE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS (75-90 minute**

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What was the civil rights movement? How did young people help to achieve greater equality for Black Americans?

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- Define civil rights and explore civil rights challenges faced by different groups.
- Define civil rights movement and identify rights denied to and won by Black people during this era.
- Investigate the experiences of Ayanna Najuma and how the sit-in movement advanced civil rights.
- Create a role-play exploring the significance of the sit-ins and youth leadership in the civil rights movement.

[Youth-Making-Change-for-Civil-Rights-Lesson-Plan-1.pdf](#)

## Unit 4

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### Unit 4: The Cruelty of Jim Crow Segregation

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What was Jim Crow and what was life under it like for Black Americans?

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- Define stereotype and explain the negative effects of stereotypes on individuals and society.
- Examine the origins of Jim Crow and associated anti-Black stereotypes.
- Analyze primary sources demonstrating ways in which Black people were segregated during the Jim Crow era.
- Discuss ways in which Black people resisted discrimination and worked to end Jim Crow segregation.
- Compose a written reflection on the impact of those who struggled to end segregation.

[The-Cruelty-of-JC-Segregation-Unit-4-LP.pdf](#)

## Unit 3

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### Unit Three: FROM JUNETEENTH TO RECONSTRUCTION: THE PROMISE OF EQUALITY (60 mins)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did new opportunities inspire Black people to turn hope into achievement during Reconstruction?

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- Explore the historical importance of Juneteenth and ways in which it is observed today.
- Discuss the meaning of Reconstruction and how it relates to the history of enslavement.
- Produce a work product that reflects their learning about one aspect of Reconstruction, such as education, the growth of Black communities or the right to vote and run for elected office.

[From-Juneteenth-To-Reconstruction-Unit-3-LP.pdf](#)

## Unit 2

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### Unit Two: The Worth of a Slave (60 minutes)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS What was chattel slavery? How did hopes and dreams help Black Americans get through difficult times?

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- Learn what chattel slavery is and how it was practiced in the United States.
- Explore a fictionalized account of a plantation and its enslaved people, and create a visual response to it.
- Discuss the inherent dignity of all people and the injustice of treating human beings like property.

[The-Worth-of-a-Slave-Lesson-Plan-Grades-3\\_5\\_1\\_.pdf](#)

## Unit 1

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### Unit One: UNCOVERING OUR AFRICAN PAST THROUGH TRACKS AND BONES (70 minutes)

Essential Question: Where did we all come from and how are we all the same?

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- Learn about key scientific discoveries advancing our understanding of human origin.
- Explore the key evidence of early hominid existence in Africa.
- Investigate the ways in which humans migrated and populated the Earth.
- Understand the shared genetics of all humans and that humanity emerged in Africa.
- Explain why racial categories based on skin color are false and not based in science.

[Uncovering-Our-African-Past-Through-Tracks-and-Bones-Lesson-Plan.pdf](#)

## Background Lesson

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### Background Lesson: Africa's Rich History

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Why is it important to learn about Africa's historic kingdoms and vibrant trade? (125 minutes)

OBJECTIVES Students will:

- Explore the emergence and history of West African kingdoms and trade.
- Analyze the meaning of a West African fable and the significance of that region's oral tradition.
- Interpret a primary source to learn about the influence of the Kingdom of Mali.
- Annotate a text on the history of the Ghana and Mali kingdoms.
- Create an original salt craft rendering depicting key features of an African kingdom.

[Africas Rich History.pdf](#)