

Unit 1: New Unit

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

GOALS/PURPOSE

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.L.VL.7.3.D	Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
ELA.RL.CR.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what a literary text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RI.CR.7.1	Cite several pieces of 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.7.2	Determine a central idea in an informational text and explain how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.RL.IT.7.3	Analyze how particular elements of a text interact including how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1.C	Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

ELA.SL.PE.7.1.D

Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

ELA.SL.UM.7.5

Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

READ ALOUD TEXTS/EXCERPTS

The Slave Who Went to Congress by [Frye Gaillard](#), [Marti Rosner](#), [Jordana Haggard \(Illustrator\)](#)

(This goes with the Unit: **Resisting Oppression, Claiming Freedom**)

In 1870 Benjamin Turner, who spent the first 40 years of his life as a slave, was elected to the U.S. Congress. He was the first African American from Alabama to earn that distinction. In a recreation of Turner's own words, based on speeches and other writings that Turner left behind, co-authors Marti S. Rosner and Frye Gaillard have crafted the story of a remarkable man who taught himself to read when he was young and began a lifetime quest for education and freedom. As a candidate for Congress, and then as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Turner rejected the idea of punishing his white neighbors who fought for the Confederacy—and thus for the continuation of slavery—believing they had suffered enough. At the same time, he supported the right to vote for former slaves, opposed a cotton tax that he thought was hurtful to small and especially black farmers, supported racially mixed schools, and argued that land should be set aside for former slaves so they could build a new life for themselves. In this bicentennial season for the state of Alabama, the authors celebrate the life of a man who rejected bitterness even as he pursued his own dreams. His is a story of determination and strength, the story of an American hero from the town of Selma, Alabama, who worked to make the world a better place for people of all races and backgrounds.

All the Colors We Are/Todos los Colores de Nuestra Piel, by Katie Kissinger

This goes with the **Unit THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE: THE SKIN I AM IN**

This bilingual book offers a scientific description of the reasons human beings have different skin colors, including geographical and environmental factors. It also celebrates human diversity and raises awareness about the negative impact of stereotypes based on skin color.

The School is Not White! by Doreen Rappapo (book) (goes with the **Unit Racism in Rules and Laws**)

All they wanted was to learn. In Drew, Mississippi, in 1965, the schools were still segregated. The "all-black" schools were separate and unequal to "white" schools, lacking resources and support from the government. The Carters, a family of sharecroppers, had had enough. Mae Bertha and Matthew wanted their children to have an equal opportunity for a good education. So they sent their kids to the "all-white" schools. Teasing, death threats,

and rebuking followed—from the white children and the white adults and teachers. It was not easy to be black and wage a fight for equality, but that's just what the Carters did. Their faith in a higher power and in the goodness of people helped them battle through ignorance and prejudice. As President John F. Kennedy said, "When Americans are sent to war, we do not ask for whites only. American students of any color should be able to attend any school." For the Carters, it would be the fight of their lives. This is a true story of faith, courage, and honor: qualities Americans of any color can learn from the Carters.

Pies from Nowhere: How Georgia Gilmore Sustained the Montgomery Bus Boycott by Dee Romito (one copy of book or [online read-aloud](#))

This goes with the **Unit NONVIOLENCE IN ACTION: THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT**

Ophie's Ghosts by Justina Ireland, (Balzer + Bray), 2021.

Past winner of Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction.

Ophie is twelve when she sees a ghost for the first time: her father's spirit warns her to leave Georgia with her mother after he has been murdered by white men. She and her mother find shelter with family in Pittsburgh, in 1922 only slightly more welcoming than Georgia to Black people, and take jobs as maids at Daffodil Manor, owned by a tyrannical elderly white lady. There Ophie meets a household full of new people, and she realizes that some of those people are ghosts, who offer glimpses into the household's (and the nation's) troubled history. One, in particular, strikes a chord with Ophie, who begins to suspect that the truth about this spirit's mysterious death may reveal a terrible secret at the heart of Daffodil Manor.

Rain Rising by Courtne Comrie

An inspiring debut middle grade novel-in-verse about Rain, who must overcome sadness after her all-star brother is badly beaten up at a frat party. *Genesis Begins Again* meets *Brown Girl Dreaming* in this powerful story of perseverance, family, and hope.

Tales of the Talented Tenth: No. 2, Bessie Stringfield

Joel Christian Gill, writer and artist

2016, Fulcrum Publishing

Imagine a five-foot-two-inch-tall woman riding a Harley eight times across the continental United States. Now imagine she is black and is journeying across the country in the pre-Civil Rights era of the 1930s and '40s

Strange Fruit. Volume II: More Uncelebrated Narratives from Black History

Joel Christian Gill, writer and artist

2018, Fulcrum Publishing

A collection of stories from early African American history that represent the oddity of success in the face of great adversity. Each of the eight illustrated chapters chronicles an uncelebrated African American hero or event.

ARTICLES AND/OR VIDEO RESOURCES (FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES)

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.

[Common Lit Article: The Cotton Club was a whites-only night club that showcased several prominent African American entertainers during the 1920s and 1930s. In this informational text, McBirney explains the club's influence in Harlem and its representation of African American entertainers.](#)

Texts to pair and related media also available there!

[Common Lit Article: After the assassination of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a third-grade teacher named Jane Elliott led a social experiment to help her students understand the unfair treatment of African Americans.](#)

WEBSITES (FOR STUDENTS TO INTERACT WITH)

Many of the books come with quizzes and there are also some videos. Students can be assigned a book or browse

[Epic Books Collection- Amistad 6th](#)

[Epic Books Collection- Focus on Africa](#)

[Important people in History/Civil Rights](#)

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

Students can do independently, after learning about Africa.

There are lessons connected to this source in the teacher resource section.

<https://www.youtube.com/@makingspacewithchristianro4965>

A YouTube series by award-winning children's author-illustrator Christian Robinson in which he leads young people in exploring big feelings, creativity, and self-expression

<https://www.kidsaskauthors.com/>

(this is not specific to Amistad but has a lot of good representation and can be explored by students independently or a podcast could be assigned)

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

Helpful Websites

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](#)

Unit 5

Unit: NONVIOLENCE IN ACTION: THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT (105-120 mins)

How did Black Americans use the values of nonviolence to achieve equal rights?

Students will:

- Define nonviolence and identify the values associated with it.
- Read about Georgia Gilmore and discuss how her actions during the Montgomery bus boycott exemplified nonviolence.
- Examine texts about other women who led the Montgomery bus boycott.

→ Create a “found poem” reflecting key themes related to the struggle for civil rights.

[Nonviolence-in-Action-The-Montgomery-Bus-Boycott-Lesson-Plan-1-1.pdf](#)

<https://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/new-high-court-nominee-ketanji-brown-jackson> (About Ketanji Brown Jackson, could be paired with a read aloud book about her)

Unit 4

Unit: Resisting Oppression, Claiming Freedom (60 mins)

How did those opposed to equal rights for Black people try to prevent the progress that was being made during Reconstruction? How did Black people show resistance?

Students will:

- Discuss what is required to live a free and happy life.
- Describe how laws passed following the Civil War, such as Black codes and Jim Crow laws, limited freedom and equality for Black Americans.
- Analyze images depicting Black resistance to oppression and inequality during the era of Reconstruction.

[Resisting-Oppression-Unit-3-LP.pdf](#)

Unit 3

Unit: La Amistad, A child's Journey (60-90 mins)

What do you think the experience was like for children who came to the U.S. on the Amistad? How do you think the experience changed them?

Students will:

- Learn about the rebellion by the kidnapped Mende aboard the slave ship La Amistad.
- Analyze a fictionalized child's perspective on the Amistad by creating a visual representation of it.
- Describe the lives the children of the Amistad were forced to leave behind and identify connections between these children's lives and their own.
- Interpret Hale Woodruff's murals depicting the Amistad and discuss the social and emotional effects of the rebellion and legal victory.

[La-Amistad A-Childs-Journey-Lesson-Plan.pdf](#)

Unit 2

Unit: Racism in Rules and Laws (45-60 mins)

Essential Question: How have rules and laws been created in our country based on race?

Students will:

- Define the concepts of segregation and integration.
- Explain the significance of Brown v. Board of Education.
- Describe how school segregation harms all members of a community.
- Identify examples of individual and institutional racism.
- Generate ideas for making their community welcoming for people from all backgrounds.

[Racism-in-Rules-and-Laws-Feb-2022.pdf](#)

Unit 1

Unit: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE: THE SKIN I AM IN (60 mins)

What makes our skin colors different? When is it appropriate to categorize or refer to people by skin color or race, and when is it not?

Students will:

- Explain when it is appropriate and when it is problematic to categorize people by race or skin color.
- Learn that race does not have a scientific basis, but that racism is real and hurtful.
- Describe personal experiences of prejudice based on race or skin color.
- Identify the scientific reasons for skin color variation.
- Create a mural that celebrates skin color diversity.

[The-Social-Construction-of-Race-The-Skin-I-am-In-Feb-2022.pdf](#)

