



MARGINALIZED VOICES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE TEACHING GUIDE

TEACHING PURSUIT OF FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL THROUGH AMERICAN LITERATURE

Unit 1: Early America

Key Concepts: The Open Literary Canon; Stereotypes; Marginalization; Bias

The Great Law of Peace by the Iroquois Confederacy

“Little No Name’s Grandson” by George A. Boyce

“Superman and Me: The Joy of Reading and Writing” by Sherman Alexie

Unit 2: Puritan Literature

Key Concepts: Justice; Superstition; Morality; Challenging Authority; Courage

“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” by Jonathan Edwards

The Crucible by Arthur Miller

Unit 3: Voices of Revolution

Key Concepts: Equality; Racism; Avarice; White Supremacy; Inequality of Opportunity

“Common Sense” by Thomas Paine

The Declaration of Independence

Speech in the Convention by Benjamin Franklin

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano by Olaudah Equiano

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass & “What to the American Slave is the Fourth of July?” by Frederick Douglass

“Ain’t I A Woman?” by Sojourner Truth

“The Solitude of Self” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Unit 4: Romanticism

Key Concepts: Authenticity; Usury; Revenge

“The Birth-Mark” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

“The Devil and Tom Walker” by Washington Irving

“The Cask Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe

Unit 5: Transcendentalism

Key Concepts: Conscience; Morality; Law; Courage

“Self Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau

Unit 6: 1920s

Key Concepts: Equality; Racism; Avarice; White Supremacy; Inequality of Opportunity

“I, Too” (1925) and “Harlem” (1951) by Langston Hughes

The Great Gatsby (1925)

Unit 7: 1930s

Key Concepts: Freedom; Land Ownership; Poverty

“Let America Be American Again” (1936) by Langston Hughes

The Grapes of Wrath (1939) Chapter 19 by John Steinbeck

Unit 8: 1940s

Key Concept: Cultural Competence

The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston

Unit 9: 1950s

Key Concepts: Redlining; Segregation; Racism; Inequality of Opportunity

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry

Unit 10: 1960s to Present

Key Concepts: Cultural Competence; Perspective Taking

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

“Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

“Kindness” by Naomi Shihab Nye

Unit 1: Early America

Key Concepts: The Open Literary Canon; Stereotypes; Marginalization; Bias

Guiding Questions

During this unit, students will read early American literature and be challenged to consider the following major big questions:

- Who were the people occupying the land that would come to be called the United States?
- What were their values?
- Were they treated unjustly? If so, how and why?
- What stereotypes formed?
- What is marginalization? Was it present then relating to these people groups? Is it still present today? If so, why and how?
- What can today's citizens learn about personal identity, group identity, stereotypes, and marginalization by exposure to the literature of early America?

Literature	Social Justice Objective	Historical Context	Mini-Activity
"The Law of Great Peace" & the U.S. Constitution	Understand the influence of the indigenous peoples on the US constitution.	How the "The Great Law of Peace" Shaped the U.S. Constitution (PBS)	Comparison Activity
George A. Boyce's "Little No Name's Grandson" (1974)	Understand the legacy of injustices against Native Americans.	Reservation History (History.com)	Activity

Unit 3: Voices of Revolution

Key Concepts: Equality; Racism; Avarice; White Supremacy; Inequality of Opportunity

Guiding Questions

Through the reading and the study of early American freedom documents and literary pieces, among other questions, students will explore the following major big questions:

- What do the early revolutionary documents actually say?
- What was the mindset of the Founding Fathers of the United States?
- How did the American system of slavery involving African peoples affect the growing new country?
- How did the view and treatment of women evolve?
- How does the treatment of African-Americans and women match with the stated objectives of the Constitution?

Literature	Social Justice Objective	Historical Context	Mini-Activity
The Declaration of Independence + Jefferson's deleted passages about the trans-Atlantic slave trade	Understand the foundation principles of America of freedom and justice for all.	The American Revolution (CrashCourse)	Reflection/ Discussion Questions
Speech at the Constitutional Convention (1787) by Benjamin Franklin	Observe Franklin's posture of humility toward the constitution and its issues. Discuss the slave trade.	Constitutional Convention (Article) Constitutional Convention Video	Rhetorical Analysis Practice
The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano by Olaudah Equiano	Analyze the implicit argument and the persuasive appeal of eye-witness accounts (ethos) and imagery (five senses).	Equiano Background (PBS) The Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves of 1807 (Politico)	Excerpt & Rhetorical Analysis Practice
"What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass	Analyze the implicit and explicit arguments about the abolition of slavery and the persuasive appeal of rhetorical/literary devices.	Inheriting the mother's slave status (PBS) 13th Amendment (History.com)	In-class essay on "What to the Slave...?"
"Ain't I A Woman?" by Sojourner Truth	Analyze the use of logos and rhetorical questions to argue for women's rights.	Truth Background (History.com)	Kinetic Typography & Reading by Kerry Washington Rhetorical Analysis Practice
"The Solitude of Self" by Elizabeth Cady Stanton	Analyze the use of conceit to make an argument about the right to higher education for both men and women.	Issue of white supremacy with Stanton (NPR)	Excerpt & Rhetorical Analysis Practice

Unit 6: 1920s

Key Concepts: Equality; Racism; Avarice; White Supremacy; Inequality of Opportunity

Guiding Questions

Through the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s quintessential novel about the American Dream, among other questions, students will explore the following major big questions:

- What were the defining features of what F. Scott Fitzgerald called the Jazz Age?
- What is the American Dream?
- How did the American Dream change in the 1920s?
- How can an individual’s starting position in life impact their success?
- How can race and socio-economic status impact an individual’s success?
- What other obstacles impact an individual’s ability to reach the American Dream?

Literature	Social Justice Objective	Historical Context	Mini-Activity
“I, Too” by Langston Hughes	Analyze the house as a microcosm of America, the kitchen as representative of Jim Crow segregation, and table as a symbol of equality.	The Great Migration (History.com)	Reflection Questions
“Harlem” by Langston Hughes	Analyze the meaning and message of each verb and what it reveals about Hughes’s community in Harlem.	Harlem Renaissance (History.com)	Reflection Questions
The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald	Analyze the impact of individual choices versus social forces and structures on characters’ lives.	Six Facts About Economic Inequality in the US (Pew) Wealth Inequality in America (2012 Video)	Great Gatsby Curve and the Baseball Metaphor Activity



Unit 9: 1950s

Key Concepts: Redlining; Segregation; Racism; Inequality of Opportunity

Guiding Questions

Through reading and discussing Lorraine Hansberry's play about a working class family in south-side Chicago, among other questions, students will explore the following major big questions::

- Why is land and homeownership valued in America?
- What is redlining?
- What groups were impacted by redlining, and why?
- How has redlining impacted access to quality education?
- What other areas of life has redlining impacted?

Literature	Social Justice Objective	Historical Context	Mini-Activity
A Raisin in the Sun	Observe the effect of systemic racism on characters' lives.	Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History (NPR) (explicit language in first 15 seconds) Racial discrimination in mortgage lending (WaPo)	Anticipation Discussion Guide for A Raisin in the Sun