

LESSON: Colorblind Practices After *Brown*

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 10-12

SUBJECT: Social Studies/Sociology

TIME REQUIRED: 45 minutes

This is a sociology and history lesson that examines colorblindness.

RATIONALE

This lesson is supposed to help students recognize one of the unintended results of the *Brown* decision: equating colorblind policies with equity.

NOTE: This could be a difficult topic and lesson for students. We recommend alerting your administration before engaging with this lesson.

This lesson plan and materials needed to teach it can be found at the Thurgood Marshall Institute: <https://tminstituteldf.org/>

OVERVIEW

This lesson will cover colorblindness and how ignoring race can lead to increases in bias and decrease the ability to recognize it. Students will do two guided readings to expose them to the idea of colorblindness and its relationship to bias.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How should you treat someone who is different from you?
- What is the difference between justice and equality?
- Do laws guarantee fair treatment?

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

After the lesson, students will be able to define colorblindness and bias. They will also reflect on the relationship between colorblindness, equality, and justice.

PREPARING TO TEACH

The biggest preparation a teacher can do for this lesson is to make sure that the classroom environment they have fostered all year is one that can learn about and tangle with the sometimes-difficult idea of colorblindness. Teachers should communicate with their department heads and administrators that they are doing this lesson and show its relevance to curriculum.

SCAFFOLDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS TO SUPPORT LEARNERS

Reading support...

The readings can be done by the recommended grade levels, however some scaffolding may be beneficial if the teacher determines. The worksheet is meant to help direct student reading, but allowing for students to look up words they do not know may help with comprehension.

Differentiation...

Differentiation with this assignment could be giving one set of students the TED article (the easier read) and some students the Harvard piece (the more difficult read), having them fill out their half of the worksheet, and then sharing as a class to fill in each group with what the other read.

Adjusting for middle school grades...

For middle schoolers, we would recommend paraphrasing or excerpting from these articles and having students read the new, simpler versions.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SEQUENCE

Begin class by pointing out the essential questions. Then articulate to the class that today's lesson will deal with topics of bias and race, reiterating that the purpose of the class is to explore ideas and that the class is a respectful and thoughtful community. Hand out the reading worksheet and review the questions on it before beginning the reading to help ground students in what they should be looking for in the readings. Then do the readings in class, potentially in reading groups or all together if that is easier. After reading, give time to respond to the worksheets, potentially partnered up so that students can begin to discuss. Once finished, put the *Brown v. Board* decision on the board as a grounding point and have students in pairs discuss the question from the worksheet: Does *Brown* advocate for colorblind policies? Finally, students will provide an illustrated reflection on the question. This needs to be some kind of artistic, hopefully multimodal, reflection that is an articulation of their understanding of colorblindness and its relation to the *Brown* case.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment will be the reading worksheet, helping to determine reading comprehension and understanding, as well as the illustrated reflection.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ENRICHMENT

[Why saying “I don’t see race at all” just makes racism worse | \(ted.com\)](#)

https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/Racial%20Color%20Blindness_16f0f9c6-9a67-4125-ae30-5eb1ae1eff59.pdf

Questions	TED Reading	Harvard Business School Reading
How would the author define racial colorblindness?		
What is an outcome of racial colorblindness the article describes?		

<p>What is the relationship between bias and racial colorblindness?</p>		
<p>Would the author agree with this statement? Why or why not? "<i>Brown v. Board</i> advocated for colorblind treatment."</p>		

What from the article surprised you, or what from the article did you learn?		
What from the article are you curious about or want to question more?		