

LESSON: The Start of the NAACP

GRADE LEVEL: Late Middle School

SUBJECT: History, Sociology

TIME REQUIRED: 45 mins

This lesson introduces students to an analysis of social grouping by explaining the start of the NAACP.

RATIONALE

This lesson allows students to explore ideas of social grouping and racism, using a primary source document from the creation of the NAACP.

NOTE: The ideas and activities of this lesson are intended for middle school grades, but the document included requires a developed reading level. Students will need reading support depending on their grade.

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

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How are people grouped and evaluated in American society?
- How does racism exist in America?
- Where did the NAACP come from?

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

After the lesson, students will...

- Summarize the early ideas of the NAACP.
- Discuss the realities of racial injustice in 1909.
- Consider the relationship between race and social experiences.

PREPARING TO TEACH

- Students should have a foundational understanding of social grouping, race and segregation, and racial injustice.
- Teachers should
 - Print copies of the attached document for each student.

SCAFFOLDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS TO SUPPORT LEARNERS

Reading support...

Teachers can aid students in reading the included document by providing helpful vocabulary definitions, modern translations, direct partner supports, or other reading scaffolds.

Differentiation...

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Teachers can adjust class groupings, discussion expectations, or types of group activities depending on the needs and interests of their students. Group assignments can also be completed online or using technological resources as necessary.

Adjusting for high school grades...

This lesson should be generally applicable to lower or higher grades. Teachers may need to add more reading scaffolding or edit discussion questions depending on their class.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES SEQUENCE

1. Review any necessary information/history with students to prepare them for the content of the lesson.
2. Divide the class into 6 groups. Give each group 3 blank sheets of paper and a copy of the attached document. Assign each group a paragraph from the document (the last paragraph includes the 3 demands at the end).
3. Explain to students that this document is the beginning manifesto from an organization that would later be known as the NAACP.
4. Instruct each group to work together and read their paragraph. They should then use their 3 pages to:
 - a. Summarize their paragraph in 1-2 sentences.
 - b. Extract and define important words from their paragraph.
 - c. Draw a diagram, picture, or chart to represent their paragraph.
5. Allow each team to lay out their pages and let students walk around and read the pages of each group.
6. Invite students to come back together as a class and discuss the following questions in their groups.
 - a. What social problems is this new committee concerned about?
 - b. How would this committee evaluate the experiences of white Americans vs. Black Americans?
 - c. How are political and economic issues changing the social experiences of Black Americans?

ASSESSMENT

Teachers can collect the pages of each group at the end of the lesson. Teachers can also monitor the closing discussions to evaluate student understanding.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ENRICHMENT

- See attached document: <https://history.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/primary-sources/images/history-education-pss-reconstruction-nationalcommittee-source.jpg>.

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Platform Adopted by the National Negro Committee, 1909

We denounce the ever-growing oppression of our 10,000,000 colored fellow citizens as the greatest menace that threatens the country. Often plundered of their just share of the public funds, robbed of nearly all part in the government, segregated by common carriers, some murdered with impunity, and all treated with open contempt by officials, they are held in some States in practical slavery to the white community. The systematic persecution of law-abiding citizens and their disfranchisement on account of their race alone is a crime that will ultimately drag down to an infamous end any nation that allows it to be practiced, and it bears most heavily on those poor white farmers and laborers whose economic position is most similar to that of the persecuted race.

The nearest hope lies in the immediate and patiently continued enlightenment of the people who have been inveigled into a campaign of oppression. The spoils of persecution should not go to enrich any class or classes of the population. Indeed persecution of organized workers, peonage, enslavement of prisoners, and even disfranchisement already threaten large bodies of whites in many Southern States.

We agree fully with the prevailing opinion that the transformation of the unskilled colored laborers in industry and agriculture into skilled workers is of vital importance to that race and to the nation, but we demand for the Negroes, as for all others, a free and complete education, whether by city, State or nation, a grammar school and industrial training for all and technical, professional, and academic education for the most gifted.

But the public schools assigned to the Negro of whatever kind or grade will never receive a fair and equal treatment until he is given equal treatment in the Legislature and before the law. Nor will the practically educated Negro, no matter how valuable to the community he may prove, be given a fair return for his labor or encouraged to put forth his best efforts or given the chance to develop that efficiency that comes only outside the school until he is respected in his legal rights as a man and a citizen.

We regard with grave concern the attempt manifest South and North to deny black men the right to work and to enforce this demand by violence and bloodshed. Such a question is too fundamental and clear even to be submitted to arbitration. The late strike in Georgia is not simply a demand that Negroes be displaced, but that proven and efficient men be made to surrender their long-followed means of livelihood to white competitors.

As first and immediate steps toward remedying these national wrongs, so full of peril for the whites as well as the blacks of all sections, we demand of Congress and the Executive:

- (1). That the Constitution be strictly enforced and the civil rights guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment be secured impartially to all.
- (2). That there be equal educational opportunities for all and in all the States, and that public school expenditure be the same for the Negro and white child:
- (3). That in accordance with the Fifteenth Amendment the right of the Negro to the ballot on the same terms as other citizens be recognized in every part of the country.

I herewith subscribe \$ _____ to the National Negro Committee, and desire to become a member of the permanent organization growing out of the present Conference.

(Make checks payable to Oswald G. Villard, Treasurer).