

Forging A Connection:

*Releasing the bondage of internalized oppression through quality social studies instruction*

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**Abstract**

In this curriculum unit, students will be provided a link to aid their understanding of past enslavement and how it relates to them personally as African American children in Philadelphia. Moreover, this education can aid participants in developing authentic self-pride, African descended identity, and a sociological understanding of slavery and its impact in Philadelphia.

This interdisciplinary curriculum is written for third-grade students but can be easily adapted to use across all grades. The lessons will focus on slavery, the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia, and the abolitionist movement. Through virtual field trips, letter writing, videos, and interactive notebooks, students can begin to express the same desires for political, personal, expressive, and legal freedom in their lives today.

Keywords: *slavery, internalized racism. vacant esteem. ever-present anger. racial socialization, abolitionist,*

“Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs—all the world has agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. “Here,” they said, “this is beautiful, and if you are on this day ‘worthy’ you may have it.”

— Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

## **Problem Statement**

The mention of the word slavery evokes strong negative images and reactions in adults. In my experience as both a long-time psychotherapist and educator, that reaction is magnified in children and teens. In the urban school settings where I teach predominately black and brown students, it is not uncommon to hear students devalue their African features such as: skin tone, color, nose, and hair by trading insults or “snaps” about their physical features. Snaps that contain phrases such as “African booty scratcher,” “monkey ass,” and “nappy-headed,” are tossed around to bring shame, pain, and insult to one another.

In a middle year’s social studies class, I endeavored to introduce the history of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. I wanted the students to have an understanding of the life of a slave. In one segment of my lesson, I played the HBO documentary, *Unchained Memories* which features narratives from former slaves during the 1930’s Federal Writers’ Project. It was my aim to bridge more understanding of their histories, themselves and their culture. However, I didn’t get the reaction that I was looking for. Instead of empathy and connection, I heard roaring, rowdy laughter and jokes. The children had no connection to the slave images and narratives artfully narrated in the documentary. There was a complete disconnect from the legacy of slavery to who they are now as African American children in Philadelphia. The class referred to the slaves as “them.” It was curious to me at the time, why these black children seemed to ignore the obvious fact that the images on the screen looked racially like them. It was even more painful to see that the children lacked any empathy for the horrors that the slaves endured.

The children in my class are like African American children across the country. The behaviors are not discrete to them. It is common because of the shared historical and systemic experiences that they and their families have both perpetuated and endured generationally. In this unit, students will be provided a link to aid their understanding of past enslavement and how it relates to them personally as African American children in Philadelphia. Moreover, this curriculum can aid participants in developing authentic self-pride, African descendant identity, and the historical understanding of slavery and its impact within Philadelphia. In the following section, the origins of the African American experience in American will be explored in order to facilitate understanding of the etiology of the behavior demonstrated in middle school children in my class and the many around the country.

## Content Objectives

### Psychological Injury

African American children, adolescents and adults alike experience racism, discrimination, bigotry and microaggressions on a personal or systemic level on a daily basis. These experiences become part of the African American psyche and become internalized. Psychologist E.J.R. David (2014) explains, “External experiences of racism create psychological injury” (p, 174). This psychological injury is also known as internalized oppression which occurs when:

The persons who are the target of the hatred often believe the lie that they are inferior, that they are the problem, that they are less worthy. The persons who are discriminated against over a period of time will often shift from a healthy self-image into a self-image that exemplifies the lies of inferiority and inadequacy. When oppressed persons believe the lies that the oppressors tell them about their status as inferior – they have internalized the oppression (Pak, 2020).

In the book, *Internalized Oppression: the psychology of marginalized groups* (2014), Psychologist E.J.R. David agrees and further elaborates, that African American psychologists have long postulated about the disturbing effects racism has on the lives of African Americans. Four exemplars of behavior have been identified to indicate race-related psychological injury. They are : (1) failure to recognize one’s African heritage, (2) failure to value African interest, and survival, (3) failure to respect and support all African interests, and (4) failure to support a standard of conduct that negates people and things that are anti-African (David, 2014).

### History

The origins of this psychology injury did not occur in isolation. It is firmly grounded and rooted in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The Transatlantic Slave Trade lasted nearly 400 years and transported more than 12 million slaves across the Atlantic to the Americas.

The preexisting slave market in Africa was not vast enough to accommodate the huge need that America required for labor. It must be noted that ancient African slavery was not chattel slavery, it was much like other slave systems all over the world. Some refer to it as “domestic servitude.” People were enslaved for debts, war, adultery, criminal offenses, and being orphaned. In this state of enslavement, the slaves worked mostly in the homes, retained some freedoms, could have slaves of their own, earned profits from their labor, could marry and pass land to their children. (Home Team History, 2016).

To gain laborers, slave traders created permanent warfare between unstable African nations (Smallwood, 2007). The Europeans manipulated the elite African rulers by making them middle men in the enslaving business. Slavery was a big and lucrative business (ApplePieNow 2010). Also, they exploited the elite Africans' desire for European commodities. Alcohol and firearms were the bait used in their strategy and played a key role (Whitney Plantation, 2020). With access given by the African elites, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade became successful.

In chattel slavery, there was a critical relationship between honor and the psychology of power. The slave had no honor because he had no worth. This act of dishonoring, which began with the capture, conquer and rape of Africans permeated every aspect of life for slaves who found themselves bought and sold as property in the New World (Crapps, 1990). As “non-persons” Africans were dishonored and deprived of their customs, foods, religions, and traditions. This psychological injury through lifetimes of abuse at the hands of slave masters and other power-wielding figures is a learned trauma that has been passed down generationally (Degruy, 2017).

#### Enslaved Families and Psychological Injury

Trauma is passed down generationally. It seeps through generations from extended family to community. During American slavery, the black community was suppressed and marginalized. Today, African Americans use adaptive survival strategies to cope with the divergent anxieties that the collective community shares. And, like most families, these adaptive survival skills were modeled and passed down from elders who most likely also suffered from trauma.

Informed by the examples of elders, most parents raise their children the way they were raised. There are things that parents may choose to do differently, but for the most part, parenting is part of an innumerable set of skills that are passed down from generation to generation (Degruy, 2017). Furthermore, by the age of 6, children receive most of their attitudes, life skills, and approaches to life from their parents (Degruy, 2017). Consequently, the children in bondage learned that:

The slave family existed only to serve the master and in order to survive physically, psychologically and socially the slave family had to develop a system which made survival possible under degrading conditions. The slave society prepared the young to accept exploitation and abuse, to ignore the absence of dignity and respect for themselves as blacks. The social, emotional and psychological price of this adjustment is well known (Comer, 1980, p. 47)

To further clarify around the relationship between generational trauma and slavery, Barron states, “from 1619- 1954, about 335 years, Black people were owned as property, refused citizenship or treated less than, were bought and sold as commodity

and used for entertainment and disregarded" (Barron, 2016, 04: 51). Only since 1954 has this country moved to do something about the legacy of slavery (Barron, 2016). Fortuitously, the tragic murder of George Floyd, a black man who was killed in Minneapolis police custody in May of 2020, seems to have spurred some level of acknowledgment and national investment in understanding how slavery, racism and systemic oppression impacts African American lives today.

### Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

When populations experience multigenerational trauma from the results of slavery, oppression, and institutionalized racism, that group has a condition coined by Dr. Joy Degruy as Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, PTSS (Degruy, 2017). There is no single pattern of behavior as many behaviors live underneath the broad definition. However, Degruy has identified three major categories that address Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: vacant esteem, ever-present anger, and racist socialization. (Degruy, 2017).

#### *Vacant Esteem- PTSS*

Vacant esteem is the false belief of worthlessness. It is transmitted generationally through family, community and society (Degruy, 2017). On a familiar level this occurs when parents believe they have no worth. In return, these parents instill similar beliefs into their children. (Degruy, 2017). Schwartz acknowledges (2001) that not much is known about the children in slavery, but we do know that they were valuable future investments of commodity. It is ironic that the care of slaves was not standardized for a return on the master's investment. Instead the care of the children was dependent on the benevolence of the master. Sadly, slave children, under their parents and masters lived in fear and isolation. They ate sparse meals from pig troughs, tended to animals, witnessed the trauma of others and were beaten in preparation for a life of servitude (U.S. Department of the Interior. 2017).

Abolitionist Frederick Douglas, acknowledged that:

His grandparents provided him with his first sense of family, while at the same time training him and other children to prepare for one of the many predictable events characteristic of slavery's abnormal trappings: the destruction of the traditional family and its role in human development. Here, on the plantation, unacknowledged and fused relationships through bloodlines typically crossed between a slave mother, master-father, and offspring, the consequence of which shattered the normal human channels for identity and self-awareness (Troutman, 2011, p. 6).

Members of a community typically develop common beliefs about their community members' worth, beliefs as it relates to the community's standards and values of acceptable behavior, educational acquisition and professional endeavors. The problem arises when these standards undermine the goals of community members that are actually attainable. For example, black leader and educator, Booker T. Washington, espoused in his famous Atlanta Compromise speech of 1895, that blacks should accept the political and social status quo of segregation and discrimination and focus on self-reliance and hard work in the trade fields. He felt that in time white people would admire this behavior in black people and eventually be granted full citizenship and be integrated into every aspect of society (PBS, 2020). Considering the political climate of the day, including the daily threat of lynching of black men and women in the Jim Crow South, it is easy to understand how Washington came to this point of view. Sadly, many community members bought into this limited view for their futures and took their cue from this community vacant esteem group think. Accordingly, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, families sent their daughters off to become nurses and teachers and kept their sons at home to learn crafts and trades involving manual labor.

The workings of vacant esteem were quite apparent on a societal level during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. To create an ideal slave, a vacant esteem is required. The tactics the slave merchants employed to achieve this goal included: strict discipline and unconditional submission, instilling fear, teaching slaves to take interest in their master's enterprise, and preventing access to education and recreation, to ensure that slaves remain uneducated, helpless, and dependent. These devices were leveraged to enforce captivity and white supremacy. It required an unrelenting sustained control of the slaves' mind and body (Stamp, 1995). Slaves did not have any choices and therefore, rules of conduct dominated every aspect of slaves' lives. This programming started early in slaves' lives (Trotman, 2011).

For example, vacant esteem was evident on the Eglet slave ship on February 24, 1682 when an African slave turned the violence received from the slave merchants against himself and another African with a murder/suicide (Smallwood, 2007). Smallwood (2007), retells an account of a man who stabbed another African before hanging himself.

Upon further inquiry, the company agents learned that "the Negroe {who}... hanged himself... was much abused with blowes." Whether these "blows took place in the middle passage or after arrival the agents did not say. But when the invoice of the cargo's sale was prepared, only the hanged man was listed as a loss; the other dead man was not counted as part of the cargo (p.180).

Tragedies such as this were not uncommon and exposed some of the emotional, psychological and human complexities involved in the transatlantic slave trade.

Today, the long-term effects of PTSS can be seen through our society's laws, institutions, policies and media. Degruy asserts:

African Americans have been and continue to be disproportionately represented in our penal institutions. African Americans often live in neighborhoods where the schools are functionally segregated and lack adequate revenue to sustain them. In African American communities, banks charge higher interest rates on home and auto loans, as well as making it more difficult for African Americans to get small business loans. The media contributes to vacant esteem's formation by frequently displaying African Americans as criminals, disadvantaged, academically deficient, and sexually irresponsible (p. 110).

Consequently, it is evident that the historical factors of family, community, and society create a vacant esteem for black peoples' self-assessment of worth.

#### *Ever-Present Anger- PTSS*

The second symptom of the condition known as Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is ever-present anger. Anger is a normal response to a blocked goal. Over time, blocked goals lend themselves to the possibility of failure and ultimately provoke anger (Degruy, 2017). Over centuries the United States fed black people lies; for example, the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution states:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America (United States Courts, 2020).

Yet, the promise of justice and domestic tranquility is yet to be realized as the document cleverly omits a vital distinction between people and property. In its opening line, "We the people", actually fabricates subservience. It defined "the people" as white men and blacks in America were considered property, and even a full human being. This ensured white supremacy and black racial oppression (National Trust of Historic Preservation, 2020). Black Leader Malcolm X agrees and adds. "We were brought here against our will. We were not brought here to be made citizens. We were not brought here to enjoy the constitutional gifts that they speak so beautifully about" (DuVernay, 2016, 44.40).

Moreover, the loophole in the 13th Amendment, ratified in 1865, still affects black Americans today. The amendment states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction"

(Little, 2018). However, the exception clause is embedded into the amendment that has supported/permitted/allowed black incarceration rates five times that of white people. The prison system directly profits from the unpaid or underpaid slave labor of the prisoners (Little, 2018).

In addition, this amendment allows for the involuntary servitude when convicted of a crime. The post-Civil War South white lawmakers implemented Black Codes to keep newly freed people working on plantations. The Black Codes were intentionally vague. Offenses ranged from misdemeanor to felony depending on the alleged severity of the criminal offenses under the Codes. For example, failing to defer to white people, which meant that a Black person could be jailed for not demonstrating enough respect to white people was a crime. (Little, 2018). After the Civil War, new criminal offenses were devised such as, “malicious mischief” and “insulting gestures”. These crimes were also intentionally vague and truly undefinable.

From the Black Codes period onward, state laws have sent black people to jail at unprecedented rates. This phenomenon of disproportionate black incarceration is described today by legal theorist Michelle Alexander as the “New Jim Crow” (Alexander, 2020). Today, the United States leads the world in incarcerations. Demographically, blacks in America are the most imprisoned at 38% (Nellis, 2016).

Furthermore, Dr. Kelly Campbell, adds,

Black people have a right to be angry and frustrated. Although white people think racism is a thing of the past, ethnic minorities (African, Latin, and Native Americans) disproportionately live in poverty. On average, they earn 20-35% less income than whites, receive an inferior education, are more likely to occupy dangerous jobs, and live in polluted, run-down neighborhoods. They have worse health outcomes, higher incidence of disease, and they die younger. Ethnic minorities know they live in a racist system but lack the power to change it on their own. (Campbell, 2014).

From a historical perspective, the very act of enslaving others is an inherently violent process that uses terror to dehumanize people into complete submission. White people modeled anger and violence in every component of enslavement. “Individuals were forcibly captured, chained, and regularly beaten into submission over hundreds of years. Any group of people living under such harsh conditions would eventually learn the ways of their captors” (Degruy, 2017, p. 114).

### *Racist Socialization-PTSS*

The third and perhaps most permeating symptom of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is racist socialization. Racist socialization is the adoption of the white man's value system. In short, its cornerstone premise is all things white are superior to all things black are inferior (Degruy, 2017).

Since slavery commenced, there have been rewards for adopting white standards of beauty. The slaves who had lighter skin, with physical hints of some European ancestry were permitted to be house slaves which was a more desirable role in the slave hierarchy. Black people who possess darker skin hues, kinky hair, broader facial features, tended to be field slaves. Today, when black people adopt, identify, and internalize white supremacist value systems, they are responding to racist socialization. For black women, there is a shifting of identity that involves "altering, disguising, and covering up your physical self in order to assimilate, to be accepted as attractive" (Patton, 2006, p. 26).

In the act of adopting the white man's values, black people all over the world participate in colorism. The term colorism was crafted by Pulitzer Prize Winner Alice Walker in 1982. Walker is quoted as defining colorism as, "prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color" (Norwood, 2015, p. 586). It is not racism but there is a clear and distinct relationship. An example of colorism is when darker skinned black women are told that they are "Pretty for a dark skin girl."

Also, some black people in the twentieth century created a form of discrimination against one another called the Brown Paper Bag Test. In this test a skin color that was lighter or matched the color of the paper bag gained entrance and admission to select social events, churches, fraternities, sororities, and clubs (Pilgrim, 2014). Even in hard-core hip-hop biopic films such as *Straight Outta Compton*, the casting roll sheet blatantly perpetuated colorism and Eurocentric beauty standards. Female actors were actually "graded" in the roll call casting sheet from A- D by ethnicity, skin tone, and body type (Clark, 2014). Moreover, a pediatric study from Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc. notes that "Colorism ... stands to jeopardize the physical health, well-being, and life chances of adolescents of color globally" (Craddock, Dlova, Diedrichs, 2018, p 475). Dr. Tricia Rose (2014), a pioneering scholar of hip-hop explains that in the current status of hip-hop, the exploitation of black women is almost a requirement in order for the male artist to be viewed as powerful, desirable and successful. As a consequence, in order to have any level of participation, black women sign on to this exploitation. This is especially troubling as black women are coming from a history of being sexually exploited and associated with sexual excess and deviance.

Rose expounds, (2014),

This is a troubling thing that we're having a difficult time dealing with because no one wants to, especially with a progressive point of view, beat up on young black men any further because they themselves are facing so many pressures and so much exploitation. To accuse them of contributing to the half of community's oppression is a difficult thing to do, so there's a lot of silence about it (02:15-02:57).

Alongside blacks who adopt white supremacist value systems are some black people who project an image of inferiority. Behaviors that reflect inadequacy in the eyes of white supremacists reaffirm their personal beliefs in their superiority. Many African American youth idolize and glamorize thug life, and being uneducated. This is evident when their main areas of aspiration and inspiration are sports and entertainment (Degruy, 2017). (Rose 2014) furthers DeGruy's assertion, and adds, black youth culture today has historic levels of corporate pressure to "perform blackness". (Rose, 2014) expounds, when African American people perform blackness,

Repetition of lots of very troubling stereotypes and conceptions that help their market value but don't help the art form itself...the big winners here are the industry that they're making money off of the deeply destructive representations of black people especially black women that is unprecedented... if Puffy's got 400 million we know that the industry at large is making hundreds of millions of dollars off of these representations (01:11-03:23).

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines culture as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group." Yet, when my middle school students were asked about their culture after viewing the documentary, *Unchained Memories*, the students named European designer brands such as "Gucci" as their culture. At the time I was perplexed. I wondered; how could an Italian luxury brand be adopted as the culture of inner city black middle school students?

The answer is racial socialization. There is a plethora of racial socialization reflected in the hip hop music and videos that many young people enjoy watching and listening which influences young minds greatly. However, hip hop is aspirational. It mixes reality with fantasy. The mention of the designer label Gucci is in many ways a form of escapism (Gordon, 2018). Additionally, a large portion of hip-hop music and videos that the younger people are attracted to espouses Eurocentric styles and aspirations. It is devoid of African values and culture (McWhorter, 2003).

Moreover, the harmful racial socialization of black Americans is evident in the reluctance to celebrate the achievements, gifts, and accomplishments of fellow African Americans. Degruy (2018) affirms that this is very understandable from a historical

perspective as slave masters divided slaves into groups which gave select groups more privilege and access and the denial of privileges to other groups. In line with the “divide and conquer” mindset most slave masters separated the slaves. The strategy was born of the fear that slave solidarity could jeopardize their power and topple their financial empires.

Authentic slave narratives and many historical accounts describe this behavior. For example, to ensure dominance over slaves and assuage his fears, that slave owners perpetuated feelings of mistrust and separateness among slaves by

sometimes ordering some black slaves to beat or otherwise punish their friends, peers, and relatives. Black overseers who were assigned the duties of monitoring and disciplining the field slaves were often more brutal than their white counterparts. One reason for their brutality was that they did not want to be perceived as being lenient and so lose their position. Another reason was that slave masters rewarded them for their cruelty.” (Degruy, 2017, p. 118).

In light of the history and conditions that descendants of slaves have endured and continue to endure, there is little wonder why the African American students I taught lacked empathy for other black people, lacked racial self-identification and racial pride. As discussed, these behaviors are the result of four centuries of legally sanctioned abuse, systematic programmed enslavement, and institutionalized racism and oppression. Unknowingly these innocent children of today are crying the tears of the slaves of yesteryear. From the first day the inhabitants of Africa were kidnapped, sold, and transported to the Americas, Pan- Africanism was subordinated to the profits that could be generated from slavery. As a result of slavery and other systemic measures, vacant esteem, ever- present anger, and racist socialization are the byproducts of slavery that live subconsciously in the lives and minds of African American adults and children today.

Esteemed historian, Dr. Henry Louis Gates asserted on his television show, *Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates Jr.* (2010) that “Africans sold other Africans to the Europeans” (00:00-00:02). This statement is disingenuous at best and disrespectful at worst. It has a tinge of the “black on black crime” sentiment. Statements such as that are uttered when historical perspectives on the topic have been adulterated and taken completely out of context. Africans were not one people, but distinctive ethnic groups that numbered in the thousands. There was no “we”. There was for example, Fulani vs. Mandinka, Songhai vs. Massa, or Bundu vs. Bakingo. That means that the Gates remark could only be true if looked at through a 21<sup>st</sup> century gaze and mindset. Also, through this 21<sup>st</sup> century mindset, a conclusion founded in victim blaming could easily be reached. It is corrective to examine these events through the mindset of a 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century African. At that time there was no black power or pan Africanism. Pan Africanism is “the idea that peoples of African descent have common interests and

should be unified” (Kuryla, 2020). They didn’t become collectively “black people” until they were sold and brought to the New World. It wasn’t until then that the Africans shared a similar culture, experience, and began to speak the same language (Home Team History, 2016). In Western Africa alone, there were thousands of different ethnic groups who spoke different languages, had completely different worldviews and religions. It is curious why many people today would apply pan Africanist views to ancient Africans who were tribal in nature, did not view each other as the same and did not even speak the same languages.

Africa is often portrayed as a monolith, as many people erroneously classify Africa as a country instead of a continent. However, European cultures for example, are accepted for their nuanced differences. Like the ancient Africans, they too do not see each other as the same. This was evident when one group of Europeans enslaved another group of ethnically and culturally different Europeans (Home Team History, 2016).

The majority of enslaved people came through warfare specifically war captives and they were enslaved due to rivaling ethnic groups vying for power.... these people were not sold into slavery or enslaved by their own people. But by people who obviously viewed them as other...People persist in simplifying this complex social structure of West Africa because it has always been easy to disparage and disrespect the culture, the worldview, and the humanity of African people (Home Team History, 16:27-17:03).

## Impediments to Quality American History Instruction

Now that we have thoroughly examined the historical and psychological implications for students lacking a connection and value to their culture, themselves, and Pan-African principles, we will now examine the educational impediments that have blocked quality American and African American History instruction in America. These obstacles include: lack of access to accurate historical information, state governed textbooks, profitability, conflicting accounts of the civil war and non-existent national social studies standards.

### *Inaccurate Historical Information*

American textbooks are filled with lies and omissions (Loewen, 2018). Lies including: Thanksgiving, Christopher Columbus, The Founding Fathers, The Emancipation Proclamation and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Research shows that more myths in American history occur in elementary and middle school textbooks rather than advanced placement textbooks (Raphael 2020). These textbooks are known to be filled with lies, yet, they are pawned off to young children as fact. One textbook on the American Revolution that is riddled with

falsehoods but remains immensely popular is *A History of US* (Hakim, 2011). The book is popular because the author is a master storyteller that has a style that is appealing to young readers regardless if the information is true or not (Raphael. 2020). Raphael and Loewen both assert that twenty-first century textbooks perpetuate the myths of the nineteenth century's nationalism.

Moreover, the most consequential lie in history textbooks is the failure of the textbook to address why or how events came to pass. For example, in 1892, 400 years after Christopher Columbus supposedly discovered a land that millions of indigenous people already lived, it appears that white people dominated the entire world. It is assumed by the achievements discussed in textbooks that white people, worked harder, were smarter and more driven. What has been pawned off as "history" to American children was actually a deep investment in white supremacy. Loewen (2020) clarifies, "Even though the reasons why history unfolded the way it did are extremely complicated and have to do with luck, and geography, and all sorts of factors that aren't captured in our oversimplified narratives."

Moreover, Loewen asserts, through the lens of nationalism, it is easy to understand why so many textbooks have trouble with revealing the problems of someone who is idealized as a great hero (The Film Archives, 2014). For example, when a "hero" such as Woodrow Wilson, a known white supremacist, is discussed in textbooks, there are no active verbs in the sentences. It is mentioned only in the passive voice, as if it never happened (The Film Archives, 2014).

### *Boring and Alienating Textbooks*

Another problem with American history instruction is the fact that most students find it boring. Survey after survey reveals that history is the most disliked subject. The reasons for this include textbooks that are often close to 900 pages, the textbook is "boring" and there are questions at the end of the chapter where the student is supposed to memorize the information to answer the question.

Additionally, if you are African American, female or Asian American the material can be alienating. Interestingly, affluent whites also felt alienated according to the surveys (The Film Archives, 2014). Perhaps consequently, this is the reason why 83% of students who graduate high school whether they attend college or not, never take another history course in their lives (The Film Archives, 2014).

James Loewen, author of the book, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (2018) stated in an interview, that he completed an in-depth study of 12 of the most popular American history textbooks and doesn't recommend any of them. He further explains, "I don't recommend a history book. I don't

know of a history book where the history is handled in the same way a chemistry book is, something to be studied and worth learning about” (The Film Archives, 2014).

### *State Governed Textbooks*

People are unaware that textbooks are approved on a state level. States have the final say on all the information included and omitted in a text book. Additionally, anyone regardless of accreditation, education and agenda can write and edit a school history textbook (HuffPost, 2019). The list of editors in a social studies textbook may include a PTA mom or a minister (Stewart, 2019).

During the 1970’s the inquiry based social studies book movement was born. It emphasized primary sources and questions to facilitate student thinking. These books are now all out of date because they lost favor with teachers. Most history books of today are narratives which present an omnipresent God-like authority (The Film Archives, 2014).

Moreover, in some cities where the local government is largely African American, there are no black oriented United States textbooks. There are no multicultural textbooks, only Eurocentric textbooks (The Film Archives, 2014).

### *Profitability*

Additionally, the profitability of a textbook factors greatly into the type of textbooks that are written. If a textbook can capture ¼ of the United States market then the book is highly profitable. A very successful history book such as *Triumph of the American Nation* (1990) is the standard that most other book editors aspire. With profit margins in view, often only clones of that textbook get published (The Film Archives, 2014).

### *Conflicting Accounts of the Civil War*

Slavery is taught so poorly in schools it is thought to be malpractice by some (Stewart, 2019). The Southern Poverty Law Center found only 8% of high school seniors surveyed could name slavery as the root cause of the Civil War (HuffPost, 2019). One of the main reasons for this is state authority. Each state has final authority of the content material in a textbook. In a 1993 Alabama textbook, its brief section on slavery opens with,

People of all races have been slaves, and then it goes on to teach children that, the main difference between the North and the South leading up to the Civil War wasn’t slavery but rather a fight between the independent minded southern states and an overbearing federal government or as the textbook put it, state rights (HuffPost 2019, 00:47-01:02).

Sometimes the problem is not what is included, but what is omitted. If there is no discussion of the fact that slavery existed in the North or that someone could oppose slavery but still be a white supremacist, then students can easily arrive at the notion that slavery is confined to the South (Stewart, 2019).

### *Non-existent National Social Studies Standards*

There is a disheveled patchwork of ideas about how to teach and what to teach in the American history curriculum because there are no national level standards for the subject. This surely adds to the confusion about how to teach American history. This is not a problem for those studying reading and mathematics, as both subjects have long had Common Core Standards adopted and utilized across all states.

The attainment of National History Standards seemed quite promising in 1992, when Congress mandated that National History Standards be written. Lynne Cheney, former head of the National Endowment for Humanities, funded this effort. For 32 months, esteemed educators, historians, and school administrators created a respected set of standards. This work was coordinated through the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA. These efforts were lauded by a national council, and 30 respected professional and public interest organizations. However, all of this work was lost in October of 1994 when Cheney found the work devoid of value and “grim and gloomy” (Nash, 2020).

Cheney claimed that the proposed national standards expressed an allegiance to political correctness. She wanted the standards to uphold and highlight the greatness of Robert E. Lee and The Wright Brothers. Conversely, Cheney felt that figures such as Harriet Tubman were obscure and worthy of little mention. Cheney also took great offense to the standards highlighting anti-patriotic chapters covering history such as the Ku Klux Klan and McCarthyism (Nash, 2020). There was a fierce debate in the media over these events leading up to the 1994 elections (Ravitch, 1998). However, despite all of the national debate, the withdrawal of Cheney’s support ended the quest for national American history standards to date.

Due to this lack of standardization, Texas students continued to be taught that the Civil War was fought over states’ rights. However, Texas made news in 1999 when Texas students for the first time were taught that slavery was the key component in the Civil War. However, the curriculum maintains that states’ rights and sectionalism were “contributing factors” (Daley, 2018). Texas residents continue to welcome and expect a curriculum that espouses a positive America, biblical values, and free enterprise (CNN 2010).

### *Recommendations*

Loewen (2018), in an interview about his seminal book, *Lies My Teacher Taught Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, details the problems in providing quality American history instruction. However, he does provide excellent recommendations to providing quality social studies instruction. Loewen asserts that teachers should “teach history with all of its dirt and glory with all of its good guys and bad guys, instead of only good guys”. Also, if teachers choose to use a textbook, they should also have a secondary history book to teach against the textbook. In doing this, probing questions can better inform social studies instruction. Inquiries about why the textbook leave certain things out and why the book makes misleading or false statements, will lead to better quality social studies instruction.

As educators, we have the power to support African American young people develop self-pride. Educators have a unique set of skills that can change the life course of children and empower them not only academically but psychologically throughout their lives. Educators who have the heart, desire, and cultural competency will be doing life affirming and life changing work. This curriculum unit and the lesson plans that follow, aspire to these goals in the hopes of helping African American children forge a connection to their African descendant history in order to release the bondage of internalized oppression through quality social studies instruction.

## Teaching Strategies

### Lesson 1 The Greatness of Ancient African Kingdoms & Me

**Brainstorm**-about a great empire they would create

**Recognize/Define**- What is an empire?

**Identify**- three great ancient African civilizations and the role of food, protecting others' laws, culture, government, common language, agriculture, teaching, writing played in those empires.

**Discuss**- Newly learned information about Ancient African civilizations and their aspiring empires.

**Create**- Interactive Notebook of ancient African kingdoms using Google Slides and tools

**Present**- Interactive Notebook to class

### Lesson 2 The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade & Me

**Brainstorm**- about their lives without the people and things that they love in a strange land

**Cite**- facts from videos and books the life of Henry Box Brown

**Compose**- a letter of empathy and thanks to a slave child

**Contribute**- to class discussions

**Recognize/Define**- slavery, underground railroad, plantation, abolitionist

### Lesson 3 The Abolitionists & Me

**Brainstorm**- How do you stand for something what is wrong when it is punishable by death?

**Imagine**- You can't be free because it is illegal

**Define/ Recognize**-Recognize and define the meaning of the word abolish and abolitionist

**Participate** in class discussions

**Compose**- short script about something they would like to abolishment

**Create video presentations about something that they would like to abolish**

**Create** a protest sign (slogan) about something they want to abolish

### Lesson 4 The Greatness Is Me Project

**Brainstorm**- your goals for the future

**Create**- a tri-fold poster board

**Cite**- the contributions of a select freedom fighter, and successful African Americans

**Present**- poster board presentations

## Classroom Activities:

### **The Greatness of Ancient African Kingdoms & Me** (6 days) 45-minute class periods **Lesson 1-My Empire of Greatness**

#### **Day 1**

##### **Introduction:**

Students will build a sense of pride and gain knowledge of their African heritage by learning about some of the greatest ancient African kingdoms. Students will use videos and written documents as source material to create their own electronic interactive notebook based on 3 dynasties.

- Kingdom of Ghana
- Mali Empire
- Songhai Empire

Students should understand that they should use their creativity in making the interactive notebook. They can use all of the Google features (clip art, images. Text boxes. backgrounds, etc.) to create an interesting and beautiful interactive notebook.

**Objective:** SWBAT research ancient African kingdoms IOT understand the contributions and accomplishments of African kingdoms.

##### **Materials:**

Google Slides  
Computer/Laptop  
Internet Access

##### **Background Information:**

The continent of Africa has seen the rise and fall of many great civilizations and empires throughout its history. When a group of people no longer live in small tribes or isolated family groups and they live in large well-organized groups like towns, this is called a civilization. Actually, a civilization is an advanced stage of organized living. That means it has **laws**, **culture**, a regular way of getting **food** and **protecting** the people. Most civilizations have **agriculture** and a system of **government**. They speak a **common language** and usually have a religion. They **teach** their young. All civilizations since the Sumerians and the Egyptians have some kind of **writing**. Writing lets people store and build up knowledge.

If a civilization continues to grow and decides to start taking over other towns, cities, or even countries, it can become an empire. An empire is a set of lands or regions that are ruled by an emperor. An empire will usually have many different cultures since it

is many separate groups of people brought together under one ruler. Empires are formed through war or political alliances.

**Vocabulary:**

- civilization
- empire
- food
- protecting
- laws
- culture
- government
- common language
- agriculture
- teaching
- writing

T-will introduce the vocabulary and have a class discussion

T- will ask the class what the difference is between a civilization and an empire

T-will play two short videos empires and civilizations:

*Africa Geography & Medieval Ghana, Mali, and Songhai*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=4&v=iDmwJx4nLrU&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=iDmwJx4nLrU&feature=emb_title)

*Top 10 World Empires*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7JK0RqAQaE>

T- Will lead the class in a discussion about the videos and check for understanding

T- will ask students, if they were going to build an empire of greatness, what would the Empire look like? What would make it great?

T- will facilitate a discussion

Students will begin part 1 of the interactive notebook. On the Google slides students will define the meaning of the word an empire and show how they would rule their empires. Students must incorporate the vocabulary words into their presentations to show how those terms play a role in their individualized empire of greatness.

S- will use internet articles to support the research

*Civilization Facts for Kids*

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Civilization>

*Empire Facts for Kids*

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Empire>

If students do not complete the slides in class, they will be completed as homework.

## **Lesson 1**

### **Day 2- Ghana**

#### **Background Information:**

The Empire of Ghana was located in Western Africa in what is today the countries of Mauritania, Senegal, and Mali. The region lies just south of the Sahara Desert and is mostly savanna grasslands. Ancient Ghana ruled from around 300 to 1100 CE. "Ghana" was the word that the Soninke people used for their king. It meant "Warrior King."

#### **Vocabulary:**

- **Ghana**

Students will conduct research in order to create an interactive notebook. Each kingdom must include and include at least 5 photographic images, (clip art, etc.)

In the interactive notebooks, students will create 1-2 slides per kingdom that examine the daily life, government, structure, accomplishments of each African nation.

At least 3-5 facts are recommended per kingdom  
Students will share their notebooks with the class

#### **Teaching Procedures:**

T- Ask students to share what great things they know about Africa/Ghana

. T-will show where Ghana is on the map, explain geographically, etc.

T- Will do a KWL chart with students

S- Will watch a video about Ghana

*The Empire of Ghana*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6Vmnf9z43M>

T-will lead a discussion about what was shared in the video

Students will conduct internet research about Ghana using websites such as Ducksters.com

*Ancient Africa: Empire of Ancient Ghana*

[https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire\\_of\\_ancient\\_ghana.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire_of_ancient_ghana.php)

Students will complete the Ghana portion of the notebook in class and complete any remaining portion for homework,

## **Lesson 1**

### **Day 3- Mali**

#### **Background Information**

The Empire of Mali was located in Western Africa. It grew up along the Niger River and eventually spread across 1,200 miles from the city of Gao to the Atlantic Ocean. The Empire of Mali was established around 1235 CE. The Empire of Mali was formed when a ruler named Sundiata Keita united the tribes of the Malinke peoples.

#### **Teaching Procedures:**

T- Will play video introducing Mali- *Ancient Mali- Miss Wright's Third Grade Class*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKdtJTloNUQ>

(A song about the history of Ancient Mali)

T- will lead a group discussion about Mali

#### **S- Students will use internet articles to support research**

*Ancient Africa: Empire of Ancient Mali*

[https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire\\_of\\_ancient\\_mali.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire_of_ancient_mali.php)

Videos”

*The Empire of Mali - The Twang of a Bow - Extra History - #1*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkayShPilkw>

*The Empire of Mali - An Empire of Trade and Faith - Extra History - #2*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPytwp5ll9g>

*The Empire of Mali - Mansa Musa - Extra History - #3*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-Un2xx6Pzo&t=114s>

S- Will complete the Mali portion of the notebook in class or the remainder for homework

Students will work on interactive notebooks in class. Any unfinished work will be assigned as homework

## **Lesson 1**

### **Day 4- Songhai**

#### **Background Information:**

The Songhai Empire was located in Western Africa south of the Sahara Desert and along the Niger River. The Songhai Empire lasted from 1464 to 1591. The Songhai Empire first came into power under the leadership of Sunni Ali.

#### **Vocabulary: Songhai**

S- Will use the following resources to complete the Songhai section of the interactive notebook:

*The Songhai Empire*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11XUwCcC9tw>

*Ancient Africa- Songhai Empire*

[https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/songhai\\_empire.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/songhai_empire.php)

## **Lesson 1**

### **Day 5**

Students will use all of the class time to work on the interactive notebook (proofreading, editing, etc.)

## **Lesson 1**

### **Day 6**

Students will present their interactive notebook to classmates

This can be done in class or remotely

## **The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade & Me**

### **Lesson 2 (4 days)**

**Objective:** SWBAT learn about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade with accurate historical information (on a 3rd grade developmental level) IOT write a letter of empathy and thanks to a slave child.

#### **Materials:**

- Notebook
- Pencils

**Vocabulary:**

- slavery
- abolitionist
- Plantation
- underground railroad

**Teaching Procedures:**

T- will ask students to make a list of things that they cannot live without in their notebooks.

S- students will share aloud what they wrote

T- will list those items on the board

T- will put a line through or erase all of the things that the slaves did not have

T- will ask the students: how would you feel if someone took you away from your home without your parent's permission and you were not allowed to have anything?

T- lead class discussion

T- will write a KWL chart with students about the lives of child slaves

T- will prepare children behaviorally and emotionally to watch the short video

S- will watch a short photographic video depicting primary source photos of actual children in slavery.

*Children of Slavery*

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo1v-8vRarM>**

T- will lead a group discussion about the video

T- Will present story vocabulary

T- will read do an intentional read aloud of the book: *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad*

S- will answer teacher created comprehension questions

S- will listen to a rap song about Henry Box Brown

*Henry Box Brown Biography Rap Song for Kids*

*. Henry Box Brown Biography Rap Song for Kids with Sequence of Events Worksheets*

S- will listen to the song 2 times. During the second listening session, each student will write down and share 1 fact about the historical figure, Henry Box Brown learned through the rap song.

S- will each share 1 fact aloud

S- will write a letter of empathy, comfort, and thanks to a slave child

## **The Abolitionists & Me**

### **Lesson 3- (6 days)**

#### **Vocabulary:**

- Abolitionist
- Underground Railroad
- Free State
- Overseer
- Rights
- Slave
- Slave Catchers

#### **Materials:**

Poster Board

Yardstick

Computer/Laptop

Internet access

Readwork.org (free website)

#### **Teaching Procedures:**

##### **Lesson 3-Day1**

**Objective:** SWBAT understand the American Abolitionist movement IOT to apply the concept of abolishment in their lives

T- will ask students what freedom means to them

T- will list student responses on the board

T-Imagine that you can't be free because it is illegal

T- lead class in discussion, tie discussion into today's civil unrest with the Black Lives Matter movement

T-Ask class, how do you stand for something that is wrong when it is punishable by death?

T-Introduce Harriet Tubman vocabulary for the intentional read aloud.

T- read *Harriet Tubman* by Barbara Kramer

S- will complete Harriet Tubman assignment and questions on Readworks. org

##### **Lesson 3-Day 2:**

T- review the vocabulary and what it means to be an abolitionist

T - will introduce the William Still the "The Father of the Underground Railroad

T- will play videos.

*Underground Railroad: The William Still Story*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKcdwI2VSeQ&t=6s>

*William Still*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJP5AKcFvJM>

S- will participate in a discussion about William Still

T- will lead a virtual tour of the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia

<https://www.visitphilly.com/articles/philadelphia/underground-railroad-in-philadelphia/>

### **Lesson 3-Day 3:**

T- Teacher will review all the work from day 1 and 2

T- will introduce the abolitionist, Frederick Douglas

T- will play a video about video about Frederick Douglas

*Frederick Douglass for Kids (Cartoon Biography)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtKY4bLUxC0&t=34s>

S- will participate in a class discussion about what they learned

S-Students will complete reading assignments and questions on Frederick Douglas on Readworks.org

### **Day 4**

T- will review the main ideas of days 1, 2, 3

T- will write the word abolitionist on the board, then circle the part of the word that looks like the abolish. Then the teacher will write the word abolish on the board.

T- will ask the students what that word means, class discussion (formally put an end to (a system, practice, or institution).

T- will ask the students what is something that they would like to abolish

S- will participate in a think pair- share and share then share thoughts with the class

### **Assignment:**

Students will create video presentations of something that they would like to abolish.

Video format: Each student short 30 sec- 1-minute speech will start with one the following choices:

- Quote
- Question
- Story

### **Sample Script**

President Obama once said, *“Each of us deserves the freedom to pursue our own version of happiness. No one deserves to be bullied.”* My name is

\_\_\_\_\_. *I deserve happiness. I want to abolish bullying. Everyone must be the change we seek. Join me and become a peacemaker.*

### **Lesson 3-Day 5**

S- On a poster board, students will write a slogan about something they want to abolish.

S- will affix their poster board to a yardstick/meter stick to create poster signs

S- will march around the school and yard with their protest signs

T- will videotape the event

### **Lesson 3- Day 6**

S-will watch their individual abolish speeches and view the protest video

### **Lesson 4- (4 Days)**

#### **The Greatness Is Me Project: Past, Present, and Future**

**Objective:** SWBAT create an African American history poster board presentation IOT forge a connection of African greatness to the lives of the students.

#### **Materials:**

- Tri-Fold poster board
- Art supplies
- computer/laptop
- Internet access (photos, information)

This is the culminating project of this curriculum. Each section of the trifold will be divided as follows:

- Freedom Fighter (1st column)
- Successful African American person living today-famous or familiar (2nd column)
- The student- The student will envision themselves in the future, attaining his/her future goals of greatness (3rd column)

The tri-fold poster will display photos, drawings in every section and text to highlight the accomplishments in each area.

After completion, Students will present the tri-folds to the class.

## Resources:

### *Bibliography for Teachers*

ABC NEWS. (2015). *Mom Sparks Textbook Change Over Historic Downplay*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwN8jHubY-k>.

Mother shares a personal story of how white washing of slavery appeared in her son's textbook.

Alexander, M. (2020). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New Press.

The New Jim Crow is a stunning account of the rebirth of a caste-like system in the United States, one that has resulted in millions of African Americans locked behind bars and then relegated to a permanent second-class status—denied the very rights supposedly won in the Civil Rights Movement. Since its publication in 2010, the book has appeared on the New York Times bestseller list for more than a year; been dubbed the “secular bible of a new social movement”

ApplePieNow. (2010). *SLAVERY SECRET: "Africans sold other Africans into slavery" - Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtRaG\\_bokds](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtRaG_bokds).

An excerpt from Gate's TV show Finding Your Roots show discussing the origins of slavery

Campbell, K. (2014, December 19). *Black People Have a Right to Be Angry*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/more-chemistry/201412/black-people-have-right-be-angry>.

The article discusses the reasons why African Americans are rightfully angry.

Clark, K. L. (2017, September 29). *N.W.A.'s 'Straight Outta Compton' Casting Call Controversy*. Black Enterprise. <https://www.blackenterprise.com/n-w-a-s-straight-outta-compton-casting-call-causes-controversy/>.

The article discusses the colorism involved in casting the movie, Straight Outta Compton

CNN. (2010, May 21). *Texas Textbook Changes*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad3rytLNk3k>.

Discusses the changes made to the Texas history curriculum in 1999

Comer, J. P. (1980). *The Black Family: An Adaptive Perspective*. ms, Yale University Study Center.

The article discusses perspectives on black families from slavery to the present.

Craddock, N., Dlova, N., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2018). Colourism. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*, 30(4), 472–477. <https://doi.org/10.1097/mop.0000000000000638>

This article discusses colorism in women globally.

Crapps, S. (1990). *A Socio-Psychological and Contextually analysis of the African American Dance-Movement Style with implications for the Dance -Movement Therapist* (thesis). Drexel University, Philadelphia.

This thesis discusses the historical perspectives on the African American dance/movement style and its implications for intercultural dance therapy.

Daley, J. (2018, November 19). *Texas Will Finally Teach That Slavery Was Main Cause of the Civil War*. Smithsonian.com. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/texas-will-finally-teach-slavery-was-main-cause-civil-war-180970851/>.

The article explains the Texas education system and the addition of slavery in the curriculum

David, E. J. R. (2014). *Internalized oppression: the psychology of marginalized groups*. Springer publ.

The book discusses various ethnic groups in America and how they cope with internalized oppression,

DEGRUY, J. O. Y. (2017). *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's legacy of enduring injury and healing. revised edition*. JOY DEGRUY PUBLICATIONS.

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing is a 2005 theoretical work by Dr. Joy DeGruy. P.T.S.S describes the multi-generational trauma experienced by African Americans that leads to undiagnosed and untreated posttraumatic stress disorder in enslaved Africans and their descendants.

DuVernay, A. (2016). *13th*. Netflix.

This movie explores the 13th amendment and its effect on black lives.

Emory University. (2019). *EXPLORE THE DISPERSAL OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC WORLD*. Slave Voyages.org. <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>.

This website provides primary source material on actual slave voyages.

The Film Archives. (2014). *American History Textbook Lies: Everything your teacher got wrong*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okcfKaC87r4&t=402s>.

Loewen discuss problems with American history instruction in schools.

Goodreads. (2020, July 6). *The Bluest Eye Quotes by Toni Morrison (page 3 of 6)*. Goodreads. <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1987778-the-bluest-eye?page=3>.

This website page displays quotes from the book. The Bluest Eye

Gordon, C. (2018, January 26). *How Gucci Became the Most Popular Brand in Hip Hop*. AnotherMan. <https://www.anothermanmag.com/style-grooming/10162/how-gucci-became-the-most-popular-brand-in-hip-hop>.

This article explores the reasons why hip hop is popular in the black community.

Hakim, J. (2011). *A history of US*. K12, Inc.

A History of US is a ten-volume (and one sourcebook) historical book series for children, written by Joy Hakim and first published in its entirety in 1995. ... The books are all written in a personal tone, as if the author were a storyteller.

HBO. (2003). *Unchained memories: readings from the slave narratives* [VHS]. United States.

Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives is a 2003 American documentary film about the stories of former slaves interviewed during the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers' Project and preserved in the WPA Slave Narrative Collection

Home Team History. (2016). *Atlantic Slave Trade: Fallacy of Blacks selling Blacks*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJ5zizWjSko>.

This video explains the Atlantic Slave Trade and fallacies about how it happened.

HuffPost. (2019). *What School Doesn't Teach Us About Slavery. What School Doesn't Teach us about slavery*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztywqIu0PvA>.

Provides information on how slavery is taught in schools.

Illing, S. (2018, August 1). *The biggest lie we still teach in American history classes*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/conversations/2018/8/1/17602596/american-history-james-loewen-howard-zinn>.

An interview with James Loewen about the lies in American History books.

Kamenetz, A. (2018, August 9). *'Lies My Teacher Told Me,' And How American History Can Be Used as A Weapon*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2018/08/09/634991713/lies-my-teacher-told-me-and-how-american-history-can-be-used-as-a-weapon>.

Interview with James Loewen

Kimberly Jade Norwood, "If You Is White, You's Alright. . . ." Stories About Colorism in America, 14 Wash. U. Global Stud. L. Rev. 585 (2015), [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law\\_globalstudies/vol14/iss4/8](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_globalstudies/vol14/iss4/8)

This law review article explains stories of colorism around the world.

Knickerbocker, B. (2010, May 22). *In Texas, social studies textbooks get a conservative make-over*. The Christian Science Monitor.

<https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2010/0522/In-Texas-social-studies-textbooks-get-a-conservative-make-over>.

This article discusses Texas and the state of American history instruction

Kuryla, P. (2016, April 29). *Pan-Africanism*. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pan-Africanism>.

Defines pan-Africanism and explains the concept.

Lexico Dictionaries. (2020, July 7). *Hip-Hop: Definition of Hip-Hop by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of Hip-Hop*. Lexico Dictionaries | English.

<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/hip-hop>.

Dictionary providing the definition of hip-hop

Little, B. (2018, October 2). *Does an Exception Clause in the 13th Amendment Still Permit Slavery?* History.com. <https://www.history.com/news/13th-amendment-slavery-loophole-jim-crow-prisons>.

Discusses the 13th amendment and exclusions for black people

Loewen, J. W. (2018). *Lies my teacher told me: everything your American history textbook got wrong*. The New Press.

This breakthrough book critiques the quality of social studies instruction in America.

McWhorter, J. H., Domanico, R., Hymowitz, K. S., & Miller, J. (2019, June 18). *How Hip-Hop Holds Blacks Back*. City Journal. <https://www.city-journal.org/html/how-hip-hop-holds-blacks-back-12442.html>.

The article discusses the negative influences in today's rap music.

MORRISON, T. O. N. I. (2020). *Bluest Eye*. VINTAGE CLASSICS.

The *Bluest Eye*, published in 1970, is the first novel written by author Toni Morrison. The novel takes place in Lorain, Ohio (Morrison's hometown), and tells the story of a young African-American girl named Pecola who grows up during the years following the Great Depression. Set in 1941, the story tells that due to her mannerisms and dark skin, she is consistently regarded as "ugly". As a result, she develops an inferiority complex, which fuels her desire for the blue eyes she equates with "whiteness".

Nash, G. B. (2020, July 6). *Lynne Cheney's Attack on the History Standards, 10 Years Later*. History News Network. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/8418>.

Discusses Lynn Cheney's role in the development of the National History Standards

Nellis, A. (2016, June 14). *The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons*. The Sentencing Project. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>.

The article discusses the inequities of the criminal justice system for black people.

Pak, J. K. (2020, June 4). *What is Internalized Oppression?* General Commission on Religion and Race. <https://www.gcorr.org/what-is-internalized-oppression/>.

This article defines internalized oppression.

Patton, T. O. (2006). "Hey Girl, Am I More than My Hair? African American Women and Their Struggles with Beauty, Body Image, and Hair." *NWSA Journal*, 18(2), 24–51. <https://doi.org/10.2979/nws.2006.18.2.24>

This article discusses the beauty standards for African American women and the role colorist plays in their lives.

Professor Tricia Rose. (2014). *Tricia Rose - Hip Hop Images: Women and Exploitation*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=JhVOi8XQ7P8>.

In an interview. Rose discusses the problematic elements of hip-hop.

Public Broadcasting Service. (2020, July 7). *The Debate Between W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington*. PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/debate-w-e-b-du-bois-and-booker-t-washington/>.

The article compares the viewpoints of Booker T. Washington and W. E.B. DuBois.

Raphael, R. (2020, July 7). *Are U.S. History Textbooks Still Full of Lies and Half-Truths?* History News Network. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/7219>.

This article explores the lies and omissions in American Textbooks

Ravitch, D. (1998). "The Controversy over National History Standards." *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 51(3), 14–28.

Journal article about the events involved with the National History Standards

Schwartz, M. J. (2001). *Born in bondage: growing up enslaved in the antebellum South*. Harvard University Press.

Born in Bondage gives us an unsurpassed look at what it meant to grow up as a slave in the antebellum South. Schwartz recreates the experiences of these bound but resilient young people as they learned to negotiate between acts of submission and selfhood, between the worlds of commodity and community.

Smallwood, S. E. (2008). *Saltwater slavery: a middle passage from Africa to American diaspora*. Harvard University Press.

Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora is a book by Stephanie E. Smallwood and the 2008 winner of the Frederick Douglass Book Prize. The book tells the story of enslaved Africans through the accounts of the Royal Africa Company from 1675 to 172

Stampp, K. M. (1995). *The peculiar institution: slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*. The Easton Press.

The book describes and analyzes multiple facets of slavery in the American South from the 17th through the mid-19th century, including demographics, lives of slaves and slaveholders, the Southern economy and labor systems, the Northern and abolitionist response, slave trading, and political issues of the time.

Stewart, N. (2019, August 19). *Why Can't We Teach Slavery Right in American Schools?* The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/19/magazine/slavery-american-schools.html>.

Provides an in-depth study of how slavery is taught in American school.

TEDxPasadenaWomen. (2016). *What Beyoncé Taught Me About Race*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDzj9vRw5yM>.

In this powerful TEDx Talk, diversity advocate and Beyoncé super fan, Brittany Barron translates Beyoncé's music as a road map about race relations in the United States; demonstrating that being "colorblind" is not the goal, but diminishing our nation's "expertise" in racism

Todd, L. P., & Curti, M. (1990). *Triumph of the American nation*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

A textbook tracing the political, social, and economic history of the United States from the discovery of America to the present day.

Trotman, C. J. (2011). *Frederick Douglass: A Biography*. ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Written for young adults, this biography of Frederick Douglass covers the life of the most famous black abolitionist and intellectual of the 19th century. Frederick Douglass: A Biography explores the life of the most famous black abolitionist and intellectual of the 19th century.

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2017, August 11). *African American Children (U.S. National Park Service)*. National Parks Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/african-american-children.htm>.

This website provides information on the lives of child slaves

United States Courts. (2020, July 7). *The U.S. Constitution: Preamble*. United States Courts. <https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/about-educational-outreach/activity-resources/us>.

Cites and discusses the Preamble to the constitution

Whitney Plantation. (2020). *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. Whitney Plantation. <https://www.whitneyplantation.org/the-atlantic-slave-trade/>.

Explains the history of the Atlantic Slave Trade

### *Reading List for Students & Materials for Classroom Use*

Educational Videos for Students. (2015). *Frederick Douglass for Kids (Cartoon Biography) Educational Videos for Students (Black History Month)*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtKY4bLUxC0&t=34s>.

Frederick Douglass was an African American leader and an impact on slavery, the civil war and black history. With our Educational Videos for Students share a cartoon biography any month for kids & families about the life and times of Frederick Douglass.

Extra Credit. (2018). The Empire of Mali - An Empire of Trade and Faith - Extra History - #2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPytwp5ll9g>.

Seeking a meeting with the emperor of the Mali Empire, a man named Ibn Battutah journeyed across the perilous Sahara sands to discover Mali's gold... instead, he found out how Mali blended its Islamic and African cultures.

Extra Credit. (2018). *The Empire of Mali - Mansa Musa - Extra History - #3*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-Un2xx6Pzo&t=114s>.

Mansa Musa is remembered as the richest person in the entire history of the world, but he also worked hard to establish the empire of Mali as a political and even religious superpower. However, his excessive wealth started creating bigger problems.

Extra Credits. (2018). *The Empire of Mali - The Twang of a Bow - Extra History - #1*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkayShPilkw>.

While the old Ghana Empire waxed wealthy due to taxes on trade passing through its lands, the new Empire of Mali born in its stead had expanded borders that included vast lands of gold...

Instructomania. (2019). *Africa Geography & Medieval Ghana, Mali, and Songhai by Instructomania*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=4&v=iDmwJx4nLrU&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=iDmwJx4nLrU&feature=emb_title).

This video will detail: Section 1: The geographical features of Africa. Section 2: How geography shaped the lives of Medieval Africans.

Kramer, B. (2020). *Harriet Tubman*. National Geographic.

This is a Level 2 Reader for children who are reading independently about the life of Harriet Tubman

Levine, L. (2007). *Henry's Freedom Box*. Scholastic Inc.

A stirring, dramatic story of a slave who mails himself to freedom by a Jane Addams Peace Award-winning author and a Coretta Scott King Award-winning artist. Henry Brown doesn't know how old he is. Nobody keeps records of slaves' birthdays. All the time he dreams about freedom, but that dream seems farther away than ever when he is torn from his family and put to work in a warehouse. Henry grows up and marries, but he is again devastated when his family is sold at the slave market. Then one day, as he lifts a crate at the warehouse, he knows exactly what he must do: He will mail himself to the North. After an arduous journey in the crate, Henry finally has a birthday -- his first day of freedom.

Media Wiki. (2020, May 22). *Empire facts for kids*. Empire Facts for Kids.

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Empire>.

This website provides kid-friendly information on empires

MediaWiki. (2020, June 3). *Civilization facts for kids*. Civilization Facts for Kids.

<https://kids.kiddle.co/Civilization>.

This website provides introductory information on civilizations.

NolanDigital. (2019). *Children of Slavery*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo1v-8vRarM>.

By 1860, it is estimated that more than two million slaves in America were under the age of 20. These photographs reveal the faces of African American slave children in the 1800s and the hardships they suffered even after they were emancipated.

On the Shoulders of Giants. (2014). *William Still*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJP5AKcFvJM>.

This historical video series is shedding light on persons of African descent from around the world. This week's video is highlighting William Still. Labeled as the "Father of the Underground Railroad," Still helped hundreds of people find freedom. He also maintained historical records of his encounters with people escaping slavery, and made a book of it; *The Underground Railroad*.

Our Home of Many Blessings. (2016). *Henry's Freedom Box*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ2FAzDjK-o>.

A stirring, dramatic story of a slave who mails himself to freedom by a Jane Addams Peace Award-winning author and a Coretta Scott King Award-winning artist. Henry Brown doesn't know how old he is. Nobody keeps records of slaves' birthdays. All the time he dreams about freedom, but that dream seems farther away than ever when he is torn from his family and put to work in a warehouse. Henry grows up and marries, but he is again devastated when his family is sold at the slave market. Then one day, as he lifts a crate at the warehouse, he knows exactly what he must do: He will mail himself to the North. After an arduous journey in the crate, Henry finally has a birthday -- his first day of freedom.

PowToon. (2018). *The Ghana Empire*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6Vmnf9z43M>.

The children's animated video provides information about the accomplishment of Ghana.

Rap Opera for Kids. (2020). *Henry Box Brown Biography Rap Song for Kids with Sequence Events Worksheets*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nhr\\_UgLidaw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nhr_UgLidaw).

The song explores Henry Brown's life as a slave, his motivation for escape, his daring "mail-myself-to-freedom" plan, and his successes and challenges as an inspiration for the abolitionist movement.

ReadWorks. (2020). <https://www.readworks.org/>.

A website that features differentiated reading instruction with high-quality texts and lessons.

Sabrina. (2012). *The Songhai Empire*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11XUwCcC9tw>.  
Summary about the Songhai Empire

Stormey Wright. (2015). *Ancient Mali-Miss Wright's Third Grade*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKdtJTloNUQ>.  
A song about the history of Ancient Mali

Technological Solutions Inc. TSI. (2020). *Ancient Africa*. Ducksters Educational Site.  
[https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire\\_of\\_ancient\\_mali.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire_of_ancient_mali.php).  
This website provides historical and cultural information about Mali

Technological Solutions Inc. TSI. (2020, July 10). *Ancient Africa: Empire of Ancient Ghana*. Ducksters Educational Site.  
[https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/songhai\\_empire.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/songhai_empire.php).  
Provides kid-friendly information on the Ancient Songhai Empire

Technological Solutions Inc. TSI. (2020, July 9). *Ancient Africa- Empire of Ancient Ghana*. Ducksters Educational Site.  
[https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire\\_of\\_ancient\\_ghana.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/africa/empire_of_ancient_ghana.php).  
This is a child-friendly website that provides historical, and cultural information about ancient Ghana.

Visit Philadelphia. (2020, February 7). *A Guide to Underground Railroad Sites in Philadelphia*. Guide to African American Culture and Historic Sites in Philadelphia.  
<https://www.visitphilly.com/articles/philadelphia/underground-railroad-in-philadelphia/>.  
Presents the African American landmarks in Philadelphia

Visual Education Centre. (2012). *Underground Railroad: The William Still Story*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKcdwI2VSeQ>.  
William Still was one of the most important, yet largely unheralded heroes of the Underground Railroad. Still was determined to get as many runaways as he could to "Freedom's Land," smuggling them across the US border to Canada. Bounty hunters could legally abduct former slaves living in the so-called free northern states, but under the protection of the British, Canada provided sanctuary for fugitive slaves.

Watch Mojo.com. (2013). *Top 10 World Empires*.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=336&v=Z7JK0RqAQaE&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=336&v=Z7JK0RqAQaE&feature=emb_title).

Many empires have risen and fallen through the ages of history. This video will count down our picks for the top 10 world empires of all time.

## Appendix

### Pennsylvania Department of Education, SAS Standards

#### Social Studies

**5.1.3.A** Explain the purposes of rules, laws, and consequences.

**5.1.3.C** **Define** the principles and ideals shaping local government: liberty/freedom, democracy, justice, equality

**5.2.3.A** Identify **personal rights** and responsibilities.

**5.2.3.D** Describe how **citizens** participate in school and community activities.

**5.3.3.F** Explain how an action may be just or unjust.

**5.3.3.G** Identify individual interests and explain ways to influence others.

**6.1.3.C** Explain what is given up when making a **choice**.

**6.1.3.D** Identify reasons why people make a **choice**.

**7.2.3.A** Identify the physical characteristics of **places** and **regions**.

**7.3.3.A** Identify the human characteristics of **places** and **regions** using the following criteria: Population, Culture, Settlement, Economic activities, Political activities

**8.1.3.C** Conduct teacher guided **inquiry** on assigned topics using specified **historical sources**.

**8.2.3.A** Identify the **social, political, cultural, and economic** contributions of individuals and groups from Pennsylvania.

**8.3.3.D** Identify and describe how **conflict** and cooperation among groups and organizations have impacted the history and development of the US.

#### English Language Arts

**CC.1.2.3.A** Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

**CC.1.4.3.C** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, and illustrations, as appropriate.

**CC.1.4.3.U** With guidance and support, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

**CC.1.4.3.V** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

**CC.1.4.3.W** Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

**CC.1.4.3.X** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences.

**CC.1.5.3.A** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**CC.1.5.3.F** Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.

**CC.1.4.3.G** Write opinion pieces on familiar topics or texts