
UNIT OVERVIEW

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| Unit Length | 5 days/one week <i>*May be easily extended to 2+ weeks depending on grade level, pace, and how lesson plans are carried out.</i> <i>*Lessons are designed in slides for 55min class periods.</i> |
| Grade Level(s)/Subject(s) | Middle-High school grades - designed and tested with 7th & 8th grade; suitable with modifications/accommodations/extensions for 7th-12th. |
| Unit Overview | <p>This unit draws on the premise that the current issue of mass incarceration has its roots in the legacies of slavery in the now-called United States.</p> <p>This mini-unit focuses on the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Who is responsible for the problem of mass incarceration?- What root causes have created and continue to maintain this present-day issue?- What are possible solutions? <p>Students will grapple with perspective-taking via a role play and a “trial discussion .” They will also practice using evidence to support a claim, integrating new evidence, and forming/responding to questions and alternative viewpoints.</p> <p>This unit helps to build the context of where the United States is currently located in time as we heal from the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade, specifically around their manifestations in the justice system. It begins to help students imagine other possibilities.</p> |

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| Objectives & Outcomes | Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-analyze multiple sources demonstrating the root causes and perpetrators of the issue of mass incarceration-debate who, or what, is responsible for the issue of mass incarceration-support their arguments with clear evidence-integrate, question, and respond to new perspectives as presented by peers-begin imagining a future where mass incarceration is no longer an issue |
| Standards | <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.6 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacherled) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. <p>2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.</p> <p>3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of</p> |

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| | <p>the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <p>a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.</p> <p>b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.</p> |
| <p>Facilitation Resources</p> | <p>Projecting Across Time - Thinking Routine</p> <p>CSQ Protocol</p> <p>The People vs. Columbus et al, Zinn Education Project -- tips and tricks on facilitation</p> <p>Zinn Education Project - How to, and How Not to, Teach Role Plays</p> <p>Bonus: Take a Stand - Thinking Routine</p> <p>CSQ RUBRIC: Two Rivers Learning Institute 6-8 Effective Reasoning Rubric CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1 assessment CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 assessment</p> <p>SOCRATIC SEMINAR PARTICIPATION TRACKER: Mass Incarceration on Trial Teacher-Facing Tracking Sheet CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.6 assessment</p> <p>STUDENT HANDOUTS: Excerpt from The New Jim Crow Excerpts from “Ten Years After “The New Jim Crow”” by David Remnick</p> |

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| | <p>The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher The People vs. Mass Incarceration TRIAL NOTES Student Notecatcher Indictment Role Sheets</p> <p>OPTIONAL TEACHER READING Are Prisons Obsolete by Angela Davis On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World by Danya Ruttenberg Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration, and a Road to Repair by Danielle Sered</p> |
| Performance Task(s) | <p>Students will engage in a “trial discussion” in which they debate who is responsible for beginning, maintaining, and ending the system of mass incarceration in today’s United States.</p> <p>They will produce “Claim-Support-Question” writing pieces in which they present their own case after researching their perspectives as well as participating in the trial discussion; take note of other perspectives; revise; and reflect.</p> |
| Assessment/Evaluation | <p>FORMATIVE: - <i>Reflection questions at the end of background readings:</i> Excerpt from The New Jim Crow Excerpts from “Ten Years After “The New Jim Crow” by David Remnick</p> <p>The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher The People vs. Mass Incarceration TRIAL NOTES Student Notecatcher</p> <p>Socratic Seminar participation tracker charts will be used during discussion to assess students via speaking and listening standards during the trial:</p> |

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| | <p>SOCRATIC SEMINAR PARTICIPATION TRACKER: Mass Incarceration on Trial Teacher-Facing Tracking Sheet CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.6 assessment</p> <p>The CSQ (Claim-Support-Question) will be used to summatively assess students' engagement and thinking.</p> <p>RUBRIC: Two Rivers Learning Institute 6-8 Effective Reasoning Rubric CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1 assessment CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 assessment</p> <p>SUMMATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Mass Incarceration and Justice CSQ - The 1619 Project</p> |
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DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Day 1: Gathering Information on the Topic of Mass Incarceration

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
|---|
| Students will examine the root causes of mass incarceration, and reflect on its injustices. |
| Lesson Materials & Resources |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Do Now: Mass Incarceration on Trial Day 1● Excerpt from The New Jim Crow<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (Original PDF: Excerpt from The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander; p. 1-4, bottom of p.6-top of p. 9)○ Audio○ Vocabulary: <i>egalitarian, caste, mass incarceration, economy, subordinated, moratorium, unprecedented, abolition, inevitable</i>● Excerpts from “Ten Years After “The New Jim Crow” by David Remnick<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Vocabulary: <i>legislation, mass incarceration, fearmongering, scapegoating, deportation, restorative justice, transformative justice, economy, profiteer, disparity, decline, genocide</i>○ Audio● The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher● Slides - slides 1-31 *NOTE: video resources are included in slide deck |
| Lesson Activities |
| <p>Do Now - Vocabulary, then reflection.</p> <p>What do the words “mass incarceration” mean to you? Have you heard this term before?</p> <p>Frame the mini-unit for students, define mass incarceration, and present the task. Ask the question: “Who, or what, is responsible for creating, maintaining, and therefore ending the system of mass incarceration?”</p> |

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Divide students into pairs or small groups to explore the readings below. They will highlight key points, and answer the questions at the bottom of the readings to highlight their takeaways about the core of the issue.

You may assign one or both readings to the entire class; or divide the class in half, and assign one reading to each half of the class. Another option would be to divide the class into groups, assign each group one reading, and have each group complete a poster with their takeaways; then have students complete a gallery walk of posters to collect notes on their PREPARATION notecatchers (linked below).

- [Excerpt from The New Jim Crow](#)
 - (Original PDF: Excerpt from The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander; p. 1-4, bottom of p.6-top of p. 9)
 - [Audio](#)
 - **Vocabulary:** egalitarian, caste, mass incarceration, economy, subordinated, moratorium, unprecedented, abolition, inevitable

- [Excerpts from “Ten Years After “The New Jim Crow”” by David Remnick](#)
 - **Vocabulary:** legislation, mass incarceration, fearmongering, scapegoating, deportation, restorative justice, transformative justice, economy, profiteer, disparity, decline, genocide
 - [Audio](#)

Optional: Teacher may choose to distribute this notecatcher to allow students to begin collecting evidence on their initial thoughts on who/what is responsible – depending on time.

- [The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher](#)

[Slides](#) - slides 1-21

Day 2: Forming an Opinion about Who/What is Responsible

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
|---|
| <p>Students will dive deep into one perspective on the causes responsible for the issue of mass incarceration. They will determine whether this cause is “guilty” or “innocent” of the indictment (causing mass incarceration); and collect evidence and analysis to back up their plea.</p> |
| Lesson Materials & Resources |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Do Now Mass Incarceration on Trial Day 2● Indictment Role Sheets<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The System of Capitalism○ The 3 Branches of the United States Government○ The Prison Industry (Prison Industrial Complex/PIC)○ Law Enforcement○ US Citizens○ The System of White Supremacy● The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher● Slides - slides 23-38 |
| Lesson Activities |
| <p>Do Now - <i>Why do you think the prison population has grown so much? Why do you think there was a dip around 2010 (what changed? people or laws?)</i></p> <p>Review the essential question: “Who, or what, is responsible for creating, maintaining, and therefore ending the system of mass incarceration?”</p> <p>Divide students into 6 equally-sized groups, and assign each group a role to represent during the “trial”. You may allow each group to choose their role, in the order that groups are in their correct locations and ready to go. Give students time to explore their indictment sheet, as well as any others they wish to compare theirs to. Remind them that they may have strong feelings about the role they are representing – they may already strongly believe that their “role “ is guilty - and that is okay! Their job is to make a claim and collect evidence for WHY their “role”</p> |

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is guilty or innocent of creating, maintaining, and therefore ending the system of mass incarceration.

In small groups, students will read their indictment brief, analyze the evidence provided along with their prior reading, and form a claim about whether their “cause” is guilty or innocent (responsible or not responsible) for causing and changing mass incarceration. They will record evidence/quotes on their notecatcher (they may only use one side depending on their claim). They will collect and record 5 pieces of evidence to show WHY their claim/plea is correct. They will then analyze each piece of evidence collected – explaining why this evidence/quote shows that their plea of responsible or not responsible (guilty or innocent) is correct.

Students may also read the other indictment briefs once they are finished with their own, and accuse other groups, given evidence.

They will complete the preparation notecatcher using their readings from yesterday and their indictment brief.

[The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher](#)

[Slides](#) - slides 23-38

Day 3: Trial Discussion: Defendants on Trial

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
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| <p>Students will put in a plea of “innocent” or “guilty” for their assigned party responsible for mass incarceration, in small groups. In a Socratic Seminar-inspired “trial discussion” format, students will present their case one group at a time to argue whether their “cause” is responsible or not responsible for causing and therefore ending mass incarceration.</p> <p>Students will gather notes to support or revise their claims, as they listen to the other defendants present.</p> |
| Lesson Materials & Resources |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do Now - Mass Incarceration on Trial Day 3• Indictment Role Sheets• The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher• The People vs. Mass Incarceration TRIAL NOTES Student Notecatcher• Mass Incarceration on Trial Teacher-Facing Tracking Sheet• Slides - slides 40-58 |
| Lesson Activities |
| <p>Do Now - Mass Incarceration on Trial Day 3</p> <p>Who, or what, do you currently think is most responsible for the system of mass incarceration?</p> <p><i>*Teacher Note – decide on a “Lesson Style” dependent on how your class, and you, will function best. Two options listed below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LESSON STYLE 1: Students will gather in their small “indictment role” groups to agree on their plea, and who will present what evidence/analysis to back it up. Give time for groups to assign |

each team member a part of their argument to present; since students will be graded based on their contributions to the trial discussion!

Once students have had the opportunity to highlight the parts of their team's argument that they will each present, have all groups form a large circle around the classroom. Each group should be seated together around the circle.

Each "team" will be given a chance to present their case, giving each team member a chance to speak. While team members speak, others listen/take notes on their [TRIAL NOTES](#) Notecatcher; to record whether their opinions are changing or being affirmed.

Once all teams and team members have had a chance to speak, open the floor for whole group discussion. The class should be encouraged to use the discussion protocols, sentence starters, and norms listed on their [TRIAL NOTES](#) sheet. These are also outlined on [slide 59](#) in the slide deck.

While students discuss, track participation for a speaking and listening standard grade using the [Teacher-Facing Tracking Sheet](#).

- **LESSON STYLE 2: (outlined in slides)**

Students will gather in their small "indictment role" groups to agree on their plea. Each team member will highlight 2-3 of their strongest pieces of evidence and analysis to back up their plea, that they want to be sure to share in discussion. Remind students that they will be graded based on their contributions to the trial discussion!

Once students have had the opportunity to highlight the parts of their team's argument that they will be sure to present, divide the class into equally-sized smaller groups with at least one member of each "team" represented (for example, 4-5 smaller groups, each with 6 people - at least 1 from each team).

In these smaller discussion groups, each member will have 2 minutes to present their case, giving each member a chance to speak. While group members speak, others listen/take notes on their [TRIAL NOTES](#) Notecatcher; to record whether their opinions are changing or being affirmed.

Once all members have had a chance to speak, the floor is open in each group for discussion. The class should be encouraged to use the discussion protocols, sentence starters, and norms listed on their [TRIAL NOTES](#) sheet. These are also outlined on [slide 53](#) in the slide deck.

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While students discuss, teacher(s) circulate with a clipboard, being sure to “look for” opportunities to catch each student presenting. Teacher(s) will track participation for a speaking and listening standard grade using the [Teacher-Facing Tracking Sheet](#).

Once the discussions are winding down (~20mins), give students 5 minutes to jot down their reflections from discussion on the “Reflection Notes from Listening”

Connect-Extend-Challenge chart on the back of the [TRIAL NOTES](#). Tell students that these notes will be used to complete a writing assignment – encourage them to be sure they’ve captured their thoughts fully, including any evidence or analysis that was new to them!

[Slides](#) - slides 40-58

Day 4: Jury Decision & Revising Opinions about Who/What is Responsible

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

Students will come to a collective jury decision about who or what is responsible for the creation, and therefore the destruction of, the system of mass incarceration in the United States.

Students will revise their claims, supports, and questions, and complete a rough draft of their CSQ writing piece.

Lesson Materials & Resources

- [Do Now - Mass Incarceration on Trial Day 4](#)
- [The People vs. Mass Incarceration Trial PREPARATION Student Notecatcher](#)
- [The People vs. Mass Incarceration TRIAL NOTES Student Notecatcher](#)
- [Mass Incarceration and Justice CSQ - The 1619 Project](#)
- [Slides](#) - slides 63-76

Lesson Activities

[Do Now](#) - How has your thinking changed about the causes of mass incarceration, from Day 1?

Have students get out their PREPARATION Notecatcher, TRIAL NOTES Notecatcher, indictment sheet, and background readings.

1. Students (who are now ALL the jury) will debate all together, making final points about WHO or WHAT they think is responsible for mass incarceration.
2. After 5-10 minutes of final debate, have all students vote on a collective decision on who to charge (it may be more than one group!)
3. Give all students time to then [work on their CSQ](#) (Claim-Support-Question), using their notes from the “trial discussion.” They may choose to AGREE or DISAGREE with the jury’s decision in their final reflection!

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4. Once students have completed the CSQ outline, they will turn it into a written reflection piece at the bottom.

[Slides](#) - slides 63-76

Day 5: Completing a Reflection & Looking Forward

| Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s) |
|---|
| Students will complete a reflective written CSQ on the process and product of this activity. They will reflect on their evolving perspectives on who/what is responsible for mass incarceration, and who/what is responsible for changing it. |
| Lesson Materials & Resources |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do Now - Mass Incarceration on Trial Day 5• Mass Incarceration and Justice CSQ - The 1619 Project• 8G High-Quality Writing Rubric Checklist• Slides - slides 78-end <p><i>*Students should also gather all past unit resources – notecatchers and background readings. Teacher may want extra copies of background readings for extension.</i></p> |
| Lesson Activities |
| <p>Do Now - What do you think can, or should, be done about the U.S. Justice system? If we are to end mass incarceration, what should replace it?</p> <p><i>Have students get out their PREPARATION Notecatcher, TRIAL NOTES Notecatcher, indictment sheet, CSQ, and background readings.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students will complete the writing and revision of their final CSQ reflective writing piece. <i>They can use the high quality writing rubric/checklist - with sentence starters for evidence/analysis and a structure scaffold on p.2 - to finish their writing, revise, and edit.</i>2. When students are complete, have them go back to their background readings as sources to complete the Extension Questions. <i>Included at the bottom of the CSQ assignment, these questions ask students to provide evidence from the text for why incarceration should end, as it is used today, and to define what justice should look like in the United States.</i> |

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[Slides](#) - slides 78-end