

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Length	5 lessons, plus time to work on an independent project
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	Grade 8 Civics
Unit Overview	<p>Students will learn about the history of race in the early American Colonies, and discuss how dominant historical narratives can shape our understanding of these groups’ history. They will discuss the start of slavery in Virginia, the treatment of Native Americans at Jamestown and in New England, and the role of the Iroquois Confederacy in shaping the American government. Students will also practice independent research skills by investigating different historical events and mapping the locations of those events on a collaborative map.</p> <p>At the end of the unit, students will create a work of written or audio nonfiction, art, or realistic fiction inspired by what they have learned and their own independent research.</p>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand how racism against Black and Native American people influenced early colonial history, and how those attitudes still influence modern society, even in their own communities. ● Practice research and information literacy skills, such as synthesizing information from different sources and evaluating the reliability of online sources. ● Use maps and timelines to visualize and contextualize historical events. ● Connect with local African American Heritage to gain perspective about our historical surroundings and analyze connections to unit themes ● Apply knowledge of history to a creative project of students’ choosing
Standards	<p><u>Common Core Literacy Standards</u> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</p>

	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.</p> <p>Massachusetts’s History Standards: 8.T1.4 -Explain how British ideas about and practices of government (e.g., the Magna Carta, the concept of habeas corpus, the Mayflower Company, self-government, town meetings...) influenced American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America. 8.T1.5 - Analyze the evidence for arguments that the principles of government of the United States were influenced by the governments of Native peoples.</p>
<p>Unit Resources</p>	<p>Excerpts from Nikole Hannah-Jones’s essay “The Idea of America” *</p> <p>Five-minute audio clip from NPR’s <i>All Things Considered</i>, describing how different people feel about the American flag</p> <p>Video from Robert Trent Vinson, professor at the College of William and Mary, discussing slavery in Jamestown.</p> <p>Poem by Clint Smith on the Middle Passage</p> <p>National Geographic article to provide historical context on Native Americans in New England</p> <p>How the Iroquois Great Law of Peace Shaped U.S. Democracy Iroquois Great Law of Peace</p> <p>Video from Tiokasin Ghosthorse on the role of the Iroquois Confederacy in shaping the U.S. government</p> <p>Readings from the Iroquois Constitution and communications between Iroquois and colonists</p> <p>Presentation: Timeline of Historical Events [.pdf]</p> <p>Presentation: Timeline of Historical Events [.docx]</p>

	<p>Slave Voyages</p> <p>Black Berkshires: A Hidden and Not so Hidden Legacy</p> <p>Uncovering Our African American History</p>
Performance Task(s)	<p>Refer to the attached document for student performance tasks based on grade level, resources, time commitments, and student interests. Detailed instructions for performance tasks are included in the final daily lesson plan.</p> <p>End of Unit Performance Task Options [.pdf] End of Unit Performance Task Options [.docx]</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p>Civic teacher teams to determine options for formative and summative assessment throughout the unit. See options below within daily lesson plans.</p> <p>Writing Rubric [.pdf] Writing Rubric [.docx]</p>

DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Day 1: Exploring National Symbols and their Connections to Different Communities

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are some examples of America’s national symbols?2. How do people perceive those symbols differently based on their life experiences?3. How do conceptions of those national symbols change over time?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>Excerpts from Nikole Hannah-Jones’s essay “The Idea of America”</p> <p>Five-minute audio clip from NPR’s <i>All Things Considered</i>, describing how different people feel about the American flag</p>
Lesson Activities
<p>Warm-up Activity: Have students list some of America’s national symbols (not just like the bald eagle, but also think of things like buildings, holidays, or even people or ideas). Then, have students describe what those symbols represent to the American public.</p> <p>I do: Play the NPR podcast about the different meanings of the American flag, then outline how different individual experiences lead to different perspectives. Discuss with students why this is okay.</p> <p>We do: Read or listen to excerpts from “The Idea of America”* by Nikole Hannah-Jones</p> <p><u>Questions to answer as a class/in groups:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might the American flag represent different things to different people?2. What does Hannah-Jones mean when she says that the U.S. is “founded on both an ideal and a lie?”3. Can you think of some examples of times when “black Americans...helped the country live up to its founding ideals”?4. Why do you think that some might find the <i>1619 Project’s</i> way of thinking about history to be controversial? <p>You do: Think of a historical event or symbol that might have a different meaning to you than it might for someone of a different racial/ethnic, religious, etc. group. Write a paragraph describing your different perspectives and the backstories behind them.</p> <p>Some examples: Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day; the 4th of July (think of the Frederick Douglass speech “What to the Slave is the 4th of July?”); Juneteenth; the Pledge of Allegiance; the national anthem; the Civil War; the first Thanksgiving.</p> <p>Exit ticket: Students think about a symbol that one of their classmates discussed in class today. They reflect on, and share responses to, the following questions:</p>

- What does that symbol mean to you, and what does it mean to your classmate?
- What different life experiences might you and your classmate have had that led to your differing viewpoints?

Day 2: Researching the TransAtlantic Slave Trade

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did slavery begin in America, and what was it like? 2. In what ways was slavery an integral part of the history of the colonies? 3. How do we remember the history of slavery today?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>Video from Robert Trent Vinson, professor at the College of William and Mary, discussing slavery in Jamestown. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1M4VrdM3DY</p> <p>Poem by Clint Smith on the Middle Passage, part of <i>The 1619 Project</i></p> <p>Resource on how to use the shared Google Maps technology (could be useful to students or teachers):</p> <p>Map of slave routes, which shows the numbers of slaves coming from various parts of Africa and going to various parts of the Americas.</p>
Lesson Activities
<p>Warm-up Activity: Watch a video from the College of William and Mary that provides background on the history of racial slavery. Then, answer this question: How did racialized slavery differ from indentured servitude?</p> <p>I do: Explain the history of the Triangular Trade and the Middle Passage. Points for teachers to be sure to mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The flow of goods between the Americas, Europe, and Africa (Slaves came from Africa to the Americas, where they were forced to produce raw goods like cotton and sugarcane. These raw goods then went to Europe to be turned into refined goods, which were then traded to Africa in exchange for more slaves) - Point out the fact that slavery existed between different groups within Africa, especially for prisoners of war, but make it clear that this sort of slavery was not the same as American chattel slavery (In particular, slavery in Africa was not racialized, was not necessarily lifelong, and was not intergenerational). <p>- Show a map of where slaves came from, and where they ended up (i.e. Brazil/Caribbean/North America)</p>

to contextualize the Clint Smith poem. (Teachers: This example is also linked in the Lesson Materials.)
- Students may be surprised to find that so few enslaved people traveled the Middle Passage to end up in the United States, especially compared to the Caribbean or Brazil. If this comes up, remind them that most slaves in the U.S. were not brought directly from Africa, but instead came from families that had been in the U.S. for generations. (This contrasts with slaves in the Caribbean and Brazil, where death rates were higher because of the dangers of working on sugar plantations. Because of this, slaves in those places had fewer children, and more enslaved Africans were brought across the Atlantic.)

We do: Analyze Clint Smith’s poem from the 1619 Project. Questions to consider:

1. What specific imagery does Smith use to illustrate the hardships enslaved people faced along the Middle Passage?
2. Smith writes “I...grow weary of chasing / a history that swallowed me,” while the ships that carried slaves “wash their hands of all they carried.” What does Smith illustrate using these two contrasting responses?
3. Smith uses the imagery of maps/globes throughout the poem; how might the discussions of specific places in slaves’ lives influence our understanding of slavery?

You do: Choose a location from anywhere in North or South America, Africa, or Europe that had something to do with the slave trade. It could be a place in Africa where slaves originally came from, a place where slaves were sold, a place where slaves were forced to work, a place where slave trading corporations were headquartered, etc.).

Research that location and answer a few questions:

- What happened here?
- Why are those events still important to us today?
- Can you see evidence of this place’s history today (e.g. a historical plaque, memorial, a standing building), or have people successfully erased the history?

Put your answers to those questions on a pin and put them on the collaborative Google Maps. (see link in Lesson Materials) Students can read through their classmates’ pins afterward.

Exit ticket: Look at a few of the other pins that your classmates have made. Do you notice anything interesting about them? What about the general distribution of pins across the map?

Note to teachers: If you don’t want to use the Google Maps software to do this, you could have students write out their answers on sticky notes or index cards and place them on a physical world map.

Day 3: Examining the History of the Relationship between European Colonists and Native Americans

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How did early colonists interact with Native Americans?2. How do the dominant narratives of European colonists shape and limit our understanding of Native American history?

Lesson Materials & Resources

[National Geographic article to provide historical context on Native Americans in New England](#)

Lesson Activities

Warm-up Activity: Ask students what they know about Native Americans pre-colonization, and write them all on the board, possibly in a word web. (Expect stories about the First Thanksgiving, some responses about Pocahontas, some responses that perpetuate the “noble savages” myth).

I do: Building off the Warm-up activity, talk with students about how our knowledge of history often prioritizes dominant narratives, and how that leads to us often not knowing a lot about Native American history compared to the history of white settlers who arrived on their land (or even perpetuates harmful myths, like the fact that there were no advanced societies or cultures before Europeans arrived).

We do: Read about the *National Geographic* article about the treatment of Native Americans in Colonial New England:

Answer these questions in pairs, and then share out to the class:

- Why do you think the colonists wanted to fight King Philip’s War?
- How did the religious views of the Pilgrims shape their interactions with Native Americans?
- Why do you think that historical events differ so drastically from the conventional story that many tell about Thanksgiving ([“cultures coming together and sharing the bounty of the land that would eventually become America”- from the National Geographic article](#))?
- Whose perspectives are emphasized in this text, and whose are diminished?

You do: Go back to the map from yesterday’s class, and create another pin in the same way as you did for the previous class. This time, choose a location where European colonists and Native Americans came into contact in some way.

Again, answer these same questions:

- What happened here?
- Why are those events still important to us today?
- Can you see evidence of this place’s history today? (e.g. a historical plaque, memorial, a standing building), or have people successfully erased that history?

Note: it might be helpful to have all the pins from Day 2 in one color, and all the pins from Day 3 to be a different color

Exit ticket: Look at a few of the other pins your classmates made today. Compare the pins your class made today with the ones you made yesterday. What do you notice that’s the same, and what do you notice that’s different?

Day 4: Analyzing role of the Iroquois Confederacy in shaping the U.S. government

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did the Iroquois system of government influence the framers of the Constitution?• Why do you think most civics and U.S. history textbooks don't discuss this?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>How the Iroquois Great Law of Peace Shaped U.S. Democracy Iroquois Great Law of Peace Video from Tiokasin Ghosthorse on the role of the Iroquois Confederacy in shaping the U.S. government</p> <p>Readings from the Iroquois Constitution and communications between Iroquois and colonists</p> <p>How the Iroquois Great Law of Peace Shaped U.S. Democracy Iroquois Great Law of Peace Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian guide for educators on the Iroquois:</p>
Lesson Activities
<p>Warm-up Activity: Watch a video about the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the U.S. Constitution. Then, answer this question in small groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think back to Nikole Hannah-Jones's essay from two days ago--can you think of some similarities and differences between this video and her discussion of the early treatment of African-Americans? <p>I do: Briefly explain background information about the Iroquois Confederacy. Important points to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Iroquois (also known as Haudenosaunee) was a confederation, or alliance, of six different Native American nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora). They lived in what is now upstate New York.• Their constitution, the Great Law of Peace, was an early model of governance that influenced the Founding Fathers.• It was influenced by the metaphor of a bundle of arrows: one arrow on its own could be easily snapped, but several arrows bundled together couldn't be.• Unlike many colonial societies, the Iroquois were matrilineal, meaning that kinship was recorded from the mother's lineage. Also, many women in the Iroquois Confederacy held substantial political power.• For more information, including sources for the material above, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian put together a guide for educators on the Iroquois: https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/HaudenosauneeGuide.pdf <p>We do: To review, ask students to write down and share features of the U.S. government to prepare for comparison with the Iroquois government. Students suggestions may include separation of powers, bicameral legislature, checks, and balances.</p> <p>You do: Read primary sources (see Lesson Materials) in groups and then compare the Iroquois Confederacy</p>

with the US Government. Main question: *How did the Iroquois Confederacy influence the Founding Fathers when writing the Constitution?*

Exit ticket: In the next class meeting, you will be starting to produce a piece of work (it could be a story, a short research project, a work of art, etc.) that relates to a topic of your choice. Your topic should relate to the treatment of African-Americans or Native Americans in your city, county, or state. The project should also make connections between the history explored in the unit, and observations of the present. Jot down a few ideas for topics that you might be interested in.

Day 5: Analyzing role of the Iroquois Confederacy in shaping the U.S. government

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how racism against Black and Native American people influenced early colonial history, and how those attitudes still influence modern society, even in their own communities. • Connect with local African American Heritage to gain perspective about our historical surroundings and analyze connections to unit themes. • Apply knowledge of history to a creative project of students' choosing.
Lesson Materials & Resources
<p>Performance Task Outline [.pdf] Performance Task Outline [.docx]</p>
Lesson Activities
<p>Expectations for students: End of Unit Performance Tasks [.pdf] End of Unit Performance Tasks [.docx]</p> <p>Self-directed work on their independent project. Students should do research and work on writing or creating their individual projects. Teachers should mainly serve as a resource or sounding board for students. Potential projects are listed below. More ideas are included in the document “End of Unit Performance Tasks.”</p>
Options for Students’ Projects
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creative Writing - A New Ending. Think about all of the experiences that African Americans endured when they reached America. If you had the opportunity to rewrite history, dating back to the period of colonization, what would you want to see happen differently? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your writing must be one full page typed (500 words). The plot must progress after colonists began to settle in America and vessels arrived on land carrying enslaved Africans. When they land in America, what should have happened?

2. **Nonfiction Writing** - Research an event in the history of your area (city, county, or state) that involves the treatment of African-Americans or Native Americans. Write a short summary/profile or record a podcast about your event, of the kind that might appear in a newspaper or news podcast.
 - Your writing must be one full page typed (500 words), or your podcast must be 5 minutes long. You are encouraged (but not required) to interview people who may have some knowledge about your topic (e.g. eyewitnesses or local historians). You must cite at least 2 reputable sources.
3. **Geography** - Create a brochure or poster to provide some information on a place in/around your city. Imagine tourists are coming to look at this location and you need to provide them with some context. Your location should be relevant to the history of African-Americans or Native Americans in your area.
 - You must use a computer
 - You must use color to illustrate all of your illustrations, find photographs online, or take some pictures yourself.
 - Each illustration must include a description
4. **Art** - The Art of the Matter. Illustrate four scenes from one of the periods explored in this unit. Whether you decide to draw, make a collage, or stage a photograph, try to capture the ideas and feelings expressed in the depiction that you are doing.
 - Your artwork must be in full color.
 - For drawings, you must outline everything with a thin black marker.
 - You should take your time and think about the illustration - and the scene that you are creating. It should have details from the story - and more importantly, the illustrations should be identifiable by your classmates.

Student Example from Reid Middle School in Pittsfield, MA:

