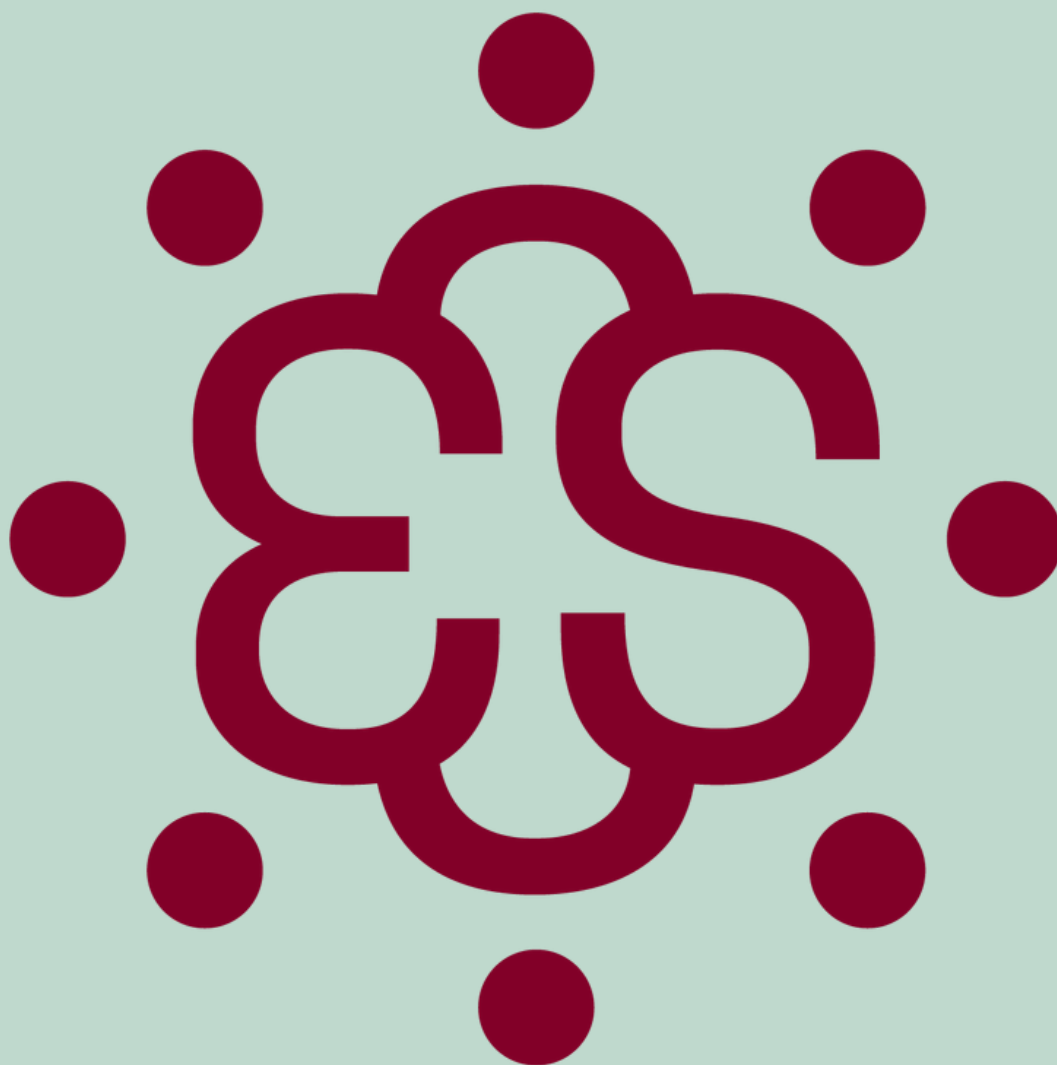


ES RESOURCES

EDUCATOR BULLETIN • ISSUE 03

SUMMER 2026



Disability Pride Month • Founding Stories • Women's Equality Day

Jefferson's Deleted Passage • Sojourner Truth • Maya Angelou • Suffragists • Phillis Wheatley • Frederick Douglass • Black Loyalists • Crip Camp • Joachim Prinz • Expert Annotations • Teacher Fellowship



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Introduction to Expert Annotations “

ES Resources has designed an Ethnic Studies praxis that uses historical inquiry and close reading to teach students how, what, and when to annotate primary sources. **These activities are organized around recurring habits of historical thinking rather than isolated historical facts.** Students practice the rigorous work of historians: examine evidence, identify perspective, situate authors and arguments within historical context, weigh competing interpretations, and support claims with evidence. These habits intentionally recur in our instructional materials so that students gradually assume greater responsibility as teacher scaffolds are removed.

[View More Annotations](#)
[Download Activity](#)

The Deleted Passage (Jefferson, 1776)

Refers to King George III
 He has waged **cruel war against human nature itself**, violating it's most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, **captivating & carrying them into slavery** in another hemisphere, or to **incur miserable death in their transportation thither**, this **piratical warfare**, the opprobrium of **infidel powers**, is the warfare of the **CHRISTIAN** king of Great Britain. determined to keep open a market where **MEN should be bought & sold**, he has **prostituted his negative** for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this **execrable commerce**; and that this **assemblage of horrors** might want no fact of distinguished die, **he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us**, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, & murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them; thus **paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.**

Handwritten annotations include:

- Active** (next to "waged")
- What is "human nature itself"? Is human nature not inherently that which seeks dominance and subjugation?**
- placed in "self-evident truths" line of DoI**
- Taken captive through theft and human trafficking**
- this word feels... light. It was more violent, like "force" or "compulse"**
- Severe public disgrace**
- "Incur" = to bring but this framing happened during to captured & why did death & the violence th That is where I just King Geo. people participate**
- Why CAP this? Do MEN and CHRISTIAN relate or compare?**
- misusing, degrading, or corrupting something for an immoral or selfish purpose. "this negative" = the king's veto powers**
- Interrogating: what legal efforts had been taken (in Britain?) pre-1776 to end the Transatlantic slave trade?**
- market, product, way of making sth**
- Collection/compilation/combination**
- the King**
- enslaved, escaped or free Black people?**
- GB promised freedom and rights to them if they existed in the loyalist cause.**
- forcing onto others w/out being asked**
- enslaved Black people & Africans**
- American revolutionaries**
- So... the king refused to abolish slavery... but he promised Black people freedom if they fought for him against the American "patriots"/revolutionaries?**
- pointing out hypocrisy, cool. But... is it for the benefit of enslaved Black people, or the benefit of his own argument?**
- current concerns the nature of indigenous lands to spread Christianity and from European colonization as religiously just.**
- North America vs. Africa**
- Two PASSIVE**
- like pirates**
- doubt we refer to this type of warfare anymore?**
- why did he put this in all CAPS?**
- slave trade = "market"**
- Why CAP this? Do MEN and CHRISTIAN relate or compare?**
- misusing, degrading, or corrupting something for an immoral or selfish purpose. "this negative" = the king's veto powers**
- Interrogating: what legal efforts had been taken (in Britain?) pre-1776 to end the Transatlantic slave trade?**
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British Parliament abolished slave trade in 1807. Abolished slavery entirely b/w 1833-1834. (Ft), not abolished in USA 1865.

ES

Example of an ES Resources "Expert Annotations" handout.

IN CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION

A summer issue rooted in inquiry, reflection, and classroom practice.

This summer issue of the ES Resources Educator Bulletin explores two important summer commemorations—Disability Pride Month and the nation's 250th year—through inquiry-driven classroom resources, guest editorials, primary source investigations, and ready-to-use instructional materials designed for Ethnic Studies classrooms.

In celebration of Disability Pride Month, we are honored to feature a guest editorial by **Liz Berger**, a social worker and doctoral candidate whose work focuses on neurodiversity, accessibility, and bias. Drawing on both professional and personal experience, Berger reflects on what meaningful inclusion looks like in Ethnic Studies classrooms and offers practical guidance for designing learning experiences that reduce barriers, recognize disability as an important part of human diversity, and support all learners. This section also includes classroom activities, multimedia resources, and links to lesson plans that introduce students to the history of the disability rights movement and the ongoing pursuit of accessibility and inclusion.

Our "Foundings" section invites educators and students to revisit the promises and contradictions of the nation's founding through close reading, historical inquiry, and primary sources. We are especially honored to feature a guest editorial by **Reverend Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.**—civil rights leader, author, and Senior Fellow for Divinity and Interdisciplinary Studies at Duke University Divinity School—who reflects on ethical courage, John Lewis's call to make "good trouble," and the responsibility to confront injustice rather than remain silent. He reminds us that civic education is not only about understanding history but also about cultivating moral leadership and thoughtful citizenship.

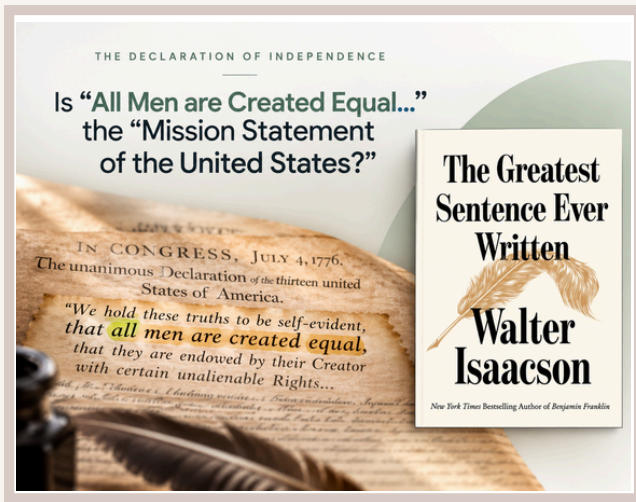
This issue also offers a preview of the expanding ES Resources Ethnic Studies curriculum project. Throughout these pages, you'll find inquiry-driven classroom activities, primary source investigations, Expert Annotations, student handouts, and multimedia classroom connections designed to help students think like historians.

Our model invites learners to see themselves as agents of historical change. They investigate evidence, ask questions, evaluate competing interpretations, and develop ideas by close reading. These materials represent the first releases in a growing collection of curriculum and instructional resources that will continue to expand on ESResources.org.

Finally, we are excited to announce the launch of the **ES Resources Ethnic Studies Curriculum Innovation Fellowship**, a funded opportunity recognizing California educators who are developing exemplary Ethnic Studies curriculum. We invite teachers to learn more about the fellowship, eligibility requirements, advisory committee, and application process by visiting ESResources.org/teacher-fellowship/.

As always, thank you for the work you do every day to create thoughtful, engaging, and inclusive learning experiences for your students. We hope the resources in this issue support and inspire your classroom practice.

Is Equality “a Radical Idea”?



In the history of the United States, movements for the abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage, civil rights, disability access, and LGBTQ+ rights have all appealed to the Declaration of Independence’s principles to advocate for greater inclusion. Walter Isaacson, Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Teach For America, describes the phrase, “all men are created equal,” as the **mission statement** of the nation and argues that it expresses a *founding ideal*. Every generation must work to expand access to that ideal.

In this podcast, Walter Isaacson argues that the Declaration of Independence provides an ongoing, guiding purpose for the United States. Even as the nation has not always lived up to its own ideal of human equality: “It is a narrative, and over the course of generations we take this sentence and expand it, so more people are included.” Isaacson contends that the nation’s story is one of continually working towards a **founding ideal**, meaning that if President Abraham Lincoln were alive today, he would likely see the United States as still working to fulfill that mission statement. Isaacson proposes that Lincoln might say, “**You’re still trying to prove it.**”

Isaacson explains that although the phrase did not originally include everyone in practice—such as enslaved people, women, and many others—later generations have used this “mission statement” to argue for expanding rights and equality over time. Notable examples can be seen in the writings and speeches of Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



LISTEN

[Download Activity
& Answer Key](#)



It is a narrative, and over the course of generations we take this sentence and expand it, so more people are included.

The Deleted Passage

SLAVERY AND THE CONTRADICTION INSIDE INDEPENDENCE

IN HIS FIRST DRAFT of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote a tirade "on slavery." It was removed from the final version. Today, this passage is often referred to as the "deleted passage on slavery."

But was the passage actually saying something different?

A question for close reading and classroom discussion.

Rather than speaking out against the institution of American slavery, Jefferson spends the paragraph primarily rebuking the British king for his apparent hypocrisy: How can you permit the Transatlantic slave trade yet offer freedom to Black loyalists who fight with you against the American revolutionary cause?

[Download Annotations](#)

[View Activity](#)

The Deleted Passage (Jefferson, 1776)

Refers to King George III. Why this word specifically?

He has **waged cruel war** against human nature itself, violating its **most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people** who never offended him, **captivating & carrying them into slavery** in another hemisphere, or to **incur miserable death in their transportation thither**, this **piratical warfare**, the **opprobrium of infidel powers**, is the warfare of the **CHRISTIAN** king of Great Britain, determined to keep open a market where **MEN should be bought & sold**, he has **prostituted his negative** for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this **execrable commerce**; and that this **assemblage of horrors** might want no fact of distinguished die, **he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us**, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, & murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them; thus **paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.**

Annotations:

- He has **waged cruel war**: active, refers to King George III. Why this word specifically?
- violating its **most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people**: replaced in "self-evident truths" line of DSI. Enslaved Africans.
- who never offended him, **captivating & carrying them into slavery**: Taking captive through theft and human trafficking. This word feels... high.
- in another hemisphere, or to **incur miserable death in their transportation thither**: North America vs. Africa. Was more violent. Forceful or room.
- this **piratical warfare**: Too passive. Severe public disgrace.
- the **opprobrium of infidel powers**: doubted we refer to two types of warfare and more?
- is the warfare of the **CHRISTIAN** king of Great Britain: refers to non-Christians, non-Christian or pagan empires.
- determined to keep open a market where **MEN should be bought & sold**: slave trade = "market". Why cap this? Do MEN and Christian relate or compare?
- he has **prostituted his negative** for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this **execrable commerce**: missing degrading or corrupting something for an immoral or selfish purpose. "This negative" = the King's power to veto laws.
- and that this **assemblage of horrors** might want no fact of distinguished die: interesting! What legal efforts had been taken (in Britain?) pre-1776. = ref. to end the Transatlantic slave trade?
- he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us**: to market, produce, way of making. By collection/compilation/combination.
- and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them: the King. Enslaved, escaped or free. Black people.
- murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them: obtruded = forced onto others w/out being asked.
- thus **paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.**: enslaved Black people & Africans. American revolutionaries.

So... the King refused to abolish slavery... but he promised Black people freedom if they fought for him against the American patriots/revolutionaries?

Thomas Paine: I think "sound" might mean the "tyrannical" rule of the British forces, so sound slavery would mean -

Student Questions

Learning Excerpts

CLOSE READING / DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1

Jefferson criticizes King George III for blocking efforts to restrict the slave trade. What is the difference between outlawing the Transatlantic Slave Trade and abolishing slavery itself? Why is this distinction important for understanding Jefferson's argument?

2

Jefferson describes an "open market where MEN should be bought & sold." What is Jefferson criticizing about commerce in this sentence? How does the language of markets and buying and selling change when the "goods" are human beings?

3

Throughout this passage, Jefferson uses very different language when describing King George III and enslaved Africans. Compare the verbs used for each. Which actions are described actively? Which actions are described passively?

4

In the final sentence, Jefferson criticizes King George III for encouraging Black people to fight against the American colonies. At this time in history, the Black community in the American colonies included enslaved, escaped, and free people. How are Black people in the American colonies portrayed in this paragraph? Do they appear as independent actors making choices, or as people being used by others? Explain using evidence from the text.

THE DELETED PASSAGE

SLAVERY, CONTRADICTION, AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF BLAME

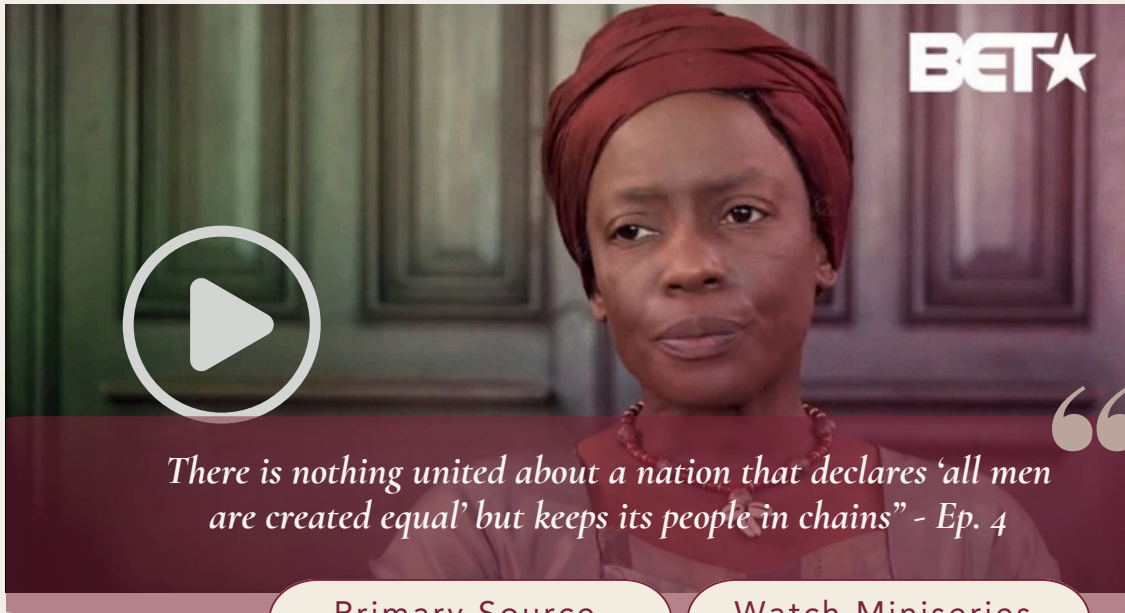
[Download Questions](#)

The complete activity handout has more than a dozen questions to choose from!

MINISERIES

The Book of Negroes

The British Army made proclamations of freedom for Black people who joined the British cause during the American Revolutionary War. While the policy had major limitations, approximately 3,000 formerly enslaved Black Loyalists were provided transport out of the newly established United States of America.



There is nothing united about a nation that declares 'all men are created equal' but keeps its people in chains" - Ep. 4

[Primary Source](#)

[Watch Miniseries](#)

Aminata Diallo's is a harrowing life story — from **being kidnapped in West Africa at age 11 to surviving enslavement in South Carolina**, helping the British record names in the historic "**Book of Negroes**," and traveling to **Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone** — the show brings real, historical experiences to life with a fictional protagonist. *The Book of Negroes* is based on a historical fiction novel by Canadian novelist Lawrence Hill. However, between 1783-84 a British military ledger called the "Book of Negroes" really did record the names, ages, physical descriptions, and claims to freedom of about 3,000 Black Loyalists who were granted passage by the British out of the newly formed United States of America.

*Teacher discretion is advised, as some scenes will not be appropriate for all students. Please refer to the [ESResources.org](https://www.esresources.org) [resource page](#) for guidance on teaching *The Book of Negroes: Miniseries*.*

ESRESOURCES.ORG CURRICULUM

Discover

“

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...”

The Declaration of Independence made a historic claim, but **history is an ongoing conversation** – not a settled narrative. Every generation inherits the past, wrestles with its contradictions, and leaves behind new interpretations for future generations.

From the Civil Rights Movement to disability rights, Sojourner Truth to the 19th Amendment, these ES Resources classroom activities invite **students to investigate how meaning is constructed, contested, and reconstructed across generations.**

Learners discover that they, too, inherit the ideas, debates, and unfinished aspirations of the past.

"Liberty" = right or agency to act, believe, and express oneself w/out external (or internal?) constraints, punishment, or situations of oppression. Must be balanced w/ the right & obligation to respect & uphold the liberty of others?!

Liberty Tree



what happens on trees?
Fruit hangs, leaves dry, they fall, trunks and roots hold, grow, mold, stay firm; they need sunlight; trees in forest communicate like a network. What "hangs" on trees?

Like Apollo riding a golden chariot across the sky to bring the sun
In a chariot of light from the regions of day,
The Goddess of Liberty came;

Ten thousand celestials directed the way
And hither conducted the dame;
A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
And the plant she named Liberty Tree.

This reminds me of Sky Woman, an Indigenous figure in creation story.
The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around.

To seek out this peaceable shore,
Unmindful of names or distinction they came,
For freemen like brothers agree;
With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was Liberty Tree.

American ideals of equality and liberty
Beneath this fair tree, like the patriarchs of old,
Their bread in contentment they ate,
Unvexed with the troubles of silver and gold,
The cares of the grand and the great.
With timber and tar they Old England supplied,
And supported her power on the sea;
Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
For the honor of Liberty Tree.

But hear, O ye swains, 'tis a tale most profane,
How all the tyrannical powers,
Kings, Commons, and Lords, are uniting again
To cut down this guardian of ours,
From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms
Through the land let the sound of it flee,
Let the far and the near, all unite with a cheer,
In defence of our Liberty Tree.

Thomas Paine

Like Statue of Liberty, but this was written 110 years before the statue came to us shores

In this time period (late 18th century), 1776, "Lady Columbia" personified this idea. She was a patriotic symbol for the American colonies - pioneered by Phillis Wheatley - an African American poet, in an ode/letter to George Washington. Revolution will be seen ahead...?

I think this is an allusion to the "manna" / "bread from Heaven" the Israelites are said to have eaten after the exodus from enslavement while wandering in the desert.

"unvexed" = calm, serene, undisturbed

"regions" = location, so how can day (time) be a place, unless means the borders as drawn at that time.

"AGREE" about WHAT? and who are the "millions of millions?"

"Sky Woman" is a revered figure in creation story of Haudenosaunee Indigenous ppl. Story about and genesis of the world read about in a book - and I'm remembering the song with imagery.

uniting people across divides of identity, creed, or origin

religious imagery

Shipping off hard-earned, grown or colonies back to the British Empire = "Taxation without representation" [They had to support the crown's might, felt used and abused in return]

"This guardian of ours" = Liberty itself?

in 1776

Download Annotations

Literary Devices Handout

Guided Exploration

[Download Activity](#)

INTRODUCTION TO EXPERT ANNOTATIONS

DIRECTIONS - FOR INSTRUCTORS

Point out the title on the annotated "Liberty Tree" PDF. Students will see a **tree drawn** above the word "Tree." Clearly, that is a literal depiction.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS

Turn students' attention to the highlighted word in the title: "**Liberty**." Why did the Expert Annotator highlight that word?

Draw your pointer from the highlighted word to the arrow, which leads to a yellow note. Read aloud the first sentence of the note: "Liberty = the right or agency to act, believe, and express oneself without external (or internal?) constraints, punishment, or situations of oppression."

REALIZATION FOR STUDENTS

Oh, the Expert Annotator was defining the word, "Liberty."

ASK YOUR STUDENTS

Why would the Expert Reader need to define the word before reading the document?

EXPLAIN TO YOUR STUDENTS

A word in the title often suggests it will be a primary topic of the text. **The Expert Annotator wanted to be sure they would understand what the purpose, message, and argument of the text is so they needed to define the word first even though they already knew what it meant to them, or in everyday use.** While they were defining it, they realized they actually had a question about the definition itself and wanted to ask, *Is liberty something that must be given to other people, or is it something that happens on the inside?*

READ ALOUD TO YOUR STUDENTS

Read the **second sentence** on the yellow annotation tab aloud, which is an Expert Annotator's question: "**Must be balanced with the right and obligation to respect and uphold the liberty of others?!**"

EXPLAIN TO YOUR STUDENTS

Because the Expert Annotator defined the word "liberty" before starting to read the text, they went into the activity already having developed this big question to explore while reading.

Tips for the Expert Learner Role

Introduction to Expert Readers

WHAT IS CLOSE READING?

Close reading means reading a text carefully and purposefully, paying attention to details, language, evidence, and the author's message. Sometimes, people read a text multiple times, with a different focus each time.

Close reading also means asking questions and making personal connections between what you're reading and what you already know. It requires doing extra digging—looking up the definition of an unfamiliar word, researching the historical period when the document was written, or looking into the background of the author.

EXAMPLE: WHY NO AUTHOR?

If there is no author listed on a primary source, that can lead to important close reading questions:

- Why is there no author?
- Was it written by one person or multiple?
- Why did they not include their name? (e.g., gender bias, political fear)

Historians often ask questions about credibility, purpose, informativity, impact, novelty, and patterns.

CLOSE-READING EXAMPLE

Look at the arrow next to "trees." The Expert Annotator asks, "What happens on trees?"

Ask: Why did the Expert Annotator ask that question? Why would exploring it help them understand the text better?

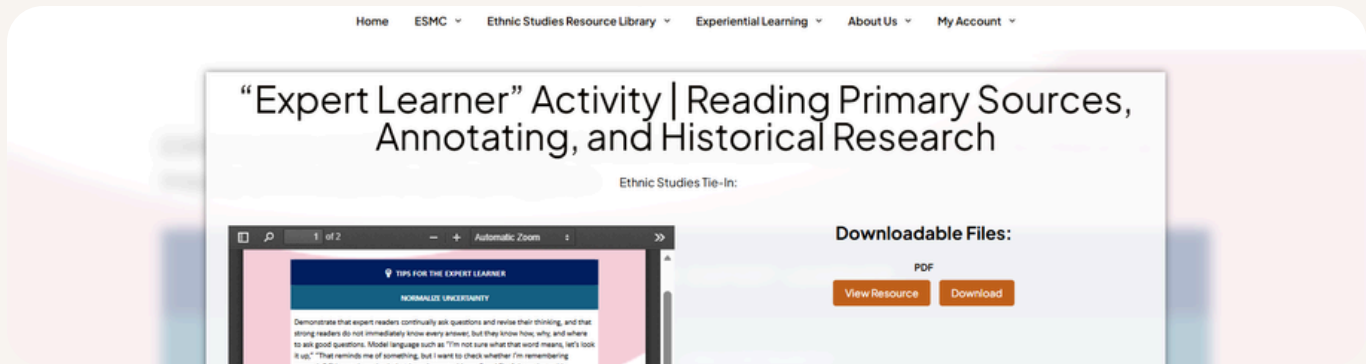
The Expert Annotator finishes the note by asking "What 'hangs' on trees?" Encourage students to keep that question in mind as you close-read the Expert Annotator's notes and the ballad, "Liberty Tree," as a class.

THE EXPERT LEARNER ROLE

An Expert Learner approaches a text the way a historian or scholar would—with curiosity, skepticism, and a willingness to dig deeper. Before reading, they define key terms. While reading, they ask questions, make connections, and note patterns. After reading, they reflect on what they learned and what questions remain.

In this activity, students and teachers practice the Expert Learner role by following the annotations of an Expert Reader and discussing why each annotation was made.

Introduction to Expert Learners



Recommendations

GUIDANCE FOR INSTRUCTORS

Sit down with your students. Literally join them at the table as a peer in this activity. Read together, think together, and ask questions with the text, the annotator, and each other. Read aloud popcorn style. Students will learn historical context, new vocabulary, and critical inquiry and reading skills, but the goal is for students not merely to understand the meanings or notice literary devices. It is for students to explore the use, form, and type of annotating itself and become confident *doing* annotations independently.

Recommendations

ROLE ASSIGNMENTS

At first, the teacher will be the **Expert Learner**. As the Expert Learner, pause the group strategically, noting your own reactions, ideas or questions. Stay attuned to the student behaviors and ask students frequently if they wish to contribute thoughts, connections, frustrations, excitement, ideas, or questions – whether contextual, clarification, or purely out of curiosity. Identify moments where students might have found answers to the student questions on a handout, and guide students towards completing both fact-based and synthesis questions throughout the activity.

CLOSE-READING EXAMPLE

- **Group 1:** Assign half the class to one group. These students will read the original text and pause when the annotator has made a note on that text. Any student assigned to Group 1 can jump in to read the original text.
- **Group 2:** The other half of students will be assigned to read the annotator's comments. Any student assigned to group 2 can jump in to read an annotator's comment.

NOTE ON LIMITATIONS

The Expert Annotations are one example of how an experienced reader engages with a complex historical text; they are not unfalsifiable data sources. Use them to make expert thinking visible: asking questions, identifying uncertainty, making evidence-based connections, and revising interpretations as new information emerges. The goal is to apprentice students into the habits of historical inquiry, so they gradually become independent close readers themselves. Students will learn that historians build understanding by gathering evidence rather than relying on immediate certainty.

EXTERNALIZING EXPERT LEARNING

Podcast Hosts!

Moving from externalized onto the page to externalized through conversation – In conversation pairs, students simulate a podcast environment! While interviewing each other, students record their conversation. They may create a title for the show, and they are welcome to prepare in advance if doing so best suits student comfort-levels and accessibility needs.

PROMPTS

- Points my classmates and I made that the Expert Annotator...
 - Did address
 - Did not address
- Five new things I learned or thought from engaging with the Expert Annotator's notes
- One thing that feels clearer or more certain to me
- One thing I'm still struggling with
- Two questions I have
- "This line was interesting to me because...What did you think about it? Why?"
- "I don't like that is says ... what do you think?"
- "I loved this word because it conveys... but I'm not sure because it might...what do you think?"
- "I remember you once said...so reading this, I wonder how you feel about..."

RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS: RATIFYING THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Whose Revolution?

The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits the federal government and states from denying citizens the right to vote based on sex. Passed by Congress on June 4, 1919, and ratified on August 18, 1920, it marked a massive milestone for the women's suffrage movement.

But the 19th Amendment did not come from nowhere.

As early as 1776, before the founding of the United States, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, future President John Adams:

*“I long to hear that you have declared an independancy—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. **Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands.** Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion , and **will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.**”*

• Original spelling retained and unedited •

Women were not included as equal citizens in the Declaration of Independence or the United States Constitution.

It would take another 144 years.

Abigail Adams Warns John Adams, "Do Not Put Unlimited Power into the Hands of the Husbands"

For use with the Expert Learner Activity.

Expert Annotations

What did she line through?

Founders Online

ABIGAIL ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS, 31 MARCH 1776

3 months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence

Abigail Adams to John Adams = John Quincy Adams (6th president) was their son (1744-1818) (1735-1826) Braintree March 31 1776

Adams' and wife of → First VP of USA & 2nd president

I wish you would ever write me a Letter half as long as I write you! and tell me if you may where your Fleet are gone? What sort of Defence Virginia can make against our common Enemy? Whether it is so situated as to make an able Defence? Are not the Gentry Lords and the common people vassals? are they not like the uncivilized Natives Britain represents us to be? I hope (their) Riffel Men who have shewen themselves very savage and even Blood thirsty; are not a specimen of the Generality of the people - are they representative? Who are they? (George Washington then Commander in Chief of army)

I am willing to allow the Colony great merit for having produced a Washington but they have been shamefully duped by a Dunmore = the last royal governor of Virginia colony → ironic.

I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for Liberty cannot be Equally Strong in the Breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow Creatures of theirs. Of this I am certain that it is not founded upon that generous and christian principle of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us. (He's talking about the British, not slavery, right?)

Do not you want to see Boston; I am fearfull of the small pox, or I should have been in before this time. I got Mr. Crane to go to our House and see what state it was in. I find it has been occupied by one of the Doctors of a Regiment, very dirty, but no other damage has been done to it. The few things which were left in it are all gone. Cranch has the key which he never delivered up. I have wrote to him for it and am determined to get it cleand as soon as possible and shut it up. I look upon it a new acquisition of property, a property which one month ago I did not value at a single Shilling, and could with pleasure have seen it in flames) long, girl! (Tone = fiery, fiery, passionate, confident = happen suddenly unexpectedly, or prematurely)

The Town in General is left in a better state than we expected, more owing to a precipitate flight than any Regard to the inhabitants, tho some individuals discover a sense of honour and justice and have left the rent of the Houses in which they were, for the owners and the furniture unhurt, or if damaged sufficient to make it good. = moral, empathy, respect, humanity

Others have committed abominable Ravages. The Mansion House of your President is safe and the furniture unhurt whilst both the House and Furniture of the Solisiter General have fallen a prey to their own merciless party. Surely the very Friends feel a Reverential awe for Virtue and patriotism, whilst they Detest the paricide and traitor.

I feel very differently at the approach of spring to what I did a month ago. We knew not then whether we could plant or sow with safety, whether when we had toild we could reap the fruits of our own industry, whether we could rest in our own Cottages, or whether we should not be driven from the sea coasts to seek shelter in the wilderness, but now we feel as if we might sit under our own vine and eat the good of the land.

I feel a gaiety de Coar to which before I was a stranger. I think the Sun looks brighter, the Birds sing more melodiously, and Nature puts on a more cheerfull countenance. We feel a temporary peace, and the poor fugitives are returning to their deserted habitations. Beautiful literary writing!

Tho we felicitate ourselves, we sympathize with those who are trembling least the Lot of Boston should be theirs. But they cannot be in similar circumstances unless Pusillanimity and cowardise should take possession of them. They have time and warning given them to see the Evil and shun it. - I long to hear that you have declared an independancy - and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men were tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation. (overhears OK, BADDIE)

"Girl" + Friends + "Christian principle" → strong framing about the Women's Liberation Movement (Hemmes)

"Vassals" = Colonial subjects (give loyalty and in return, get "protection")

Expressing profound frustration @ British loyalists inside the American colonies (eg. "Dunmore")

"Parricide" = the act of killing one's own father. Symbolically, she likely means a metaphor = treason against the American Revolutionary cause / continental Army.

"Pusillanimity" → faint-heartedness, cowardice. Founding fathers loved this word...

"At under our own vine" = from religious scripture; Washington and Abigail Adams both used this imagery, and it's also in the play, Hamilton!

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WHOSE REVOLUTION?
POWER, EQUALITY, AND THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION

[Download Annotations](#)

[Download Activity](#)

POWER, EQUALITY, AND THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION

Whose Revolution?

In 1851, Sojourner Truth asked whether the virtues of being a “lady” are reserved for white women. “Ain’t I a Woman?”

- Sojourner Truth gave this speech live at the Women’s Conference in Akron, Ohio, without written notes – she was illiterate. Frances Dana Gage, who transcribed the speech, is said to have added a stereotypical Southern plantation dialect that Truth never spoke in.
- Truth’s speech is a landmark historical text. It challenges the exclusion of Black women from standard definitions of womanhood and addresses the specific experiences of Black maternal trauma.
- Speaking from her lived experience, combined with rhetorical force, Truth critiques paternalism, dismantles the notion of female frailty by citing her own labor as an enslaved person, and spotlights the distinct experiences of Black womanhood.
- More than a century later, Dr. Maya Angelou – the esteemed poet and Black literary icon – lends her voice to Truth’s historic speech in a moving elocution of history in the modern day.



VIDEO RESOURCE

This resource is a recitation of Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" read by Dr. Maya Angelou (1928-2014), an American memoirist, essayist, poet, and civil rights activist. The historic speech was delivered by Sojourner Truth extemporaneously at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) was an American abolitionist and activist for African American civil rights and women's rights.

SUFFS the Musical

Tony award-winning musical about the suffragist movement in the United States. Explores themes of gender, race, the labor of mothers and women, and civil rights.



[Watch on PBS](#)

EXTRA CREDIT

Project

OPTION 1

Write a script with a debate between at least two characters about: The ethical conflicts activists face when movements exclude marginalized voices. Why did it take so long for the 19th Amendment to pass? What obstacles did reformers face during the Suffs movement, and how did they overcome them?

OPTION 2

Choose a modern or historical song that reflects the struggles and goals of the women's suffrage movement. Write a brief analysis explaining the connection and why it resonates.

OPTION 3

Select a character from Suffs who you found intriguing or wished to explore further. Write or record a short monologue (1–2 paragraphs) from this character's perspective. Consider what they might express in a private moment, revealing layers not overtly presented on stage.

Beyond the Vote

While Watching *SUFFS*

Identify the appearances of recurring themes by writing notes in the table as they occur while you are watching. Add your examples in the four rows, where they fit best. Include time stamps for each entry. You must fill in examples for at least two columns (events/scenes, words/phrases, quotes, choices made) per theme.

	Events/scenes	Words/phrases	Quotes	Choices made
CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED				
EQUALITY	NARRATIVE			
INCLUSION/EXCLUSION	LANGUAGE			
FORMS OF RESISTANCE	LAWS			
OBLIGATION	PERSPECTIVE			
AGENCY	GENDER STEREOTYPES	PATIENCE		
FAILURE	STRATEGY	LEGACY		
SACRIFICE	BURNOUT	INHERITANCE		
	RESILIENCE	Question (answer in 3-5 sentences): Identify a scene in <i>Suffs</i> where characters disagree — for example, over race, strategy, or generational differences. How did the actors' body language, tone, or blocking highlight that conflict? Reflect on how theater made the tension feel real.		
	LIBERTY			
	EMOTIONS (E.G., RAGE, HYSTERIA)			

[Download Activity](#)

POLITICS OF INCLUSION & THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

RACE, HISTORY, AND NARRATIVE

Liberty, Then and Now



[History Now: The Journal](#) > [Black Lives in the Founding Era](#) > [Phillis Wheatley: Poet Laureate of the American Revolution](#)

History Now, Issue 60 (Summer 2021) Black Lives in the Founding Era

PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Phillis Wheatley (c. 1753–1784) became the first African American and the first enslaved person in the U.S. to publish a book of poetry. Kidnapped from West Africa as a child, she was enslaved in Boston by the Wheatley family, who taught her to read and write. She was a poetic prodigy, and her landmark book of poems was published in 1773. Her famous letter, “To His Excellency General Washington,” was written in the form of an ode and later published by those close to President Washington for public audiences.

CREATIVE ENTRY

Open Mic | Run a class open mic! Invite students to stand up in front of the class and recite their odes to put on the Statue of Liberty today aloud.

[Read More](#)

[Podcast](#)

Phillis Wheatley: Poet Laureate

1. How did Phillis Wheatley come to be in the American colonies? Include both a direct quote and your summary.

Direct quote: _____

Paraphrase / summary / interpretation: _____

2. The article states that "Wheatley explicitly links the ideal of freedom from British tyranny with the ideal of freedom for enslaved African Americans." Provide three examples from the poems and analysis included in the article.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

3. The official US Poet Laureate position was not established until 1985-1986, and there were no state or royal laureateships for an enslaved African American woman in the 1770s.

A. Is it a historical anachronism to call Phillis Wheatley a "Poet Laureate"? Explain your reasoning.

B. Is bestowing this title on her today an act of reparative justice? Why or why not? Explain.

4. According to the article, what are two reasons that Phillis Wheatley wrote the ode to George Washington?

5. What happened when Phillis Wheatley left London?

Direct quote: _____

Paraphrase / summary / interpretation: _____

6. In her poem "America," how does Wheatley use metaphor in a way that "posits a double meaning"? What two groups does she compare?

[Download Activity](#)

7. Was Phillis Wheatley a British loyalist?

Direct quote: _____

Paraphrase / summary / interpretation: _____

8. As a free Black woman writing against British rule, what risks did Phillis Wheatley face?

Direct quote: _____

Paraphrase / summary / interpretation: _____

9. What does "Freedom's Cause" mean in the article?

Direct quote: _____

Paraphrase / summary / interpretation: _____

10. How did Wheatley become "a political actor in one of America's worst crises"?

Direct quote: _____

Paraphrase / summary / interpretation: _____

Student Questions

Historical ideas are inherited, adapted, and reinterpreted—not created in isolation.

CLOSE READING / DISCUSSION PROMPTS / HISTORICAL MOTIFS & ANACHRONISMS

Option 1

CREATIVE ENTRY

Find an example of a historical anachronism in media today, either online / social media, in a TV show, film, news coverage, or song. Write 3 paragraphs, the first explaining the items, the second providing historical research and presenting the issues, and the third offering a solution. Or, draw, design, and / or create a visual model of (1) the historical anachronism and (2) your proposed solution.

Option 2

Purposefully invent a historical anachronism by creating a cartoon, song, image, video, or other visual/audio format. Your submission must be accompanied by a rationale statement, explaining the correct historical context for each component, and what commentary your purposeful anachronism makes obvious or implicit.

[Download Activity](#)

The complete handout has countless activities and extensions to choose from!

1

Even though the Statue of Liberty is pictured in the “Liberty Tree” video – the monument did not exist in the actual time period when Thomas Paine wrote “Liberty Tree.” **The Statue of Liberty arrived in New York Harbor in June 1885, whereas Thomas Paine wrote “Liberty Tree” in 1775, 110 years earlier.** Do you think the video creator used a historical anachronism on purpose, or was it an accident? **When the “Liberty Tree” and Statue of Liberty are presented together, what narrative are they supposed to tell about the United States?** Do you agree with that narrative? Why or why not?

2

As you read **Emma Lazarus’ biography**, trace the chain of events that made “The New Colossus” possible. Born to a Sephardic Jewish refugee family in 1849, her legacy reminds us how **personal history and public voices shape the stories we tell**. Identify moments where history is being connected across different time periods; details that help explain why Emma Lazarus might have connected the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty to immigration, refuge, and refugees; connections between historical events and Emma Lazarus’ own family history; examples of how history is passed down through families or communities; and evidence that one generation influenced the next.

RACE, HISTORY, AND NARRATIVE

Liberty, Then and Now

From Phillis Wheatley writing an ode to George Washington as the first African American to publish a book of poetry, to Ariana Brown's contemporary spoken word performances about thrift stores, the city bus, and racism, students create their own poetic works.



ODE TO THE CITY BUS

The longest relationship I have ever been in has been with the public transportation system...Thank you to every Black bus driver who got me home safe. Thank you to every brown bus driver who got me home safe...Automobile of the movement...Thank you to every bus driver...who saw in me a daughter, who let me write this poem in the ride home, in the rain."



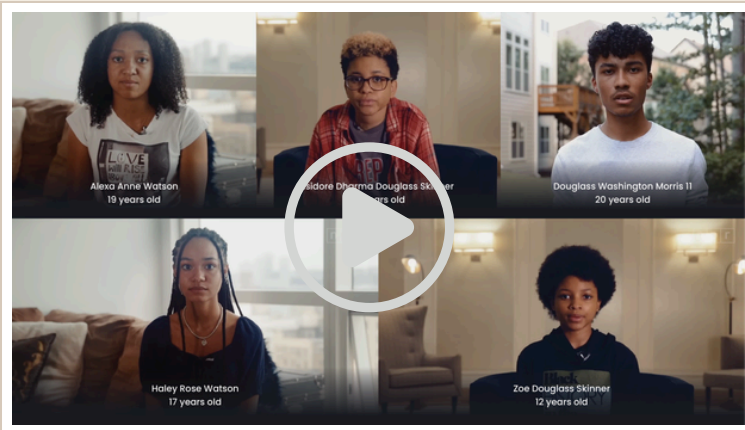
ODE TO THRIFT STORES

"I remember 'This Will Be,' some Natalie Cole, or Otis Redding, or Earth, Wind & Fire shooting through the speakers, my mom humming about everlasting love while scouring the kitchen utensils, and I know the rich girl is wrong, that thrift stores are anything but sad."

”

Clint Smith's "Ode to the Only Black Kid in the Class"

“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

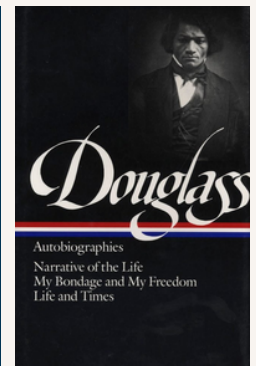
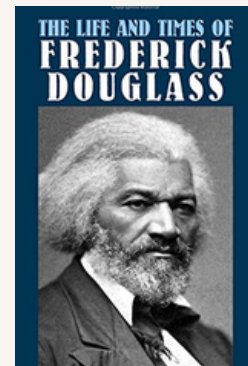


“What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”
From 1852 to 2020, Frederick Douglass’
Descendants Read His Speech.

“The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, the distance between this platform and the slave plantation, from which I escaped, is considerable ...Your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery.”



Actors perform Frederick Douglass’ impactful speeches. Because Douglass’ actual voice was never recorded, these performances offer an opportunity to hear the potency of his words with timely urgency over a century after his time.
[Access them here.](#)



[Read the Speech](#)

The “Slave Bible”

The Slave Bible was a heavily edited version of the standard Protestant Christian Bible specifically created for enslaved Africans in the British Caribbean during the early 1800s. It was altered: the “Slave Bible” redacted entire verses, stories, and chapters, including 90 percent of the Hebrew Bible and 50 percent of the New Testament.

- It was published in London in 1807 by a missionary organization that sought to convert enslaved Black people to Christianity while removing the stories and quotes about freedom, liberation, equality, or emancipation (freedom from enslavement).
- The editors deliberately omitted passages that emphasized freedom, equality, or liberation, while keeping passages that encouraged obedience and submission.
- It portrayed a version of Christian scripture that supported the plantation system rather than challenged it.

Who created the “Slave Bible”?

Who was its intended audience?

What information was omitted — and why?

How might those omissions change the reader's understanding of Christianity, freedom, and enslavement?

[Learn More](#)



Fisk University (HBCU) students comment on what the “Slave Bible” means to them.



Discover

Who Speaks to Liberty? Jewish Refugee Voices.

RABBI JOACHIM PRINZ' SPEECH AT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON:
"THE PROBLEM IS SILENCE" (1963)

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S LETTERS WITH MOSES SEIXAS: PERSECUTION
& RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN EARLY U.S. (1790)

Who Speaks to Liberty?

THE PROBLEM IS SILENCE

Joachim Prinz, March on Washington 1963

"... It is not merely sympathy and compassion for the Black people of America that motivates us. It is above all and beyond all ... a sense of complete identification and solidarity born of our own painful historic experience.

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime ... The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. **The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.** A great people which had created a great civilization had become a nation of **silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality and in the face of mass murder.**

America must not become a nation of onlookers. America must not remain silent. Not merely Black America, but all of America. It must speak up and act, from the President down to the humblest of us, and not for the sake of ... the black community but for the sake of the image, the idea and the aspiration of America itself.

Our children, yours and mine in every school across the land, each morning pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States and to the Republic for which it stands. They, the children, speak fervently and innocently of this land as the land of **'liberty and justice for all.'**

The time, I believe, has come to **work together - for it is not enough to hope together, and it is not enough to pray together, to work together that this children's oath,** pronounced every morning from Maine to California, from North to South, may become a glorious, **unshakeable reality in a morally renewed and united America.**

[Listen](#)

These remarks by Rabbi Joachim Prinz were delivered immediately preceding Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's famous, "I Have a Dream."

For use with the Expert Learner Activity.

Expert Annotations - George Washington & the Touro Synagogue

Annotations:

- Current in his 1st term as President
- What was happening in 1790?
 - 1st US census
 - National capital compromise = birth of DC
 - Rhode Island ratified constitution and became 13th state
 - 1st State of the Union address - Benjamin Franklin dies April 1790
- George Washington's 1790 Letter to Touro Synagogue - in Rhode Island, oldest existing Jewish synagogue
- Why is this important/relevant?

Document Content:

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Americans United for Separation of Church and State

While I receive, with much satisfaction, your Address **replete with expressions of affection and esteem**; I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you, that I shall always retain a grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced in my visit to Newport, **from all classes of Citizens.**

AVA "I'm blushing"

increased "citizens"

Expert Annotations - George Washington & the Touro Synagogue

 **Ethnic Studies Educator Support**
esresources.org

Americans United for Separation of Church and State

AVA "I'm bashing"

While I receive, with much satisfaction, your Address replete with expressions of affection and esteem; I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you, that I shall always retain a grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced in my visit to Newport, from all classes of Citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are past is rendered the more sweet, from a consciousness that we are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity and security. If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good Government, to become a great and happy people.

The Citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of enlarged and liberal policy a policy worthy of imitation! All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my Administration, and fervent wishes for its felicity. May the children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.

May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.

G. Washington

If you would like to learn more about religious liberty, please contact:
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
1301 K Street NW, Suite 850, Reston, VA 20190
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 466-3234 Fax: (202) 466-2587
e-mail: americansunited@au.org
website: www.au.org

What's interesting is he never says, directly, "Yes, you can be citizens." He thanks them for their admiration and then quotes the Hebrew Bible - but ITS the meaning inside/belind the scriptural quote that actually gives the most compelling and clear answer: "we have the right to liberty, safety, and inclusion among the Citizens of this new country." And earlier he seems to imply he'd be a hypocrite if he'd decided otherwise. (We are wise men, we cannot fail, under... just administration... "if it is more that toleration is spoken of... by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights."

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believe, and express oneself w/out external (or internal?) constraints, punishment, or situations of oppression. Must be balanced w/ the right & obligation to respect & uphold the liberty of others?!

Liberty Tree

Like Apollo riding a golden chariot across the sky to bring the sun
In a chariot of light from the regions of day,
The Goddess of Liberty came;

Ten thousand celestial directed the way
And hither conducted the dame
A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
And the plant she named Liberty Tree.

This reminds me of Sky Woman, an Indigenous figure in creation story
The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around.

ARE WE ALLOWED TO REINTERPRET THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE?

For freemen like brothers agree;
And their spirit did cheerly unite
And then temple was Liberty Tree
Beneath which they swore the solemn vow
Their bread in contentment they ate,
Unvexed with the troubles of silver and gold,
The cares of the grand and the great.
With timber and tar they Old England supplied,
And supported her power on the sea;
Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
For the honor of Liberty Tree.

But hear, O ye swains, 'tis a tale most profane,
How all the tyrannical powers,
Kings, Commons, and Lords, are uniting again
To cut down this guardian of ours
From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms
Through the land let the sound of it flee;
Let the far and the near, all unite with a cheer,
In defence of our Liberty Tree.

Thomas Paine

I think "and" here might mean the "tyrannical" rule of the British forces, so sound meaning would mean -

what happens on trees?
Fruit hangs, leaves dry, they fall, trunks and roots hold, grow, mold, they firm; they need sunlight; trees in forests communicate like a network. What "hangs" on trees?

regions = location, so how can day (time) be a place, unless it means the borders of a day/drawn at that time...
Presigious woman

"AGREE" about WHAT? and who are the "millions and millions"?

"Sky Woman" in the creation story of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) indigenous ppl. It is a story about reciprocity and generosity. I read about Sky Woman in a book - a memoir - and I'm remembering the story with the imagery in this line.

religious imagery

Shipping off hard-earned, grown or made colonies back to the UK British Empire
"Taxation without representation"
[They had to support the crown's might, but felt used and abused in return]

In 1775, "Profane" likely meant outside the church, or even profane

"swain" → a young man in love, or a suitor

Liberty, Agency, & Voice

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Compare

Which person changed your understanding of America's "mission statement" the most, and what responsibility—if any—does studying history place on you as someone who now inherits these ideas?

Students...

- Identify a primary source
- Practice the annotation steps
- Complete the analysis charts
- Conduct a written or creative project

Choose a historical figure you believe most effectively appealed to America's own ideals.

Guiding questions for capstone project:

- 1 Walter Isaacson describes the U.S. mission statement as "a new type of nation based on values, not the divine right of kings or the sword of conquerors." Based on what you've learned, what do you think those values are?
- 2 Is the sentence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal..." the mission statement of the United States? Explain with evidence.
- 3 How have individuals and movements used American society's own founding ideals to argue for inclusion and to renegotiate the interpretation of justice?
- 4 Why do you think we are still reading these documents today?

Who is America?



“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus | Recited by Immigrants - Read clients & employees at the Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) in Portland, OR.

While in everyday English, many people use the term *America* in reference to the United States in particular, this usage treats one country as though it stands in for the entire hemisphere, which can obscure the identities and histories of people from South America, Central America, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, all of whom are also peoples of the Americas.

Using the more precise term *United States* helps students distinguish a particular nation-state from the larger and more diverse geography of the Americas. It also encourages educators to notice and recognize that language influences the way places, peoples, and histories are represented and absorbed by students.

GUIDING IDEA

Liberty Tree

Every generation inherits ideas, institutions, language, and aspirations.

Those inheritances are neither static nor self-explanatory, but continually debated, challenged, expanded, and reimagined in response to new circumstances.

Thomas Paine

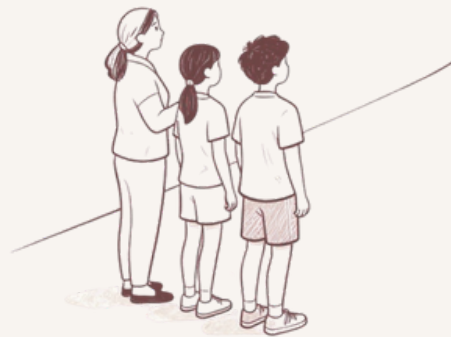
Reflections

ON "GOOD TROUBLE"

Reverend Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is a Senior Fellow for Divinity and Interdisciplinary Studies at Duke University Divinity School. An African American civil rights leader, author, and journalist, he served in his youth as a coordinator and assistant to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In 1971, at the age of twenty-three, Chavis gained international prominence as a leader of the Wilmington Ten, a group of civil rights activists in North Carolina who were wrongfully convicted of arson. Their convictions were later overturned, and in 1980 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ordered their release, citing prosecutorial misconduct. Chavis currently serves as president and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

As someone who has spent more than six decades working in the Civil Rights Movement alongside courageous leaders such as Congressman **John Lewis**, I have learned that lasting social change begins with moral leadership. John Lewis inspired millions with his call to make "good trouble, necessary trouble." He taught us that "good trouble" means standing peacefully and courageously for justice, equality, and human dignity. It is not about creating conflict for its own sake; rather, it is about having the integrity to challenge unfairness with love, discipline, and hope. **Every student should know that one person, acting with courage and compassion, can make a positive difference in the lives of others.**

Throughout my life, I have also witnessed the problem of silence. Too often, good people see injustice, bullying, prejudice, or discrimination but remain silent because they are afraid or believe someone else will speak. Congressman Lewis challenged all of us to reject that silence. Ethical courage means speaking the truth with respect, standing beside those who are treated unfairly, and refusing to accept hatred or injustice as normal. **Teachers have a unique opportunity to help young people understand that their voices matter** and that kindness, honesty, fairness, and peaceful action are among the greatest strengths any leader can possess.



I believe our schools are places where future leaders are formed every day. In classrooms across America, educators help students develop not only academic excellence but also strong character, moral conviction, and a commitment to serving others. The legacy of Congressman John Lewis reminds us that democracy depends on citizens who are willing to stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult. My hope for every young person is that they will never be afraid to speak for justice, never remain silent when others are harmed, and always remember that the greatest "good trouble" is helping to build what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called the "Beloved Community"—a society where freedom, justice, equality, and love are shared by all.

Reflections

INCLUSIVITY AND ETHNIC STUDIES

Liz Berger is a scholar and UNESCO research consultant on international projects. Her research focuses on inclusion-building and strengthening when advocating for multiple marginalized people. Her work within neurodivergence spans more than two decades in public and independent schools, medical institutions, and child and adult populations as a social worker, therapist, trauma specialist, and now a PhD student and researcher. Her work reaches educators and policymakers globally.



Capitol Crawl | In 1990 about 60 disability rights advocates staged a protest, known as the Capitol Crawl, to advocate for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Tom Malone, from Owensboro, Kentucky (left) and Shaila Jackson, from Atlanta, Georgia, (right) were two of the sixty protesters who crawled up the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Source: The Tom Olin Collection, Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections, William S. Carlson Library, University of Toledo.

Have we invited everyone in the room?

Decades ago, I started my career after college working with autistic children in schools. For thirty hours a week, I spent school days with an amazing child who offered daily weather reports at the start of every day and relished repeating certain words in the middle of class (which I then repeated constantly in my own mind). We studied together, took his tests together, and when he needed a break from the classroom, we spent time on the swing set on the playground outside together (one of my favorite activities well into adulthood). It was the beginning of my therapy career and my dream job, with one exception: the padded room in the basement of the school.

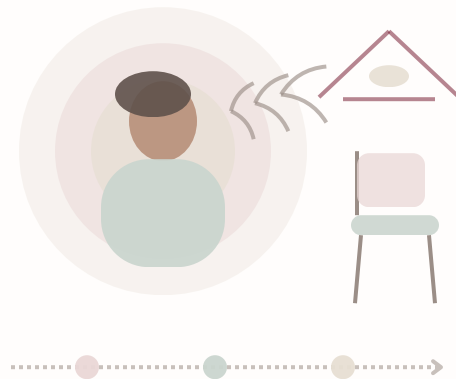
When my client would become dysregulated in class, he would respond robustly, and sometimes violently. The expectation was that I and a few of the teachers would physically remove him from the class to the padded room for everyone's safety (and to minimize school disruption). After the first time that he became physically violent, and our attempt to safely take him down there, we agreed that despite school policy, we would devise a plan in the classroom that capitalized on our collective presence to better prevent these incidents and then to respond to them within the classroom. We never visited the padded room again.

Every student enters the classroom with an invisible (or obscured) receptacle that holds the weight of their experiences in the world. Family, friends, community, sports, nutrition and health, and individual processing differences mediate how students express these differences in the school social environment.

Access friction (Silverman 2024) refers to the idea that providing circumstances that ease access for one student can create circumstances that negatively impact access for another student simultaneously. Important attention has been offered to the role of trauma in classroom dynamics, learning and accessibility. Understanding how to navigate difficult topics with students who have diverse learning styles is complex. So too is the potential for difficult topics to elicit thoughts and feelings for students that may not just be uncomfortable, but may activate trauma responses.



What happens when one student learns best with near total quiet, but another learns best with background noise?



When challenging or potentially controversial topics are brought into the classroom, the often herculean efforts of teachers to accommodate students' emotional and learning needs can lead to an understandable amount of conflict.

Empathy, validation, kindness, voice and patience are infinite in their potential in the school and classroom, and educators offer these to learners of all backgrounds with grace and generosity. As we consider the importance of appreciating the unique collective that a classroom makes, we also remind ourselves that the individual experience of students can be hard to recognize. Disabled and neurodiverse learners are not just observers of Ethnic Studies work – we share an important lineage in the struggle to be visible and valued alongside all marginalized groups.

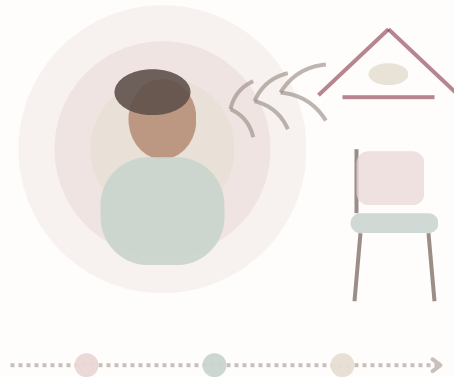
When teachers are designing or adapting Ethnic Studies curriculum where the varied needs of complex learners have not been built into the foundational design, this can leave teachers contemplating the enormity of responsibility that they have to introduce important material and navigate conflicting needs of students at the same time.

Ethnic Studies: Disability & Accessibility

We have made great progress in recent decades in recognizing that access and inclusion at the community level offer not just visibility for those with disabilities or differences, but approaches to living in civil society that may benefit all people (who enjoys taking their bikes up and down those curb cuts?).

Schools have developed systems to accommodate students with disabilities, and those accommodations can make barriers visible while also creating more inclusive environments. In classrooms, we regularly employ IEPs, 504 Plans, ramps, elevators, and other elements of Universal Design. Visibility organically dissolves in favor of the needs of the student as a learner – ideally, once the supports are in place, the student is able to participate simply as a learner rather than being defined by the accommodation or disability. While this process is far from ideal in some circumstances and school contexts, tremendous progress has been made in creating systemic policy change that ultimately benefits the plurality of the classroom.

Ethnic studies curriculum, in addition to being formatted accessibly, should include content that acknowledges the lived experience of disabled and neurodiverse people as marginalized people who have advocated for their visibility and the right to live equitably in their communities.



There are steps educators can take to adapt Ethnic Studies coursework while easing concerns about trauma activation, access friction, and a lack of salience for diverse learners. These steps will be familiar to educators, but are sometimes not considered when it comes to curriculum and learning that falls outside of core subjects despite accessible frameworks such as Universal Design for Learners (UDL).

Educators should consider what has worked in their classroom previously for students and employ similar strategies to accommodate Ethnic Studies learning. It is easy to think that accommodation plans do not fit outside standard pedagogy, but if a student needs accommodations for science, math, and history, then they also require them for any learning that happens anywhere in the school environment.

Recommendations

Because neurodivergent students can demonstrate asynchrony in their development, demonstrating advanced verbal abilities (for example) does not necessarily mean that students have the emotional skills to process advanced or disturbing emotional content. In fact, their ability to do that may be delayed or affected by particularly attuned empathy pathways, justice-oriented lenses, or a tendency to use systemization to process content. In these cases, welcome insight from parents and caregivers wherever possible. Doing so may help predict where an adjustment is needed. Through advanced communication as lessons are designed and planned, educators can determine what is needed to provide a safe, inclusive and trauma-free classroom implementation.

Experiential learning opportunities, such as museum trips and site visits, can be deep and enriching ways to interact outside of the classroom and school. Understanding how this different context may impact diverse learners, from imposing potential physical barriers to offering different sensory stimuli, can help teachers ensure it is a meaningful experience for all. Scarcity is real when it comes to budgets and resources in education, depending on political will, systems and decisions that are often far removed from the inner workings of the classroom.

Be transparent about the limitations of the classroom to meet every student's needs ideally, and to perfectly translate difficult topics into digestible lessons. Although some Ethnic Studies curriculum may include UDL activities that offer multi-modal tools for students to engage in learning, whenever possible, teachers should ensure that there are multiple ways of learning and assessment that diverse learners can engage in. Text-based learning, video, audio, art-based and mastery-based learning are areas where diverse learners can connect with material in ways that illustrate their strengths.

Educators cannot be expected to litigate complex, global events, histories, or challenges in the classroom while also balancing the needs of diverse learners. Introducing a culture of civil discourse, where students of all learning styles can help establish guidelines for classroom discussions, is important. Neurodivergent learners may benefit from private check-ins after lessons to gauge how these lessons were processed, and what emotions may have been activated as the result.

Understanding that some diverse learners may process lesson content over a longer amount of time is key – and offering the opportunity later in the day or week to ask follow-up questions or discuss the lessons may be helpful.



[Apply for a Teacher Grant](#)

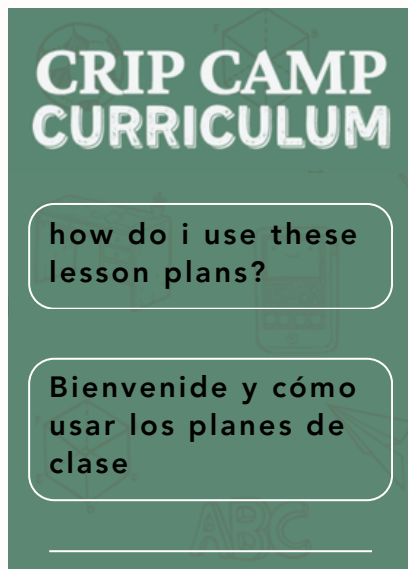


Read more about "access friction": Silverman, S. E. (2024, May 23). [Navigating "access friction" in teaching](#). *Beyond the Scope*.

D DOCUMENTARY Discover

No one at Camp Jened could've imagined that those summers in the woods together would be the beginnings of a revolution.

In the early 1970s, teenagers with disabilities faced a future shaped by isolation, discrimination and institutionalization. Camp Jened, a ramshackle camp “for the handicapped” (a term no longer used) in the Catskills, exploded those confines. Jened was their freewheeling Utopia, a place where campers experienced liberation and full inclusion as human beings. Their bonds endured as many migrated West to Berkeley, California — a hotbed of activism where friends from Camp Jened realized that disruption, civil disobedience, and political participation could change the future for millions. the documentary, *Crip Camp*, is the story of one group of people and captures one moment in time. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of other equally important stories from the Disability Rights Movement.



[Watch & Learn](#)

D CURRICULUM Discover

Unit

National History Day

The Americans with Disabilities Act: Taking Action for Access

Grades 7-12

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1 *Lesson 2* *Lesson 3*

Deaf President Now (3 lesson plans)

Grades 7-12

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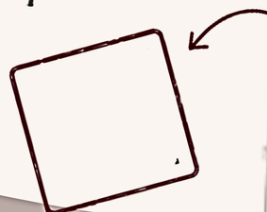
Fellows \$500

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California public or independent high school educators who have created and successfully taught class sessions aligned with the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum state-approved guidelines, in person or online.

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