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THE COLOR LINE

Charley M. Nelson

The Color Line Unit

Overview

Defining the Color Line

History of the Color Line

Location of Color Line Today

Six Lesson Plans

- a) Frederick Douglass
- b) W.E.B. DuBois
- c) Langston Hughes
- d) The Rise of Jack Johnson
- e) 21st Century Color Line
- f) Teaching Tolerance

Bibliography

- Books
- Articles
- Videos

Overview

*Because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve. **President Barack Obama***

Defining the Color Line

Color Line: A barrier or non-physical wall usually created by custom or economic differences, to separate nonwhite persons from white persons. In the 1890s, this customary barrier in the southern states of America became a legal line of separation with laws stating clearly where blacks could and could not go in public spaces. By the turn of the century, African American were confronted with "colored" signs on doors, water fountains, bathrooms and waiting rooms in bus and train stations designating their places for standing, sitting, eating, and using the facilities. The "colored" sign was the most visible mark of inferiority imposed upon African Americans by the Jim Crow laws. The color line also existed in the mid-western and eastern states of the nation, but it was not so clearly marked, and was seldom enforced by law. (Encyclopedia)

Definitions of color line on the Web:

Color bar: barrier-preventing blacks from participating in various activities with whites
wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

The phrase color line was originally used as a reference to the racial segregation that existed in the United States after the abolishment of slavery. The phrase gained fame after W.E.B. Du Bois' repeated use of it in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*.

En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color-line

History of the Color Line

Due to marriage and other relationships occurring between Africans and Europeans during colonial life, laws were established around 1691 to prevent these occurrences. The laws established harsh punishment for those whom violated any of the earlier laws. These laws were among the first to establish the so-called Color Line.

The Black Codes were laws passed during the early 19th century on the state and local level to limit liberties, freedom and economic opportunities (Civil Rights) of African Americans. Since the United States constitution originally discriminated against African Americans, states started to pass discriminatory legislation. The term Black Codes is used most often to refer to legislation passed by Southern states at the end of the Civil War to control the labor, movements and activities of newly freed slaves. The establishment of Jim Crow laws upon the end of the Civil War was established by local and state separate all public facilities based on race between 1876 to 1965.

The phrase color line became famous once used by W. E. B. DuBois in his book entitled, *The Souls of Black Folk*. DuBois wrote, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line -- the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea. It was a phase of this problem that caused the Civil War." Also the quote he made during a conference about the color line, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line, the question as to how far differences of race...will hereafter be made the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization".

William Edward Burghardt DuBois was a scholar and totally devoted to the advancement of the Negroe. He also became an advocate for all people who were treated without justice and freedom. During the mid 20th century DuBois traveled to Poland on an assignment and witness the living condition of Jew in Warsaw. He modified his view of the color line to include all people and expands beyond the discrimination of black and white. His Warsaw Ghetto article included, " The result of these three visits, and particularly of my view of the Warsaw ghetto, was not so much clearer understand of the Jewish problem in the world as it was a real and complete understanding of the Negro problem. In the first place, the problem of slavery, emancipation and caste in the United States was no long in my mind a separate and unique thing as I had so long conceived it. It was not even solely a matter of color and physical and racial characteristics, which was particularly a hard thing for me to learn, since for a lifetime the color line had been a real and efficient cause of misery."

DuBois was a devoted Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism, who surrendered his citizenship in the United States to become a citizen of Ghana during the mid to late 20th century. Similar to Malcolm X, some people avoided public interaction with DuBois because he was viewed as radical leading crusades to uncover social ills in the world. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "history cannot ignore W.E.B. DuBois because history has to reflect truth and Dr. DuBois was a tireless explorer and a gifted discoverer of social truths. His singular greatness lay in his quest for truth about his own people. There were very few scholars who concerned themselves with honest study of the black man and he sought to fill this immense void. The degree to which he succeeded disclosed the great dimensions of the man."

Frederick Douglass, also known as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was a human rights leader who possessed excellent oratorical and literacy skills and led the abolition movement and was also the first African American to rank high leadership on the national government level. He gains his freedom from slavery by escaping and changing his last name to Frederick Douglass. He wrote his autobiography in 1845 entitled, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Due to his notoriety, Douglass left on a two-year speaking tour of Great Britain and Ireland to avoid recapture by his former master. Douglass finances improved and he started his own antislavery newspaper, the North Star (later Frederick Douglass's Paper), which he published from 1847 to 1860 in New York.

During the Civil War (1861–65) Douglass consulted President Abraham Lincoln, advocating that

former slaves are armed for the North and that the war is made a direct confrontation against slavery. During Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877, he fought for full civil rights for all men and sternly supported the women's rights movement. After Reconstruction, Douglass continued to serve in much government leadership roles in an outside of the United States. Douglas wrote about the Color Line and said, "Prejudice of race has at some time in their history afflicted all nations, "I'm more holy than thou" is the boast of races, as well as that of the Pharisee?" He also writes that, "Of all the races and varieties of men which have suffered from this feeling, the colored people of this country have endured most. They can resort to no disguise, which will enable them to escape its daily aim. They carry in front the evidence, which marks them for persecution. They stand at the extreme point difference from the Caucasian race, and their African origin can be instantly recognized, through they may be several removes from the typical African race". Douglas says that if he could talk to his white brother he would talk to him about human nature, freedom to live a peaceful life, the need to reject false belief about other people, need for white people to give up this need to be superior, stop classification and categorizing people so that differences are be view as flaws, refused to continue this tiresome level of ignorance about race, and "the Negro arises out of the fact that he is as we see him, poor, spiritless, ignorant, and degraded, then whatever is humane, noble, and superior, in the mind of the superior and more fortunate race, will desire that all arbitrary barrier against him manhood, intelligence, and elevation shall be removed, and a fair change in the race of life be given him.

Finally, his grandmother raised Langston Hughes also known as "the poet laureate of Harlem," by some and the original rapper by other after his parents divorced. His grandmother was well known in the community because her first husband found with John Brown at the Harper Ferry and her second husband was a politician during Reconstruction? Langston grew up poor and unhappy because he felt abandon by his parents. His outlet for his feelings of rejection led him to write poetry in high school.

His father financed his schooling at Columbia University because he promised to study engineering. Later Hughes won a poetry contest in the Crisis, called "the Negro speaks of Rivers" and decided to follow his dreams in writing. After working on a ship to Africa, he work in Paris and returned to the United States. Other poets recognized his abilities and gave him the exposure he needs to reach notoriety. While in New York became emerged in the Harlem arts scene, and began to associate with other artist in the field of literature, music and art. "His name is thus connected with that historic movement known as the Harlem Renaissance, and he is generally considered its most representative poet, with others (like Countee Cullen) not far behind.

Hughes uses the phrase color line in his autobiography, "In Cleveland, a liberal city, the color-line began to be drawn tighter and tighter. Theaters and restaurants in the downtown area began to refuse to accommodate color people. Landlords doubled and triple their rent at the approach of a dark tenant." Langston Hughes died in 1967.

Location of the Color Line Today

"Observers and analysts say that seven years into the 21st century the problem is still the "color-line" in America. A CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll released in December 2006 stated that "most Americans, White and Black, see racism as a lingering problem in the United States." CNN also used as a consultant University of Connecticut professor Jack Dovidio, who has researched racism for 30 years, according to his website? estimated that approximately 80 percent of White Americans have racist feelings they may not recognize. The survey questioned 328 Blacks and 703 Whites and determined that 84 percent of Blacks and 66 percent of Whites considered racism to be a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem, and 51 percent of Blacks and 26 percent of Whites claim to have "been a victim of discrimination." Percentages were lower when people

they knew anyone who was “racially biased”—only 31 percent of Blacks and 21 percent of Whites said they did. Only 12 percent of Blacks and 13 percent of Whites surveyed further admitted to being racially biased themselves.

CNN’s Paula Zahn wrote on Dec. 19 that after comedian Michael Richard’s racist rant at a Los Angeles comedy club in November; she discussed with her staff “what would possibly drive a person to say such vile and hateful things?” She said the discussions with her staff raised a series of questions: Is there an inner racist in most of us? and, is racism thriving today? So, armed with their poll, they went throughout the nation, holding town hall meetings. According to Prof. Dovidio, the results of CNN’s poll found that: We’ve reached a point that racism is like a virus that has mutated into a new form that we don’t recognize. Reaction to the CNN poll was swift. In her article on GOPUSA.com, Star Parker, president of the Coalition on Urban Renewal & Education and author of the book *White Ghetto: How Middle Class America Reflects Inner City Decay*, asked what was the point concerning the CNN program on racism? The point had to be to communicate with White America, because there certainly was no news for Blacks,” she said. “I just couldn’t help wondering if Zahn and the CNN crew really thought any of this was prime-time worthy news, Ms. Parker stated. However, on Dec. 14, two days after the poll’s release, a group representing Black conservatives, Project 21, issued a press release that stated: The CNN report serves only one purpose, and that is to convince the public at large—specifically White people—that they are evil racists. It is a vulgar exercise to try to find racism in the fiber of every White. Ms. Zahn continued to raise questions concerning race. On Feb. 2, two days before Super Bowl 41, she devoted program time to the issue of Black coaches in the NFL; Blacks being tasered by police in Houston, and whether the fact that a Black celebrity may face jail-time because of a fatal car accident, when White celebrities in the same situation only faced civil charges.

The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; Bob Law, former national radio talk show host and New York State co-chair of the Millions More Movement; and Mychal Massie, Project 21 chairman, were queried on whether CNN was the proper vehicle for the issue of racism in America. CNN does not have a single show hosted by an African American, Rev. Jackson said, throwing the issue of racism right back into CNN’s lap. On whether he felt the shows were having any particular affect on the consciousness of Blacks, he said, I think Black people look at these shows as just that, shows. He said that his organization continues to put pressure on all of the networks to step up to the plate and hire more Blacks. We are applying pressure and opening doors, Rev. Jackson said.

Mr. Law stated that We all know that racism is real, but the real discussion should be centered on the question, What is wrong with White folks? Why is it necessary for them to continue to look for White advantage, after decades—no, centuries—of White privilege? Why it that Whites is are still racist—still using race as a tool—anything else is a bogus discussion, Mr. Law stressed. He also added that CNN isn’t talking about anything that is real, but rather what we get from them are tricks. CNN is promoting a racial divide and a double standard, offered Mr. Massie. And the liberal media is standing by quietly, he said. “When I speak of credibility of a news organization, I am speaking of an organization that knows its responsibility to provide balanced news. CNN goes out of its way to create a news environment for its own benefit, which is not to show Blacks in a positive light; always there is a stereotypical slant, Mr. Massie said.

Meanwhile, in New York City, the Rev. Al Sharpton of the National Action Network

continues to hammer home the issues of race as they impact on the lives of Blacks. On Nov. 23, Rev. Sharpton explained to CNN why he wouldn't accept an apology from Mr. Richards: This is not about accepting an apology. This is about starting a process to really deal with racism in this country. Rev. Sharpton spoke out again when U.S. Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) recently referred to Illinois Sen. Barack Obama as articulate and clean. Rev. Sharpton, on Feb. 4, again tackled the issue of race, when he told reporters he may seek to file a class-action lawsuit over a report from The New York Times (NYT) that the New York Police Department (NYPD) had stopped more than 500,000 people in 2006, more than five times as many as they did four years ago.

The NYT reported that 55 percent of the people stopped were Black, while 30 percent were Latino. Is there a measure of profiling based on race that permeates in the NYPD? Rev. Sharpton asked. There are other reports that observers say reflect a racist trend. On Feb. 1, the federal office of Equal employment Opportunity Commission released a report stating that federal job discrimination complaints by workers against private employers rose in 2006 for the first time in four years. Allegations of racial discrimination rose 35 percent with over 27,000 charges. These figures tell us that discrimination remains a persistent problem in the 21st century workplace, stated an official of the EEOC. On Jan. 11, Rockland County, NY students on the Ramapo High School freshman basketball team, after their game against Suffern High School, entered the locker room to find that a racial slur and a sketch of a Black-lynching victim had been scrolled on a blackboard.

According to The Journal News, some of the parents expressed outrage and demanded dialogue to address their children's well being. Racism is present in Rockland County, a mother told the newspaper. However, around the nation, there are some who are using diverse vehicles to deal with the issue for racism in America, or at least get some dialogue started. In Oakland, Calif., actor/comic/writer/radio host David Lacy uses humor to talk about serious racial issues in his one-man-show entitled Colorstruck. Which runs through the second week of February at Laney College, while at the University of Arizona, those who stay in the dorms were greeted Jan. 31 with signs that read White People Only and Colored People Only, as an experiment conducted by the school? The students were invited to a dinner to discuss their thoughts about the signs and racism in general. It was really to provoke a discussion around racism—racism isn't a topic students want to talk about, the assistant director of residential education, responsible for the experiment, told the Arizona Daily Star."

Six Lesson Activities

I. FREDERICK DOUGLASS

9-12 Grade

"Keep the black man away from the books, keep us ignorant, and we would always be his slaves! Come hell or high water--even if it cost me my life--I was determined to be read."--Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) was the most prominent black American leader of the 19th century. A fiery orator, dedicated editor, bestselling author, and presidential advisor, Douglass crusaded for human rights as an abolitionist, were a strong advocate of women's suffrage, and became a unique voice for social justice. Born into slavery in Tuckahoe, Maryland, as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, he was taught to read

and write as a child in violation of state laws. After being sold and traded to several different owners, he escaped to freedom at age 20, got married, and adopted the last name Douglass. He soon became active in the incipient abolitionist movement. After making an impromptu speech at the Massachusetts Antislavery Society in 1841, Douglass began to speak more and more on behalf of abolitionism, and eventually embarked upon a three-year speaking tour of Northern cities. His powerful rhetorical style, combining humor and outrage, showed audiences the numerous evils of slavery and built public support for the abolitionist cause.

In 1845, Douglass wrote his autobiography and called it: [Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave](#). Written as antislavery propaganda, this powerful book told of his struggle to gain his freedom, identified his "owner," and became a national bestseller. It also forced Douglass into exile in England for two years to avoid capture by slave traders. British supporters "purchased" Douglass allowing him to live free in the United States. Douglass returned to the United States in 1847 to publish *The North Star*, an abolitionist paper, in Rochester, New York. On the masthead appeared the motto, "Right is of no sex...Truth is of no color... God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren." Douglass's children helped publish the four-page paper. As the abolitionist movement gained strength in 1850s, Douglass became more directly involved with the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman and other "conductors" often stayed at Douglass's house en route to Canada. In the notorious Dred Scott decision of 1857, the Supreme Court ruled that black people had no rights under the Constitution. This decision infuriated Douglass, and deepened the national debate over slavery.

Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860 promising to limit slavery's expansion. Eleven Southern states, built on a slave economy, decided to leave the country. War soon broke out. Douglass welcomed the Civil War in 1861 as an opportunity for a moral crusade to free slaves and establishes a true democracy. During the Civil War, Douglass traveled around the country calling on Lincoln to immediately end slavery and enroll black troops in the war effort. After Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, Douglass helped recruit blacks for the Union Army.

Douglass continued to advise Lincoln throughout the Civil War, and pushed for constitutional amendments that would end slavery once and for all and give blacks a legally guaranteed place in society. With the North's victory, Douglass saw these goals realized: the 13th amendment banned slavery, the 14th amendment gave citizenship to everyone born in the United States, and the 15th amendment granted the right to vote to males over the age of 21 (women did not gain the right to vote until 1920 with the passage of the 19th amendment).

After the war, Douglass held a number of posts. President Rutherford Hayes appointed Douglass the federal marshal of Washington D.C. in 1877. In 1889, Douglass became minister to Haiti, a position he stayed in for two years. During the 1890s, Douglass returned to the lecture circuit in order to condemn the lynching and Jim Crow laws (these limited the rights of blacks) which characterized the new wave of racism sweeping the South. Douglass died on February 20, 1895, just after attending a meeting for women's suffrage.

QUESTIONS

Where was Douglass born? What was his legal status?
When did Douglass first speak in public? Why?
What was an abolitionist?
What was the name of Douglass's 1845 bestseller?
Why did Douglass write his autobiography?
Where did Douglass flee to? Why?
Why did Douglass return to the United States?
What was the North Star's motto?
What was the Underground Railroad?
Why did Douglass welcome the Civil War?
What was the 13th Amendment? 14th Amendment? 15th Amendment?
Why was the 15th amendment particularly important?
What government positions did Douglass hold?
Do you consider Douglass an American hero? Why?

Frederick Douglass was a fiery orator. His speeches often provoked controversy, inspiring some while shocking others. Douglass's address "The Meaning of July 4th for the American Negro," was given in Rochester, New York on July 5th, 1852. Here are two short excerpts:

"What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all the other days of the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim...To him, your celebration is a sham...a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation of the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States."

"Fellow citizens, I will not enlarge further on your national inconsistencies. The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretense, and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad; it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing and a byword to a mocking earth. It is the antagonistic force in your government, the only thing that seriously disturbs and endangers your Union. It fetters your progress, it is the enemy of improvement; the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride; it breeds indolence; it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse of the earth that supports it; and yet you cling to it as if it was the sheet anchor of all your hopes?"

QUESTIONS:

Why does Douglass call American republicanism a "sham"?
According to Douglass, how does slavery hurt the United States?
Why do you think Douglass's speech caused controversy?

II. W.E.B. DuBois 9-12 Grade

In the opening pages of the book, DuBois suggests that in analyzing the problem of the 20th century, one analyzes "the color line." Naturally, he is able to draw a historical and spiritual direction to this analysis. However, he personalizes this in a couple of ways. I would submit that the first way he does this is in his proposition: "What does it feel like to be seen as a problem?" Within this lies the understanding that being Black in America involves having to see oneself as part of a "problem." This is a uniquely different experience than being in the cultural majority. He speaks this from a personal point of view. Another example of his personalization of "this problem" is when as a grade school child; he tried to give a card, during a card exchange, to a little white girl who was in his class. She refused. He understood that this refusal was because of the color of his skin, proving that the issue of race is a social and cultural one, but moreover, it is a personalized experience of trying to understand "a problem" and seeing oneself as an inextricable part of this predicament.

Suggested Lesson Plans

For students of any age. Students divide into small groups to investigate and play the roles of great African American leaders Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King, and W.E.B. Du Bois.

The student groups then come together to discuss, from their character's perspective, their views and beliefs at the time each lived. Students form small groups, discuss and write down their thoughts on why Du Bois thought scientific research was the key to dispelling false beliefs about the races. Students then share their conclusions with their classmates.

III. W.E.B. Du Bois and the 1900 Paris Exposition By David J. Cope

Overview

In this lesson, students will study primary and secondary sources to discover how W.E.B. Du Bois portrayed African Americans at the 1900 Paris Exposition. They also will create a similar exhibit using their classroom as the example. This lesson serves as a great complementary lesson to the early years of the Jim Crow era and can easily be adapted for upper elementary through high school students.

Time Required

One to two days for background readings, discussion, Internet research, and project preparation.

Materials Needed

Web sites:

- **Paris Universelle Exposition** collection in the Jim Crow History Image Gallery
- http://www.boondocksnet.com/expos/wfe_dubois00.html
- **Paris Exposition Essay**

The Lesson

Anticipatory Set

Instruct the students to look around the classroom and decide those things that characterize the class. Then, ask them: "Which positive and negative images did you identify that apply to your group?" Have students repeat the tasks above for the entire school building. After they have agreed on only those images that would present a positive view of education, have students write their results on the board.

Procedures

Have the students read "**The Paris Exposition of 1900 and W.E.B. Du Bois**" essay.

Ask them:

What was Du Bois' purpose and how did he go about achieving that purpose?

- Can you think of a more effective approach that he might have used?

2. Instruct the students to view the Du Bois collection. Have them to pick ten images DuBois used for the Exposition and write a caption for each one.

3. Tell students to enter the "Boondocks" Internet site and read Du Bois' essay on the Exposition and exhibit. Ask them to discover his intentions for using the photographs for an international audience. Then, allow the students to return to the Jim Crow Image Gallery and ask them to review their captions and decide whether Du Bois fulfilled his intent. Discuss students' answers as a class.

4. Bring in a camera and take pictures of the room from the consensus list on the board. After processing them, mount the photographs and present them to another class or period. Have that group of students write a caption for the photos and return them to your class.

5. Ask them: Did your class achieve its goal of presenting a positive image of their educational experience?

Assessment

You should assess the students based on your observations during the class discussions, as well as the written assignments and project provided in the Procedures section.

Interdisciplinary Links

The photography project allows for a great interdisciplinary link with curricula in the visual arts and English.

This lesson was submitted by David J. Cope, Honors teacher at Titusville Senior High School, Titusville, Pennsylvania

IV. Langston Hughes

The Big Sea was the first of Langston's two autobiographies. His story begins in New York as he sets sail on a steamer headed for Africa in search of his Negro motherland. His journey takes him to the Canary Islands, the Azores, Dakar, Holland, Paris, Italy, Spain, and finally back to America. While in Europe, he works as a cook, a doorman, and a waiter. In Genoa, he exists as a beach bum and on his excursions he has as many adventures as a fruit cake is full of raisins and nuts. It's these adventures that will be discussed in vignettes as the story progresses.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Unit objectives are to present an overview of Langston Hughes's poetry, short stories, and his first autobiography; to read and appreciate the candid, honest and powerful creative masterpieces of this black genius; and to discuss the numerous universal themes and their subtle, underlying meanings as they highlight the tensions, the inequities, and the hope for greater opportunity as we climb the "crystal staircase" of life. Other objectives are to dramatically improve the reading and writing skills of our students; to improve their critical thinking and inferential skills; and to challenge them with oral speaking and communication opportunities. Hopefully, my students will be motivated to excel, to develop a greater appreciation for Langston Hughes and his literary achievements, and to enjoy themselves as well.

Strategies for teaching this unit will reflect a diversified literary approach. Students will be challenged with comprehensive silent and oral readings; summarizing, finding the main idea, and context skills; analytical and inferential skills; and writing and communication skills. The poetry selections will lend themselves nicely to oral presentations and classroom discussions of their interpreted meanings. The short stories and the vignettes from *The Big Sea* will encourage lively discussions and will provide opportunities to transform these situations into dynamic classroom plays or short sketches. Throughout these writings we will highlight the dialect of Langston's characters, their rich and candid humor, and we will analyze the mechanics of his writing and his writing style. Listening to Langston himself on his records will be quite an experience. I'm sure that the children of the city of New Haven will have *ample opportunity* to open their ears and to listen to the sweet music of Langston Hughes.

Activities

1. *Reading poetry, short stories and vignettes of The Big Sea for comprehension, details main ideas,*
2. *critical thinking and inferential skills, and drawing conclusions.*

Students will be challenged with oral and silent readings to seek out the various universal themes within Langston Hughes's literature and to begin to understand their subtle, underlying messages. Within the context of each reading, students will be motivated to excel, to participate frequently in oral and written communication exercises, and to develop a greater appreciation for Langston Hughes and his literary accomplishments.

2. *Oral Speaking*

After having read a wide selection of Langston's poetry, students will have the opportunity to select an individual piece to memorize and subsequently to present to the class. Following these presentations, the class members will be encouraged to discuss their perceptions of the oral presentation, both in terms of context and the manner of oral presentation. These activities will encourage all students to take an active role in our classroom discussions.

3. *Book Reports*

Individual students, utilizing *The Big Sea, I Wonder As I Wander, and Not Without Laughter* will be encouraged

to prepare chapter summaries each evening as they work through their assignments. Within the context of each chapter, students will be challenged with a variety of reading skills while maintaining a chronological sequence of events and the circumstances surrounding these events. The preparation of these chapter summaries will culminate with a comprehensive overview and a critique of their selection, both in oral and written format.

4. Recordings

As a culminating activity, students will have the opportunity to listen to the “sweet music” of Langston Hughes. An MGM L.P. record entitled “The Weary Blues and Other Poems” was created in 1958 with jazz background provided by Charles Mingus and other talented musicians. It shall be quite a treat for all of us.

Langston Hughes: Voice Among Voices

G. Casey Cassidy

Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

V. This guide accompanies the film *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* and its companion Website www.pbs.org/unforgivableblackness. The materials are written and designed to serve a target audience of students in Grades 9-12. The guide is centered on a series of multidisciplinary learning activities and extension ideas, each correlating to national teaching standards. Students use critical analysis, investigative techniques and creative writing skills to explore various historical influences on American life, including race, racism and the role of the press. The guide contains resources to a students in researching how social and political realities create practical challenges in people’s lives. In one lesson, educators and students explore the “color line” and the effects of race and racism on daily living and discuss miscegenation and the history of American law relating to interracial marriage. In two lessons, students analyze primary documents to write about Jack Johnson in poetic and journalistic styles. Students will also role-play as journalists and create sports pages reflecting various historical media. This guide may be used in conjunction with the film or as a stand-alone educational piece. Throughout the course of study, students should be encouraged to refer to additional sources to supplement their knowledge of Johnson’s life; American social and cultural history in the 1900s; and the intersections of race, sports and laws.

CROSSING THE COLOR LINE: THE RISE OF JACK JOHNSON SUBJECTS: American History, Sociology, Civics

OBJECTIVE: Students will use Johnson’s life as a means to investigate why the system of legal and de facto segregation was inherently threatened by the legitimization of interracial relationships.

BACKGROUND: Ask students to define what they think *race* means, as best as they can. Write down a random list of different population categories (examples might be Asians, Italians, Jews, Negroes, Pygmies, American Indians, English, Arabs, Poles, Nubians, Iraqis, Muslims, Melanesians, Republicans, Mayas, Ainu, Han Chinese, Dravidians, Hindus, Africans, poor people), and ask students which of these, in their opinion, is or is not a race and why. Now write the following statement on the board. *Nearly all observers admit that the Negro child is on the whole quite as intelligent as those of other human varieties but that on arriving at puberty all further progress seems arrested.... It is more correct to say of the Negro that he is non-moral than immoral.* Ask students who might have written this statement, for what audiences, and when? (It appeared in the 1875 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

Vol. 17, page 326, followed by lengthy pseudo-scientific explanations from leading experts of the day explaining why the Negro was mentally and physically inferior.)

Discuss the following questions:

Why have definitions of race changed over the past 90 years?
Do students think that some, most, or all people living in 1875 believed that what the *Encyclopedia Britannica* said was fact? Who benefited from this definition? Who was penalized by this definition?

If people living around the turn of the last century were so certain that Caucasians were superior to Negroes, why were they afraid to let an African-American boxer fight a white American for the heavyweight boxing championship?

PROCEDURE: Before viewing the film, put the following quotation from the program on the board. *The problem of the twentieth century is the color line.*
W.E.B. Du Bois

Ask students to try to define the term *the color line*, using whatever knowledge they have acquired before their study of Jack Johnson. As students watch the film, ask them to take notes in two columns: "The rules of the color line" and "How Johnson conquered the color line." Then discuss the following questions: What races were divided by the so-called color line? To whose advantage? What were some of the laws that demarcate segregation in the Jim Crow-era South? In both the North and South, what were some of the social conventions that demarcated the color line? How did they separate blacks from whites and place blacks in the inferior and subservient position? What did it mean to cross the color line? What kind of behavior was disapproved of by whites because it crossed the color line? What were some of the penalties, both formal and informal, for crossing the color line? What were some of Johnson's methods for surmounting the color line?

Chicago Historical Society
Jack Johnson enjoys one of his favorite pastimes. Chicago, c. 1910.

Analyze statements about the color line.

After Johnson became the heavyweight champion in a fight against Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, two newspapers commented on the fight and its relation to the color line. Distribute these quotes and ask students to comment on their meaning in light of what they have learned.

The color line was ... used in the most select pugilistic [boxing] circles as a subterfuge behind which a white man could hide to keep some husky colored gentleman from knocking his block off.... It is a handy little invention which costs nothing and probably has saved many a white man's life.... Many men who are well

known in public life today owe their well-preserved appearance and success to this lifesaving compound.

– *New York Morning Telegraph*, 1908

A negro is the champion pugilist. [The] dark peoples of the earth are threatening to play mischief generally with the civilization of the white man. Is the Caucasian played out? Are the races that we have been calling inferior about to demand to us that we must draw the color line in everything if we are to avoid being whipped individually and collectively?

Detroit Free Press, 1909

Ask students to evaluate this quotation:

I have found no better way of avoiding race prejudice than to act with people of other races as if prejudice did not exist.

Jack Johnson

Do students think this attitude was useful to Johnson’s struggle against racism? Do they think it is a useful strategy for fighting prejudice today? Why or why not? Ask students to compare the strategies used by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B.

Du Bois in fighting racism. Where would students place Johnson in relation to the views of these two leaders? The Johnson-Jeffries fight in Reno in 1910 earned Johnson the definitive title of World Heavyweight Champion. Riots broke out across the country. (If you did not show this section, it begins with “A Word to the Black Man” at approximately one hour, 38 minutes into Episode One.) Ask students *why* Johnson’s victory undermined the theory (white racial supremacy) upon which the entire system of the color line was based. Why were whites frightened after the fight?

Extension Activities

Ask the class to make a diagram that expresses what they have learned about the color line. Divide a bulletin board in two with a line lengthwise. Label the line “The color line.” Above it write “Caucasians” and below it write “Negroes.” Ask each student to write one “rule” of the color line on an index card and place it on the color line. Topics can include voting rights; segregation in transportation, schools, public facilities, eating and housing facilities; and so forth. Discuss with students some of the penalties African-Americans faced for crossing the color line, such as loss of jobs, arrest, lynching, race riots. Also ask if whites were permitted to cross the color line and what happened if they did? Research racial categories in the U.S. Census from its inception until today. What do the categories reflect about changing American views about race?

VI. Video: 21st-Century Color Lines and Other Lines: The Challenge of Pan-Africanism

[21st-Century Color Lines and Other Lines: The Challenge of Pan-Africanism](#)

Bill Fletcher, President and Chief Executive, Tran Africa Forum, Washington DC

Keywords: Africa, race, Diaspora

File Format: Real Media

Running Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Sponsors: The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Center and [Center for Global Studies](#).

Global Regions: [Africa](#)

Centers: [University of Illinois, Center for Global Studies](#)

Length: 1 hr 15 minutes

Year Produced: 2006

Material: Real Media video file

Basic Concepts: Culture and Society, Economic Development, Globalization, Governance, Imperialism and Colonialism

Disciplines: Government, History and Social Studies

Fields: Audio/Visual, Films

Time Periods: Contemporary

Levels: Other

Discussion Questions

Where is the Color Line located today?

Who is a part of the Color Line?

If it is still present, how long will it continue to exist?

Martin Luther King Jr., dreamed of a world more tolerant than the one he lived in. The lessons below – perfect for use at the start of the school year or for celebrating King's life in January -- are designed to teach kids about tolerance. Included: Lessons on stereotyping, appreciating differences, recognizing how words can hurt (or heal), and more.

The highest result of education is tolerance. -- Helen Keller

Helen Keller's words serve as a reminder of the key role educators play -- both as role models *and* as teachers of tolerance.

The start of the school year and the days leading up to the celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday are excellent times to introduce classroom activities that teach tolerance. Exposure to such lessons has the power to make a difference in students' lives -- and in the world those students will create.

FIVE LESSONS FOR TEACHING ABOUT TOLERANCE

This week, Education World provides five lessons focused on messages of tolerance. Click each of the five lesson headlines below for a complete teaching resource. (Appropriate grade levels for each lesson appear in parentheses.)

["Bursting" Stereotypes](#)

Balloons serve as the conduit for this lesson in which students "burst" stereotypes. (Grades 2-12)

[How Tolerant Are Kids in Your School?](#)

Students graph results of a survey of attitudes and tolerance in their school. (Grades 6-12)

[Those Tear-Me-Apart, Put-Me-Back-Together, Never-Be-the-Same-Again Blues](#)

This powerful activity illustrates how unkind words can hurt. (Grades PreK-8)

[Teaching About Tolerance Through Music](#)

Invite students to analyze the lyrics of Peter, Paul and Mary songs that express themes of tolerance. (Grades 3-12)

[Everybody Is Unique: A Lesson in Respect for Others' Differences](#)

Teach about respect for others' unique qualities in this lesson that combines art and language arts. (Grades K-8)

[Henry Louis Gates, Troy Anthony Davis, and the 21st Century Color Line](#)

W.E.B. Du Bois' classic 1903 work "The Souls of Black Folk" opens with "The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line?" Du Bois helped form the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which just celebrated its 100th anniversary?

Henry Louis Gates Jr., who directs Harvard University's W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, knows much about the color line -- not only from his life's work, but from life experience, including last week, when he was arrested in his own home. Gates' lawyer, Harvard Law professor Charles Ogletree, said in a statement that the arrest occurred as Gates returned from the airport:

"Professor Gates attempted to enter his front door, but the door was damaged. Professor Gates then entered his rear door with his key, turned off his alarm, and again attempted to open the front door. With the help of his driver they were able to force the front door open, and then the driver carried Professor Gates' luggage into his home." Both Gates and his driver are African-American. According to the Cambridge [Mass.] Police report, a white woman saw the two black men attempting to enter the home and called police. Ogletree continued: "The officer...asked Professor Gates whether he could prove that he lived there and taught at Harvard. Professor Gates said that he could, and...handed both his Harvard University identification and his valid Massachusetts driver's license to the officer. Both include Professor Gates' photograph, and the license includes his address." Police officer James Crowley reported that Gates responded to his request for Identification: "Why? Because I'm a black man in America?" Despite his positive identification, Gates was then arrested for disorderly conduct.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, more than 60 mostly African-American and Latino children attending the Creative Steps camp were disinvited from a suburban Valley Swim Club, which their camp had paid for pool access.

Suspensions of racism were exacerbated when Valley Swim Club President John Duesler said, "There was concern that a lot of kids would change the complexion...and the atmosphere of the club." The U.S. Department of Justice has opened an investigation.

The Senate Judiciary hearings on Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor were permeated by the race question, especially with white, male senators questioning her comments on how a "wise Latina" might rule in court. If confirmed, one of the first cases she will hear will be that of Georgia death-row prisoner Troy Anthony Davis, an African-American.

As it moves into its second century, the NAACP is, unfortunately, as relevant as ever. It is confronting the death penalty head-on, demanding Davis' claims of innocence be heard and asking Attorney General Eric Holder to investigate the case of Pennsylvania death-row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Another new NAACP initiative asks people to record instances of bias, discrimination and police brutality with their cell-phone cameras, and upload them to naacp.org.

At the group's centennial, longtime board chair Julian Bond said, paraphrasing Jay Leno: "When I started, my hair was black and my president was white. Now my hair's white, and my president is black. I hold the NAACP responsible for both." While the Cambridge Police Department has dropped the charges against Gates, his charges of racial discrimination remain. W.E.B. Du Bois' color line has shifted -- but it hasn't been erased.

Denis Moynihan contributed research to this column.

Amy Goodman is the host of "[Democracy Now!](#)," a daily international TV/radio news hour airing on more than 750 stations in North America. She is the co-author of

[Standing Up to the Madness: Ordinary Heroes in Extraordinary Times](#), recently released in paperback.

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Related Web Sites

www.msu.edu/course/mc/112/1920s/Garvey-Dubois/index.html

This site contains pictures and information on the life of W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey along with links to other World Wide Web sites with similar information.

www.duboisl.org/html/DuBoisBio.html

This site contains information on the life of W. E. B. Du Bois along with similar links.

