



**Stranger Things?
The World We Know but Ignore: White Privilege and “Being Normal”**

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
5th Grade ELA, Social Studies, and Writing

Keywords: white privilege, normal, power, racist, racism, disenfranchise, coping, unearned, coded language, majority, race, whiteness, and “world”-traveling

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: *Stranger Things? The worlds we know but ignore: White Privilege and “Being Normal”* is created to help teachers and students have crucial conversations in school settings about race, white privilege, and its existence within the school settings. The focus of this unit is on white privilege and as Maria Lugones says, “the different worlds that operate in our society.”¹ Students in fifth grade are going to analyze the impact of race relations on the development of our nation through modern times and discover the creation of a majority race for power and privileges. Through this unit, students will get the chance to have authentic discussions on race and develop their own plan to cope instead of hope for change.

I plan to teach this unit in the spring of the 2019-2020 school year to 50 fifth grade students.

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Stranger Things? The World We Know but Ignore: White Privilege and “Being Normal”

Latonda Mitchell

Introduction

“One of the privileges of not being a part of a marginalized group is believing you can set your own benchmarks for bigotry.”

— Mychal Denzel Smith²

This quote speaks to the mood and realness of the unit. This unit is all about white privilege and how it operates in our world; similar to the fictional portrayal of the Upside-Down in the popular Netflix original show, *Stranger Things*. I am here to uncover some truth behind white privilege and what we can do about this issue.

Rationale

The intention of the unit is teaching teachers and students about the power of NORMAL. I want my fellow colleagues and students to dissect what normal is and identify if this relates to some sort of supremacy such as the color of one’s skin or class level set by our society. We are going to dive deep into what normal means, what is white privilege, the background of education when it comes to all people, and “world”-traveling. Students will have to answer the questions: What does normal look like to you? Who makes the rule on what is normal? Can we change the normal? If so, how can we change it? If not, why? Students will answer these questions at the beginning of the unit and at the end of the unit for reevaluation of the concept.

School/Student Demographics

Mountain Island Lake Academy is located in the Northwest Learning community of Charlotte Mecklenburg School system. The school was originally named Mountain Island Lake Elementary when it opened in 2002 but changed when the transition to a Prekindergarten- eight was introduced in 2013. It is the first school in CMS that transitioned from a regular elementary school into a Prekindergarten through eighth grade academy by community choice. Mountain Island Lake Academy is a STEM-focused Cambridge International Program school that uses balanced literacy as a foundation. MILA is a feeder school into Hopewell High school with the same Cambridge program. The school has an enrollment number of 924 students. Within the middle school we offer dance, band, chorus, physical education, basketball, football, volleyball, cheerleading, soccer, and many other opportunities for the students.

Based on the statistics for the year of 2018-2019 there are currently 924 students enrolled. 22.2% are white, 63% African American, 8.4% Multi- racial, and 4% Asian.³ We have one principal, one elementary assistant principal, one middle school assistant principal, and one dean of students. We currently have 74 staff members that assist or teach the students of Mountain Island. All teachers are certified and 45.8% of the teachers at Mountain Island have Masters Degrees.

Grades 4-8 implement the Cambridge programme within the classroom. The Cambridge programme is an innovative and accelerated method of academic study offered solely through the University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). The program promotes academic rigor in English, math, and science. In a Cambridge classroom you will find that the teachers are flexible to promote creativity, they emphasize thinking outside the box, inquiry-based learning which prepare students for high school Cambridge programs. The teachers present a global focus while also promoting cultural sensitivity. While students are in third grade, they participate in a pre-Cambridge classroom to see if they would like to participate in the program in 4-8. Students have to apply for the Cambridge program and entry is based on students' test scores, application, and teacher recommendations.

On the elementary side of Mountain Island, the grade level teams have multiple days to perfect their craft through lesson planning with team members, facilitators, and administration. Within these meetings, teachers analyze data from common and formal assessment, plan units, talk about possible academic or behavior problems with students, and share ideas, initiatives, or any other feedback to administration that could support the group as a whole.

Unit Goals

As a teacher at Mountain Island Lake Academy, I use the most valuable resources within the school, which are my colleagues to help further my education as a teacher. I am a fifth-grade teacher that implements the Cambridge program values daily in the classroom. I teach ELA, science, and social studies to 50 students. At Mountain Island Lake Academy, we use the latest North Carolina standards and other research-based techniques to help us provide the best education possible to students. This is my fourth-year teaching at Mountain Island Lake Academy and one of the biggest challenges is self-identity. I see students who have grown up wealthy, well-exposed, and have the best of the best but I also see the other side where students are living under the poverty line, never travel, and sometimes are homeless. No matter the economic standard they are living, each one of these students struggle to understand themselves and would rather be like someone else than to be true to themselves. This is a growing pain but also a reality that no teacher ever addresses. Within the school, I have explored self-identity for the students but what I fear is that we, as adults, are creating and perpetuating a sense of superiority and supremacy. We have created a culture of NORMAL behaviors, self-worth, and inferiority based on class and race throughout the school that has to be broken.

The unit is set to be taught in spring of 2019-2020 school year and take around three to four weeks. The ending project may take a little more time based on scheduling. Adjustments will be made based on the flow of the unit. See [Appendix 1: Teaching Standards](#) for more detail.

Content Research

“People don’t spend their lives trying to look at what’s behind the curtain. They like the curtain. It provides them stability, comfort, and definition.”

– Murray Bauman⁴

I sat down with a colleague of mine a few years ago and we started having a conversation about the importance of morning meetings. Morning meetings were being really pushed in our school and I was on board like a good puppy. As the conversation progressed, we got on the subject of a certain student that expressed herself with hand gestures, eye/neck rolls, and even a little attitude. We are talking about a pre-teen that thinks the world is ending if they do not get their way. All of this to say, when he talked to me about the conflict resolution lesson they were having, he said that this child started to talk with her hands. He proceeded to say to this young lady, “Can you just talk like a normal person and stop all of the dramatic stuff.” I stopped in my tracks and asked, “What do you mean like a normal person? Is that the way she talks every other day in the class.” He says yes but also includes, “But I am just done with all of the girl drama.” I replied, “Speaking with your hands is a form of expression and most of the time black women tend to do this. That is just the way we express ourselves. We want to show you the passion behind what we are trying to say.” He walked off from me saying, “You always want to be the contrarian to everything that I say.” I replied, “No! I just want to call you out when you are looking at something from one side.” We laughed it off but what is NORMAL? Who gets the right to determine what is NORMAL in the eyes of the world? How does NORMAL run our lives?

NORMAL is what the majority says. The majority is white. When I speak of white people being the majority I am not speaking on a numerical level. I am speaking on a normative level. “... many whites claim that they are now or will soon become a minority group. This is only true in the numeric sense. Whites will continue to be the majority in terms of wealth, power and prestige. Whites have amassed large amounts of wealth and other resources that will not become depleted with their declining population counts. While increasing numbers will translate into some political gains among people of color, the white political machinery is already in motion deploying political tactics, such as gerrymandering and voter ID laws, to minimize the political power of groups of color. In South Africa, while whites are the numerical minority, they continue being the dominant group politically and economically.”⁵ Statistics says that in 2015-2016, 80% of the teaching force in America were white, while less than half of the student population is white.⁶ The ideology and long history of institutional racism show their faces in The Upside-Down world of white privilege.

What is white privilege?

A privilege is a right, advantage, favor, or immunity specially granted to one, especially a right held by certain individual, group or class, and withheld from certain others or all others.⁷ Ask yourself as you are reading this, have I ever been in the position where I have been at an advantage? You do not have to be a part of the dominate race to have been in a position of privilege. Privilege comes in many different forms but who gets the best advantages? Who gets the right to vote without prejudice? Who is granted immunity from racial terrorist acts in the United States over the past 100 years? As you look at the citizens of the United States, there is

only one group of people who have had this type of unearned privilege granted to them repeatedly. These people are white.

Being white means to not think about race at all. “We generally prefer to frame identity in ethnic terms instead: Identifying as Italian or Irish or Jewish seems to come with zest, pathos and a chance to take pride in some shared history.”⁸ This reminds me of an exercise that I participated in a couple of months back. The presenter asked us to write down all of the things that we loved about our race and my hand went crazy. I was so overjoyed that I started talking before we were given the cue, but something interesting happened. When he started with the white people, they said insignificant things about their ethnicity instead of their race. I was shocked and could not understand why they were having so much trouble explaining what they loved about their race. At the end of this exercise, the presenter explained this same concept that white people do not really see themselves as being a part of a racial group unless it is pertinent in the moment. Then I thought, “I think about my race all the time. That is the first thing that someone does to identify me and that is the first way that I identify myself. Why don’t they seem themselves?” As I researched, I found that white people do not have to identify racially because they get that privilege.

“White privilege is an absence of the consequences of racism. An absence of structural discrimination, an absence of your race being viewed as a problem first and foremost.”
— Reni Eddo-Lodge⁹

White privilege is a mystery word that everyone talks about but no one has the real definition. White privilege has nothing to do with the men that stand in southern lands with hoods on their heads and chant the words, “WHITE POWER!” As Peggy McIntosh says, “I was taught to see racism only in individual act of meanness, not in invisible system conferring dominance on my group.” That’s right folks, white privilege is, through my research, a byproduct of racism that has been deep seeded in our world. The dictionary defines racism as the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

White privilege did not just start in the 2000’s. No, this started back when people of a different continent were brought to a foreign land, enslaved, “freed”, and then enslaved again in the penial system. “For those of us who are white, one of our privileges is that we see ourselves as individuals, “just people,” part of the human race. Most of us are clear, however, that people whose skin is not white are members of a race.”¹⁰ Having the freedom to not think about your race on a daily basis is a privilege that not all people get. For example, the All Lives Matter movement dismissing the purpose of the Black Lives Matter movement because it did not include whiteness.

Having this unearned privilege does not make you racist. Being a person who shows or feels discrimination or prejudice against people of color, or who believes that the majority group is superior to another, does. Nor does not mean that you were raised with a silver spoon in your mouth if you were white but it does give you the right to move through the world a little easier than people of color. Cory Collins said, “The more complicated truth: White privilege is both unconsciously enjoyed and consciously perpetuated. It is both on the surface and deeply

embedded into American life. It is a weightless knapsack –and a weapon. It depends on who’s carrying it.”¹¹ Some of the acts of white privilege are unconscious and seen in the way we talk to others of color or the unconscious bias that we hold to a particular group of people. On the other hand, there are people who know they have this privilege and wield it around for everyone to see. For example, a white doctor, who was being arrested in an airport for disorderly conduct started shouting, “Not resisting, you are treating me like a black person!”¹² This makes you wonder, is this real and he sees it too? However, it also makes you think, WOW! Is this what you think about people of color? Because you are upset, you believe you have right to act like this – without consequence for your actions? Is that not a privilege or is it just normalcy?

White privilege is the right to choose. Lugones says it best, “One can “travel” between these “worlds” and one can inhabit more than one of these “worlds” at the same time. I think that most of us who are outside the mainstream of, for example the U.S. dominant construction or organization of life are “world travelers” as a matter of necessity and of survival. It seems to me that inhabiting more than one “world” at the same time and “travelling” between “worlds” is part and parcel of our experience and our situation.”¹³ To be a person of color in the United States means that you have to travel for survival and necessity. You do not travel into other people’s world without having a purpose. As for white people, their time spent traveling is not out of necessity unless it is for a profit. When white people “world” travel, they are doing it with the choice button sitting in their back pocket. I can act as if I am part of the black culture but as soon as it gets a little dicey, they are out of the world faster than you can say their names. Do not mistake what I am saying. There are good white people in the world but it does not negate the fact that they have a choice in everything they do.

What Does White Privilege Promote?

White privilege promotes normalcy or a standard of how things are supposed to operate or be in the world. If you have ever seen the Netflix original show, Stranger Things, you would know that things get weird. There is the “normal” world that everyone is living in without a care in the world but there is also an evil dark world that is living under them. This place is, The Upside-Down. In The Upside-Down, people are being used to sustain an unearthly being that is trying to pull everyone into its alternate universe. The craziest part about this is that only a few people know about The Upside-Down because the power that be want to keep it that way. I sometimes think we are living in a place just like the characters in the show. We walk around living a normal life. Peggy McIntosh says, “...it’s normal to never be asked to speak for all the people of my racial group or go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed or I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race, and even more simply I can choose blemish cover or bandages in “flesh” color and have them more or less match my skin.”¹⁴

“But the root of these problems is often ignored. These types of examples can be dismissed by white people... But the reason even these simple white privileges need to be recognized is that the damage goes beyond the inconvenience of shopping for goods and services. These privileges are symbolic of what we call “the power of normal.” If public spaces and goods seem catered to one race and segregate the needs of people of other races into special sections, which indicates something beneath the surface. White people become more likely to move through the world

with an expectation that their needs be readily met. People of color move through the world knowing their needs are on the margins. Recognizing this means recognizing where gaps exist.”¹⁵ These ideas of expectation and margins are just normal in our day to day. We are just getting to a point where we are starting to see The Upside-Down world but so many people are still lost in the normal day to day or the *sunken place*.¹⁶

Does This, White Privilege, Show Itself in Schools? How?

“In schools, privileged-based bias plays out in many ways but perhaps most acutely in discipline.”¹⁷ Equity and equality is the big push in CMS but we are still seeing reports of privilege-based bias playing a huge role in the way that we see our students and the consequences that are associated with one group of kids compared to other groups of students. In the 2016-2017 school year, 76% of the suspensions and expulsions were from African American students and only 7% of those suspension and expulsions were from white students.¹⁸ Here is the crazy part; the black population in CMS only makes up 40%.¹⁹ The number have not changed much because in 2017-2018, black students made up 75% and white students made up 8% of the suspensions and expulsions in CMS.²⁰ I am sure that the population of black students did not explode in a year. What are we doing in the classroom to make these types of numbers look this way?

An example of how this bias shows itself in schools is through dress code rules that we put in place to regulate what students wear. A principal talks about how her teachers were stopping and berating the black male students about sagging their pants but when it came to the white students, the teachers would ask them politely to pull their pants up.²¹ White privilege is everywhere but in the school system, it is subtle to some and apparent to others.

Similarly, students of color are targeted for cultural hairstyles within schools. Natural hair is in and processed hair is out, but this means standards of hair are stricter and natural hairstyles penalized. Hair is a part of the growing child identity, but not everyone is punished for displaying his or her natural hair in schools. Here are just a few examples of students of color who have been discriminated against based on their hairstyle.

1. Clinton Stanley Jr in Florida. This child, excited for the first day of school, was told that he would not be able to attend because his dreadlocks were not allowed.²²
2. An elementary school in Georgia depicting “appropriate” and “inappropriate” hairstyles for students.²³
3. Lorain Horizon Science Academy- the Ohio school that banned Afro puffs and small braided hairstyles. This school only wants hairstyles that look “natural, clean and well-groomed.”²⁴
4. Andrew Johnson given an ultimatum to cut his dreadlocks or forfeit his wrestling match because his hair covering did not conform to the rulebook.²⁵

Where black hair is discriminated against because it does not fit the standard of straight, “professional”, or in better terms white those above are just a few instances. But, what if a white man or woman had the same hair, would the rules be different?

“To Be African American is to be African without memory and to be American without privilege.”

-Brittani Krystin²⁶

We need to look at a new way to train our teachers to deal with simple issues in the classroom when it comes to students of color. Teachers need to be more culturally competent educators. “Culturally proficient educational leaders are committed to educating all students to high levels through knowing, valuing and using the students’ cultural backgrounds, languages and learning styles within the selected curricular and instructional contexts.”²⁷ We seem to always want the students to learn how to adapt to new situations and teachers but we as teachers have to also come with the same spirit and adapt to the changing times, including working with students that we have cultural issues with.

Can You Eliminate This Issue?

The issue of white privilege can be eliminated as soon as there is a total shift in the universe. “These powers would not exist if systemic racism hadn’t come first. And systemic racism cannot endure unless those powers still hold sway.”²⁸ What does this mean? This means that if we want the issue of white privilege to end we have to first recognize that this is a problem in our society, understand where the issue originally arose, and then put things in place to slowly but surely change the outlook of privilege in the United States.

Will this ever change? In my honest opinion, I believe that it will not because whiteness is always changing. Whiteness is always three steps ahead to make sure that whiteness is the majority. “The underlying sentiment of any institutional bias in a white supremacist society is that the non-white other *deserves* that which is substandard.”²⁹ White privilege will always be a thing because we live and operate within the “NORMAL” world but the people in The Upside-Down are in control. Furthermore, “... white people’s attempts to help people of color often are an unconscious exercise of white domination and condescension in disguise.”³⁰ In order for things to change drastically, there has to be a shift of white people who call out behavior that promotes white supremacy and racism. Things will not change if the only people doing the talking are the people of color.

Do not let this idea of, “... white people generally are seen as embodying a society’s standards of truth and goodness...”³¹ cause you despair your entire life. There are good people in the world. Instead of hoping things will change one day, we have to start coping with the issues of whiteness and how it operates. Coping in terms of dealing with something very difficult. We should follow in the footsteps of Germany and Africa. They have publically recognized the devastating crimes of terror they inflicted upon groups of people. They openly talk about it. We should be able to do the same thing and not continue to condemn people of color after the domestic terrorist attacks imposed upon them.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

Before teaching the unit, I am going to send home a letter that says, “During our next unit, we will start to have some difficult conversations about race and the role that race plays within our society. During this unit, we will take multiple breaks and timeouts to give students chances to take a breath. This unit is to bring awareness and create a safe space for students to talk about race. Our scholars have a yearning to talk about these things and I want to give them the chance. Within the unit, we will be sure to hit all of the required standards presented by CMS schools and we will have full proof of learning. If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.”

The purpose of every activity is to help the students see themselves within the world that we currently live within. People of color are made out to be crazy when they recognize they are being gas lighted, manipulated to question their own sanity, while questing the actions of white people. These activities are to show the students who has the power and who is disadvantaged in the game called life. I will be teaching this unit to fifth graders. Some of my fifth graders do not have any background knowledge of what has happened in the past for people of color. For example, two years ago while teaching fifth grade, there were a group of fifth grade girls who were playing “slave” games. One person was the “slave” bounty/master and the other girls were the “enslaved” people. The purpose of every activity is to help the students recognize the upside down world that is constantly operating within the shadows to disenfranchise people of color and the lasting effects of our racist foundation as a nation. We have to deal with these lasting effects and educate our scholars on how to handle, manage, and cope with these issues that happen every day within our society. The purpose is to teach scholars their existence is important and they deserve to be a part of what the normal should be because we are so similar, DNA speaking. We are all 99.9% the same.³² We also have to encourage our students to change the narrative about their culture, even if that means we are uncomfortable.

This unit should take around three to four weeks to teach to students and will be taught during the spring of 2019-2020 school year.

Here are some of the teaching strategies that I will use to help facilitate this unit:

- Breaks as needed. Breaks are giving throughout this unit because some of the information is heavy and can really stir up some emotions in students. I want to be sensitive to the time they need to digest such a cumbersome topic. Especially when we are flipping their world upside down... literally.
- Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy in which small groups use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject
- Presentations are speaking engagements in the classroom. The students will speak with a group and alone.
- Creating media is a way for the students to use technology to help them create a piece of a piece of critical media.
- Discussions are interactive conversations between two or more people. This is a way for the students to share ideas and collaborate.

- Jigsaw is a method to organize classroom activities. This method breaks down the information and the student groups.
- Inquiry based learning is active learning that starts by posing questions, problems/scenarios, instead of giving a straight path to the knowledge.
- Projects are a way for the students to display their learning in a creative way.
- Debates are formal discussions, which have opposing arguments on the same topic. This teaching strategy will help the students get their chance to express their feelings and thoughts.
- Direct instruction is explicit teaching. This teaching strategy is needed to teach specific skills.
- Close Reading is a critical analysis teaching strategy. The students will take a text and “read between the lines” to think deeply about the text over multiple readings. Each reading the students read deeper and deeper within the text.
- Modeling is a way to show the students what you would like them to do with the assignment or with a piece of literature.
- Summarizing and note taking is a teaching strategy for students to find the main idea and use details from the text to help them understand what is happening.
- Socratic seminars are facilitated conversations that continue through open-ended questions being asked to further the conversation. Students are listening closely to the conversation in order to form their rebuttal or own thoughts.
- Graphic organizers are a visual demonstration of facts. These charts and graphs help to guide the student’s thinking as they fill in the visual maps.
- Accountable talk is meaningful, respectful, and speech that helps the listeners. This kind of talk is used to stimulate higher-order-thinking.
- Academic vocabulary is used to help the students understand the information taught.
- Gallery Walks are walks around the classroom or room to look at the work of others. Students can do this strategy to help them see others ideas or to comment on the other students work in a respectful manner.
- Comparing and Contrasting is a way to tell the similarities and differences between two things. This is important because the students will have to use this strategy to understand multiple characters within the book and also show how these characters are the same and different.
- Brainstorming is a teaching strategy to help the students think through the problems they are having.
- Think-pair-share is a way for the students to collaborate and share their ideas with other people in the classroom.
- Comprehension questions is a way see if the students are understanding the information that come from the books or the content that is taught to the students.

Classroom Activities for the Unit

During this unit, the students are going to read multiple books and articles to help them see a full picture of how race works and what is really going on without their knowledge. Some of those books are *How it all Went Down* by Kekla Magoon, *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia, *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson, and *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang.

How it all Went Down is by Kekla Magoon. It is about the dynamics of race relations and violence. A sixteen-year-old named Tariq Johnson dies from two gunshot wounds. He is a young black male and the shooter, Jack Franklin, is white. The community is in an uproar and everyone has something to say, but none of their stories match.³³ This book would be read with the parents' permission because of the content.

One Crazy Summer is about three young girls who are going for the summer with their mother who has nearly abandoned them for about seven years. The girls live with their father and grandmother in Brooklyn, NY, but travel to Oakland, CA to spend the summer with their mother. They are more excited about seeing the sights than seeing their mother. During their time in Oakland, they learn about the black panthers and other ways of their mother during a crazy summer.³⁴ This book would be used to learn about how power has a difficult time making its ways to the black neighborhood because they are constantly criminalized for exercising their rights.

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson is written in all verse. The book would be classified as a memoir of Jacqueline Woodson's life as she grows up in the 1960s and 1970s. She lives in two different regions, north and south, during a time of Jim Crow and growing civil rights movement. She is reflecting upon this time and shows how she was finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading. This book would really foster the understanding of what life was like for a child growing up during the time of open oppression.³⁵ Students would compare and contrast what they have read in the book to what they see going on in the media in present time.

Front Desk by Kelly Yang is placed during the roaring 90's. The book is told from a child's, Mia, perspective whose family recently immigrated to the United States. Her family falls on hard times and eventually find a job that turns into more work than the family bargained for. Students get the chance to explore multiple themes in the book including but not limited to: extortion, fraud, and racism.³⁶ Students will apply their background knowledge from multiple non-fiction text to compare and contrast the themes from past to present.

Entire Unit Timespan: Vocabulary

Purpose: Understand the language that is used throughout the unit

Objective: The students will understand and use nonfiction vocabulary throughout unit and make connections from vocabulary to activities.

Procedure: Before starting the unit, students will learn different vocabulary to help them throughout the unit. Some of the words are sex (female/male), ethnic group, majority, coded language, coping, white privilege, normal, power, racist, racism, social class, unearned, disenfranchise, and many more words. The student will take the word and find the definition, picture, example (scenario), and create a sentence to go along with the word. The students will use quizlet and charades to help them understand and retain the vocabulary words.

Entire Unit Timespan: Analyze Quotes

Purpose: Understand coded language

Objective: The students will analyze quotes from people in current times to understand coded language.

Procedure: Before starting the unit, students would have practice with analyzing quotes and making inferences from them based on what the speaker has said using their prior knowledge. Students will then break down the quote into sections: What the author was trying to say, what did it convey, and how could this affect others? Students will write at least a paragraph long on the quote explaining what it means and using outside sources to help them explain their thoughts. This will be done 2-3 times throughout the week.

Entire Unit Timespan: Novel Reading (excerpts)

- How It All Went Down by Kekla Magoon
- One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams- Garcia
- Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson
- Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Purpose: Understand how race plays out in different neighborhood

Objective: The students will analysis sections of the book to understand the reality of situations that people of color face on a daily basis.

Procedure: Teacher will take exert from the novels and read parts of them with the students. Students will be put into small groups and read the novels based on different factors. Some of those factors include but are not limited to reading ability and maturity level. Students will create a novel analysis that includes telling four things they learned, 3 things they knew previously, 2 paragraphs to synthesize the text, and 1 question they have. Students will also report to the class on the book and what it is all about (book report).

Day 2 or 3: Power Flower

Purpose: The purpose of the power flower is to help students see who has the power in the school, at the house, and within their circle of friends. Once the students have completed these three flowers, they will compare the power they have within the different circles. The students will be able to understand how their power can be seen from different people whom they interact with every day.

The flower within the classroom will be used to compare between the other flowers they have completed but also a compare and contrast with the people within the classroom. Do the girls have the power or do they boys have more power in school? Who has more or less power within the races of girls? Why do they think this about themselves?

Objective: To show the power dynamics of a room can change based on the people in it and the environment that you are in.

Procedure: As a whole group, we will create a power flower for the different people we read about in our articles based on the criteria we have laid out for our power flower. The purpose of this is to show the difference in the dynamics of world based on race, class, and normal. How can women of color make a change? Does age change the way or fashion in how we react to a challenging situation?

Day 3 or 4: Find the Race

Purpose: The purpose of “Find the Race” is for students to investigate where race came from and the purpose of defining people based on their skin color or regions in which they live.

Objective: To show the power dynamics that are in play at all times in our world and how they can affect us.

Procedure: Students will be given an online scavenger hunt that will lead them to articles explaining what race is, how it came about, and who did it benefit. Students will have the answer the overarching question: How did race affect identity and the culture of the United States? Students will need to give three examples, one old and two modern, of how race has affect the identity and culture of the United States.

Day 5: “I Am”

Purpose: The purpose of the “I am” activity is to 1) build confidence in the students and 2) for students to see how words of association can tear them down based on normalcy.

Objective: Students to recognize the world will say one thing about them but stand on the person they know they are. Build for the next activity, how words can change your perspective of what you think about yourself.

Procedure: The students will write words that describe them, negative and positive. After the students have done this, they will create a self-image; you can also print a picture of them, and surround the image with the positive words. Give the students the chance to write down the positive words and then stop them. The teacher will demonstrate that not all words/adjectives are what they seem. Words people see as “bad” have a purpose in making you, you. For example, if you describe a person as loud the “normal” feelings associated with the word is negative, BUT maybe the person is loud in a good way. Maybe the person is confident.

Day 6, 10, 16: Reflection Time/Break

Purpose: The purpose of the reflection time is to give the students a time to break from the content and make connections to what they have seen in their life.

Objective: Students will reflect on how they described themselves and the general assumptions about their racial profile.

Procedure: The students will write reflections on what they think about themselves but also looking at how society has already labeled them because of their skin color. Students will answer these questions and more: How does this effect your own belief of yourself? How does this change the way you look at your qualities previously written down? Do you think this will affect you in the end? Do these people determine who you are?

Day 7: Myth Busters

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to change the narrative in student’s minds about different racial and cultural bias

Objective: Give the students to find out if what they have heard about different races is true or false based on research and not just word of mouth.

Procedure: Based on the popular show, students will use the internet, research facts about the different times including slavery, reconstruction, colonizes, mass incarceration, and modern times. Students will decide for themselves how accurate the media has been about topics dealing with race and discover where allies lie for people of color. For each statement or idea, students will decide if it is “Busted” or “Plausible.” The students will then explain their answer using the evidence they found from a reliable internet source. At the most, the students will have 10 myths about race and race relations. Students will get into small groups and discuss what they found to be plausible and what they busted based on further research.

Day 8-10: Break the Mold

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to display how people in the past have broken the mold of normalcy and made a new normal.

Objective: Show students there are and were individuals, not just people of color, in the world that have a passion to break from the normal to create a normal that includes everyone.

Procedure: Students will find an unsung famous person or unsung hero who broke the mold and create a celebrity look alike photo and presentation. Students will have to describe how this person broke from the NORMAL and made a change for themselves, their family or their community. The students will then describe how they will break their own molds and figure out how they can make a change for themselves, their family, or their community.

Day 11-15: What is this thing called NORMAL? (Assessment)

Purpose: The purpose of the ending project is to see what the students have learned in the unit and share their information with others.

Objective: Students will show understanding of white privilege, where it came from, how it operates now in our world, and how they believe it will be resolved, if it can be?

Procedure: The ending project is to make a movie or trailer. Students will highlight how the norms for our society were set, whom these norms left out and/or misrepresented what effect they had on the development of all people in the 21st century and how they can change the never-ending cycle of being thought of as a choice and not a priority. Students will interview people outside of their school and students within the school.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

- ❖ RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text
- ❖ RI.5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
- ❖ RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
- ❖ RI.5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.
- ❖ RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.
- ❖ RI.6.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
- ❖ RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question or to solve a problem efficiently.
- ❖ 5.H.1.3 Analyze the impact of major conflicts, battles and wars on the development of our nation through Reconstruction.
- ❖ 5.H.2.2 Explain how key historical figures have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.
- ❖ 5.H.2.3 Compare the changing roles of women and minorities on American society from Pre-Colonial through Reconstruction

Appendix 2: ALL Activities

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JbERjWpw1XrXL9kNAGTfyOXqKE2ipKrE?usp=sharing>

Student Resources

Non-Fiction textual support

Collins, Cory. "What Is White Privilege, Really?" *Teaching Tolerance*, (2018). *Article used to help students understand privilege. Students will read sections of the article.*

Kaur, Harmeet. "Black Kids Go Missing at a Higher Rate than White Kids. Here's Why We Don't Hear about Them." CNN. Cable News Network, November 3, 2019. <http://www.cnn.com/2019/11/03/us/missing-children-of-color-trnd/index.html>. *Article used to help students understand privilege.*

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Teacher Resources

Additional Readings to help teachers: *All citations below used for additional readings to help teachers understand white privilege and how to deal with difficult conversations in the classroom.*

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