



**Assume Nothing:
The Role of Stereotypes and Personal Bias in Conflict**

By Toni Johnson, 2019 CTI Fellow
Parkside Elementary

This curriculum unit is recommended for Fourth Grade/ English Language Arts & Social Studies

Keywords: stereotypes, bias, immigration

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

Synopsis: This unit will include our first novel study of fourth grade. Using *Save Me a Seat* written by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan as a catalyst, my scholars will explore assumptions made by people over the course of history and how these assumptions have led to prejudice and discrimination against numerous ethnic and gender groups. By exploring these assumptions, I hope to teach students the dangers of the assumptions they make about people without evidence to support their theories. Through the use of academic conversations, students will also gain the skills needed to deflect and avoid assumptions that they may be pressured to accept as truth. With this awareness, my fourth grade scholars will find the courage in themselves to ask questions, and communicate clearly to avoid misunderstandings that lead to conflict in our classroom, their own lives, our community, our nation, and our world.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 60 students in a fourth grade ELA classroom.

I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Assume Nothing: The Role of Stereotypes and Personal Bias in Conflict

By Toni Johnson

Introduction

Rationale

“Making assumptions simply means to believe things are a certain way with little or no evidence that shows you are correct, and you can see at once how this can lead to terrible trouble.”
- Lemony Snicket

A generalization is a broad statement or an idea that is applied to a group of people or things. We often teach students to make generalizations as part of the elementary reading curriculum. In the fourth grade readers may identify and analyze generalizations made by an author. They may also be asked to make and support their own generalizations based on their reading of a selection. Lastly, literacy teachers may ask students to locate clue words in a text that support generalizations students have made while reading. Making generalizations is an imperative thought process. It's a way to expand our knowledge in a particular area beyond what we've experienced. The danger comes when we as people overgeneralize. Overgeneralizing is the process of extending the characteristics from a small sample of people to an entire population. Overgeneralizing can lead to inaccurate conclusions and biases about large groups of people.

American immigration policies have been a topic of much discussion in recent months. The U.S. census identifies immigrants as foreign born. According to the United States Census Bureau, the foreign-born population is composed of anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes persons who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization. The United States has more immigrants than any other country in the world. Today, more than 40 million people living in the U.S. were born in another country, accounting for about one-fifth of the world's migrants in 2017. The population of immigrants is also very diverse, with just about every country in the world represented among U.S. immigrants.¹ American schools reflect the diversity of our population. The United States Census Bureau reported that in 2010 the number of immigrants in the United States was nearly 40 million, or 13 percent of the total population. Migrants from Latin America, accounted for over half of all immigrants, 28 percent of U.S. immigrants were born in Asia, 12 percent in Europe, and 4 percent in Africa.² Students must learn to confront the stereotypes and preconceived notions they harbor when interacting with their peers who have immigrated from another country. A loving, learning environment must be provided in order for students to be comfortable sharing what they believe is true so that their biases are addressed in a way that challenges their beliefs but values them as people. Immigrant children also need the space to celebrate their home cultures while assimilating into American culture. They too bring personal bias that must also be acknowledged and confronted in a supportive environment where children are granted the time and space to share their ideas openly and learn from one another.

As an educator, it is my desire to play a role in improving the American Public School System. To do this, I would like my scholars to explore assumptions made by people over the course of history and how these assumptions have led to prejudice and discrimination against numerous ethnic and gender groups. By exploring these assumptions I hope to teach students the dangers of the assumptions they make about people without evidence to support their theories. Throughout this unit students will also gain the skills needed to deflect and avoid assumptions that they may be pressured to accept as truth. With this awareness, my fourth grade scholars will find the courage in themselves to ask questions, and communicate clearly to avoid misunderstandings that lead to conflict in our classroom, their own lives, our community, our nation, and our world.

The intention of this unit is to create a group of scholars who dissect and acknowledge their own biases and challenge the biases of others. By empowering the leaders of the future to ask difficult questions in the face of prejudice and stereotypes, our country will be able to enjoy the true celebration of cultural diversity. My scholars will experience the benefit of asking sometimes uncomfortable questions not avoiding them to remain in the comfort of their own ignorance. They will also be articulate enough to effectively engage in collaborative discussions explaining their own ideas, and understandings. By using their voice in whatever career field they may enter into, they will have the interpersonal skills necessary to be agents of change with the ability to empathize with others, the willingness to listen, and to adjust their opinions and viewpoints based on newly acquired information.

School/Student Demographics

The implementation of this curriculum unit will serve as an empowerment tool to 60 fourth graders in north Charlotte. My students come from diverse economic and academic backgrounds. The majority of our students represent groups of brown children who often experience the backlash of negative assumptions based on their race. 80 % of our students represent a minority racial group in America, including African American, Hispanic, and Asian.

I teach English Language Arts. I currently have 3 classes with an average of 20 students in each class. 2 of my classes consist of students that have been identified as Exceptional Children (EC) and receive additional support services from the Exceptional Children Department. I have several students that speak English as a Second Language. Some of them have met the district suggested language proficiency score and no longer qualify for English Language Services. A small percent of my students are receiving interventions as part of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Given the background of my students it is imperative that they are equipped with the necessary tools to confront unfair assumptions that they may encounter in a racially divided America.

Unit Goals

This unit is intended for a 4th grade English Language Arts class with the integration of Social Studies. The overall goal of this unit is to empower my students to empathize with others and change the biases they hold as truths by helping them to build an understanding for other people

and cultures. We will do this by exploring the effects of assumptions made by large groups of people in history as well as the mechanism that fuel these prejudices. Students will also be pushed to acknowledge their own assumptions and the impact these assumptions have on the relationships they build within their peer groups. This unit is intended for the beginning of the year to help facilitate a positive classroom environment in which students feel a sense of welcome and belonging. The overall themes include Cultural Identity and Community. By providing experiences with both fiction and nonfiction text, promoting deeper level thinking and rich, academic conversations, and experience with rewriting personal biases my scholars will gain a greater appreciation for the cultures of their peers and the diversity within our learning community.

The student learning outcomes of this unit include:

- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly.
- Analyze the historical and contemporary role of immigration in our community.
- Compare and contrast cultures within our current and historical community.
- Acknowledge and challenge stereotypes, prejudice, and biases in our community

Content Research

America is a nation of immigrants. All Americans with the exception of those from the indigenous Native American tribes can trace their lineage to nations around the world. We are a melting pot of cultures, races and ethnicities. The United States of America has the largest immigrant population in the world. The diversity of cultures is what makes America beautiful yet it is common to practice the segregation of people based on cultural differences and ethnicity.

Racial segregation and bias can be found in the beginning of American history. When the Declaration of Independence was written in 1776 the founding fathers of America wrote “all men are created equal.” However, many of these men owned black slaves and viewed themselves as part of the superior race. Thomas Jefferson’s view of blacks was shared by the majority of the European population during colonial times. Jefferson expected whites eventually to displace all of the Indians of the New World. The United States, he wrote, was to be “the nest from which all America, North and South, is to be peopled,”³ and the hemisphere was to be entirely European: Nine of the first eleven presidents owned slaves and viewed themselves as part of the superior race. This confirms the idea that the founding fathers of our country initially envisioned America as a homogeneous society only consisting of whites. After the Constitution was ratified in 1788, the governing body passed the very first citizenship law. The original United States Naturalization Law of March 26, 1790, specified that only “free white persons” could be naturalized. This law therefore denied citizenship to slaves, Native Americans and freed blacks

There are four widely accepted waves of American Immigration. Each wave of immigration brought with it a set of culturalistic norms, beliefs, ideologies, and unfortunately biases based on assumptions. The first wave of immigrants migrated to America in the early 1600s. These immigrants came to explore the land that would be later known as the United States of America. The European colonists led by French and Spanish explorers were in search of economic opportunity and political as well as religious freedom. In 1620, a group of roughly

100 people later known as the Pilgrims arrived in America, where they established a colony. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 English Protestants migrated to the region between 1630 and 1640.⁴ They were surprised to be met by Native Americans who held their own set of religious practices and cultural values. Due to their cultural differences and lack of mutual understanding, the colonists assumed the Native American were savages and treated them as such. Another group of immigrants who arrived during the colonial period were black slaves from West Africa. These Africans were brought to America against their will and sold as property. It was assumed that these Africans were merely $\frac{3}{5}$ of a man and therefore were property and denied any rights given to freed man.⁵

The second wave of immigration began in 1815. These immigrants were from Northern and Western Europe and were in search of the “American Dream” many of these German and Irish immigrants settled along the east coast. Members of the Anglo-Saxon, American born population assumed that these new immigrants were a threat to the thriving job market. The cultural and religious background of the newly arrived workers were different from the existing Anglo-American society. Their differences and the assumptions made by the founding fathers of the new country led to widespread hostility and organized opposition of the immigrants.

Beginning in 1880 a large number of immigrants from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe arrived in America. The third wave of immigrants were in search of available farmland while others were attempting to escape religious persecution. This new wave of immigrants were assumed to be racially inferior to the white Protestants that had arrived previously. Assumptions made about Asian immigrants during this time led to the Immigration Act of 1924 in which Asian immigrants were banned from entering America.

The current wave of immigration began in 1965. The immigrants of the 4th wave are primarily from Latin America and Asia. The arrival of these immigrants brought with it a change in American society and customs. This new pattern of immigration has caused some Americans to question our countries immigration laws. The current administration plans to limit immigration by building a wall along the border of the U.S. and Mexico.

"E pluribus unum" is a traditional motto of the United States. It means "out of many, one" in Latin. One could argue that the current reality of America lives out this motto more than any other time in our country's history. When looking at the diversity of our local school district onlookers may be tempted to celebrate the diversity of cultures represented amongst our schools. However, the Charlotte Observer reports that about half of black and Hispanic students in CMS attend schools that are less than 10 percent white. In addition, 59 percent of white students attend majority white schools, even though whites are only 29 percent of all enrollment. Those schools, often among the district's biggest, are located in the north and south suburbs and some close-in neighborhoods such as Myers Park and Eastover.⁶ The question becomes what assumptions lead to the racial divide of people in our local community?

For example, the main character of the novel *Save Me a Seat* has recently immigrated to America from India and is finding it difficult to fit in due to the assumptions made by his peers, teachers, and family members. He also holds his own set of biases and assumptions which lead to both internal and external conflicts. According to the Pew Research Center, the Asian population

in the United States has grown 72% since 2000. At this rate, Asians including Indian immigrants are expected to become the largest immigrant group. In 2015, Indians were noted as the second largest group among Asians in the U.S.⁷ Although *Save Me a Seat* is a fiction text, it is a microcosm of U.S. society. Throughout history we have seen how assumptions made by both immigrants and American citizens have led to conflict here within in America.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was signed into legislation by President Chester A. Arthur on May 6, 1882. This law prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers to America. This act was the first time a group of people were exclusively excluded by name. The act remained in place for 60 years. During this time anyone of Chinese descent experienced racial prejudice and were often seen as unfit human beings and therefore impossible to assimilate into America culture. American workers feared that Chinese immigrants would decrease their wages. Chinese immigrants faced lynching, home burnings, and were denied basic civil rights due to the assumptions and bias held by Anglo-Saxon Americans.⁸

American history has repeatedly used the assumptions of the majority to implement unfair laws. These laws in turn are used to marginalize minority groups of people. Like the Chinese, African Americans also experienced prejudice grounded in the assumptions made by the white majority. Jim Crow laws were a set of laws put into place during the Reconstruction Period. During this time, the rights of African Americans and other minority groups were restricted by state laws. These laws legally separated public spaces in an attempt to undermine the passing of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the constitution. The laws successfully maintained racial segregation for nearly 100 years.⁹

Although the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed citizenship rights and equal protection of the laws to all people born or naturalized in the United States, the assumptions made by government officials and the Anglo-Saxon majority would not allow Native Americans to become U.S. citizens. Indian Americans were often seen as savages and a threat to the westward expansion desired by the colonist. Without citizenship Indian Americans were denied the right to vote, serve in the military, and to create legally binding contracts. Native Americans would not be granted citizenship until the signing of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and faced racism many years following the passing of this legislation.¹⁰

Members of the “white majority” may argue that racial prejudice is part of American history and was eradicated with the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. However, in 2018, there were still a group of minorities fighting against prejudice here in America. Puerto Rico is an example of a U.S. Territory. People in Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens but do not have the same rights as other Americans. Puerto Ricans are not able to vote for president. They also have limited representation in Congress. Citizens of Samoa, another U.S. territory, are not granted U.S. citizenship. They are nationals, meaning they pay taxes but are unable to vote, run for office or serve on a jury. Samoa is the only unincorporated U.S. territory which is why its citizens are considered nationals. When Samoa was won after the Spanish American War the justices of the Supreme Court assumed that the people living in Samoa were part of an “uncivilized” race and therefore dangerous. In 2018, a group of Samoans

filed a lawsuit against the United States of America seeking equal rights as an American citizen.¹¹

On Sunday, November 25, 2018 a group of migrants including children attempted to cross the U.S. border from Tijuana, Mexico. Many of the migrants from Central America were fleeing economic hardship and violence and seeking protection in the United States. When attempting to enter the country the migrants were met by U.S. Border Patrol officers who fired tear gas to disperse them. Some Americans argue that the actions were a justified attempt at stopping illegal immigrants from crossing the border. Others argued that the actions of the U.S. Border Patrol were cruel and unnecessary.¹² These events along with countless others show that yes the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did end segregation with legislation however, assumptions made by others still lead to prejudice and a deep divide of Americans in our current society.

The ideas centered on Human Rights Education (HRE) can be traced back to the works of Eleanor Roosevelt. Her leadership led to the passage of the Universal Human Declaration of Rights. This document, adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, was created under the fundamental principle that “global peace and progress could only be obtained through means that affirmed the dignity of every human being.”¹³ The goal of this historic agreement was to outline the basic rights and freedoms every human is entitled to regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity or sexual origin. It was the first international contract based on the basic principles of human rights and would later become the stimulus for improving the basic rights given to members of minority groups. It is important that my students understand that to counteract assumptions made by themselves and others they must first hold true to the idea that everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality should be treated as an imperative part of the human race. With this idea in mind, students will be able to ask questions that reveal the root behind their own biases while having crucial conversations that debunk the stereotypes and assumptions held by others.

If we know that stereotyping and prejudice is wrong then why do we do it? The answer may be rooted in the nature of human psychology. People who demonstrate strong prejudice tend to stereotype people who are different from the norm. This may be seen in people who break widely accepted physical or social patterns. This deviation from social norms can be reflected by an individual’s skin color, their clothing or religious practices. In the article “Relating pattern deviancy aversion to stigma and prejudice,” the author Anton Gollwitzer explored the idea that humans have a natural disposition to dislike patterns of behavior that are contrary to the norm. Across six studies the psychologist found that humans have a strong declination towards social patterns that are different from the accepted norm.¹⁴ Individuals that made negative judgments about deviant shapes within a pattern were more likely to prejudice others who were different from the accepted norm. People who had a broader vision of perfect and imperfect shapes were found to be more conservative and showed a decrease support of minority groups.

One way to combat prejudice is through education. People who are more educated are less likely to be prejudice. Through education, learners are exposed to new social norms. The article “Reducing Discrimination” in the journal *Principals of Social Psychology* states that, “Social norms define what is appropriate and inappropriate, and we can effectively change stereotypes and prejudice by changing the relevant norms about them.”¹⁵ A study in this article

controlled whether students thought that the other members of their student body favored equal treatment of others or believed that others thought it was appropriate to favor their same group peers. The results showed that students who were more likely to show favoritism to their same group peers believed that this was the norm. Prejudice and discrimination flourish in environments in which they are perceived to be the norm. In the same study, students who showed less favoritism to the same group peers were led to believe that their beliefs were not shared. This confirms the idea that equipping students with information about social norms combats prejudice. This also means that educators should confront prejudice when it occurs. Although the initial idea of confronting someone who you perceive as prejudice can be uncomfortable, it sheds new light on what is socially acceptable.

Since education plays such an imperative role in changing the social norms and combatting prejudice then we must take a careful look at the American educational system and its role in the fight against racism. Schools and textbooks play a major role in combatting prejudice, however many educators avoid the topic out of fear. That means students are rarely given the opportunity to discuss race in an open trusted environment that challenges their preconceived notions on the topic. In the article “Racism 101: Let’s talk about diversity and prejudice in America’s public schools,” the author Jill Koyama claims that “When we refuse to talk in racial terms we miss opportunities to discuss and analyze uncomfortable racial inequalities in school and society.”¹⁶ This conversation can only take place when educators are equipped with the tools needed to discuss race. This requires the use of curricula that includes racially diverse authors, scientist, economist, politicians and artist. Teachers should also have ongoing professional development on the topics or race and racism.

The article “When Teachers Understand Race and Racism,” states that “eight out of ten public school teachers are white.”¹⁷ However, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 60% of the American population is white. Some analysts argue that in the near future the majority of Americans will be non-white. The diversity of the student population in American schools is not reflected in the teachers standing in front of classrooms. This explains why teachers will benefit from training that enhances their ability to address race, ethnicity and culture. With the proper training, teachers have the ability to foster positive racial identities in their students of color.

Teaching Strategies and Classroom Activities

Before Reading

An anticipation guide is a strategy that is used before reading to stimulate students’ schema. Prior to beginning a selected text, students respond to general statements that contest or hold up their preconceived notions about topics to be covered in the text. Prior to beginning the novel *Save Me a Seat*, students will complete an anticipation guide to activate their prior knowledge (classroom resources appendix 1). They will also explore the generalization that assumptions lead to conflict. While completing the anticipation guide, students will determine if several statements are true or false. After they have had the chance to respond independently, they will discuss their ideas with their peers to stimulate student interest in the text and set a personal purpose for reading. To support students in engaging in meaningful conversation provide discussion sentence starters for the students to utilize. This classroom discussion will allow students to work on mastering the Common Core Speaking and Listening standards. To master this standard, students

are asked to engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions in which they build on others' ideas and clearly convey their own.

Students will also participate in a carousel activity that contains sets of photographs comparing Indian and American cultures. A carousel activity provides an opportunity to interact with their peers while moving around a room in a circular fashion. The use of this activity creates a bridge between prior knowledge and new knowledge. It allows every student regardless of the academic achievement to actively take part in the learning process by allowing them to share their ideas based on their prior experiences. The use of the carousel activity will allow the teacher to gain insight on how much students know about cultures other than their own. By having students use academic language to discuss content, oral language is developed. Requiring all participants to contribute in the conversation surrounding each set of photographs holds all students accountable.

During this carousel activity students will stop intermittently to view a set of photographs comparing Indian and American cultures. The students will need to be assigned to collaborative groups. Each group will receive a different colored writing utensil to record their thinking. Prior to beginning this activity the teacher will post 5-6 photographs on chart paper around the room. The students will have an opportunity to observe each photograph and determine what they notice about the picture as well as questions they may have about what they see. Once students have had the opportunity to view the picture independently they will discuss their ideas with their peers. After a brief discussion and sharing, each student is required to write an individual response on the chart paper that must be different from his/her peers. Students should continue in this fashion until they have had the opportunity to discuss each of the photographs displayed. This activity will reveal some of the assumptions students may have about Indian culture and cultures that are different from their own.

Misunderstandings and conflict occur throughout the school day. As an educator, I have found that many times there is no apparent cause of the conflict. It is important for students to develop problem solving skills that will assist them in developing positive relationships both inside and outside of the classroom. Students' ability to identify when they make an assumption is an imperative step in the problem solving process. The final activity prior to beginning the text explores the idea that assumptions lead to conflict. Introduce the concept of making assumptions and how apparently obvious situations can have multiple meanings. Provide students several examples of situations that may occur at school in which there may be several possible meanings. For example, two students begin to laugh loudly while looking across the room. Once students have an understanding of this idea, ask them to brainstorm everyday occurrences that may lead to a variety of possible assumptions and have multiple meanings. Record the students' ideas. For each idea listed ask students what possible assumptions can be made and what the possible causes of this action are. Once you have exhausted the ideas of the students, assign each group of 3-4 students one of the example scenarios provided. Instruct the groups to act out the assigned scenario demonstrating what someone could do to avoid making assumptions and get to the actual cause of the action. To conclude the activity, discuss the following questions as a class:

-How can you determine what your classmates are thinking or feeling without making an assumption?

- How would our classroom climate change if we worked on not making assumptions about one another?

-How can acknowledging the assumptions you make lead to stronger relationships both inside and outside of the classroom?

To introduce the concept of bias students will read *American Samoans file suit against U.S. seeking birthright citizenship*. This news article can be found on the Newsela. Newsela publishes high-interest reading articles at various reading levels. The Lexile of this article is 610L but can be adjusted to meet the needs of the readers in your classroom. Explain to the students that in this article students will learn about a group of people who reside in the U.S. territory of American Samoa. Students may not be familiar with the location of Samoa. To familiarize students with its location show this territory on Google Maps. Samoa is the only place in the country where people don't become citizens by being born there. While students are reading they should be asked to think about the relationship between Samoa and the United States. To facilitate student thinking, students should annotate the text by turning the subheadings into questions. Under each heading students should highlight three or more key details that relate back to the posed question.

Once students have closely read the article, discuss the past relationship between Samoa and the U.S. Also discuss the causes of the lawsuit as well as why Samoans have not been granted birthright citizenship. These ideas will lead to the completion of a multi-flow map. A multi-flow map includes several boxes that lead into a box, which leads to several corresponding boxes. This multi-flow map will show cause and effect relationships between events in the informational text and help students analyze the events in history that have caused the Samoans not to be granted citizenship. This activity assists students with mastery of Common Core standard RI.4.3. This standard requires students to explain concepts in historical texts. Students' explanation should include what happened and why, based on specific information in the text. After completing the thinking map, students will be ready to synthesize the information in it. The thinking map will help students think critically and prepare them for the writing assignment to be assigned at the end of the lesson.

To begin an academic discussion on bias students should understand that a stereotype is the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way. Ask students if they can think of any examples of stereotypes that they have heard or experienced themselves. An example that illustrates this situation is the idea that all boys are good at sports. Students should also have a clear definition of prejudice. Prejudice should be defined as judging or making a decision about someone or a group of people before you actually know them. Explain that prejudice is often directed toward people in a certain identity group. Prejudice is an attitude or opinion that is often based on stereotypes. For example, "I don't like girls. As a class, brainstorm examples of stereotypes and prejudice in the article. Once a list has been created ask students to discuss the harmful effects that prejudice and stereotypes have had on the citizens of Samoa. Explain that stereotypes can be harmful because they send inaccurate messages to people that may cause them to treat other unfairly.

To complete this lesson, students will use the information from their annotations, and the class discussion to provide a written response to the question: In your opinion should Samoans

be granted birthright citizenship? What details from the text support your opinion? The students' written responses should restate the question, answer the question, cite 2 pieces of evidence from the text to support their thinking, and explain their thinking with a connection, or relevant example.

During Reading

The students will participate in a novel study of the text *Save Me a Seat* by Sarah Weeks and Gita Varadarajan. The Lexile level of this text is 780. This falls within the recommended Lexile range for preparing college and career reading fourth graders. The 780 Lexile level corresponds to a level S using Fountas and Pinnell guided reading levels. A level S is recommended for fourth grade readers towards the middle of the school year.

This realistic fiction text follows two boys, Joe and Ravi, as they navigate their way through the first week of fifth grade at Albert Einstein Elementary. One of the themes that develops in the book, is the notion that assumptions are often wrong. Joe has grown up with the students at his school. They often assume that his quiet disposition and lack of participation in school activities is due to a lack of intelligence. However, Joe has an Auditory Processing Disorder (APD). APD makes it difficult for Joe to screen out background noise, so he is easily distracted by bits of surrounding sounds. Ravi has just moved to New Jersey from Bangalore, India. Ravi and his family are adjusting to their new lives. During this transition, Ravi makes assumptions about his peers that often turn out to be incorrect. Both Joe and Ravi fight against assumptions that are made about their intellects and overall abilities, by teachers as well as other students.

While reading, students will track the assumptions made by characters in the text. The overarching questions throughout this novel study will be “What assumptions do the characters in the text make? Are these assumptions true or false? How do these assumptions lead to conflict?” Tracking the words, actions, thoughts and motivations of the characters within the text will require students to refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text explicitly says. Students will also develop inferences about the characters and provide evidence from the text to explain their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and conclusions. This will address the demands of standards RL 4.1 and RL 4.3.

After Reading

Socratic seminars help students understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a text through a group discussion format. Students actively engage in the learning process by facilitating their group discussion around the ideas in the text. While participating in a deep analysis of a text students practice how to listen to one another, make meaning, and find common ground while engaging in meaningful conversation. Before beginning the discussion set clear expectations for students. To begin the conversation ask one of the following questions:

1. Most of us have been in Ravi's situation where we are the new kid. How many of you have been in Joe's position where you are the one welcoming in the new kid? What did you do to welcome in the new person? Is there anything you could have done differently?

2. *Save Me a Seat* teaches us about the significance of an apology. Joe's father wrote a heartfelt letter accepting responsibility for how he made Joe feel. How is this different than just saying, I'm "sorry?"
3. Why does Ravi get sent to the resource room? What about Joe? Do you know people who have either of those struggles? What assumptions have you made about people who may struggle to be successful at school? How can we show compassion for students who may have a difficult time at school?
4. Choose one conflict from the book and describe it from each of the boys' point of view. How are their perceptions different? What causes the difference in the boys' perceptions?
5. Joe plays a clever trick on Dillon near the end of the book, playing off of Dillon's own personality flaws. Do you think Joe did the right thing? Is there a different way to approach this sort of conflict? How should we defend ourselves and our friends from bullies?

When you feel that a question has been adequately discussed, compliment student responses. Continue the same procedure with another question. Conclude the seminar by referring back to the seminar guidelines. Based on these guidelines ask students to rate the overall class performance. Work as a class to brainstorm a list of strengths as well as growth areas. Use these ideas to develop a goal for the next seminar.

Students will participate in a Taba lesson centered on the concept of assumptions. The Taba lesson model was created by Hilda Taba. Her belief was that the generalization and organization of ideas or concepts leads to a greater ability to think critically. Taba lessons build on comprehension skills such as inferencing, synthesizing and summarizing. The questions asked throughout Taba lessons are open-ended with no clear right or wrong response. This encourages students to think without the pressure of getting the right answer. As students work collaboratively with their peers they build upon their speaking and listening skills.

To begin the lesson, ask students to list all the words and phrases they associated with assumptions. While students discuss this idea with their peers the teacher will assist students in generating a list of words related to assumptions by asking open-ended questions such as What words and phrases come to mind when you think about assumptions? What do assumptions look like? What are some examples of assumptions? What words come to mind when you think about your own experience with assumptions?

Once the students have generated a list of ideas, the teacher will ask the students to identify similarities between ideas on the list and use these similarities to group similar ideas into categories. Students may not place one item in more than one group. Students will come up with a name or title for each category and explain why they chose that name. Teacher will facilitate students in the categorizing process by asking questions about why students chose these groups and names and asking students to defend their choices. The teachers may ask which of these items could be put in a group together? Why? What name would you use to describe this group? Are there any other items that could fit in this group? Why or why not?

Once students have completed the grouping and labeling task, discuss the students' ideas aloud as a class. Once students have had the opportunity to listen to the thinking of their peers

ask students to subsume items into different groups. While completing this task students should explain how some items may belong to a different group or how some groups may be combined into a broader category. Teacher will assist students in subsuming by asking questions to create reflection on categories. These questions may include, which of these items might belong in a different category? Are there any items you see in separate categories that you think belong together? Which groups could be combined into a more general category?

In the final phase of the lesson, the teacher will explain the idea of a generalization and assist students in coming up with generalizations about assumptions. Students will create generalizations based on their observations about the data. Some possible generalizations about assumptions may include the ideas such as assumptions can impact our interactions with others. Assumptions can influence our actions and reactions. Making assumptions has consequences. Assumptions can be positive or negative.

Taba lessons require students to work collaboratively with their peers. It may be helpful to ask students to set a goal for their group prior to beginning the lesson. Some possible goals may be to look at the speaker. Wait your turn to speak. Accept the ideas and opinions of others. Ask students to write down this goal and place it on their table to refer to while working. After completing the lesson, ask students to reflect on their goals and discuss what students did to accomplish their goals as well as things they can work on for the next collaborative project.

Assessment

After completing the novel, students will complete a partner interview project. In the book, Joe and Ravi end up becoming good friends after making false assumptions about each other. In school, students tend to spend their days with their friends and rarely take the time to learn about people they may be different from them. To complete this project, students will be required to eat lunch with someone new, and interview them in order to get to know them better. Students will then write a brief essay summarizing their experience as well as things they learned about their partner and themselves.

To complete this project the teacher will assign each student a partner that they do not typically interact with. Students will agree on a day within a given week to sit with one another at lunch. During this time students must bring in a personal reflection object and complete a partner interview. While conducting the interview, students should take notes on the response of their partners. These notes should be submitted with students' final personal reflection. See the list below for some possible partner interview questions.

1. What personal object did you bring and why?
2. What is your full name? Is there a specific story around your name?
3. What do you like to do during your free time?
4. Who is the most important person in your life? Why is this person important to you?
5. What was your favorite part in the novel Save Me a Seat?
6. What is one thing most people do not know about you?

After all of the students have had the opportunity to complete their lunch interviews students will reflect on their experience. In the final reflection students should write about how they felt

during the partner interview. Encourage students to be honest about feelings their feelings even if they were uncomfortable. The second paragraph should include any new information the students may have learned about their partner. Students may use their notes to help them write this paragraph. The third paragraph will include things the students learned about themselves in this process. This may include their own personal bias as well as assumptions they may have made about their partner prior to interview. This final project will address the common core standard W4.4 which requires students to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

Literature Standards

RL 4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL 4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Informational Text Standards

RI 4.3 Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Speaking and Listening Standards

SL 4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL 4.1.C Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

SL 4.1.D Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Writing

W4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Language

L4.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L4.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L4.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Teacher Resources

Articles

The students will participate in a carousel activity prior to beginning the text. Visit the Utica City School District website to learn more about the Carousel Activity Protocol.

Delgado, Rosa Alcalde. Carousel Activity Protocol. Utica City School District. Accessed November 27, 2019.

[https://www.uticaschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=273&dataid=286&FileName=Carousel Activity Protocol.pdf](https://www.uticaschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=273&dataid=286&FileName=Carousel%20Activity%20Protocol.pdf).

Websites

To learn more about teaching students about bias, prejudice and stereotypes visit Teaching Tolerance.

<https://www.tolerance.org/>

To learn more about Thinking Maps and ways to effectively use them in the classroom visit the Thinking Maps website.

<https://www.thinkingmaps.com/>

To learn more about the implementation of Socratic Seminars in the classroom visit EngageNY.

file:///C:/Users/Mama%20Lisa/Downloads/socratic_seminar_protocol_el_012612.pdf

To see an example of how to implement a Tabla lesson in the classroom visit a fellow colleague's website.

<http://mrbeasleysaigsite.weebly.com/tabas-concept-development-model.html>

Student Resources

Anticipation Guide for Save me a Seat

Answer the following according to what you honestly feel is true; this is based on your beliefs and will not be graded as right or wrong.

Statement	True	False
Writing can change the world.		
You should always try to redeem yourself if given the chance.		
Assumptions are often wrong.		
It's possible for a couple zebras to outsmart a crocodile.		
Quitting is not an option.		
There's no harm in showing off a little.		
Not every game has to be about winning.		

Character Tracking for Save me a Seat

While reading the novel Save Me a Seat track the assumptions made by the characters in the text. Be prepared to share your ideas during our class discussions.

page	character	What assumption is made?	Why does the character make this assumption?	Is this assumption true or false?	How does this assumption lead to conflict?
20	Ravi	Joe is not friendly.	In the cafeteria Joe does not say hello and sits down on the bench. He shoves food in his mouth and did not stop until his plate was clean.	This assumption is false. Joe is shy. The text says "he doesn't talk much."	Ravi assumes Joe is rude before getting to know him. His assumptions make Ravi unwilling to initiate a conversation with Joe.

Articles

“American Samoans File Lawsuit Seeking Full U.S. Citizenship.” Newsela. Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff, April 2, 2018. <https://newsela.com/read/American-Somoans-want-citizenship/id/41910/>.

Books

Weeks, Sarah, and Gita Varadarajan. *Save Me a Seat*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2018.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Melinda. "When Educators Understand Race and Racism." *Teaching Tolerance*, 24 Nov. 2014, <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/when-educators-understand-race-and-racism>.
- Averbuch, Maya, and Elisabeth Malkin. "Migrants in Tijuana Run to U.S. Border, but Fall Back in Face of Tear Gas." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, November 25, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/25/world/americas/tijuana-mexico-border.html>.
- Diller, Janelle M. *Securing Dignity and Freedom through Human Rights Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2012.*
- Doss, Ann. "CMS Tally: More Hispanic and Asian Students, Fewer Black and White." *charlotteobserver*. Charlotte Observer, December 2, 2016. <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/education/article118484453.html>.
- Gollwitzer, A., Marshall, J., Wang, Y. *et al.* Relating pattern deviancy aversion to stigma and prejudice. *Nat Hum Behav* **1**, 920–927 (2017)
- History.com Editors. "U.S. Immigration Before 1965." History.com. A&E Television Networks, October 29, 2009. <https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/u-s-immigration-before-1965>.
- Koyama, Jill. "Let's Talk About Diversity and Prejudice in America's Public Schools." *Pacific Standard*, May 9, 2014. <https://psmag.com/education/donald-sterling-need-talk-racism-americas-public-schools-81162>.
- Losinski, Mickey, Robin Ennis, Antonis Katsiyannis, and Luke J. Rapa. 2019. Schools as change agents in reducing bias and discrimination: Shaping behaviors and attitudes. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* **28**, (10) (10): 2718-2726, <https://librarylink.uncc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2226628523?accountid=14605> (accessed September 21, 2019).
- Maps, Ngm. "Why Are American Samoans Not U.S. Citizens?" *American Samoans Are Suing Government for Birthright Citizenship*, March 30, 2018. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2018/03/american-samoa-citizenship-lawsuit-history/#close>.
- McMinn, John T., and Carol Nackenoff. "Native Americans: Citizenship." In *American Governance*, edited by Stephen Schechter. Macmillan US, 2016.
- Radford, Jynnah. "Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants." Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, June 17, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>.

- Rees, S. 2018. The chinese exclusion act. *The Video Librarian*. Nov, <https://librarylink.uncc.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/2221696455?accountid=14605> (accessed September 21, 2019).
- Ruiz, Neil G. "Indian Migration to the U.S. ." Pew Research Center, January 30, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/indian-migration-to-the-us.pdf>.
- Stangor, Charles. "Principles of Social Psychology – 1st International Edition." Principles of Social Psychology 1st International Edition. BCcampus, September 26, 2014. <https://opentextbc.ca/socialpsychology/chapter/reducing-discrimination/>.
- Taylor, Jared. "What the Founders Really Thought About Race." National Policy Institute, January 17, 2012. <https://nationalpolicy.institute/2012/01/17/what-the-founders-really-thought-about-race/>.
- US Census Bureau. "The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010." The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010, August 3, 2018. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2012/acs/acs-19.html.s>
- Woodward, Jennifer. "Jim Crow." In *American Governance*, edited by Stephen Schechter. Macmillan US, 2016.

-
- ¹ Radford, Jynnah. "Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants." Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center, June 17, 2019.
- ² US Census Bureau. "The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010." The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010, August 3, 2018.
- ³ Taylor, Jared. "What the Founders Really Thought About Race." National Policy Institute, January 17, 2012
- ⁴ History.com Editors. "U.S. Immigration Before 1965." History.com. A&E Television Networks, October 29, 2009.
- ⁵ History.com Editors. "U.S. Immigration Before 1965." History.com. A&E Television Networks, October 29, 2009.
- ⁶ Doss, Ann. "CMS Tally: More Hispanic and Asian Students, Fewer Black and White." *charlotteobserver*. Charlotte Observer, December 2, 2016.
- ⁷ Ruiz, Neil G. "Indian Migration to the U.S. ." Pew Research Center, January 30, 2018.
- ⁸ Rees, S. 2018. The chinese exclusion act. *The Video Librarian*.
- ⁹ Woodward, Jennifer. "Jim Crow." In *American Governance*, edited by Stephen Schechter. Macmillan US, 2016.
- ¹⁰ McMinn, John T., and Carol Nackenoff. "Native Americans: Citizenship." In *American Governance*, edited by Stephen Schechter. Macmillan US, 2016.
- ¹¹ Maps, Ngm. "Why Are American Samoans Not U.S. Citizens?" American Samoans Are Suing Government for Birthright Citizenship, March 30, 2018.
- ¹² Averbuch, Maya, and Elisabeth Malkin. "Migrants in Tijuana Run to U.S. Border, but Fall Back in Face of Tear Gas." The New York Times. The New York Times, November 25, 2018.
- ¹³ Diller, Janelle M. *Securing Dignity and Freedom through Human Rights Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2012.*
- ¹⁴ Gollwitzer, A., Marshall, J., Wang, Y. *et al.* Relating pattern deviancy aversion to stigma and prejudice. *Nat Hum Behav* **1**, 920–927 (2017)
- ¹⁵ Stangor, Charles. "Principles of Social Psychology – 1st International Edition." Principles of Social Psychology 1st International Edition. BCcampus, September 26, 2014.
- ¹⁶ Koyama, Jill. "Let's Talk About Diversity and Prejudice in America's Public Schools." Pacific Standard, May 9, 2014.
- ¹⁷ Anderson, Melinda. "When Educators Understand Race and Racism." *Teaching Tolerance*, 24 Nov. 2014.