



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

*to strengthen teaching in public schools®*

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2012 Volume IV: Narratives of Citizenship and Race since Emancipation

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## **Exchanging Letters - Changing Legacies**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.04.02, published September 2012

by Jeffrey K. Weathers

Exchanging Letters - Changing Legacies is attempt to enact meaningful and needed change through a curriculum unit inspired by the Yale National Initiative's 2012 summer seminar, Narratives of Citizenship and Race Since Emancipation led by Jonathan Holloway. This unit centers on three primary goals: to awaken students to the persistence of racism and inequality in America, to better understand American history and historical texts through the lenses of African-American experiences and to challenge students to write letters, from narratives to expositions, with the intention of developing their voices and helping them know who they are and what it means to be a citizen, in order to become the change they wish to see in their selves, their families and in their communities. Earnest J. Gaines's short story, "The Sky is Gray," and Bob Teague's *Letters to a Black Boy*, as well as James Baldwin's essay, "The Fire Next Time" are the central texts. This unit is designed to create a meaningful bridge from and context for Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, respectively.

(Developed for English III and IV, grade 10; recommended for English and History, grades 10-12)

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