



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

*to strengthen teaching in public schools®*

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2020 Volume I: American History through American Lives

---

## **American Heritage: Unmasked, Unpacked & Uncloaked**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 20.01.04, published September 2020

by Lauren E. Freeman

In today's society, there remains much debate as to the problem and existence of achievement and opportunity gaps, equitable instruction, and the overall educational experience of students of color and historically oppressed culture and ethnicity. In examining these occurrences, the question of representation when addressing all students' race, culture and ethnicity is raised. Does each child relate to text and tasks that are presented in class through the lessons of their instructors? If not, what is missing and how can the children themselves contribute to that missing portion?

This unit will focus on two marginalized groups, Native Americans and African Americans, while looking at multiple races and cultures and their experiences throughout the development of this nation. Each has experienced physical, and emotional atrocities as well as systemic racism and oppression that has discouraged progress and set them apart from what is perceived as the "All American" majority race and culture. Over a period of five weeks, students will participate in a historical journey that begins with a thorough examination of primary sources such as The Declaration of Independence, The United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, The Emancipation Proclamation, slave narratives including slave documents and freedom papers, and Native American narratives among others. The goal is to look into the depths of this country's activities from the *viewpoint* of minorities that endured the pain, strife and struggle from America's youngest moments, to the present. The reasoning is to foster a well-rounded understanding of three specific ideas; how far we have come, if and how we have grown, and how we will proceed, together, as a nation.

Key Words List: Historical Content, African American Education, Native American Education, Slave Narrative, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Restorative Practices, Abolitionist Teaching, Educational Theory, Educational Philosophy

(Developed for ELA, grade 3; recommended for ELA, grades 3 and 5; Social Studies, grades 3-5; and History, grades 3-9)

---

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit [https://teachers.yale.edu/terms\\_of\\_use](https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use)