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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2021 Volume III: Democracy and Inequality: Challenges and Possible Solutions

Cause and Effect: Inequality and Activism

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by Laura Grisham

This curriculum studies the cause-and-effect relationship between activism and inequality. Students use multi-media texts to examine and evaluate modern-day activist movements.

Students will first gain historical context for inequality in the United States by reading excerpts from Michael Klarman's book *Unfinished Business*. Students will then apply this learning to modern-day activism. Students will learn about the two activist movements that came after the 2008 financial crisis: Occupy Wall Street and the Tea Party movement. They will also learn about the history of activism by the WNBA and its players. Then, using the six building blocks of distributive politics as laid out by *The Wolf at the Door*, students will evaluate the effectiveness of these three groups. Finally, students will select an activist movement or group on their own. They will go through the process of evaluating their movement against the six building blocks to write a persuasive essay. As a result of this unit of study, students will gain an academic-based understanding of activism and allow them to advocate for causes they support.

(Developed for Speech 3, grade 8; recommended for Social Studies and English Language Arts, grade 8)

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