



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2026 Volume I: The Kids are not the Threat

Inspiring San Jose Youth to Become Activists

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This unit will start with a wide historical lens and then quickly focus on more local and more recent examples of student protest and activism. Using the course readings students will begin their journey looking at the Civil Rights Movement and the prominence of youth activism in the formation of SNCC and the involvement of the Bennett College women in sit-in protests. In addition, students will have the opportunity to look at an overview of black youth activism in the United States from the 1930s onward. Once students have learned about the long history of youth activism, they will begin to look at more recent events such as the HIV/AIDS crisis, the Black Lives Matter protests, the push for LGBTQ+ equal rights, and the conflict with immigration control, specifically

ICE activities. Students will examine what makes a college or high school campus a unique place to foment protest, and see examples of students their age (and a bit older) using their voices to fight for their rights. High school students can be limited in what methods are available to them because they are still minors, but they are far from voiceless and optionless. I want my students to know this and to know that they are following in worthwhile footsteps when they use their voice and take action. As mentioned above these examples will come from either the Bay Area or where necessary California at large, because I want this to be relevant and I want them to see what students like them can accomplish.

(Developed for World History, grade 10, and U.S. History, grade 11; recommended for Ethnic Studies, grades 9-12)

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