**Lesson Plan Template**

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Lesson Title: Still Striving for a More Perfect Union in the Age of Black Lives Matter

Grade Level: 9-12th

Compelling Questions:

1. What does Ralph Ellison see as stumbling blocks hindering Black Americans from entering the middle class?  Have these stumbling blocks changed throughout time?
2. What does “a more perfect Union” mean to the African Americans in this post-Obama, post-George Floyd age of Black Lives Matter?

**Lesson Foundations**

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| Content Standards | This lesson seeks to explore the contemporary stumbling blocks which impede the actualization of the goals of many Black Americans.  Students will read and evaluate modern source materials, explore the achievements of African Americans in the past 45 years, and view a groundbreaking speech on race given by our first American president of color.  NCSS Themes: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10. |
| Learning Objective(s) | 1. Analyze Ralph Ellison’s essay: *When Does a Black Join the Middle Class?* 2. Employ active reading strategies to identify the fundamental ideas of primary and secondary sources. 3. Construct a group Timeline detailing African American achievements in Music, Film, Literature, Theatre, and Sports. 4. Analyze contemporary and secondary news sources and compare/contrast individual findings with group members. 5. Summarize the key points of a piece of campaign rhetoric. 6. Synthesize lesson activity findings to answer an essay question accurately. |
| Assessment(s)  Include LO being addressed | (LO1, LO2): Group discussion of *When Does a Black Join the Middle Class?*  (LO3): Timeline Evaluation Worksheet  (LO4) News Article Analysis Worksheet  (L05) Essay question |
| Materials & Resources | **PPT:**  **Sources:**  **Crash Course in US History #39**: <https://wv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/100415ca-dd37-4531-a2f7-ab6c361adc74/civil-rights-and-the-1950s-crash-course-us-history-39/>  **Crash Course US History #40:** <https://wv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/5272a622-8e8f-40dc-a67a-42c10df0a20d/the-1960s-in-america-crash-course-us-history-40/>  **Ralph Ellison, *When Does a Black Join the Middle Class?***  <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/when-does-a-black-join-the-middle-class/>  **OSU Origins Article: *Justice Denied: The Killing of Trayvon Martin in Historical Perspective***  <http://origins.osu.edu/article/justice-denied-killing-trayvon-martin-historical-perspective/page/0/0>  **OSU Origins Article: *Policing the Police: A Civil Rights Story***  <http://origins.osu.edu/article/policing-police-civil-rights-story>  **OSU Origins Article: *A History of Stolen Citizenship***  <http://origins.osu.edu/article/voting-crime-and-race-history-stolen-citizenship-disenfranchisement-felony>  **New York Times article: Black America and the Class Divide**  <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/07/education/edlife/black-america-and-the-class-divide.html?_r=0>  **OSU Origins History Talk Podcast: A Long View of Policing in America**  <http://origins.osu.edu/historytalk/long-view-policing-america>  **OSU Origins Article: From Harlem to Ferguson: LBJ’s War on Crime and America’s Prison Crisis**  <http://origins.osu.edu/article/harlem-ferguson-lbjs-war-crime-and-americas-prison-crisis>  **OSU Origins History Talk Podcast: The Long View of Sports Protests**  <http://origins.osu.edu/historytalk/long-view-sports-protests> |

**Instructional Procedures/Steps**

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| **Opening**  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Minutes** | The teacher will need to print paper copies of the primary source materials and worksheets or post ALL materials in a digital format so that the students can have constant classroom access. The teacher will present this lesson after teaching the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s or during a unit on Contemporary America. |
| Instruction  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Minutes | **Part 1:** **Analyze Ralph Ellison’s essay: *When Does a Black Join the Middle Class?***  Students will begin this lesson by engaging in a class think-pair-share, asking:  What are attributes associated with the American Middle Class?  The teacher will record these attributes for further class discussion.  The students will then read Ralph Ellison’s 1975 essay: *When Does a Black Join the Middle Class?*  The students will use active reading strategies: circling, highlighting, and annotating to determine the fundamental ideas of this document.  The teacher should teach students to use active reading strategies like those outlined in this Edutopia Blog.  These strategies are highly effective in reading primary source documents: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/developing-active-readers-strategies-rebecca-alber>.  Teacher Questions:   1. According to Ellison, what conditions must exist for Blacks to enter the American Middle Class? 2. Have Blacks achieved Ellison’s societal mission for the African American community?  If so, how so?  If not, what successful steps have been taken in the past 45 years?     **Part 2**: **Achievements in African-American Music, Film, Literature, and the Theatre.**  Students will work in Groups of Four to create a PowerPoint Timeline detailing 25 Key Moments in African-American Music, Film, Literature, and the Theatre from 1975-Present.  Each event should be a separate slide with the date, description with contextual details, and image/video/audio clip to support the event.  Each event should be chronological, and the PowerPoint should include a Title Page and Works Cited Page.  Students’ final product will be evaluated using **Worksheet 1: Timeline Evaluation Rubric**.  Students should have a copy of the evaluation while preparing their Timeline assignment.  **Part 3:** **Article Analysis**  Each group of four will be given an article packet with the following four articles, and each student will select one for analysis.  Students will use active reading strategies while reading the article.  When finished reading, students will use **Worksheet 2: News Article Analysis Sheet** to compile their findings.  After analyzing the individual article, students will use **Worksheet 2: News Article Analysis Sheet** to share their results with group members.  **Part 4: Striving for A More Perfect Union in The Age of Obama**  To conclude this assignment, students will watch President Barack Obama’s *A More Perfect Union* Speech at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrp-v2tHaDo>.  This speech, given at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, was the definitive speech of the 2008 Presidential Election.  The teacher should require the students to take notes on the speech or to complete a National Archives Sound Recording Analysis Sheet:  <https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/sound_recording_analysis_worksheet.pdf> |
| Closure  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Minutes | **Synthesis:** Students will use the information collected in Activities 1, 2, 3, and 4 to answer the following question:  *Since 1975, Black Americans have taken “full advantage of these cultural tools,” i.e., Music, Film, Literature, and the Theatre, yet what are the societal stumbling blocks have persisted despite the successes of the past 40 years?  Have these stumbling blocks transformed throughout time?  How can BIPOCs overcome these persistent stumbling blocks, and what societal successes are necessary for the African-American community to achieve “that more perfect Union” promised in our U.S. Constitution?* |
| Accommodations/ Enrichment |  |