Many Voices: American Artists’ Perspectives on History, Identity, and Society

Social Studies, History, Social Justice
SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARD 1: History
Goal 1.1: Build an understanding of the cultural and social development of the United States.
Goal 1.2: Trace the role of migration and immigration of people in the development of the United States.
Goal 1.3: Identify the sovereign status and role of American Indians in the development of the United States.

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARD 4: Civics and Government
Goal 4.1: Build an understanding of the foundational principles of the American political system.
Goal 4.3: Build an understanding that all people in the United States have rights and assume responsibilities.

- Visit the website https://www.globalonenessproject.org/lessons/cultural-heritage-recording-native-language-dictionary for a lesson plan about the significance of language and Indigenous language vitality. In it, students will watch a film about a Native American woman, Marie Wilcox, who is the last fluent speaker of Wukchumni. For seven years, she created a dictionary in order to keep her language and culture alive. Students engage in learning experiences to explore the cultural element of language and consider the impacts of language loss and language revitalization efforts on Native communities.

- Have students crumple up a piece of scratch paper, and move the recycling bin to the front of the room. Tell the class, “The game is simple00, and you all represent the country’s population. And everyone in the country has a chance to become wealthy and move into the upper class. To move into the upper class, all you must do is throw your wadded-up paper into the bin while sitting in your seat.” Have students try to throw their crumpled-up papers. The students in the back of the room will likely think and say the activity is unfair while those in the front of the room will not. Conclude by saying, “The closer you were to the recycling bin, the better your odds. This is what privilege looks like. Did you notice most of the people who complained about fairness were in the back of the room? People in the front of the room were less likely to be aware of or to comment on their privilege or advantage. Your job as students is to be aware of
your privilege and to do your best to achieve great things, all the while advocating for those in the rows behind you.”

- Have students interview people who have made a difference in your community, and create a book (physical copy or digital) compiling those interviews. If community members are willing to be on video, record the interviews, compile them, and publish them in a digital format.

- Look at the Voting Rights Timeline found here: https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/TT-Voting-Rights-Timeline-Handout-October-2020.pdf. Have students read it and try to summarize the history of voting rights in the United States in 3-4 sentences. Share students’ summaries and then use the following questions for discussion:
  1. Is voting a right or a privilege?
  2. What is the “story of voting rights” we tell about the United States?
  3. What is the actual “story of voting rights” in the United States?

- Have students create their own voter’s guide that they can share with friends, family, and neighbors. Sections could/should include: Registering to Vote, Voter’s Rights, Important Dates and Deadlines, and What to Expect at the Polls. A lot of this information can be found at Rock the Vote, but students should aim for really user-friendly guides written in their voices.

**Language Arts and Technology**

**CCRA.R.1:** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**CCRA.W.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**CCRW.7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**ICT Standard 1:** Empowered Learner

**ICT Standard 3:** Knowledge Constructor

- Create a story about some aspect of identity (e.g. gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, age, ability) in the context of your school or neighborhood. Use video, audio, still photos, or other digital media. You may interview people or narrate someone else’s story or tell your own story.

- Use The Race Card Project in your school or classroom. (Go to https://theracecardproject.com/ for more information.) Think about the word “Race.” How would you distill your thoughts, experiences or observations about race into one sentence that only has six words? Race Cards can be thoughtful, funny, heartbreaking, brave, teeming with anger and shimmering with hope. Some make you smile. Others might make you squirm. Make your own Race Card “wall” at your school OR consider submitting to the Race Card Project.
• Have students re-view a TV show, YouTube channel, website, or other media they regularly watch and list all the stereotypes they see. This could also be designed as a multi-day journal assignment that encompasses all media viewed outside of school. For discussion:

1. What is a stereotype?
2. How do we identify them? And what do they tell us?
3. Is it important to be aware of stereotypes in the media? Why or why not?
• Identify a problem related to an issue you’ve explored in class or on your own. Create a PSA (Public Service Announcement) that addresses the issue and advocates for awareness or a particular solution.
• Research and follow social justice organizations and individuals on social media. Start a dialogue with them about a topic of your choice.

Math
Measurement and Data

• Determine how much money a family needs to survive, live comfortably, etc. in your town or state. Then, determine how much money someone would make if they worked full-time at minimum wage in your state. If the numbers do not add up, determine what the minimum wage would need to be in order to comfortably support a family.
• Use a graph to illustrate the incarceration rates for different populations. Determine the differences and inequities based on your findings.
• Using statistical measures, have students analyze the typical balance between and total spending on police and school spending in the state budgets. Then, discuss the effects of spending decisions as well as their own preferences for budgeting.
• Have students do statistical comparisons of data for distribution of wealth in the US: the distribution Americans think we have, the distribution they think we should have, and the distribution we actually have.