

LESSON 1

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, EMPATHY AND LOVING ENGAGEMENT

BLACK LIVES MATTER



BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

Explain that in today's lesson you'll be looking more closely at the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter and the movement that sprang from it.

- Elicit and explain that over the past few years, police violence against mostly young men of color has entered the mainstream news cycle with great immediacy. Video footage, shot mostly on private cellphones and broadcast on social media, has helped bring to light what communities of color have long been trying to expose - what Black Lives Matter calls "the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society" (<http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/> (<http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>)).
- Through Twitter and the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, activists were able to disseminate information directly to millions of people, bypassing the traditional mainstream media, which, until Black Lives Matter, had mostly ignored police violence in black communities.
- #BlackLivesMatter turned names like Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Freddie Grey, and Philando Castile into household names while raising awareness beyond communities of color about the systemic racism and structural inequality that black and brown Americans experience on a daily basis.
- As the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag gained momentum, it soon turned into a movement that continues to grow and evolve to face and address real world needs, beyond the digital world it sprang from.

Terminology: Share with students that the Black Lives Matter movement is centered around 13 principles and explain that these principles are at the core of the BLM movement. Elicit and explain that a principle, according to Merriam-Webster, is

- a moral rule or belief that helps you know what is right and wrong and that influences your actions

- a basic truth or theory : an idea that forms the basis of something



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why are these principles surrounding black families integral to the Black Lives Matter movement?

- Empathy
- Loving Engagement
- Restorative Justice



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I can identify the thirteen principles of the Black Lives Matter movement
- I can articulate the history of the Black Lives Matter Movement



LESSON DEVELOPMENT

LAUNCH:



Invite students to share any associations they have with the phrase "Black Lives Matter." Chart their associations in a web (or other visual representation). Elicit associations while interest remains high, then invite students to look over the web and discuss it using some or all of the following questions:

- What do you notice about what's written on the chart?
- Are there any similarities? Differences?
- Is there anything on here that surprises you?
- Is there anything on here that you have questions about?

ACTIVITY:

Print out a copy of these  [Black Lives Matter principles](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922286/download?wrap=1)

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(<https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922286/download?wrap=1>) Prior to class, post the principles around the room. Provide students post-it notes or have a piece of chart paper next to each poster. Allow students to participate in a silent gallery walk in which they read about the principle and on the post- it/ chart paper write a one word summary (in one word, or a few words, think “what is this principle all about to me?”). Students could also do a  [Silent Graffiti Activity](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922287/download?wrap=1) (<https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922287/download?wrap=1>)  (<https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922287/download?wrap=1>) should you prefer.

After a few minutes, have students go around again and read all of the notes and summaries around two or three principles, jotting down notes to share with others.

DISCUSSION:

Divide students into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- What ideas from the lesson launch are supported and seen within the principles?
- What did you learn about Black Lives Matter that you didn't know before?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about Black Lives Matter, based on this information?
- What questions do you have about #BlackLivesMatter, the hashtag, and Black Lives Matter, the movement?


Back in the large group invite students to share out some of the points that were made in their small groups and facilitate a large group discussion around the issues raised.

TERMINOLOGY:

Explain to students that every day of the Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action is based on specific themes from the principles. Today's theme is **Restorative Justice, Empathy, and Loving Engagement**.

- **Restorative Justice**- building and nurturing a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleted
 - Restore- to bring back or renew
 - Deplete- to lessen power, value or content
- **Empathy**-Practicing empathy, we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.
- **Loving Engagement**- embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.

ACTIVITY:

Adapted from ROCRestorative, have students read Langston Hughes's  [“I Too Sing America”](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47558/i-too) (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47558/i-too>). Read the poem at least twice so that students have time to process the words and construct meaning. Then as a class or in small groups, have students address the following questions:

1. The poet writes about the “darker brother”. How is this person being treated and who does this phrase represent?
2. What does the poem expect or demand to happen to the treatment of the darker brother not only in the poem but also as it relates to our society?
3. How do a Loving Engagement, Restorative Justice, and Empathy support the ideas of Langston Hughes?
4. What can we do today to ensure a Loving Engagement, Restorative Justice and Empathy for African Americans and Black people?



LESSON CLOSURE

Teacher brings the conversation to a close, thanking students for being honest and vulnerable, summarizing the strengths within conversation, and referencing the 13 principles from Day 1.




RESOURCES


 [Black Lives Matter Posters](https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922286/download?wrap=1)

(<https://hcpss.instructure.com/courses/122235/files/14922286/download?wrap=1>) 

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 [“I Too Sing America”](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47558/i-too) (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47558/i-too>)

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