

Literature and Society (8/31/20)

Mr. Carter - 7th Grade English/Language Arts

* Required

1. First and Last Name: *

2. Date: *

Example: January 7, 2019

3. Period Number: *

Mark only one oval.

7-2

7-4

7-5

7-6

Five Minute Do Now:

One word answers and sentence fragments will not be accepted. Please write your answers in three complete sentences.

4. Do Now: Draw an imaginary constellation. Write a story such as ancient people might have told about it. * 5 points

Learning Target:

After completing this lesson, I will make connections between literature and its origins in society.

Literature and Society Lesson:

Please read through the following descriptions and instructions. Then, complete the readings and answer the activity questions.

Introduction:

Literature is often a reflection of society..

Current events, personal experiences and pop culture have been a major source of inspiration throughout the ages. Similarly, clashes related to tradition and change, along with division among socioeconomic classes, ethnicities, political views, values, and generations have provided drama and adversity.

The most important element in this equation is the audience. The audience brings all of their knowledge, feelings and personal experiences—each of these elements bleed into the plot and characters when an engaged audience identifies with a book, article, song or film.

I want you to read this article and then using all of your knowledge, feelings and personal experiences, I want you to answer the questions that follow. It's okay for you to feel emotions as a result of reading this article and answering the questions. Do your best to express your thoughts and feelings.

Reading and writing is about communication. In this class, throughout this year, we are going to explore our identities and attempt to figure out our place, both in literature and in the world around us.

Instructions:

1. Click on this link and read this article:

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/george-floyd-racism-and-law-enforcement-in-english-and-en>

2. Answer the questions either in the form electronically or handwritten on paper, depending on your access to technology. Either way you must include your FIRST and LAST NAME, the DATE and your CLASS PERIOD.

3. If available, you should speak briefly with another person (classmate, family member or caretaker) after answering each question.

4. After answering all of the questions and proofreading your answers, submit the form (if participating online) or hold onto your work for a drop off at the school at a later date.

Assignment Overview:

After reading the article completely, use all of your knowledge, feelings and personal experiences to answer the following questions. Consider what you already knew about the information presented in the article.

Reference Article:

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/george-floyd-racism-and-law-enforcement-in-english-and-en>

Activity Questions:

One word answers and sentence fragments will not be accepted. Please write your answers in complete sentences and do not be afraid to let your voice be heard.

- 5. 1. What were your initial thoughts and feelings when you heard about what happened to George Floyd? * 2 points

- 6. 2. Do you see people talking about this issue on the news, on social media or among your friends? What impact has that had on you? (Please answer both questions) * 2 points

- 7. 3. Why do you think the movement to stop police violence against African American people is called Black Lives Matter? What does it mean to you? (Please answer both questions) * 2 points

- 8. 4. Are you surprised to learn that police officers have used force that has killed people? * 2 points

- 9. 5. Why do you think it is rare for police officers to get arrested, prosecuted and convicted in these cases? What should be done about that? * 2 points

Five Minute Exit Ticket:

Reflect on today's lesson and answer the question(s) using complete sentences.

- 10. Exit Ticket: If there was book written or a movie made about the police violence, protests, and overall racial tension we have witnessed over the past months, what would you name it? Why? * 5 points

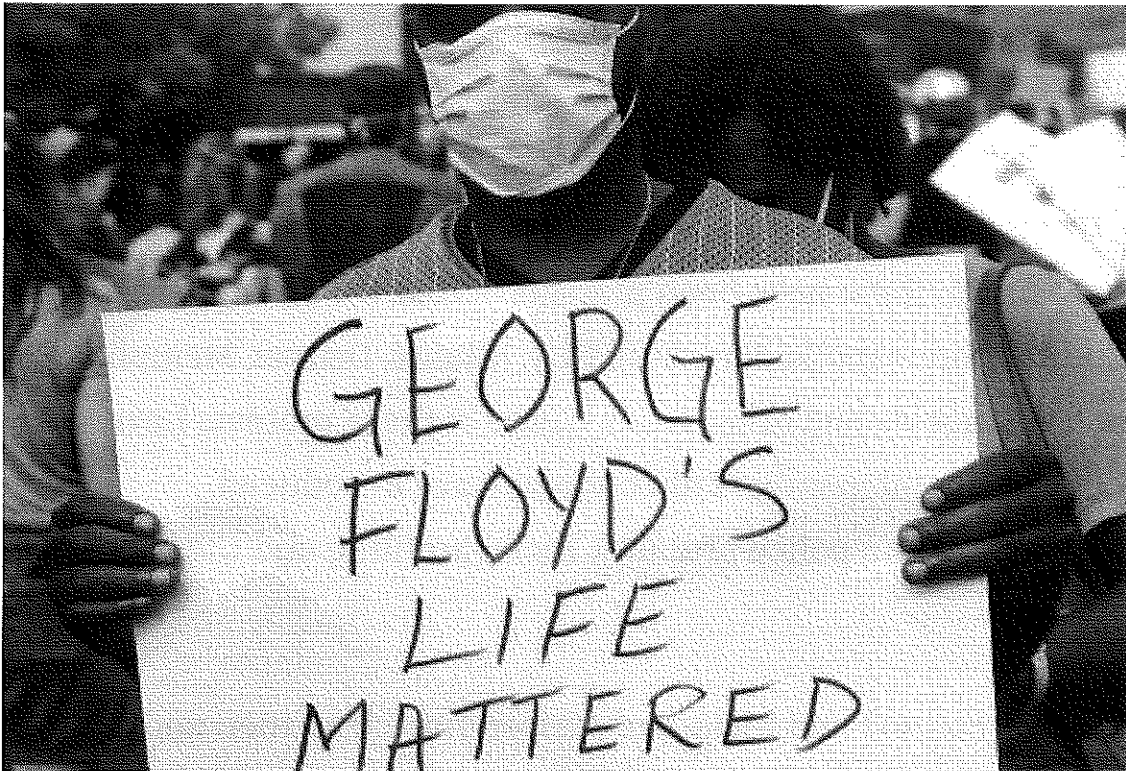
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George Floyd, Racism and Law Enforcement (in English and en Español)

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events



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Topic Summary

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, an African American man, was killed while being arrested by the police. A bystander video recording of the incident showed that a white police officer pinned Floyd to the ground while he was handcuffed. The police officer's knee pressed into the back of Floyd's neck for more than eight minutes, even after Floyd lost consciousness. On the video, Floyd was heard saying, "Please, I can't breathe. My stomach hurts. My neck hurts. Everything hurts. ... (I need) water or something. Please. Please. I can't

breathe, officer. ... I cannot breathe. I cannot breathe." In a statement, the Minneapolis Police Department said that officers had responded to a call about a man suspected of forgery.

The incident was shared widely on social media. This led to community and national outrage, an F.B.I. civil rights investigation and the firing of the officer, Derek Chauvin and three other officers who were also at the scene. On May 29, Chauvin was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter. On June 3, the charges against Chauvin were upgraded to second-degree murder and the three other officers were charged with aiding and abetting murder.

Protests Across the Country

Since Floyd's death, there have been protests across the country, in more than 100 cities including Minneapolis, New York City, Atlanta, Denver, Memphis, Phoenix, Ann Arbor, Los Angeles and other cities. Some of these protests have lasted for days. Several members of Congress have introduced a resolution to condemn police brutality, racial profiling and the excessive use of force.

There is a larger context and history of African American men and boys who were killed at the hands of the police, many of whom, like George Floyd, were unarmed. Since 2014, some high-profile deaths include Eric Garner (2014), Michael Brown (2014), Tamir Rice (2014), Laquan McDonald (2014), John Crawford (2014) Freddie Gray (2015), Walter Scott (2015), Alton Sterling (2016), Philando Castile (2016), Terence Crutcher (2016), Antwon Rose (2018) and others. Black women and girls are also targets of police violence, a reality that sparked the "Say Her Name" movement to highlight how this violence often goes unnoticed. Women who have died as a result of police interactions include Sandra Bland (2015), Deborah Danner (2016), and Atatiana Jefferson (2019) and Breonna Taylor (2020).

Despite having video recordings of many of these deaths, it is very rare for police officers to get arrested, prosecuted or convicted for excessive use of force. This perceived lack of accountability has led to a public outcry for justice.

Black Lives Matter is an activist movement which began as a hashtag (#BlackLivesMatter) when in July 2013, white civilian George Zimmerman was acquitted in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African American teenager killed in Florida. The Black Lives Matter movement became more widely acknowledged and highlighted after two 2014 high-profile deaths of unarmed African American men (Eric Garner in Staten Island, NY and Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO). Neither of the police officers involved in their deaths were indicted (i.e., formally charge with a crime).

Systemic Racism

Racism is defined as: "the marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people." Racism shows up in all aspects of our lives and society: in interpersonal communication, through discriminatory policies and practices, in biased language, and in our laws and institutions (e.g., education, media, employment, government and the criminal justice system).

Many see Floyd's death as an example of systemic racism, referring to the way race disadvantages people of color in the criminal justice system. African American and Latinx men are disproportionately represented in all levels of the criminal justice system, from arrest to sentencing to death row.

Moreover, research shows that African American people are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white people.

How Hate and Bias Escalate

On the same day that George Floyd was killed, another incident occurred in Central Park in New York City. Christian Cooper, an African American man, was

birdwatching when he encountered an unleashed dog. He asked the dog's owner, Amy Cooper (no relation), a white woman, to put the dog on a leash as the park rules require. When she did not, he began to film her. In response, Amy Cooper said she would call the police, stating "I'm going to tell them there's an African American man threatening my life" while pulling out her cellphone and calling 911.

While these two events appear to be unrelated, they both demonstrate a very important concept: when left unchecked, hate and bias can escalate and lead to dire outcomes.

The Pyramid of Hate illustrates how the levels of biased attitudes and behaviors grow in complexity from the bottom to top. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels and it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge and dismantle as behaviors escalate. Bias at each level negatively impacts individuals, institutions and society. When bias goes unchecked, it becomes "normalized" and contributes to a pattern of accepting discrimination, hate and injustice in society.

Amy Cooper's anger and bias led her to threaten Christian Cooper with the bias she assumed the police would have when she described the man who was threatening her as African American. This is a situation that could have easily escalated if the police arrived on the scene and engaged in a confrontation, or worse, with Christian Cooper. All too quickly and pervasively, the escalation of bias and hate has led to violence and the deaths of George Floyd and many others.

Age

11 and up

Questions to Start the Conversation