

Many Stories, One Nation

Curriculum Guide

Introduction

Many Stories, One Nation is a comprehensive high school Ethnic Studies course that examines American history through the lived experiences of diverse and historically underrepresented communities. By centering voices often marginalized in traditional curricula, the course helps students understand how different groups have navigated freedom, exclusion, resilience, and belonging — and how these journeys have shaped America's ongoing evolution.

Students develop deep understanding of diverse peoples' histories and essential civil discourse skills by examining how systems of exclusion operated and exploring how movements and strategies expanded democratic participation. The curriculum recognizes that building understanding across different backgrounds requires both honoring unique identities and finding shared values, enabling students to engage knowledgeably and empathetically with those from varied perspectives.

Unit 1: Identity, Character, and Civil Discourse

Unit Overview: Unit 1 establishes the foundation by exploring identity complexity — both students' own and others' — including how race, ethnicity, class, and other social categories shape experiences. Students move beyond simplistic identity categories to recognize that each person embodies multiple, intersecting dimensions of identity. This unit introduces character strengths that transcend cultural boundaries and develops practical communication skills for navigating disagreement constructively.

Lessons:

1. The Question of Identity and the Self
2. Identity Beyond Boundaries: Understanding Multiracialism in America
3. Character Strengths and Shared Humanity
4. Diversity and Unity: Navigating Belonging and Exclusion
5. Diverse Democracy in Practice: The Periwig Controversy
6. Civil Discourse Foundations



- 7. Logical Fallacies and Analysis Skills
- 8. Civil Discourse Synthesis and Practice Session
- 9. Diversity and Unity: Civil Discourse in Practice (Wrap-Up Part 1)
- 10. Diversity and Unity: Civil Discourse Forum (Wrap-up Part 2)

Unit 2: American Principles: Promoting or Impeding Equality?

Unit Overview: Unit 2 examines individual rights and community security within the context of American Governance Principles. Students explore the foundations and institutional structures of American democracy and the tensions they create. Through examining voices both included and excluded from early American democracy, students discover how different groups have invoked these principles to advocate for full citizenship.

Lessons:

- 1. Anarchy or Order - Hobbes and the Price of Security
- 2. Liberty's Foundation: Natural Rights and Limited Government
- 3. From Ideas to Implementation - Civil Discourse in the Founding Era
- 4. Self-Evident Truths: The Declaration's Revolutionary Claims
- 5. Claiming the Declaration: How Excluded Groups Weaponized America's Founding Principles
- 6. We the People: Designing Popular Government
- 7. Balancing Power: Separation, Federalism, and Checks
- 8. Rights in Practice: Who Gets Constitutional Protections?
- 9. Constitutional Rights Evolving: How Excluded Groups Expanded Rights Through Resistance
- 10. Imperfect but Perfectible: The Constitution and Equality's Evolution
- 11. Constitutional Tensions in Practice (Wrap-Up Part 1)
- 12. Constitutional Democracy in Action (Wrap-Up Part 2)

Unit 3: Indigenous Nations: Sovereignty, Resistance, and Survival Under Settler Colonialism

Unit Overview: Unit 3 examines how settler colonialism and racial hierarchies created America's founding paradox: democratic ideals coexisting with systematic exclusion. Through examining diverse strategies groups employed when facing exclusion — from cooperation to armed resistance, from legal challenges to cultural preservation — students develop nuanced understanding of how communities navigated structural barriers.



Lessons:

1. European Immigration and the Construction of Whiteness in Colonial America
2. Indigenous Nations Respond to European Invasion: Diplomacy and Resistance
3. Indigenous Resistance in the Southwest: The 1680 Pueblo Revolt
4. Cherokee Sovereignty vs. American Expansion: When Democracy Enacts Ethnic Cleansing
5. Enslaved Africans Build Community and Resist: Agency Under Oppression
6. The Constitution and Slavery: When Democracy Protects Inequality
7. Free Black Communities: Building Institutions While Fighting for Full Citizenship
8. Analyzing Patterns of Colonialism and Resistance (Wrap-Up Part 1)
9. Mock Constitutional Convention (Wrap-Up Part 2)

Unit 4: "I Contain Multitudes": The Spirit of Democracy and Its Limits

Unit Overview: Unit 4 reveals how democratic ideals were simultaneously celebrated and systematically denied based on race, class, and national origin during the antebellum period. Rather than presenting a simplistic narrative of progress, these lessons show how democratic ideals have consistently been challenged by economic exploitation, white supremacy, and systemic racial hierarchies.

Lessons:

1. How Slavery Built America: Economic Exploitation and Racial Hierarchies
2. Experiencing Slavery: Enslaved People's Resistance and Resilience
3. Free Black Communities and the Abolition Movement: Leading the Fight for Freedom
4. Abolition Strategies: The 1843 Convention Debate
5. Mixed-Race Identities in Antebellum America: Navigating Racial Hierarchies
6. Irish Immigration and the Politics of Exclusion: Who Gains Access to Whiteness?
7. The 1863 Draft Riots: How Economic Competition Divides Marginalized Communities
8. American Expansion and Hispanic Dispossession: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
9. Manifest Destiny: Ideology Justifying Dispossession
10. Mapping Constitutional Strategies (Wrap-Up Part 1)
11. Constitutional Strategy Forum (Wrap-Up Part 2)



Unit 5: Civil War, Reconstruction and Constitutional Revolution: Marginalized Groups Fight for Rights

Unit Overview: Unit 5 examines how constitutional revolution following the Civil War created new tools for marginalized groups to claim full citizenship — and how white supremacy systematically reversed these gains. Students explore how diverse groups navigated dramatic social change from 1865-1920, examining the Washington-DuBois debate, Native American responses to Industrial Age America, Hispanic Americans building the modern West, and the codification of racial classification systems.

Lessons:

1. The Road to Civil War: When Compromise Fails
2. Dred Scott and the Civil War Amendments: Constitutional Revolution
3. Reconstruction and its Aftermath: The Rise and Suppression of Black Political Power
4. Native Americans: Strategic Responses to Industrial Age America
5. Hispanic Americans Building Industrial America
6. Alaska Native Peoples: Navigating Cultural Continuity
7. U.S. Territorial Expansion in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest
8. Hawaiian Sovereignty vs. U.S. Annexation: Contested Claims to Democracy
9. Immigration and American Identity: Who Becomes American?
10. Asian Immigration: Creative Adaptation to Exclusion (1850-1924)
11. The Codification of the One-Drop Rule: Legally Defining Race to Maintain White Supremacy
12. Using the Constitution to Secure Rights (Wrap-Up Part 1)
13. Strategic Response Forum (Wrap-Up Part 2)



Unit 6: Between World Wars: Immigration, Restriction, and Resilience

Unit Overview: Unit 6 examines the complex forces that led to immigration restriction between 1914 and 1945. Students encounter a period when scientific racism, economic anxieties, WWI nationalism, and the Red Scare converged to dramatically limit immigration and challenge American pluralism. The unit examines African American resilience during Jim Crow, women's suffrage strategies, New Deal complexities, WWII's Double V Campaign, Japanese internment, and Mexican American wartime experiences.

Lessons:

1. Scientific Racism and the 1924 Immigration Restriction
2. Surviving Jim Crow: Black Cultural Renaissance and Political Resistance
3. The Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1920
4. The New Deal and African Americans: Progress Despite Opposition
5. World War II: Unity and Division in American Democracy
6. Japanese American Incarceration: Constitutional Failure and Resistance
7. Mexican American Servicemembers and the Zoot Suit Riots: Defending Democracy While Facing Racism
8. The Plinko Effect: How Shared Values Led to Strategic Diversity (Wrap-Up Part 1)
9. Strategic Complementarity: When Are Different Paths Both Right? (Wrap-Up Part 2)

Unit 7: The Long Civil Rights Movement: Diverse Strategies for Justice and Equality

Unit Overview: Unit 7 examines how the civil rights movement transformed not just African American citizenship, but opened pathways for all marginalized groups to claim full democratic inclusion. Building on Unit 6's Double V Campaign, students analyze how different groups used constitutional tools to fight for civil rights from 1945-2000 and discover how one movement's victories created tools others could use.

Lessons:

1. The Civil Rights Movement: Competing Constitutional Strategies, 1945-1968
2. The 1965 Immigration Act: A Turning Point in American History
3. Hispanic Americans: Continuity, Change, and Civic Participation (1945-2000)



- 4. Loving v. Virginia – Challenging Racial Boundaries Through Law and Love
- 5. Asian Americans and the 'Model Minority' Myth: Coalition and Division (1945-2000)
- 6. A Native American Renaissance: Sovereignty, Identity, and Two Paths Forward
- 7. The Women's Rights Movement and Intersectionality
- 8. Constitutional Strategies for Change (Wrap-Up Part 1)
- 9. Constitutional Strategies Summit (Wrap-Up Part 2)

Unit 8: Race and Identity in Contemporary America, 2000-Present

Unit Overview: Unit 8 brings students into contemporary debates about race, gender, class, and immigration. Students examine how African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American, European American, and Multiracial American communities have experienced both progress and persistent challenges since the civil rights era. The unit introduces six philosophical frameworks for understanding race and culminates in a three-lesson immigration arc featuring a DACA stakeholder simulation.

Lessons:

- 1. Progress and Persistent Inequality: Communities of Color Navigate Contemporary America
- 2. America's Expanding Diversity: Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity
- 3. Six Frameworks for Understanding Race in America
- 4. Policy Debates Over Systemic Racism: Affirmative Action, Reparations, and Mass Incarceration
- 5. Economic Justice and the Racial Wealth Gap: Class Across Communities of Color
- 6. Third and Fourth Wave Feminism: Labor, Pay Equity, and Coalition Building
- 7. America's Immigrants: Historical Patterns, Contemporary Questions
- 8. Contemporary Immigration Frameworks and Constituencies
- 9. DACA, Dreamers, and the Question of Belonging
- 10. When Frameworks Intersect
- 11. Coalition Building Across Difference



Unit 9: Building Multiracial Solidarity: Digital Democracy and Multiracial Coalition-Building (Capstone)

Unit Overview: This capstone unit connects students' extensive work on civil discourse, identity, and American diversity to contemporary challenges posed by technology and social media. Students examine how digital platforms affect discourse, practice applying techniques in digital contexts using AI-powered platforms and develop final projects demonstrating their ability to engage constructively across difference.

Lessons:

1. The Challenges of Democratic Dialogue in a Society of Technological Algorithms
2. From Polarization to Coalition: Building Multiracial Democracy
3. Finding Common Ground and Project Planning
4. Expert User Project Development Workshop
5. First Draft Development and Historical Integration

