



Module 1, Unit 1, Lesson Plan 2

Injustice and Inequality

(Grades 6-12)

Learning Targets/Objectives:

- Analyze primary documents about Jim Crow laws.
- Reconstructing Dr. King's experiences with racism when he was a teenager.

Success Criteria:

- Students should be able to work in teams to design and deliver an oration about a topic of interest.

Anchor Text:

- (Excerpt) Carson, Clayborn (ed.) *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Chapter 1.

Supplemental Resources:

- Illustrator Unknown. For the sunny South. An airship with a "Jim Crow" trailer. 1913. Public Domain, Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002720354/>
- Padlet. [View tutorial here.](#)

Lesson Content Overview:

Dr. King was exposed to the brutal nature of racism at age six when one of his white playmates was forbidden to play with him. The boy was the son of white owners of a grocery store located near the King home on Auburn Road in Atlanta. The boys were best friends until 1935 when segregation forced them to enter different schools. The painful experience directly impacted his attitudes and perceptions of white people. King said, reflecting on his childhood experience, "I will never forget what a shock this was to me." Although he initially wanted to "hate every white person," his parents, Martin Luther Sr. and Alberta King, reminded him of his "Christian duty to love."

King thrived in school. He skipped two grades and competed on the public speaking team. He heeded his parents' guidance for all his time in Atlanta schools but was tested once more at fourteen years old. After winning an oratory contest in Dublin, Georgia, where his speech was about "The Negro and the Constitution," King, his teacher Mrs. Bradley, and other Black students returning on a bus to Atlanta reluctantly gave up their seats and stood so white patrons could have a place to sit upon the insistence of the white driver. "I intended to stay right in that seat," King writes in his memoir. At the insistence of Mrs. Bradley, King and the other students eventually yielded. "It was the angriest I have

ever been in my life,” King later recollected.¹ Below is the speech King delivered at the Dublin oratorical competition. He was 14 years old.

We cannot have an enlightened democracy with one great group living in ignorance. We cannot have a healthy nation with one-tenth of the people ill-nourished, sick, harboring germs of disease which recognize no color lines—obey no Jim Crow laws. We cannot have a nation orderly and sound with one group so ground down and thwarted that it is almost forced into unsocial attitudes and crime. We cannot be truly Christian people so long as we flout the central teachings of Jesus: brotherly love and the Golden Rule. We cannot come to full prosperity with one great group so ill-delayed that it cannot buy goods. So as we gird ourselves to defend democracy from foreign attack, let us see to it that increasingly at home we give fair play and free opportunity for all people.

Today thirteen million black sons and daughters of our forefathers continue the fight for the translation of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments from writing on the printed page to an actuality. We believe with them that “if freedom is good for any it is good for all,” that we may conquer Southern armies by the sword, but it is another thing to conquer Southern hate, that if the franchise is given to Negroes, they will be vigilant and defend, even with their arms, the ark of federal liberty from treason and destruction by her enemies.²

Instructional Sequence:

- **Opener:**

To review the previous lesson, students will analyze the illustration [“For the sunny South. An airship with a ‘Jim Crow’ trailer”](#) and respond to the prompt: How does this illustration capture race relations of 1930s and 1940s Georgia?

 - **SEL Connection:** Using Padlet, a teacher can turn this opening activity into a “Silent Discussion” on dealing with discrimination. Students can remain anonymous while answering the prompt. They can also be asked to reflect on experiences when they felt like part of the out-group.
- **Class Discussion:**

Teacher will lead a discussion on the history of Jim Crow. The discussion should feature the story behind King’s comment “The angriest I have ever been” (see Content Lesson Overview).
- **Independent Read:**

Students will read an excerpt of Chapter 1 of King’s *Autobiography*. They will answer the following questions:

 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was only six when he experienced his first brush with racism. Have you ever experienced or witnessed racism? Explain how it made you feel?
 - Why do you think Dr. King and other students initially refused to give up their seats on the bus?

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr. quoted in Clarence Clayborne (ed.) *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

² Ibid.

- What is an oratory contest? If you were asked to participate in an oratory contest what would be your topic and why?
- **Small Group Collaboration:**

Working in groups of three to four, students will research an issue of interest. They will spend 30 minutes exploring their topics and compose a three-minute speech that takes a stance on the issue. Student speeches should include a one-minute overview of the issue, a one-minute description explaining why the issue is personal to each group member, and a one-minute argument for a position or stance on the issue. The argument should include a thesis statement and up to two supporting claims. Students should use evidence when discussing the supporting claims.

Formative Assessment

- Student groups will present their orations. Once completed, each member of the group will write a reflection. Reflections should respond to this prompt: How can you use the words and actions of Martin Luther King to inspire the kind of change you're seeking with your chosen issue?

Adaptations for Student Needs

IEP:

- Sizes of student groups range
- Students team up with a peer partner, while others would prefer to work individually.
- There is a variety of small-group work
- Chunking information
- Visual cues and wait time
- Visual supports (maps, images, PowerPoint slides, handouts)
- Assessments will be modified, and students given extra time

ELD

- Modified/simplified reading material
- Content-related lists/handouts of key terms
- Text is supported by visuals and connected to real-life experiences