

## Hip Hop Lesson Plan

**Subject: History/Social Studies Class -**

**Theme:** Post-Civil Rights, Racism and Discrimination

This class will encourage students to interrogate the racial dynamics of the United States from post-civil rights to contemporary America through the lens of Hip Hop texts. Students will examine the term post-racial in alignment with hip-hop texts to explore both racial issues that define American society after the civil rights movement, and to discuss whether the United States is moving toward a post-racial society.

### Learning Objectives

- To understand how hip-hop depicts the social-political climate of post-civil rights America
- To interrogate the presence of racism and discrimination in post-civil rights America
- To examine the term of racism and discrimination in post-civil rights to contemporary America by exploring the term *post-racial*

### Starting Task: Examining Hip Hop Texts

The students will spend the first 2 minutes of class reading through the Hip-Hop Texts in a hand-out provided. In groups of 2 or 3 they will answer the questions:

Text 1 - Tupac – To Live & Die in L.A.

It's the city of angels and constant danger  
South Central L.A. can't get no stranger  
Full of drama, like a soap opera, on the curb  
Watchin' the ghetto bird helicopters, I observe  
So many niggas gettin' three strikes, tossed in jail  
I swear, the pen right across from hell

Text 2 –Contemporary Hip Hop Music- Kendrick Lamar – Alright

Wouldn't you know  
We been hurt, been down before  
Nigga, when our pride was low  
Lookin' at the world like, "Where do we go?"  
Nigga, and we hate po-po  
Wanna kill us dead in the street fo sho'  
Nigga, I'm at the preacher's door  
My knees gettin' weak, and my gun might blow  
But we gon' be alright

“Which lyrics stood out most to you and why? What messages are Kendrick Lamar and Tupac trying to get across about lives for African Americans in America ? Do they present a sense of danger or happiness?”

Each group to feedback their thoughts and answers. I will also feedback some of my own analysis to stimulate discussion:

- Both artists appear to create a strong depiction of the still-present dangers and discrimination faced for African Americans in post-civil rights America
- Tupac's reference to the three-strike law in California, 1994 – implications made on it being directed more towards African Americans, relating to the increase in their incarceration
- Reference to the police and danger for African Americans– presence police brutality and discrimination in contemporary United States

### **Post-Civil Rights America to Present Day**

Was racism and discrimination ever removed from American society?

- Civil Rights Act passed in 1964
- 1980 Election – Reagan's landslide Victory and desire to "Make America Great Again"
- Adoption of Laissez faire economics – emphasis on economic growth in America which increased economic inequality
- Crack Epidemic in the 1980s – The War on Drugs – growing numbers of incarcerated African Americans. African Americans becoming increasingly involved and associated with the use of crack cocaine, resulting in discriminatory forces

**Scholarly Quote:** To be shown to the students on a handout and read out

“Contrary to their stated intention, civil rights laws have actually augmented the possessive investment in whiteness... because these particular laws were structured to be ineffective and largely unenforceable”<sup>1</sup>

### **“Post-Racial” -**

The term Post-Racial Will be introduced to the class to aid with analysis of the hip-hop text. Students will in pairs create a definition in 2 minutes. I will then feedback my definition after discussion

“A theoretical environment in which the U.S. is free from racial preference, discrimination and prejudice”

### **Reflection Task - Clip from Straight Outta Compton, (2015)**

(Watch the first 2 Minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBYiVoNwzQo&t=66s>

Questions:

“ What are some of the stereotypes about African Americans made here? Why has Hollywood chosen to include this scene in a movie based on Hip-Hop culture? Does the clip capture suggest America is *post-racial*? “

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<sup>1</sup> George Lipsitz, *A Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), p. 25.