
**The Teacher Institute at
Eastern State Penitentiary
Historic Site Presents:**

PRISON PIPELINE

LESSON PLAN

**EASTERN STATE
PENITENTIARY**

PRISON PIPELINE

LESSON PLAN

Unit Title:

Analyzing Mass Incarceration and the Prison Pipeline Phenomenon

Grade Levels:

9th through 12th

Number of Class Periods:

2 weeks; 40 minute class periods

Author:

Tiffany Davis is a dedicated second year high school English Teacher at Achieve Academy East in North Philadelphia. Her mission is to empower inner-city youth in Philadelphia through education. A proud graduate of Temple University, she brings passion and commitment to her classroom, aiming to instill not only academic knowledge but also essential life skills. Her goal is to make a meaningful impact by fostering a supportive learning environment and guiding her students toward brighter futures within their community.

INTRODUCTION & UNIT OVERVIEW

Students will participate in a group discussion where they must analyze the impact of mass incarceration on individuals, families, and communities. They will also write a reflective essay addressing the societal implications of the prison to pipeline phenomenon.

Key Points:

- Define mass incarceration and the prison to pipeline phenomenon
- Identify the contributing factors to mass incarceration
- Analyze the effects of mass incarceration on individuals and communities
- Evaluate the societal implications of the prison to pipeline phenomenon

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do government policies, economic conditions, and societal attitudes contribute to the high rates of incarceration in certain populations?
 - Explore the impact of laws, financial situations, and societal beliefs on the disproportionate incarceration of certain groups.
- What are the far-reaching effects of mass incarceration on individuals, families, and communities, and how do they perpetuate the cycle of incarceration?
 - Analyze the consequences of incarceration beyond the individual level and consider how they influence ongoing patterns of imprisonment.
- Why is it crucial for a just society to ensure equal access to justice and uphold the rights of all individuals, regardless of background?
 - Evaluate the importance of fairness and equity in the legal system and its implications for societal values and principles.
- In what ways can systemic biases and inequalities be addressed to create a more equitable and just criminal justice system?
 - Investigate strategies for combating systemic injustices and promoting fairness and equality within the legal system.
- How can community activism and advocacy play a role in reforming the current state of mass incarceration and promoting positive change?
 - Examine the power of collective action and community engagement in driving reforms and advancing social justice initiatives related to mass incarceration.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to demonstrate a 50% improvement in their ability to critically analyze the causes, effects, and societal implications of mass incarceration through class discussions, written reflections, and collaborative activities.

MATERIALS

1. Multimedia presentation video clip or real-life scenario: To introduce the topic of mass incarceration and engage students from the start.
2. Printed case studies related to mass incarceration for small group discussions during guided practice.
3. Reflective essay guidelines and rubric: To provide students with clear expectations for their independent practice assignment.
4. Poster or infographic materials: For the extension activity for early finishers to create visual representations of the impact of mass incarceration.
5. Research materials: Such as books, articles, or online resources for students to use in their homework reflections.
6. Whiteboard or chart paper: For recording key points discussed during the lesson.
7. Markers, pens, and paper: For students to take notes, participate in discussions, and complete assignments.
8. Laptops or devices: If students need to conduct online research for their reflections.
9. Classroom projector or screen: To display the multimedia presentation and any video clips.

PROCEDURES

- Introduce the topic of mass incarceration through a short video clip or real-life scenario to engage students.
- Facilitate a class discussion on the impacts of mass incarceration on individuals and communities.
- Explain the key points through a multimedia presentation with relevant statistics and examples. Address a common misconception: "Prisons are only for dangerous criminals."
- Assign students to write a reflective essay on the societal implications of the prison to pipeline phenomenon.
- Provide specific guidelines and rubric for the essay to ensure alignment with the learning objective.
- Encourage students to use evidence from the lesson and external research to support their arguments.
- Conduct a brief whole-class discussion summarizing the key points learned about mass incarceration and the prison to pipeline phenomenon.
- For students who finish early, they can create a poster or infographic highlighting the impact of mass incarceration on different communities. Encourage creativity in presenting the information in a visually engaging way.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Students will research and write a short reflection on how economic conditions and social/cultural factors influence the exercise of individual rights and civic responsibilities in the context of mass incarceration and the prison to pipeline phenomenon.

RESEARCH TOPICS

- Here are 10 topics that students could research and reflect on or they can come up with their own idea (approved by teacher):
- The impact of poverty and lack of access to quality education on the likelihood of individuals ending up in the criminal justice system.
- How racial disparities in sentencing and policing practices contribute to the disproportionate incarceration of minority populations.
- The role of for-profit prisons in perpetuating mass incarceration and incentivizing higher incarceration rates.
- The effects of mandatory minimum sentencing laws on the length of prison terms and rates of recidivism.
- The influence of media portrayals of crime and criminals on public perceptions of the justice system.
- The connection between mental health issues and substance abuse with incarceration rates.
- The impact of limited access to rehabilitation programs and support services on successful reentry into society after serving time in prison.
- How historical policies like the War on Drugs have disproportionately affected certain communities and contributed to mass incarceration.
- The relationship between socioeconomic status and the likelihood of being able to afford legal representation in the criminal justice system.
- The role of community activism and advocacy in pushing for criminal justice reform and alternatives to incarceration.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

- CC.1.4.9.A: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
- 5.2.9.A: Evaluate how government policies, economic conditions, and social/cultural factors influence the exercise of individual rights and civic responsibilities.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Contact education@easternstate.org.

Learn more about the Center for Justice Education at Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, and about the Teacher Institute, at

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