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

MASS INCARCERATION

LESSON PLAN

**EASTERN STATE
PENITENTIARY**

MASS INCARCERATION

LESSON PLAN

Unit Title:

Mass Incarceration Project

Grade Levels:

7th & 8th

Number of Class Periods:

20 (8 designated to in school project work days)

Author:

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INTRODUCTION & UNIT OVERVIEW

Over about 5-7 class periods students watched *13th* a documentary by Ava DuVernay. Using this amongst other online resources students were able to learn about the judicial system and mass incarceration. Concluding that America has a long history of incarceration that carries through to the present day.

For the project, students were expected to create a website that defined Mass Incarceration by writing a detailed history as well as including data to support the history. Students were also expected to draft a “Call to Action” that urged society and the government to make changes to the current system. The final piece to this project was including a social media or flyer campaign that promoted their website to the larger community. This was a group project with group sizes varying between 5-6 students.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is mass incarceration? How is it able to exist in America?
- How are laws created and how do they affect people long term?
- What does resistance look like when it comes to mass incarceration?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Understandings - *What specifically should students be able to understand after completing the unit?*

U1 How history follows us into the present

U2 Analyzing lawmaking and acknowledging how they have impact

U3 How to take action and resist oppressive systems

Students will know... - *What facts and basic concepts should students know and be able to recall?*

K1 The history of mass incarceration

K2 How mass incarceration impacts minorities in America

K3 How to create an action plan and cultivate change

Students will be skilled at... - *What skills and processes should students be able to draw upon and use?*

S1 Creating a timeline of important historical events and resistance

S2 Making connections between historic content and present day

S3 Creating campaign website

MATERIALS

- Documentary - 13th by Ava DuVernay (Pre-screened and approved by principal)
- Note taking sheet
- Project planning sheet
- Google Sites Account

ARTICLES

Used to build background context.

- “I’m a prisoner in solitary confinement, and I’m suing the state to end this torture” by Montana Bell
- “Disturbing new photos inside Philly’s juvenile jail show kids sleeping on floors in crowded, filthy cells” by Ellie Rushing and Samantha Melamed
- School to Prison Pipeline Infographic
- Stages of a Criminal Case

BOOK

- Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling by Sabrina Jones & Marc Mauer
 - Can be used as an anchor text if necessary.
 - Used to create “Kemba Smith Activity” (pg 7).

Click [here](#) to access a Google Drive folder with all materials, excluding specific website links.

PROCEDURES

Daily Lesson Structure (65 minute class periods)

{ “/” indicates “or” as the structure stayed the same daily but what we did each day differed }

- **Journal (5 minutes)**
 - engaging questions meant to get thinking started or to recall thoughts from previous day
 - i.e “*How does someone end up in prison? List all of the things you can think of that causes a person to go to prison.*” This was used the day we were going to do the Timeline to Prison Mini lesson
- **Artifact/Mini Lesson/Screening of documentary (30 minutes)**
 - Artifacts were things we would show as a pin point to the lesson that day. So if it was a day we were doing a mini lesson we would show an artifact related to that lesson then explain and discuss it.
 - Artifacts were, infographics, pictures, articles or websites.
 - Mini lessons were used to build background knowledge, explore important vocab, etc.
 - Screening was broken into 20 minute sessions per class period and accompanied by a note taking sheet to help keep students engaged.
- **Discussion / activity/ project work time (20 minutes)**
 - Activity suggestions on page 7.

KEMBA SMITH ACTIVITY

- Text
- Worksheet

REAL LIFE STORIES GROUP ACTIVITY

- Text
 - Students are divided into small groups.
 - Each group is assigned a story to read and discuss.
 - Findings are shared with the class.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.L.8.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization/ punctuation/spelling.

8.1.7.A - Demonstrate continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.

PASS5.2.8.B. - Describe how citizens resolve conflicts in society and government

CCSS.WHST.9 - Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.WHST.6 - Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

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

EASTERNSTATE.ORG