



The Influence of Pseudo-Scientific Racism and Eugenics on Modern Genocide

Audience: 9th-12th grades

Student Outcomes/Guiding Questions

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to answer...

- How have ideas like "race" been created and used to define membership in a community?
- How does creating societies built upon "racial" differences and hierarchies lead to atrocities such as genocide?

Aligned Standards (California Common Core)

[History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools](#)

- **7.11** Students analyze political and economic change in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries (the Age of Exploration, the Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason).
- **8.7** Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the South from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.
- **10.7** Students analyze the rise of totalitarian governments after World War I.
- **11.5** Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s.
- **12.1** Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.

[NCSS National Standards for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers](#)

- **Standard 4. Social Studies Learners and Learning**
 - Candidates use knowledge of learners to plan and implement relevant and responsive pedagogy, create collaborative and interdisciplinary learning environments, and prepare learners to be informed advocates for an inclusive and equitable society.
 - **Element 4a:** Candidates use knowledge of learners' socio-cultural assets, learning demands, and individual identities to plan and implement relevant and responsive pedagogy that ensures equitable learning opportunities in social studies.
 - **Element 4b:** Candidates facilitate collaborative, interdisciplinary learning environments in which learners use disciplinary facts, concepts, and tools, engage in disciplinary inquiry, and create disciplinary forms of representation.
 - **Element 4c:** Candidates engage learners in ethical reasoning to deliberate social, political, and economic issues, communicate conclusions, and take informed action toward achieving a more inclusive and equitable society.

Context: Ableism, racism, and xenophobia sat at the core of Eugenics and scientific racism. Theories of hereditary fitness shaped categories and experiences of ability, citizenship, reproduction, socioeconomic status, race, gender, and sexuality. This workshop introduces resources on the influence of scientific racism and the Eugenics movement within genocides throughout modern history. We will utilize a range of multimedia resources, readings, and teaching strategies to engage in this powerful history and its legacy on the modern world. The instructional materials on Eugenics and pseudo-scientific racism can be found in the Teaching Strategies Collection linked below.

Lesson/Activity:

What Is the Jigsaw Teaching Strategy?

The Jigsaw strategy asks a group of students to become “experts” on a specific text or body of knowledge and then share that material with another group of students. This strategy offers a way to help students understand and retain information while they develop their collaboration skills. Because students know they will be responsible for teaching the new content to their peers, they often feel more accountable for learning the material. The Jigsaw strategy is most effective when students know that they will be using the information they have learned from each other to create a final product, participate in a class discussion, or acquire material that will be on a test.

How to Use the Jigsaw Teaching Strategy

Step 1: Prepare the Activity

Select the material you want students to explore. It might be a collection of documents (e.g., readings, images, charts), or it could be a series of questions. Also, decide how many students you would like to work together in each “expert” group. Teachers often find that groups of three to five students work best. Sometimes it makes sense to form groups randomly (e.g., by counting off), while other times you might want to divide students in advance to balance strengths, needs, and interests. You can assign the same material to more than one group.

Step 2: Students Work in Expert Groups

In this step, small groups of students (“experts”) are responsible for reviewing specific material so that they can share this information with their peers. “Expert” groups work best when students have clear expectations about the type of information they are supposed to present to their peers. Therefore, it is often helpful to provide a chart or a series of questions that students answer together in their expert groups. It is important that all group members understand the material they are responsible for presenting. To avoid having students present inaccurate or misleading information, teachers can review and approve of content before this information is shared with students in the other groups.

Step 3: Students Meet in Teaching Groups

After “expert” groups have a solid understanding of the material they will be presenting, assign students to “teaching” groups. “Teaching” groups are typically composed of one or two members from each expert group. Experts take turns presenting information. Often teachers ask students to take notes while the experts present. For greater accountability, it is best if students are required to synthesize the material presented as part of an assignment, presentation, or discussion.

Step 4: Students Synthesize and Reflect

“Teaching” groups can be assigned a task that requires them to synthesize the information that has been shared, such as answering a larger question, comparing texts, or generating a plan of action. Students could also synthesize information individually or in pairs. It is appropriate to structure a class discussion that asks students to draw on the material they just learned to answer a question about history and apply this information to society today.

Supplemental Resources

- [Teaching Strategies Collection](#)
- [Understanding Universe of Obligation - Lesson plan | Facing History & Ourselves](#)
- [Jigsaw Teaching Strategy | Facing History & Ourselves](#)
- [Stations: Interacting with Multiple Texts Teaching Strategy | Facing History & Ourselves](#)

References

- Strategy: [Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World Teaching Strategy | Facing History & Ourselves](#)

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