

Title: Racism Dressed in the Form of Black Face

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: Visual Arts & Social Studies

Keywords: Jim Crow, Minstrel Show, Stereotype

Lesson Plan:	Black Face
Subject:	African American History, American History and Visual Arts
Grade:	9-12
Description/ Abstract of Lesson	Analyze artwork from a variety of cultures and times to compare the function, significance, and connection to other cultures or times.
VA.912.H.2.5	The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.
SS.912.A.5.9	Explain why support for the Ku Klux Klan varied in the 1920s with respect to issues such as anti-immigration, anti-African American, anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti-women, and anti-union ideas.
SS.912.A.1.4	Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.
LAFS912.RH.1.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information
LAFS.912.WHST.3 .9	Draw evidence from informational text to support analysis, reflection and research.
Objective(s):	Students will be able to study cultures artwork that was utilized during the Minstrel era. Students will be able to make an inform decision of society stereotypes
Materials:	Paper Pen The Case Study PowerPoint: The Origin of Black Face
Duration:	● 1-2 class periods ● Block Scheduling (90 min.) 1 class period
Lesson Lead In/ Opening:	The teacher will make a chart on the board with the words social, political, economic and cultural on the left side of the chart. On the top of the chart the word stereotype as a heading Students will share their written stereotypes on the board and have a whole class discussion. Where did these stereotypes come from? Does fear play a role in stereotyping?
Activity 1:	Warm up or Do Now: List some stereotypes then think pair and share
Activity 2:	Teach: The Origin of Black Face using the PowerPoint: Origin of the Black Face After showing the video have students share their opinion
Activity 3:	Read the Case study then Have students answer questions
Activity 4:	Write 2 paragraph. First paragraph Cause and Effect of Black Face the second paragraph a summary of what you learned and how can you stop society's stereotyping?

Higher Order Thinking Questions:	Are there any historical events that should not be taught in schools?
Suggested Books:	<p><i>From Slavery to Freedom A History of African Americans</i> by Franklin, John and Higginbotham, Evelyn</p> <p>Life at the Turn of the 20th Century</p>
Web Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackface: A cultural history of a racist art form https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqID-eZm1ck • https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/weve-got-egg-on-our-blackface • https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/antiblack/picaninny/homepage.htm

The Case Study: The University of Texas at Austin

Teaching on Blackface: A Lesson on Stereotypes

In 2014, Alan Barron, a white middle school history teacher who taught for 36 years in Monroe, Michigan, was placed on administrative leave a few weeks before his retirement. Barron's administration viewed his history lesson as racist. While teaching about racial segregation laws during the Jim Crow era, Barron played a video showing a white entertainer in blackface. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, white actors commonly painted their faces with makeup to depict black individuals. Barron explained that the purpose of the video was to show how stereotypes of African Americans were portrayed at one point in American history. During the lesson, an assistant principal who was observing the classroom demanded that Barron stop the video because she "concluded that Barron's lesson about how entertainers used to be racist was itself racist." Barron was subsequently suspended.

Many parents spoke out against Barron's suspension. Adrienne Aaron, whose African American daughter was in Barron's eighth grade history class at the time, said that her daughter was not offended by the lesson and thought that the subject needed to be discussed. Aaron stated, "[My daughter] was more offended that they stopped the video...History is history. We need to educate our kids to see how far we've come in America. How is that racism?"

After two weeks on leave, the district allowed Barron to return to his classroom. The superintendent stated, "The teacher in question was placed on paid leave to give the district time to fully consider what occurred in this classroom. As a result of incorrect information, a highly respected and loved teacher, and one who has done much for his students and the community, has had to endure a public airing of what should have ended through a district discussion." Barron was set to retire soon after being reinstated.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think Mr. Barron was demonstrating moral awareness or a lack of moral awareness by showing the video of the minstrel show? Explain your position.
2. Do you agree with the assistant principal's decision to shut down the video during the observation? Was she demonstrating moral awareness or lack of moral awareness? Explain your position.
3. Should Mr. Barron have warned his students that some of them could have been offended by the racism portrayed in the video? Why or why not? Is it ever necessary for teachers to provide disclaimers about content that they use in their classrooms? Explain.
4. Should teachers be prevented from showing examples (books, films, photos, etc.) of historical events and/or practices that are considered racially insensitive by today's standards? Why or why not?
5. What do you think is the best way to teach about stereotypes? Is it possible to do this without offending someone? Explain.
6. Many people viewed political correctness as the main issue of this case. Can you think of an example in which political correctness promoted ethical behavior? How about an example in which political correctness led to unethical behavior?

Resources:

Teacher's lesson about racism offends his bosses http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2014-06-05/news/ct-kass-met-0605-20140605_1_history-schooladministrator-segregation

The Daily Caller – Middle School Teacher Suspended for Showing Video About White Actors Wearing Blackface <http://news.yahoo.com/middle-school-teacher-suspended-showing-video-white-actors122027921.html>

Monroe News – Monroe Teacher Suspended Over Black History Lesson <http://www.monroenews.com/news/2014/may/30/monroe-teacher-alan-barron-suspended/>

Teaching Tolerance – Do's and Don'ts of Teaching Black History <http://www.tolerance.org/article/dos-and-donts-teaching-black-history>