

Makeba Green
African Americans in the Media
Montclair State University
Contact: 973-454-0244

Lesson Plan

Unit Topic: Portrayals of African Americans in American media.

Lesson: Students will examine various historical media to analyze negative stereotypes of African Americans in the past and today.

Rationale for the lesson: This lesson examines how media presents African Americans in negative ways, in both explicit and implicit ways. It's important to inform students how African Americans have been historically portrayed negatively in the media, including the way that they looked, dressed & spoke. Students will examine different media clips in order to understand that negative stereotypes of African Americans developed during the era of slavery and Jim Crow era, which are still with us today. Students will recognize the power that the media has on societal views of African Americans.

Standards:

Social Studies Common Core Standards

Key Ideas and Details:

- RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

- RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

- RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Essential Question:

How are African Americans portrayed in popular media compared to whites and why does this matter?

Objectives:

1. Students will learn what a "stereotype" is and how popular media influences stereotypes of certain groups, such as African Americans.
2. Students will learn that some media portray African Americans in terms of negative stereotypes from the 1950s through the present day.

3. Students will learn that these negative stereotypes can have real world consequences, and need to be addressed.
4. Students will learn how to combat negative stereotypes about African Americans in the media and replace them with positive and more accurate portrayals.
5. Students will learn different ways that we can assist with breaking negative stereotypes.

Lesson Opener: (Ice Breaker): Students will be divided into two big groups and will write positive and negative stereotypes about African Americans that can be found in popular media today such as magazines, advertisement, TV, Radio and more. 3-5 minutes

Step-by-Step Procedure:

After the ice breaker, students will further discuss stereotypes in relation to the media-and why they think it is important for us to be our own journalist, along with what is being reported. Students will go on a journey and explore various media from the 19th-21st century.

Students will take five minutes to break into groups to examine the following [depiction](#) of a runaway slave, Mobile Commercial Register, June 16, 1832. (Larger image follows at end of lesson plan).



Students will take five minutes to write down their observation of this image and, if time permits, a sample of the following runaway slave [advertisements](#).

Students will select a group leader from each group to present their findings (five minutes)

2. Students will take five minutes to analyze clip one: 1920's Tom & Jerry video : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIs5H4xVHys>

Assignment One: Students will take five minutes to break into groups to discuss their observations of the video.

After students write down their observations, students will select two group leaders to present their findings to the class. (Five minutes)

3. Students will take five minutes to discuss in groups if they've ever heard of the following terms:

1. · Blackface
2. · Mammy
3. · Sapphire
4. · Stereotype
5. · Gisbell (Jezebel)

Students will present their findings about the vocabulary listed above. (Five minutes)

Students will go over the actual definition of each word and consider why these are harmful. To what extent have they persisted to the present day? (five minutes)

4. Students will analyze the 21st century hit tv show *Empire*. Students will take five minutes to watch a short clip of *Empire* and discuss the stereotypes that they see present in the video.

Video Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Imi5QbkhQ1Q>

Lesson closure:

Students will spend the last five minutes discussing a positive hashtag to help educate & empower negative media and how they can assist with being apart of the change. (for instance, #blacklivesmatter)

Assessment: Students will be evaluated based on their responses from the video to determine if they're able to identify the various stereotypes in the clips that are shown.

Modifications for diverse learners

This lesson plan is presented for either audio or visual learners. Students will also have a chance to take notes.

Materials Needed:

1. · Laptop
2. · Projector
3. · Access to Youtube & Internet
4. · Dry erase board or markers

Homework: Students will go home and identify a negative depiction of African Americans in popular media: film, television show, internet, newspaper, broadcast news, etc. Write a letter to the producer explaining why you think this is a negative stereotype, why it matters, and what you think the production company can do to modify it in the future. 1-2 pages.



A Runway Slave. Drawing by Richard Brough from an advertisement in the *Mobile Commercial Register*, June 16, 1832