



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2022 Volume III: Ethnic Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy

Race, Racism and Genetics: An Elementary STEM Unit

Guide for Curriculum Unit 22.03.03
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This unit will teach students about Ethnic Studies, its history and its role in our lives. It is the study of the histories, experiences, cultures and issues of racial-ethnic groups. This unit will provide a deeper understanding that while 'race,' as a cultural, social and historical concept has real life consequences, it does not describe human biological variation from a scientific perspective. Students will learn the history of the concept of 'race' from a social context and what scientific researchers have to say about it. 'Race, Racism and Genetics' uses research, lesson plans and activities to explain genetic similarity and variation. Biologically speaking, 'race' is not real, but racism is. In this unit, students will discuss sensitive issues based on what they know about genetics and how it pertains to the social construct of 'race' and ethnicity, including the ways in which they identify and are identified. Students should then be able to relate the ideas of which they are learning to the world around them in terms of controversies like 'race' and health, 'race' and IQ and 'race' and sports over the course of four weeks. Students will see how 'race' and racism is embedded in our lives and can affect our everyday thinking and relationships.

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