

Redesigning Redlining

Unit Overview

Through the use of technological resources, this unit for fifth and sixth grade addresses STEM, Social Studies, and Language Arts to teach the history of redlining in Birmingham and analyze its present day effects. Students both read about the history of their city and its practices of redlining at the turn of the twentieth century while observing the livability of their own community and surrounding neighborhoods, seeing how historic causation still affects Birmingham today. Interactive maps of redlining and environmental conditions allow students to analyze data and correlation between conditions and race demographics in certain neighborhoods. In the virtual reality program KaiXR, students recreate historical cities and design their own ideal city based on what they have learned about environmental risks. To connect redlining to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, students read stories of the Children's March and create a podcast interviewing a marcher. This unit was designed and piloted by Devin Hudson in his sixth grade class at i3 Academy in collaboration with Kids in Birmingham 1963

Alabama State Standards

Mathematics

MA19.6.6. Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals using a standard algorithm.

MA19.6.15. Write, read, and evaluate expressions in which letters represent numbers in real-world contexts

MA19.6.15b. Write expressions to represent verbal statements and real-world scenarios.

MA19.6.19. Write and solve an equation in the form of $x+p=q$ or $px=q$ for cases in which p , q , and x are all non-negative rational numbers to solve real-world and mathematical problems.

MA19.6.19a. Interpret the solution of an equation in the context of the problem.

English Language Arts

ELA21.6.R3. Use digital and electronic tools appropriately, safely, and ethically when researching and writing, both individually and collaboratively.

ELA21.6.7b. Write informative or explanatory texts with an organized structure and a formal style, incorporating a focused point of view, a clear purpose, credible evidence, and technical word meanings.

ELA21.6.13. Create and edit digital products that are appropriate in subject and purpose for a particular audience or occasion.

ELA21.6.14. Enhance oral presentations by introducing ideas in digital formats with specific attention to subject, occasion, audience, and purpose.

Science

SC23.6.11a. Define problems and design solutions to monitor and mitigate human impact on the environment.

Social Studies

SS24.5.7. Describe the economic developments in the United States during the Roaring Twenties that caused the 1929 stock market crash.

SS24.5.12 Outline key events and campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement and identify significant organizations and their contributions within the Movement.

Notes

- This unit is intended for grades 5 and 6.
- It is designed to be completed over 10 class periods, with extra time outside of class allowed for the final podcast.

Daily Plans

Day 1

Materials needed: [*Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford

1. The teacher will introduce the topic of redlining to the class, giving its definition and a broad overview of how it has been used to discriminate against African Americans in the United States.
2. The teacher will describe Tulsa in the early twentieth century and explain the concept of a Black Wall Street. Students will discuss what might cause the differences in communities impacted negatively by redlining vs. Black Wall Street communities.
3. The teacher will read the book *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre* by Carole Boston Weatherford. The teacher will then lead another discussion surrounding how systemic discrimination and racial violence have both been used to hurt the African American community.

Day 2

Materials needed: [KaiXR](#)

1. The teacher will introduce the KaiXR platform and the task to recreate the Black Wall Street in Tulsa.
2. Students will begin their projects to recreate Tulsa.

Day 3

Materials needed: [KaiXR](#)

1. Students will finish their recreations of Tulsa in KaiXR

Day 4

Materials Needed: —

1. The teacher will invite students to brainstorm physical elements (placement of highways, train tracks, trees, etc) that make a neighborhood more or less desirable to live in based on how they affect daily life.
2. The class will create a list of elements that are present in the nicest neighborhoods to live in.

Day 5

Materials needed: [Birmingham Redlining Map](#), [Tree Equity Score Map](#)

1. Students will explore the historical Birmingham Redlining Map at dsl.richmond.edu, taking note of the correlations between the color coding of the neighborhoods and their populations in 1940.
2. Students will also look at the Tree Equity Score Map at treeequityscore.org, taking note of how the score is calculated and how it compares to the redlining map.
3. Students will discuss as a class how elements on their list from the previous class period affect how neighborhoods are rated on the maps, and connect the disparities between neighborhoods to what they have learned about redlining.

Day 6

Materials needed: [KaiXR](#)

1. The teacher will introduce another project using KaiXR to create “green” communities, using elements from the list to make neighborhoods that are most desirable to live in.
2. Students will begin their projects.

Day 7

Materials needed: [KaiXR](#)

1. Students will complete their projects.

Day 8

Materials needed: Grading rubric for students

1. Students will present their projects to the class, explaining the decisions they made in the design of their neighborhoods based on the list of desirable elements and the data presented on the maps.
2. The rest of the class will complete peer grading rubrics based on their previous research and discussions.

Day 9

Materials needed: [Let the Children March](#) by Cynthia Levinson, stories from [Kids in Birmingham 1963](#)

1. The teacher will introduce the story of the Birmingham Children's March and its historical context, emphasizing how the many inequalities protested by the civil rights movement were created or reinforced by redlining and seen in the neighborhoods that students analyzed previously.
2. The teacher will read *Let the Children March* by Cynthia Levinson.
3. The teacher will read suggested narratives from KIDS storytellers (Veronica Jackson, Pam Powell, Melvin Todd, etc) about redlining and the Children's March, found on kidsinbirmingham1963.org.
4. Students will discuss the story of Audrey Faye Hendricks and the other kids. They will then brainstorm ways that they can fight inequalities present in their own community.

Day 10

Materials needed: Podcast equipment, other technological resources

1. The teacher will invite a KIDS storyteller to be interviewed by students about their experiences during the Children's March or other events in 1963.
2. The students will brainstorm questions to ask the storyteller based on their projects and class discussions completed over the course of the unit.
3. The teacher and students will record, conduct, and edit the interview.
4. Alternate final projects involving technology may be substituted.

Funding

This project is supported by the Alabama Humanities Alliance, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Alabama Humanities Alliance or the National Endowment for the Humanities.