

## **Lesson 4.1: The Power of Normal**

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# Considering our everyday “normal”

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## BEFORE READING

- What does the word **normal** mean to you?
- What are some things that are **normal** to a community of yours that might not be normal to someone outside of that community? Some community norms you might consider are ones that are specific to your family, to your school, to an online platform, to your neighborhood, to Denver as a city, to America as a country, or beyond.



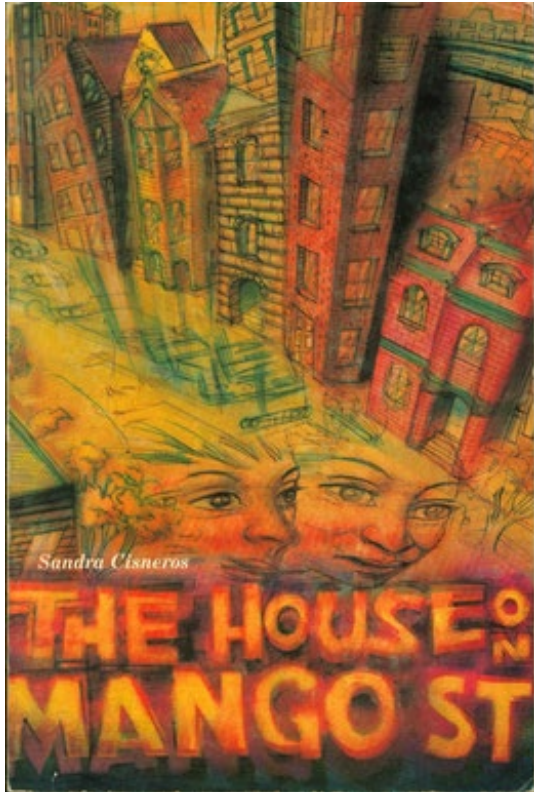
# Vocabulary terms to know

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**Normalization** is a process that makes something feel more normal or regular within a specific community.

**Implicit bias**, also known as implicit prejudice or implicit attitude, is a negative attitude, of which one is not consciously aware, against a specific social group.

# Shared reading & annotation



## DURING READING

Read the excerpt “Those Who Don’t” by Sandra Cisneros, from her novel *The House on Mango Street*. While you read, mark “N” next to details that show what the narrator, Esperanza, feels is **normalized**, or normal within her community. Also, mark “IB” next to details that show instances of **implicit bias**, or unintentional judgment or prejudice, among any of the characters.

Those who don't know any better come into our neighborhood scared. They think we're dangerous.

They think we will attack them with shiny knives. They are stupid people who are lost and got here by mistake. But we aren't afraid. We know the guy with the crooked eye is Davey the Baby's brother, and the tall one next to him in the straw brim, that's Rosa's Eddie V., and the big one that looks like a dumb grown man, he's Fat Boy, though he's not fat anymore nor a boy.

All brown all around, we are safe. But watch us drive into a neighborhood of another color and our knees go shakity-shake and our car windows get rolled up tight and our eyes look straight. Yeah. That is how it goes and goes.

# Independent reflection



Sandra Cisneros, author of “Those Who Don’t”

## AFTER READING

The vignette ends with the sentence, “that is how it goes and goes.” What is the “it” that the narrator describes as **normalized** and ongoing? Use text evidence to support your inference.



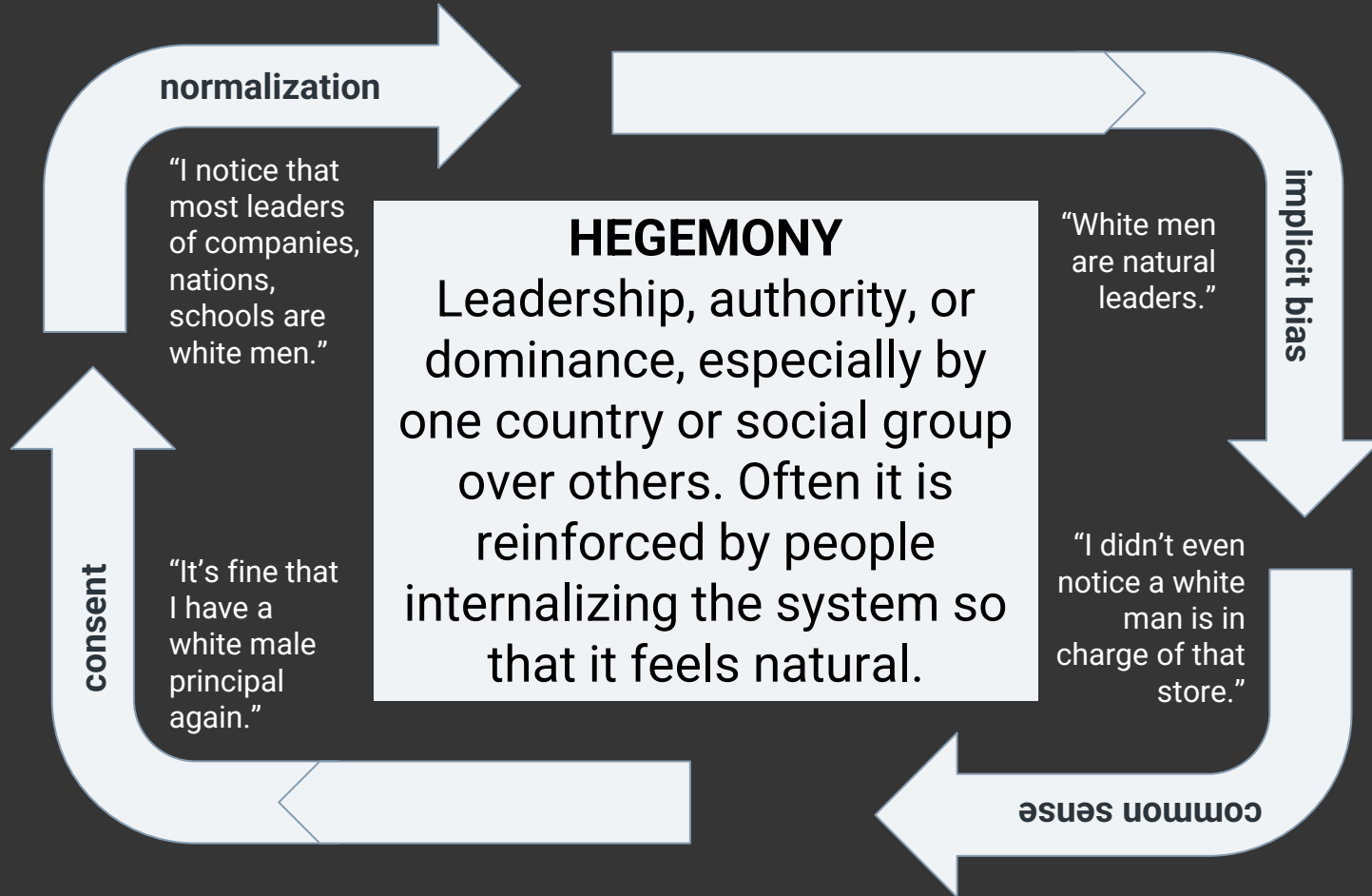
# Think-pair-share discussion

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In the United States, who decides what is **normal** and what is not normal?

Who or what reinforces normalization?

# How Hegemony Works





# Thinking about hegemony

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Where do you see examples of **hegemony** in the real world?

Think not just of extreme historical circumstances, but also of **normalized** instances today.





# Film analysis



“Zero” by Christopher Kezeloz

<p>How is hegemony <b>reinforced</b> by authorities and community members?</p>	<p>How has hegemony <b>normalized</b> implicit bias and acts of prejudice?</p>
<p>Who has <b>power</b> in this society?</p>	
<p>Where do you see acts of <b>resistance</b> against hegemony?</p>	<p>To what extent does the end of the film uphold or dismantle the preexisting <b>hegemony</b>? Explain.</p>



# T-chart pre-writing activity

What is **realistic** about the society that Zero lives in?

What is **unrealistic** about the society that Zero lives in?

# Write to reflect



In your journal, design a sequel in which you explore what it would take for Zero to truly dismantle the systems of power in his world.

- Think of the short film's end as the beginning of your sequel.
- Build upon existing plot details to show cause-and-effect.
- Consider characterization when shaping motive and behavior.
- Use your imagination!



# Journal sharing

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- Trade your journal with your partner.
- Read the sequel idea.
- Write a comment that does one of the following:
  - Compliments a specific aspect of the narrative idea
  - Connects the sequel with the real world
  - Observes and explains how the hegemony is effectively dismantled