

Teacher Guide

Lesson 2: The Intersectionality Lens Huitzilopochtli Power: The Will to Act



Lesson 2: The Intersectionality Lens

Compelling Question:

How can we harness creativity and radical imagination to contribute to social movements that transform society?

Content Objectives

I can:

- Evaluate the role of intersectionality in building social movements.
- Learn about the stories and messages of suffragists who articulated the limits of a social movement and envisioned ways to overcome them.
- Employ radical imagination to formulate hypothetical alternative outcomes for contemporary and historical social movements.

Purpose

In this lesson, you will learn about the importance of intersectionality in social movements. First, you will review and reflect on the effectiveness of the intersectionality lens to gain understanding and insight into cultural and historical movements we have studied in the course. Then, you will examine racism in the suffrage movement and reframe parts of its exclusionary narrative. You will watch a video performance of a suffragist who embraced intersectionality and helped build a more inclusive movement. Finally, you will practice using the intersectional lens to radically imagine What if? hypotheticals for contemporary and historical social movements.

Lesson Steps

1. **Review and reflect through the intersectionality lens:** Review the definition of intersectionality and reflect on its effectiveness to build greater insight and understanding by applying it to different historical and cultural movements.
2. **Examine racism in the suffrage movement:** Listen to the Amended podcast, [Myths and Sentiments](#) to learn about the dominant narrative of the suffrage movement and the often not discussed racism present in the movement. Finally, analyze the 1912 broadside titled, [Votes For Women Will Improve the Electorate](#), and complete the **Limitations of the Suffrage Movement** to reflect on the consequences of not embracing intersectionality in a social movement.
3. **Explore the counter narrative of “Ain’t I a Woman”:** First, review the definition of intersectionality. Learn about suffragists who used intersectionality to advocate for race and gender equality and reframe a social movement. Finally, use the lens of intersectionality to reflect on your own identity.
4. **Reflect on the power of intersectionality in social movements:** Consider the hypothetical that historian, Martha Jones, presents, and how it continues to be a powerful “what if” even today. Then complete your own **“What if?” hypotheticals** handout based on historical and contemporary social movements.



Lesson Overview

Pacing

Lesson Timing: 80 minutes

Summary

In this lesson, students learn about the importance of intersectionality in social movements. First, they review and reflect on the effectiveness of the intersectionality lens to gain understanding and insight into cultural and historical movements they have studied in the course. Then, students examine racism in the suffrage movement and reframe parts of its exclusionary narrative. They watch a video performance of a suffragist who embraced intersectionality and helped build a more inclusive movement. Finally, they will practice using the intersectional lens to radically imagine What if? hypotheticals for contemporary and historical social movements.

Colorado Standards: [Social Studies](#) & Interdisciplinary

SS.HS.1.2: Analyze historical time periods and patterns of continuity and change, through multiple perspectives, within and among cultures and societies.

Language Objectives: [9th Grade DPS English Language Competencies](#)

Narrative Writing

- Develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences
- Incorporate narrative techniques to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Literary Analysis

- Comprehend and analyze key ideas and details in literary texts
- Analyze the impact of authorial point of view, craft, and structure on meaning in literary texts.

Informational Text Analysis

- Analyze the impact of authorial point of view, craft, and structure on the meaning in informational texts.

Speaking and Listening

- Prepare for discussion by evaluating and collecting information on material under study.

Assessment

Performance Task

- Employ radical imagination to develop “What if?” hypothetical scenarios based on contemporary and historical social movements.

Formative

- Identify and articulate the limitations of the suffragist movement and the ways in which certain suffragists presented a reframing of what is possible to overcome them.

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Lesson Resources

For Students	For Teachers	Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limitations of the Suffrage Movement• "What if?" hypotheticals• Myths and Sentiments• Votes For Women Will Improve the Electorate• Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" performed by Kerry Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson 2.1 Slide Deck• Limitations of the Suffrage Movement Teacher Key• "What if?" hypotheticals Teacher Key	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anchor chart• Video and audio equipment

Teacher Preparation

Step 1: Activate prior knowledge on intersectionality by referring to past units, lessons and activities in the course

Step 2: Provide background on the suffrage movement so that students can better engage with activity on the significance of the movement's limitations

Step 3: Clarify what a dramatized speech is and the significance of artistic reenactment

Step 4: Clarify what a hypothetical scenario is and the effectiveness of imagining alternative outcome to better plan a course of action

Lesson Steps in Detail

Step 1: Review and reflect through the intersectionality lens

(20 min)

Purpose: Students review the definition of intersectionality and reflect on its effectiveness to build greater insight and understanding. They will engage in group discussion to apply intersectionality to historical and cultural movements covered in the course and to their own lived experiences and identity. Once students have a strong use of the concept they will be ready for the following activity that has explored the limitations of the suffrage movement and how intersectionality helped push the movement beyond its boundaries.

You might say: *Today we are going to look at the history of the suffrage movement and explore how certain suffragists used an intersectionality lens to highlight the movement's limitations and push beyond its boundaries. We start with reviewing intersectionality and reflecting on how it has helped understand the historical and cultural movements we have covered in the course.*

[Slide 2] Review definition of Intersectionality

- Facilitate discussion using the guiding questions:
 - *What is intersectionality, and how would you define it in your own words?*
Possible answer: Intersectionality is a conceptual tool that recognizes that people's experiences are shaped by a combination of their identities, and these intersections play

a significant role in shaping their lived experiences - how they see the world and how they are seen by others.

- *What are some examples of intersecting social identities? How do these intersecting identities shape a person's experiences?*

Possible answer: Race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and language are all examples of components that can intersect to form someone's identity. These components can lead to positive experiences of self and group empowerment, but also negative experiences of discrimination and biases.

- *How does intersectionality challenge traditional ways of understanding social identities and oppression?*

Possible answer: It challenges simplistic categorizations of social identities and oppression, highlighting the complexity and interconnectedness of various forms of discrimination individuals may face.

- *How does intersectionality contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of power dynamics and social inequalities?*

Possible answer: It helps reveal the complex ways in which various forms of privilege and oppression intersect and combine to influence a person's experiences and opportunities.

Reflect on the intersectionality lens in past units and our own experiences

- Invite students to identify how the intersectionality lens provided an effective way to look at and better understand different historical and cultural movements covered in the course.
- Facilitate discussion using the guiding questions:

- *Looking at the course overview, for which historical or cultural movement did an intersectional lens help you gain greater insight?*

Possible answer: (Answers will vary) The intersectional lens helped me gain greater insight into the indigenous social and cultural movement for climate justice. By examining the movement through the intersection identities of indigenous communities, I could understand how environmental issues intersect with historical injustices, cultural preservation, and economic disparities. It also helped me see the opportunity the indigenous knowledge and worldview provides to approach climate justice with a multilayered and transformative perspective.

[Slide 3] Apply the intersectionality lens to yourself

- Facilitate discussion using the guiding questions:

- *How does your experience and identity inform how you see through the intersectionality lens?*

Possible answer: (Answers will vary) My experiences and identity inform how I see through the intersectionality lens by allowing me to express the different aspects of my identity that make me unique, as well as influencing my awareness of the diverse dimensions that shape other people's lives.

- *What is one example of how your unique experience and identity is seen through the dominant narrative lens vs. the intersectionality lens?*

Possible answer: (Answers will vary) As a light skinned latino, the dominant narrative lens sees me as white, while the intersectionality lens allows me to express my ethnic identity as a latino that shapes an important part of my history and cultural identity.

- *What is an example of how seeing the world through the intersectionality lens changes how you see and understand people, culture and power?*

Possible answer: (Answers will vary) If I approach a stranger through the intersectionality lens, I can be more sensitive to the diversity of human experiences that I am not aware of. It pushes me to be more curious and sensitive, and adds a sense of responsibility to

advocate for a more inclusive community and society that values and respects the complexity of each individual's identity.

Step 2: Examine racism and the limitations of the suffrage movement

(20 min)

Purpose: Students listen to a part of the amended podcast episode on suffrage and women's history to explore the limitations of the suffragist movement and understand the importance of integrating intersectionality as a lens to comprehend the past social movement and their relevance in today's society.

You might say: Now that we have cleaned and sharpened the focus of the intersectionality lens, we can use it to explore the suffrage movement - the social movement that fought for women's right to vote in the U.S. We will analyze a quote, listen to the excerpt of a podcast, and read an article to better understand the limitations of the suffrage movement and then look at examples of suffragists who pushed beyond the movement's limitations.

[Slides 4] Introduce the podcast and activity

- Distribute the [Limitations of the Suffrage Movement](#) handout
- **Play excerpt from podcast:** ["Myths and Sentiments"](#) [0:00-4:02] and have students complete **Part 1**.
Present the 1912 broadside titled, ["Votes For Women Will Improve the Electorate,"](#)
- Prompt students to reflect on the document and answer the questions in the handout on the consequences of not embracing intersectionality in a social movement (**Part 2**)

Step 3: Explore the counter narrative of "Ain't I a Woman"

(20 min)

Purpose: Students explore the stories and messages of suffragists who embraced intersectionality, to gain a deeper understanding of their ability to articulate the suffragist movement's boundaries while envisioning ways to expand its reach and influence.

You might say: *Previously, we examined the internal limitations that hindered the suffragist movement. Now, we will look closely at the contributions of one of the suffragists who embraced intersectionality to transcend the movement's barriers. By immersing ourselves in the counter narrative of "Ain't I a Woman" by Sojourner Truth, we can gain a deeper understanding of how the radical suffragists skillfully defined the movement's scope while envisioning ways to magnify its influence.*

[Slide 5] Introduce Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" performed by Kerry Washington

- **Play video:** [Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" performed by Kerry Washington](#) [0:00-3:00]
- **Facilitate group discussion using the guided questions:**
 - *What is the significance of Sojourner Truth's rhetorical question, "Ain't I a woman?"*
Possible answer:
 - *How is "Ain't I a Woman" a counter narrative that challenges the dominant narrative of the time?*
Possible answer:

- *What challenges did suffragists like Sojourner Truth face in trying to incorporate intersectionality into their advocacy, and how did they navigate issues of race, class, and other social factors to build a more inclusive movement?*
Possible answer:
- *What is the impact of performances like Kerry Washington's portrayal of Sojourner Truth's speech?*
Possible answer:
- *How does the reenactment of historical figures' powerful speeches impact our understanding of their contributions and broader historical context?*
Possible answer:
- *How can performances like this inspire and motivate present-day activists and advocates for social justice?*
Possible answer:

Teacher Tip: Extension Activity

Present the Jigsaw activity

- Distribute the Intersectionality & Suffrage Jigsaw handout
- Organize students into groups and assign one historical figure per person
 - Ida B. Wells: [Source 1 \(excerpt\)](#), [Source 2](#)
 - Frances Ellen Watkins Harper: [Source 1](#), [Source 2 \(excerpt\)](#)
 - Mabel Lee: [Source 1 \(excerpt\)](#), [Source 2](#)

Facilitate a group share out and discussion

- Use the following guiding questions:
 - In what ways did intersectionality enhance the suffragist movement's effectiveness and impact on society?
 - Can you provide an example of how it broadened their support base and strengthened their message?

Step 4: Reflect on the power of intersectionality in social movements

(20 min)

Purpose: Students answer guiding questions and generate "What if?" hypothetical scenarios, to reflect on social movement limitations and practice harnessing the power of radical imagination to envision transformative approaches that overcome shortcomings.

You might say: *Let us now engage in our own radical imagination process by developing "What if?" hypothetical scenarios for different historical and contemporary social movements and reflect on how the practice can be a powerful way to overcome shortcomings.*

[Slide 6] Explore "What if?" hypotheticals

- Distribute "[What if?](#)" hypotheticals handout and present the quote
- Quote: "Historians don't really like to play with hypotheticals, but I'll try this one. You know, what if suffragists in the 19 teens and 20s had held out. And insisted that the only women's suffrage

amendment that they would advocate for, that they would support, was one that promised all American women the vote or guaranteed women the vote without respect to race, color, previous

- condition of servitude. What if white and black women had linked arms and continued the campaign for women's suffrage and helped to turn this nation away from white supremacy early in the 20th century? For me, that is a powerful "What if?" - Amended podcast
- Have students select a social movement and develop a *What if?* hypotheticals

[Slide 7] Share out original "What if? hypotheticals"

- Students share their work and discuss the following guiding question:
 - Ask: *How can today's social movements be reimagined with an intersectionality lens to overcome their internal limitations and foster more inclusive and transformative pathways for social change?*
- Possible answer: