

## Teacher Guide

### Lesson 4: Systems Change

#### Huitzilopochtli Power: The Will to Act

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## Lesson 4: Systemic Change

Compelling Question:

*How can we harness creativity and radical imagination to contribute to social movements that positively impact society?*

### Content Objectives

I can:

- Define systems change.
- Learn about the Black Panther Party and the Ten-Point Program.
- Identify the elements of coalition building that lead to systemic change.

### Purpose

In this lesson, you will learn about how social movements use systems change as a framework to build collaboration and advocate for transformative change in society. First, you reflect on the impacts and efforts of movement to create change. Then, you participate in a source exploration of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program as an example of radical imagination and systems change. Finally, you will discuss how the Rainbow Coalition presented a model for an alternative social movement model that transformed existing systems and created lasting social change.

### Lesson Steps

1. **Define systemic change:** Explore [Catalyst 2030](#) to define systems change. Use the catalyst of systemic change framework to complete the [Catalysing Systems Change](#) handout and reflect on a social movement you've learned about and how it developed a transformative approach to advocate for systemic change.
2. **Learn about the Black Panther Party and how they advocated for systems change:** Examine the history of [The Black Panther Party](#) and explore their [Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program](#). Using the [Black Panther Party](#) handout, identify how the Black Panther Party developed a counter narrative of freedom and systemic change approach that transformed society.
3. **Examine the points of commonality and radical imagination that built the Rainbow Coalition:** Listen to the excerpt of the [NPR How three unlikely groups worked together to achieve interracial solidarity](#) podcast and complete the [Rainbow Coalition](#) handout to identify the elements for coalition building and its societal impact.

### Explore More

- Website: "[Freedom Dreaming: A call to imagine](#)"
- Spotify Playlist: [Freedom Dreaming](#)
- National Archives: [The Black Panther Party](#)
- PBS Documentary: [The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution](#)
- Article: [Black Panther Fred Hampton Created a "Rainbow Coalition" to Support Poor Americans](#)



## Lesson Overview

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### Pacing

**Lesson Timing:** 70 minutes

### Summary

In this lesson, students will learn about how social movements use systemic change as a framework to build collaboration and advocate for transformative change in society. First, they reflect on the impacts and efforts of social movements to create change. Then, they participate in a source exploration of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program as an example of radical imagination and systemic change. Finally, students will discuss how the Rainbow Coalition presented an alternative model for a social movement that transformed existing systems and created lasting social change.

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

**SS.HS.1.1:** Apply the process of inquiry to examine and analyze how historical knowledge is viewed, constructed, and interpreted.

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

#### Narrative Writing

- 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

- Apply the catalyst of systems change framework to a contemporary or historical social movement

#### Formative

- Identify the elements that make up a systems changing counter narrative and action plan

### Lesson Resources

For Students

For Teachers

Materials

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <a href="#">Catalyzing Systemic Change</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Black Panther Party</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Rainbow Coalition</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Catalyst 2030</a></li><li>● <a href="#">The Black Panther Party</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Lesson 4 Slide Deck</li><li>● <a href="#">Catalyzing Systemic Change Teacher Key</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Black Panther Party Teacher Key</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Rainbow Coalition Teacher Key</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Anchor chart</li><li>● Headphones for students</li></ul>
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### Teacher Preparation

- **Step 1:** Create a class thought catcher. Decide how you will capture student thinking during the discussion on step 1. You can create an anchor chart or use a digital tool, like a jam board.
- **Step 1:** Preview guidance on key terms. You will help students define system change and systemic change. The teacher slide deck includes definitions for each, but the teacher guide provides talking points you can share with students. Preview this guidance before defining terms with students.
- **Step 2:** Determine how students will chunk text. Depending on the amount of time you have for this activity, students might read the entire 10-point program as a team, or they might chunk up the text and read different parts of the text before coming back together as a team. Determine how you want students to read this text.
- **Step 2:** This unit focuses on the "internal" limitations and shortcomings of social movements and how radical imagination and intersectionality can be used to overcome those shortcomings to build coalitions, formulate visions for systemic change, and lead to acts of solidarity. There is an opportunity to also explore the "external" limitations such as the U.S. government's COINTELPRO program that sought to monitor and repress the Black Panther Party. Here is a link for more information: [CUNY FBI Sets Goals for COINTELPRO](#).
- **Step 3:** You can access the transcript of the podcast [Transcript of NPR Podcast](#) and have students read along and annotate as they listen to the excerpts.

### Lesson Steps in Detail

#### Step 1: Define systemic change

(15 min)

**Purpose:** Students will explore a resource and reflect on prior knowledge to deepen their understanding of systems change as a transformative approach to addressing societal problems.

**You might say:** *Today's focus is on the powerful concept of "systems change" to deepen our understanding of this approach to addressing social problems and the pivotal role it plays in social movements. We will examine historical movements that developed systemic change approaches to social problems and advocated for transformative solutions. We will explore how a systems change mindset can provide a framework for understanding shared goals and building collaborative action.*

#### [Slide 2] Define systems change.

- Introduce [Catalyst 2030](#) and the concept of systems change using the provided resources from the website. Distribute [Catalyzing Systemic Change](#) handout. Discuss the definition of "systems change" and the various levels at which it can take place.
  - Systems change: Confronting root causes of issues (rather than symptoms) by transforming structures, customs, mindsets, power dynamics and policies, by

strengthening collective power through the active collaboration of diverse people and organizations. This collaboration is rooted in shared goals to achieve lasting improvement to solve social problems at a local, national and global level. - Catalyst 2030

- Highlight the “Recommendations for Catalyzing Systems Change” from the website and have students discuss and brainstorm practical ways these recommendations can be applied in their communities, a social issue or a social movement they have studied in the course.
- Have students complete the handout.

#### [Slides 3] Facilitate group discussion.

- Invite students to Think-Pair-Share.
  - Ask:
    - *What is your understanding of the concept of systems change? How would you explain it to someone else?*  
**Possible answer:**
    - *How does the social issue or social movement you choose follow the four steps of Catalyzing Systems Change?*  
**Possible answer:**
    - *How do collaborative efforts and active collaboration of diverse people and organizations contribute to the success of systems change initiatives?*  
**Possible answer:**
    - *Reflect on the statement “Creating systems change requires everyone to think and act differently.” What mindset shifts might be necessary for individuals and institutions to embrace systems change approaches?*  
**Possible answer:**

#### Teacher Tip: Defining “Systems Change” and “Systematic Change”

Both “Systems Change” and “Systemic Change” involve changes at the system level, rather than focusing on isolated elements or individual components. Both concepts recognize the complexity of systems, understanding that multiple interconnected factors contribute to the functioning system. Some differences between the concepts include - “Systems” Change” refers to intentional efforts to create positive and transformative shifts within a system, while “Systemic Change” is a border term that doesn’t necessarily imply intentional intervention or a specific purpose but rather a mode of understanding.

- **Systems change:** has its origins in the field of social and organizational development. It refers to a deliberate and comprehensive shift in the way a system functions, aiming to address its root causes and create lasting, positive impacts. The concept gained prominence in the 20th century as people recognized the limitations of addressing problems through isolated interventions and began to seek more holistic and sustainable changes.
- **Systematic change:** has its origins in sociology, economics, and political science. It was originally used by scholars and activists who sought to understand and address the root causes of social issues. It is used to describe a fundamental and comprehensive transformation of underlying structures, institutions, and norms that govern society or a system. The concept of systemic change suggests that the issues and challenges faced by a society are deeply rooted in its systems and structures, and addressing them requires fundamental shifts rather than superficial or incremental adjustments.

You can choose to integrate both concepts into the lesson and review the similarities and differences between them. The key takeaway is for students to build an understanding that social issues are made up of a causality network - that is, a functioning system. Students should build on this framework and effectively use the concept to articulate the stages of building a transformative movement.

#### Step 2: Learn about the Black Panther Party and their program for systematic change (30 min)

**Purpose:** Students look at a primary source example of a liberatory platform from a political party, the Black Panther Party. They identify how the platform lays out a vision for systemic change in society.

**You might say:** *In this unit we have been learning about many different social movements that have worked to overcome their external and internal limitations to have a greater impact on society. The people who worked on building these movements had a vision for a better world, and that vision was grounded in specific mindsets about freedom and systemic change. Let's take a closer look at one of these social movements, the Black Panther Party.*

**[Slide 4] Provide historical context. Give students some background context for the origins and goals of The Black Panther Party.**

- Source: [BlackPast.org](https://blackpast.org)
- The Black Panther Party was founded in 1966 in Oakland, California by Huey Newton, and Bobby Seale.
- Although the organization was founded on many different theories of liberation, one of their leading philosophies was that the people and communities facing oppression had to take control of their community to gain liberation.
- The 10-point program written by the Black Panther Party outlines the oppression facing Black Community and a plan to address those issues.
- By 1970, The Black Panther Party had over 30 chapters across the nation. However, given aggressive tactics by the FBI to disband the group and fighting within the group, they disbanded in the late 1970s.
- Their example continues to inspire activists fighting for Black liberation today.

**[Slide 5] Set up group work.**

- Distribute **Black Panther Party** handout and review the instructions with students.
- Provide groups time to read the program, then discuss and respond to the reading analysis questions.
- Use **Black Panther Party Teacher Key** to support student discussion and analysis.

**Lead brief discussion. Ask:**

- *What can we learn from the Black Panther Party about their vision and program of systemic change?*

#### Step 3: Examine the points of commonality and radical imagination that built the Rainbow Coalition (25 min)

**Purpose:** Students listen to the excerpt of podcast to delve into the historical context and significance of the Rainbow Coalition. By examining the points of commonality and radical imagination that brought these diverse groups together, students will gain insights into the power of coalition-building and cross-community collaboration as a means of addressing social injustices and envisioning a more equitable future.

**You might say:** *Now we are going to stay in the 1960s and move from Oakland to Chicago. The 1960s in Chicago is a time of social upheaval, racial tensions, and a powerful movement for change. Our focus will be on an inspiring coalition known as the Rainbow Coalition, which brings together three unlikely groups - the Young Patriots, Young Lords, and Black Panther Party. We will explore the power of coalition-building and cross-community collaboration as a means to create a counter narrative, radically imagine a different future, and begin building an action plan to achieve it.*

**[Slide 6] Introduction to the first Rainbow Coalition:** [NPR How three unlikely groups worked together to achieve interracial solidarity](#)

- Students work individually to answer the **Rainbow Coalition** handout questions and identify audio clips for evidence from the podcast that supports their claims.
- Understanding shared conditions - **Part 1 [4:20-8:15]**
- Forming a shared vision for change - **Part 2 [8:15-14:19]**

**[Slide 7] Facilitate reflection discussion.**

- Organize students into groups to discuss the following questions:
  - *What were the key shared interests that brought the Young Patriots, Young Lords, and Black Panther Party together in forming the Rainbow Coalition?*  
**Possible answer:**
  - *How did these interests align with their respective communities' needs and struggles?*  
**Possible answer:**
  - *Imagine you are a member of one of the three groups in the Rainbow Coalition. How would you explain the importance of working together to achieve your goals to someone who is skeptical or resistant to the idea of cross-community collaboration?*  
**Possible answer:**