OVERVIEW

By viewing and analyzing primary sources, students will become familiar with several key issues activists involved with the Movement for Black Lives are confronting as well as the tactics and strategies they use.

STUDENT GOALS

- Students will examine the "Vision for Black Lives" platform in order to better understand the interconnected hardships black people face and have faced in the United States.

- Students will learn about the tactics used by organizations within the Movement for Black Lives to address issues of policing and safety in New York through primary sources related to the Black Youth Project 100's campaign, "Our Streets, Our Bodies, Our Voices."

- By examining a flyer for the "Swipe it forward" direct action regarding subway fares, students will learn about "broken windows policing," and the ways activists raise awareness about it.

- Students will consider the political uses of healing and self-care by examining an activist healing manual side by side with a quote from black woman activist and poet Audre Lorde.

- Students will learn to make connections across primary sources through an activity that explores the relationship between each of the six sources in the lesson.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5
Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.
KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY
- Racial and Economic Justice
- Criminalization
- Intersectionality
- Direct Action
- Divestment
- Community Control/ Political Power
- Broken Windows Policing
- Restorative Justice
- Self Care
- Marginalized People

ORGANIZATIONS
- Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100)
- The Black Lives Matter Network (BLM)
- Million Hoodies Movement for Justice
- Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)

INTRODUCING THE TOPIC
In 2013 #BlackLivesMatter first appeared on Twitter as a rallying cry to “recognize the humanity of all black life.” Organized by three women of color—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—in the aftermath of the murder of Florida teenager Trayvon Martin, the hashtag elevated activism against racism in the criminal justice system across the country. New York activists became integral to what has become known as the Movement for Black Lives.

The issues raised by the Movement for Black Lives are not new: in New York City, home to the nation's largest metropolitan black population, black residents have protested harsh and discriminatory police treatment from Brooklyn in 1925 to “stop-and-frisk” policies introduced in the 1990s. In an era of heightened public protest and organizing, Black Lives activists have highlighted problems they see as interconnected: systemic racism, gender discrimination, health hazards, anti-immigrant sentiment, and economic inequality. Through new organizations and alliances, the Movement for Black Lives has moved toward a broad platform calling for equality, justice, and power in New York and beyond, even as it has become a flashpoint for opposition and debate about the role of race in the 21st-century United States.
INTRODUCING RESOURCE 1
“A Vision for Black Lives” Policy Platform (2016) [Available at policy.m4bl.org]

END THE WAR ON BLACK PEOPLE
We demand an end to the war against Black people. Since this country's inception there have been a targeted and unwavering war on our communities. We demand an end to the criminalization, incarceration, and killing of our people.

REPARATIONS
We demand reparations for past and continuing harms. The government, responsible corporations and other institutions that have profited off the harm inflicted on Black people—from colonization to slavery through forced labor and housing redlining, mass incarceration, and surveillance—must repair the harm done.

DIVEST-INVEST
We demand investments in the education, health, and safety of Black people. Instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging, and harming of Black people, we want investments in Black communities determined by Black communities, and that stem from collective forces, including unions, nonprofit and community-based organizations, police, surveillance, and exploitative corporations.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE
We demand economic justice for all and a re-construction of the economy to ensure Black communities have collective ownership, not merely access.

COMMUNITY CONTROL
We demand a world where those most impacted in our communities control the laws, institutions, and policies that are meant to serve us—from our schools to our local budgets, economies, police departments, and our land—while recognizing that the rights and histories of our Indigenous family must also be respected.

POLITICAL POWER
We demand independent Black political power and Black self-determination in all areas of society. We envision a re-making of the current U.S. political system in order to create a real democracy where Black people and all marginalized people can effectively exercise full political power.
More than 50 black-led organizations collaborated on a policy platform, “A Vision for Black Lives,” released in July 2016. The six sections address wide-ranging topics besides police violence toward African Americans, economic investment and justice, community control of schools and other institutions, and political power. It also echoes previous platforms, such as the 10-point platform created by the Black Panther Party in 1966.

**DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS**

Review the Vision for Black Lives Policy Platform. Notice that each idea begins with a demand to rectify an injustice. As you read the platform, consider the following questions:

- What “harms” does the platform outline? Who or what does the platform say is responsible for these harms and how does it propose to address them?

- Why does the platform use the language of “war” to describe the experience of black people in the United States? What message is the platform trying to send by placing this language first?

- One of the demands of the platform is that the United States divest from “exploitative institutions” and invest in “Black communities.” Based on your reading of the text, what does it mean to divest and invest? Which institutions does the platform suggest the federal, state and local government prioritize and why?

- Compare and contrast the platform’s call for community control and political power. What would it mean for local communities in New York City to have “power” and what would it mean for them to have “control?”
Groups such as the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100) and Million Hoodies Movement for Justice have emphasized “the right to be safe.” The New York chapter of BYP100’s campaign, “Our Streets, Our Bodies, Our Voices,” aimed to create a dialogue about policing and safety in communities across the city, and to include voices that are often left out of such conversations.
Campaign Description by BYP100:

Participants answered three questions pertaining to community safety, concerns about police presence, and feelings regarding personal police harassment. Answers will be written on a handheld whiteboard that participants will hold for a photo and short video clip...The photo/video series invites an honest sharing of stories, experiences, feelings, and concerns amongst Black New Yorkers.
DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

Examine the “Our Streets, Our Bodies, Our Voices” Post Card describing, in general terms, all of the things you see in the picture.

- Who is the intended audience of this campaign?

- What do you think the hashtag “#CommunityOverPolicing” means, and why is it included on the postcard and as a part of the campaign?

- What is the message the postcard is trying to send?

The woman in the picture is responding to one of the three central questions of the campaign. Read the questions and campaign description carefully.

- Which question is she responding to? Why might living in a “heavily policed area” make her feel vulnerable?

- Why might BYP100 choose to feature a transgender woman in their campaign? What does doing so tell you about their organizing priorities?

- Our Streets, Our Bodies, Our Voices is described as a “photo/video series [that] invites an honest sharing of stories, experiences, feelings, and concerns among Black New Yorkers.” What does this demonstrate about how activists sometimes pursue change?
INTRODUCING RESOURCE 4

“Swipe it Forward” Flyer, 2016.

The connection between racial and economic inequality is highlighted in the Swipe It Forward campaign, which protests subway fare hikes and calls attention to disproportionate police stops of impoverished New Yorkers as part of a larger policy of Broken windows policing, which is "a shorthand term for the strategy of aggressively policing minor violations to prevent serious and violent crimes" (The New York Times, August 10, 2016). The Swipe It Forward campaign has involved a range of groups affiliated with the Movement for Black Lives, such as the Black Alliance for Justice Immigration (BAJI).
DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

Read the flyer carefully.

- What is the flyer asking people to do and what arguments does it make to justify that ask? Is the flyer persuasive—why or why not?
- Which groups does the flyer suggest are most impacted by “Fare-beating” arrests?
- Describe the flyer’s design and language. Where might you might find such a flyer? What is the flyer designed to replicate?
- How are subway fares and broken windows policing connected?
INTRODUCING RESOURCES 5 & 6


“*Our Streets Our Bodies Our Voices*” Postcard, 2015, Courtesy Black Youth Project 100.

Space for **self-care** and healing have become central components of the Movement for Black Lives. In addition to this manual by BYP100, the New York City chapter of Black Lives Matter has organized classes in yoga and meditation. These initiatives intend not only to create safe spaces and new **restorative** modes of activism, but also to address the physical stress of racism and the disproportionately poor health outcomes of people of color.

“*Caring for myself is not an act of self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare*” – Audre Lorde, 1988
DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS
Consider the Activist Healing Manual and the quote from Audre Lorde. Have the group describe the cover of the healing manual and then have someone read the quote aloud.

- Why would black activists want or need a healing manual? How does the cover suggest this need?
- How does Audre Lorde describe “Caring for [herself]”? Why do you think she describes it in these terms?
ACTIVITY 1: MAKING CONNECTIONS

Break Students into groups of three and assign each a set of primary source resources according to this breakdown: Group 1 (Resources 2 & 3), Group 2 (Resource 4), Group 3 (Resources 5 & 6). Make sure each group has a copy of the Vision for Black Lives Platform (Resource 1). Based on what students have learned, ask them to work with their groups to identify which demand(s) their resource reflects. Choose one group member to share out with the entire class.

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT DOES SAFETY LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

One of the central questions of the “Our Street, Our Bodies, Our Voices” campaign was about how people in the community imagine safety on their own terms. Imagine you are approached by a member of BYP100 and you are asked this question. On a piece of paper write or draw your response to the question “What Does Safety Look like to you?” Once everyone has finished writing or drawing their response, each student should be given an opportunity to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

For Educators – Tips for Conversations

Along with deepening what students have already learned about M4BL, the goal of this activity is to invite students to imagine – through words and pictures – the kind of world they want to live in. To do so the activity employs the same tactics activists fighting for racial justice have used to get community members to engage in important conversations about New York City neighborhoods. During a facilitated conversation, students can be encouraged to see three key things:

1. The importance of imagination in racial justice activism and organizing.
2. The importance of imagination for creating a better and more just world generally.
3. The importance of each students’ voice and vision in shaping the world of the future.
**SOURCES & ADDITIONAL READING**

**LINKS**
Information on the Movement for Black Lives, including links to a detailed version of the platform
https://policy.m4bl.org/

Information on the Black Youth Project 100
http://byp100.org/

Information on the Black Lives Matter Network
http://blacklivesmatter.com/

Information on the Million Hoodies Movement for Justice
http://millionhoodies.net/

Information on the Black Alliance for Just Immigration
http://baji.org/

Information on the campaign “Our Street, Our Bodies, Our Voices”
http://byp100.org/our-streets-our-bodies-our-voices/

Articles and Essays on Broken Windows Policing
http://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/07/06/black-lives-over-broken-windows-challenging-the-policing-paradigm-rooted-in-right-wing-folk-wisdom/#sthash.8wJNyl1C.dpbs

**BOOKS**


