

Two Towns of Jasper

Premiere Date: January 22, 2002

Lesson Plan: Examining Prejudice

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OVERVIEW

Viewing **Two Towns of Jasper** will provide students with a starting point to research and discuss diversity in our culture and the impact intolerance has on a variety of groups in our society. In this lesson students will take a hidden bias test to uncover the existence of hidden biases, research the struggles faced by certain people living in the United States, and reflect on how they arrived at their own convictions and how firmly they are committed to their beliefs.

POV documentaries can be recorded off-the-air and used for educational purposes for up to one year from the initial broadcast. In addition, POV offers a [lending library of DVDs](#) that you can borrow anytime during the school year — FOR FREE! Please visit our [Film Library](#) to find other films suitable for classroom use or to make this film a part of your school's permanent collection.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- evaluate personal hidden biases
- synthesize information from a variety of sources
- analyze convictions and commitment to social issues

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

SUBJECT AREAS: [Civics](#), [U.S. History](#), [Law](#), [Multiculturalism](#)

MATERIALS

1. DVD of the POV/PBS program **Two Towns of Jasper**.
2. Computers with Internet access.
3. Copies of ["Where I Stand on the Issues" chart](#).

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED:

Background Activity - One class period (This may vary depending on how many computers are available.)

Activity One - One class period

Activity Two - Two class periods, plus homework preparation

Activity Three - One class period, plus homework assignment

Activity Four - One class period, plus homework assignment

BACKGROUND ACTIVITY

The purpose of this activity is for students to build background knowledge on hidden biases.

1. Send students to the Tolerance.org website at http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/02.html to evaluate their hidden biases.
2. Tell students to select and complete one of the tests.
3. After the students have completed the test, discuss the results. The following is a list of suggested discussion questions:
 - Did the results show that you have some hidden bias?
 - Were you surprised by the results? Explain.
 - What do you think might be some of the reasons behind your test results?

Focus for Viewing:

This activity may be used during the viewing of *Two Towns of Jasper*.

1. Tell the students to divide a piece of paper into six equal sections and write one of the following headings in each section. As students watch the films, they will record information from the film under the appropriate headings.

- I learned that...
- I noticed that...
- I was surprised when...
- I was upset when...
- I was happy when...
- I discovered that...

2. After viewing the film, use the information to discuss the film and summarize the point of view of the filmmakers.

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ACTIVITY ONE

In this activity, students will watch clips from **Two Towns of Jasper** and engage in discussions and role-playing activities based on quotations from the programs.

Teacher Note: Some of the scenes from the **Two Towns of Jasper** program contain only one person; for these scenes, pair two students together. Other scenes contain several people sitting around a table. For these multiple-people scenes, use a student to play each person in the scene and add an additional student to respond to what was said by the people in the clip.

1. Watch the following clips from **Two Towns of Jasper**.

- Clip 1 (Timecode: 11:30)
The table scene in the hotel when the people talk about how if you ask a black person if there is racism they'll say yes, and a lot of white people will say no because they don't see it.
- Clip 2 (Timecode: 41:31)
Walter Diggles talks about how there is still a problem in this country with the perceptions of blacks and how you can't control or change a white man's heart.
- Clip 3 (Timecode: 43:16)
The scene from the hotel where the man says that he is amazed at how people have become so easily offended.
- Clip 4 (Timecode: 54:38)
Rev. Ray Charles Lewis talks about how he didn't know what was going through their minds when they deleted Martin Luther King Day from the school calendar after they had fought so hard to get that day. He also talks about how he doesn't think that they are trying very hard to heal.
- Clip 5 (Timecode: 1:01:18)
The scene where the people in the hotel are talking about how Shawn was never a racist and he had his prejudice the same as they do.
- Clip 5 (Timecode: 1:03:34)
Mary Vernet talks about how Shawn could have made a difference that night and they want mercy shown to them when they didn't show any mercy.
- Clip 6 (Timecode: 1:24:16)
The end of the program when the woman talks about how the fence could have stayed up, and that coming together is what they need.

2. Ask students to write down the dialog or conversation from each clip.
3. After each clip, ask students to role-play what happened in the clip.
4. Ask one of the students to pretend that they are the person in the program and ask them to repeat what the person in the program said to their partner. The partner will then respond to the comment, the comment being the quote from the program.
5. Allow students several minutes to hold a conversation based on the quotations from the program.
6. Allow time for the groups to discuss what happened in their role-playing conversations.

ACTIVITY TWO

The purpose of this activity is for students to participate in a discussion on prejudice and its effect on society and people's civil rights.

1. Do a "Think-Pair-Share" activity, in which students pair up, discuss questions and then participate in a large-group discussion. Pairs begin by discussing the following questions:

- What happens when people are judged by the way they look?
- What is prejudice? (List examples of how prejudice causes some people to stereotype others.)
- What are some examples of prejudice resulting in unfair treatment of people?
- Why do you think some people are prejudiced?
- What is tolerance? (List examples of ways people practice tolerance or respect toward others.)
- What do people gain or lose from respecting or not respecting other people's diversity?
- What do you think the United States and the world in general gain or lose from not respecting diversity?
- What are some things that can happen when people practice intolerance over a long period of time?
- What can people do to help create an environment that encourages respect for all persons?

2. Have the pairs share their insights with the entire class.
3. Discuss how prejudice and intolerance have affected people's civil rights.

ACTIVITY THREE

In this activity students will research the struggles faced by different groups of people.

1. Divide the class into groups and assign each group one of the following topics:
 - African-Americans
 - Gays and Lesbians
 - Native Americans
 - Women
 - Arab Muslims
 - Asian Americans
 - Body Image bias
 - Age bias
2. Ask each group to collect information on the particular stereotypes, struggles and violation of civil rights its group faces.
3. Provide time for each group to report its findings to the class.

ACTIVITY FOUR

The purpose of this activity is for students to consider how they have arrived at their convictions and how firmly they are committed to their beliefs.

1. Ask students to spend a few minutes answering these questions. Teacher Note: Tell the students that their responses are for their own use and will not be collected or graded.

Where do I stand on the following issues:

- African-American rights
- Gay and Lesbian rights
- Native American rights
- Women's rights
- Arab Muslim rights
- Asian American rights
- Body Image bias
- Age bias

2. After students have spent time reflecting on where they stand on the issues, ask them to fill out the "Where I Stand on the Issues" Chart.
3. After students have completed the chart, break the class into groups of three or four.
4. Ask each student to select one issue to discuss with the group members. Teacher Note: Tell students that the point here is not to defend their position, but rather to discuss how they arrived at their beliefs.
5. Homework Assignment: Have students write a "Stop And Consider Letter" to an elected official, friend, relative, etc.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Teacher Evaluation

Create individual student portfolios of students' work.

Observe students in the following areas:

- Growth in cognitive skills
- Interactions that occur during group work
- Growth in social skills
- Growth in attitudes toward learning

Conference with each student on these topics:

- His or her goals
- Strategies for learning
- Solutions to problems

Student Self Evaluation

What did I learn from this activity?

What do I still want to learn about this topic?

What part of my work on this activity gives me a sense of achievement?

What would I do differently next time?

In what ways was I able to work with others on this activity?

What did I like most about this activity?

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EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS

Work as a class to create a school or community initiative for tolerance. The following sites provide many ideas on the topic.

UNESCO: [Ten Ideas for Observing the International Day for Tolerance \(PDF\)](#)

[Ten Things You Can Do To Fight Prejudice and Racism](#) (PDF)

Southern Poverty Law Center: [101 Tools For Tolerance](#) (PDF)

[10 Ways To Fight Hate](#)

STANDARDS

[Browse Online Compendium Standards and Benchmarks \(www.mcrel.org\)](#)

Civics:

(10) Understands the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life

No.	Description
6	Knows the historical and contemporary role of various organized groups in local, state, and national politics (e.g., unions; professional organizations; religious, charitable, service, and civic groups)

(11) Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

No.	Description
2	Knows different viewpoints regarding the role and value of diversity in American life
3	Knows examples of conflicts stemming from diversity, and understands how some conflicts have been managed and why some of them have not yet been successfully resolved

Thinking and Reasoning:

(6) Applies decision-making techniques

Level IV Grade: 9-12

No.	Description
5	Evaluates major factors that influence personal decisions

Working With Others:

No.	Description
1	Contributes to the overall effort of a group Level IV Grade: K-12

United States History:

(31) Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States.
Level IV Grade: 9-12

No.	Description
5	Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved

Language Arts (Writing):

No.	Description
1	Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

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Where I Stand On the Issues	Are you content with your position?	Was your opinion formed with careful consideration?	Have you chosen this position on your own accord?	Have you publicly stated your position?	Have you acted on your beliefs?	Do you have a strong commitment to your position?
Rights & Biases						
African-American Rights						
Gay and Lesbian Rights						
Native American Rights						
Women's Rights						
Arab/Muslim Rights						
Asian American Rights						
Body Image Biases						
Age Biases						

Two Towns of Jasper

Premiere Date: January 22, 2002

Lesson Plan: Examining White Privilege

Jump to:

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OVERVIEW

Two Towns of Jasper raises many questions about race relations, prejudice and privilege in America today. The documentary reveals not only that racism still exists in America, but also how brutal it can be. In 1998, in Jasper, Texas, James Byrd, Jr., a black man, was chained to the back of a pick-up truck and dragged to his death by three white men. The killing of Byrd horrified the nation and left the town of Jasper forever altered.

The film is a nuanced view of the subtleties of race relations in America and the different viewpoints forged by racial identity. The lessons below will guide students to a better understanding of privilege — one of the pervasive causes behind racism — and, more specifically, the impact of "white privilege" on racism against non-white Americans. An exploration of the concept of privilege can also help students understand the societal factors that contribute to other "ism's": sexism, ethnocentrism, classism and heterosexism.

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OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Better understand the history and intent of hate groups in the United States.
- Define the concept of privilege.
- Analyze the role of privilege in the documentary.
- Reflect on the impact of privilege on one's own life.
- Identify the effects of privilege on daily activities for others.

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

SUBJECT AREAS: [Civics](#), [U.S. History](#), [Law](#), [Multiculturalism](#), Psychology and Sociology

MATERIALS

1. DVD of the POV/PBS program **Two Towns of Jasper**.
2. Computers with Internet access.
3. Copies of [Writing for Change: Section 1 - Worksheet 1.19](#), "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack](#)" by Peggy McIntosh, and "[The History of the Klan](#)"

An overhead transparency or photocopied hand-out of the "[Hate Map](#)" from Tolerance.org.

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED:

History of the KKK and Hate Groups in the United States: One class period

Defining Privilege: One class period

Demonstrating Privilege: One class period

Watching the Documentary: One and a half class periods (83 minutes)

Post Viewing Activity: One class period

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PROCEDURE

Before Viewing The Documentary

Create a safe environment that welcomes open, respectful participation.

The strategies below can help you create an atmosphere that encourages students to share their experiences and insights in respectful and productive

ways:

Set ground rules. You might involve your students in this process by asking them what rules would help them feel safe enough to participate openly. You'll need strategies for how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak, and how you will prevent one or two people from dominating the discussion.

You'll also need guidelines for the way students express themselves: No one may interrupt someone who is speaking; no one may use a "put down" or "slur"; yelling is off limits; people may speak for themselves ("I think. . .") but may not generalize for others ("everyone agrees that. . ."), etc.

Talk about the difference between "dialogue" and "debate." In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and actively listening to each other.

The History of the KKK

Review the role of the Ku Klux Klan in the Jim Crow South. Distribute the article from Africana.com on the history of the Ku Klux Klan. Discuss the tactics used by the KKK to intimidate African Americans.

Guiding questions for discussion:

- What is the KKK?
- Why did they form?
- Who joined the KKK?
- What did/do they want to accomplish?
- Who did/does the Klan target?
- During the height of the KKK's reign of terror, lynching was a popular tactic. What is a lynching? Why was it effective in keeping African Americans from demanding their rights?

Hate Groups in the United States

Print the hate map from Tolerance.org. Either project the map onto a screen in the classroom from the computer or print out the map and make an overhead copy of it to display in the classroom. You can also photocopy it and pass it out as a hand-out to the class. Discuss the presence of hate groups in the United States today.

Guiding questions for discussion:

- Why do hate groups still exist?
- Are students surprised by the number of hate groups still active in the US?
- What issues influence people to join hate groups?
- Why are hate groups allowed to exist in the United States?
- Is this an American phenomena or do hate groups exist in other countries? Give examples.
- Are hate groups always composed of white people?
(Be sure to identify the New Black Panthers since a member is interviewed in the movie.)
- Are hate groups solely concerned with race? What are other prejudices do hate groups organize around?
- If a person is prejudiced would he/she always join a hate group? Explain.
- Are there levels of prejudice? Do most people have some prejudices?
- Is racism or prejudice based on religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, or ability ever acceptable if the person who is prejudiced does not commit a violent act? Why or why not?
- Can prejudice ever be benign? Explain.
- Discuss the difference between prejudice and bias.
- Are some biases acceptable? Explain.

Defining Privilege

Assign students to read Peggy McIntosh's essay "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack](#)". Depending on the reading level of your students you may want to give them a condensed version of the essay. If you do this be sure to include in your shortened version the 26 conditions she outlines that exemplify white privilege. Ask them to bring a definition of privilege to class.

When students return to class ask them to share their definitions of privilege. Decide as a class on a working definition of privilege. Write for Change provides an excellent definition of privilege in [handout 1.14](#). Then divide students into small groups and ask them to answer the questions from [Writing for Change: Section 1 - Worksheet 1.19](#). After students have grappled with the questions pertaining to "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," discuss their responses as a class.

Demonstrating Privilege

Ask students to reflect on Peggy McIntosh's essay and their own situation in society and write a one page essay about a trait that they possess that has granted them "privilege" as McIntosh describes. They may examine race, gender, sexual orientation, class and even academic achievement (for example honors students are often times able to do things that other students can't not because of individual merit but because of the reputation of the group).

Students can also write about a negative experience that they believe someone of privilege would not have had to endure. A teacher may allow students

to describe a scene witnessed or heard about instead of a personal experience. Because this is a sensitive topic, teachers should evaluate their students' ability to complete the assignment in a comfortable manner.

The Documentary

While students watch the documentary ask them to write the definition of privilege the class decided on at the top of a piece of notebook paper. As the students watch the documentary ask them to note examples of privilege they notice. When they have noted an example they should raise their hand.

Pause the video and allow for a brief discussion on whether the noted example does indeed illustrate privilege. The questions below can be used to spark discussion at points during the documentary or be assigned to students after they have viewed the film.

- Discuss the significance of the title **Two Towns of Jasper**.
- Why do you think the filmmakers chose to use two film crews to make the documentary?
- Compare the conversation at Unav's beauty shop with the conversation at the "Bubbas in Training" breakfast club.
- The second time the "Bubbas in Training" were filmed they were discussing the use of the word "ni--er." How does this dialogue reflect their sense of invisible privilege?
- A woman at the beauty shop commented that after the murder of James Byrd, Jr. she would now have to always be looking over her shoulder. What did she mean by this comment? Why was this not a reflection of one of the "Bubbas"?
- One of the women in the beauty shop described walking into two banks in Jasper. How did she describe the banks? Why is her description of the banks important in understanding white privilege in Jasper?
- The radio announcer discussed the meaning of the Confederate flag for himself. What did he say the flag represented? Explain why his answer is a result of white privilege. Include in your answer how an African-American teenager might view the Confederate flag.
- Why was the school district's decision requiring students to attend school on Martin Luther King Day so upsetting to African Americans in Jasper? Was the school district being directly racist? Was the decision racist? Did the school district demonstrate white privilege in their decision to require school on Martin Luther King Day?

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FURTHER RESEARCH

Ask students to research a recent violent hate crime against a member of a minority group. Students should then describe the facts of the crime and the community or national response to the crime and compare it with the murder of James Byrd, Jr. After they have described the crime they should indicate the issues of privilege related to the crime and compare them with white privilege as seen in **Two Towns of Jasper**. Examples of recent hate crimes they could research include the murders of Matthew Shepard and Billy Ray Gaither. They could also investigate violent backlash against Arabs and Muslims after September 11. On a more abstract level, students could research rape statistics and other forms of violence against women and compare those with the documentary.

Below is a list of websites students might find helpful as they research:

[American Civil Liberties Union](#)

[Amnesty International/USA](#)

[Anti-Defamation League](#)

[Civilrights.org](#)

[Human Rights Campaign](#)

[Tolerance.org](#)

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STANDARDS

[Browse Online Compendium Standards and Benchmarks \(www.mcrel.org\)](#)

Historical Understanding Standard and Benchmarks:

(2) Understands the historical perspective, Level IV (Grade 9-12)

No.	Description
1	Analyzes the values held by specific people who influenced history and the role their values played in influencing history
2	Analyzes the influences specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history and specifies how events might have been different in the absence of those ideas and beliefs
10	Understands how the past affects our private lives and society in general
11	Understands how the past affects our private lives and society in general Knows how to perceive past events with historical empathy

Language Arts Standard and Benchmarks:

Writing

(1) Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process, Level IV (Grade 9-12)

No. Description

- 6 Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes (e.g., to explain, inform, analyze, entertain, reflect, persuade)
- 8 Writes fictional, biographical, autobiographical, and observational narrative compositions (e.g., narrates a sequence of events; evaluates the significance of the incident; provides a specific setting for scenes and incidents; provides supporting descriptive detail [specific names for people, objects, and places; visual details of scenes, objects, and places; descriptions of sounds, smells, specific actions, movements, and gestures; the interior monologue or feelings of the characters]; paces the actions to accommodate time or mood changes; creates a unifying theme or tone; uses literary devices to enhance style and tone)
- 11 Writes reflective compositions (e.g., uses personal experience as a basis for reflection on some aspect of life, draws abstract comparisons between specific incidents and abstract concepts, maintains a balance between describing incidents and relating them to more general abstract ideas that illustrate personal beliefs, moves from specific examples to generalizations about life)

Reading

(5) Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process, Level IV (Grade 9-12)

No. Description

- 5 Understands influences on a reader's response to a text (e.g., personal experiences and values; perspective shaped by age, gender, class, or nationality)
- 6 Understands the philosophical assumptions and basic beliefs underlying an author's work (e.g., point of view, attitude, and values conveyed by specific language; clarity and consistency of political assumptions)

Viewing

(9) Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media, Level IV (Grade 9-12)

No. Description

- 1 Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media (e.g., draws conclusions, makes generalizations, synthesizes materials viewed, refers to images or information in visual media to support point of view, deconstructs media to determine the main idea)
- 2 Uses a variety of criteria (e.g., clarity, accuracy, effectiveness, bias, relevance of facts) to evaluate informational media (e.g., web sites, documentaries, news programs)

Thinking and Reasoning Standard and Benchmarks

(3) Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences, Level IV (Grade 9-12)

No. Description

- 2 Identifies abstract patterns of similarities and differences between information on the same topic but from different sources
- 3 Identifies abstract relationships between seemingly unrelated items

Behavioral Studies

(2) Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and Level IV (Grade 9-12)

No. Description

- 1 Understands that while a group may act, hold beliefs, and/or present itself as a cohesive whole, individual members may hold widely varying beliefs, so the behavior of a group may not be predictable from an understanding of each of its members
- 2 Understands that social organizations may serve business, political, or social purposes beyond those for which they officially exist, including unstated ones such as excluding certain categories of people from activities
- 5 Understands that social groups may have patterns of behavior, values, beliefs, and attitudes that can help or hinder cross-cultural understanding