



# LIBERATED ETHNIC STUDIES

MODEL CURRICULUM CONSORTIUM

## Russell City: Resisting white supremacy's disappearance of racialized people

Time: 1-3 class periods

Grade Level: 7-12

### **Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):**

- Students will understand how cross-racial groups of people of color can work in solidarity to resist their own erasure or “disappearance.”
- Students will understand how people wield white supremacy to do harm to and “disappear” and displace racialized peoples through law, violence, and racism.

### **Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:**

- We understand and critique the relationship between white supremacy, racism, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, xenophobia, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, ageism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression.
- We understand and challenge all forms of oppression and their manifestations by conceptualizing and enacting transformative projects of agency and resistance.
- We understand that while studying forms of oppression, it is also critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope and healing.

### **Lesson Guiding Questions:**

- How did Alameda County officials use “blight” to take the land and displace the people?
- How did Russell City residents resist their displacement and erasure?
- How did white supremacy culture assist in the displacement and erasure of Russell City residents?

### **Essential Skills:**

- I can define and identify white supremacy in a variety of contexts.
- I can effectively analyze primary source documents providing evidence for my analysis.
- I can research and identify ways that Russell City residents resisted the disappearance of racialized communities and present it to an invested audience.

**Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):**

- ***Aspirational capital:*** We have hope that we have can resist the ongoing erasure of people of color and Indigenous people through actions that lift up our identities and cultural wealths.
- ***Familial and resistant capital:*** We can identify and utilize strategies of resistance to build community and undo racialized violence, especially in the form of displacement.

**Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- *Principle 1:* cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and people of color.
- *Principle 4:* Critique empire and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, patriarchy, and cis-heteropatriarchy.
- *Principle 5:* challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels.

**Standards Alignment:**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

**Materials:**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Vocabulary list and definitions</a></li> <li>2. Slidedeck</li> <li>3. Computers with internet access (minimum one per group) and LCD projector</li> <li>4. <a href="#">“In first person” readings</a></li> <li>5. <a href="#">Read and Resist recording chart</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Primary source readings of white supremacy</li> <li>7. <a href="#">Read and Record the White Supremacy</a> chart</li> <li>8. <a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a></li> </ol>
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**Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Modify the slidedeck to respond to the needs of your classroom. As needed, add photos and examples that are familiar to your students and that will be responsive to your students.</b></li> <li>● <b>Pairs of students use the <a href="#">Reciprocal Reading Strategies Bookmark</a> to make difficult vocabulary and concepts accessible. Pair bilingual students with emergent bilingual students if possible.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>You can shorten or lengthen this lesson to 2-3 days depending on how long your class is able to maintain focus and engagement.</b></li> <li>● <b>Preview the key vocabulary terms below before beginning the lesson utilizing the ideas presented.</b></li> </ul>
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**Critical Vocabulary:**

<b>CRITICAL VOCABULARY</b>	<b>Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept</b>	<b>Idea for pre-teaching or front-loading the concept.</b>
<b>unincorporated</b>	areas that do not have their own local government	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>
<b>city services</b>	Basic city services may include sanitation (both sewer and refuse), water, streets, the public library, schools, food inspection, fire department, police, ambulance, and other health department issues and transportation	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>
<b>a “blight”</b>	land that is dilapidated, hazardous, or unattractive is “blighted property.”	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>
<b>eminent domain</b>	In California, eminent domain gives the government the power to take your property, even if you don’t want to sell. But under the Fifth Amendment, eminent domain must be for a “public use,” which traditionally meant projects like roads or bridges. Meanwhile, the government must pay the owners “just compensation” for their property.	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>
<b>property seizure</b>	when the government or its agent removes property from an individual's possession as a result of unlawful activity or to satisfy a judgment entered by the court	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>

<b>resistance</b>	an act of dissent or defiance aimed at an oppressive force.	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>
<b>arson</b>	the criminal act of deliberately setting fire to property	<a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a>

## C1: Cultural Ritual and Energizer

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> Show the class the first title slide of the lesson. Ask volunteers to share what they see in the pictures and what they think the lesson will be about. Explain that the class will be researching and analyzing ways that Russell City residents resisted being erased from and forced out of their town and homes and how they resisted white supremacist strategies to stop them.	<b>2 minutes</b>
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Land Acknowledgement</b> We would like to begin this lesson by recognizing that some of us are gathered on the ethnohistoric tribal territory of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, the land on which continues to be of significance to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. We recognize the importance of this land to the indigenous Ohlone People of this region and strive to be good stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone tribe whose lands we occupy. Ask the class to look at the aerial photograph of the Muwekma Ohlone's land and what they notice?	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Ancestor Acknowledgement</b> Show the Ancestor Acknowledgement slide and explain that we acknowledge the Ohlone People whose burial site, whose bones, were built upon by Joel Russell, who Russell City was named after. Ask the class to think and offer responses to the discussion question: How would you feel if someone built a home on your family's grave?	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Cultural Energizer</b> Play a few excerpts of the video. Explain that the residents and their children of Russell City, who were forced out of their homes, still have an annual picnic to gather and remember the cross-racial solidarity and happiness of living in Russell city. Next ask the students to respond to the questions: Where does your family gather to have fun? Why are these gatherings important to us?	<b>5 minutes</b>

## C2: Critical Concepts

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 6	Pre-teach the lesson vocabulary. Direct volunteers to read the vocabulary and definition for the lesson. Support student as they fill out the <a href="#">4 corners vocabulary sheet</a> for as many words as you require.	5-10 minutes (can also be homework)
Step 7	<b>Blight:</b> Show the slide and click through the images. Explain to students: You buy a houseplant. How do you care for it? What do you need? [Water. Sunlight.] What if there was no water and sun? The plant would die. This is exactly what the government did to the people in Russell City. They deprived them of water, roads and city services and then they blamed the Russell City residents for the poor conditions of the city. The city leaders declared the city “blighted” when they had caused it themselves.	2 minutes
Step 8	Ask a volunteer to read the quote on the slide and have pairs respond to the question: What do you think caused the “blight” of Russell City? What are your experiences with blight?	2 minutes
Step 9	Divide class into 4 groups. Direct each group to read the <a href="#">primary source readings</a> about ways that Russell City residents resisted oppression.	10 minutes
Step 10	Each group reads their 1st person account, discusses the questions, and fills out their own <a href="#">chart</a> . For each person, Gloria, Marian, Rudy, and Toni: What challenge did they face? How did they resist?	10 minutes
Step 11	<b>White supremacy:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Show students the iceberg chart of overt (we can see it) and covert (it’s hidden but there) white supremacy.</li> <li>2) Direct students to pick one example of white supremacy and give an example you’ve seen or noticed.</li> <li>3) For a deeper dive into white supremacy culture skim Okun (2020) with the students, in small groups or as homework: <a href="https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture_2020.pdf">https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture_2020.pdf</a></li> <li>4) Review the six examples of white supremacy culture on the slide (e.g. perfectionism, defensiveness, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, and progress is bigger, more). Volunteers offer additional examples of the characteristics of white supremacy culture.</li> </ol>	5-20 minutes

### C3: Community Cultural Collaboration

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 12	Direct the students, in their groups, to read the news clippings from the time period and record the white supremacy culture they see in	2 minutes

	<p>action on the <a href="#">recording sheet</a>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Russell City Asks Water (1947): <a href="#">LINK</a></li> <li>2) Street Improvement Refused by County (193?): <a href="#">LINK</a></li> <li>3) Landmark Destroyed in Blaze (1964): <a href="#">LINK</a></li> <li>4) Remove the Blight (1967): <a href="#">LINK</a></li> </ol> <p>Each group reads their primary source document, discusses the questions, and fills out their own chart: What kind of white supremacy? And they will need to identify and write down an example or quote from the text to support the kinds of white supremacy culture they identified for each of water services, roads, arson, and blight.</p>	
<b>Step 13</b>	<p>Students can now work in small groups to better understand how to resist the disappearance of racialized communities through an investigation of Russell City. There are multiple youth participatory action research projects (YPAR) that can grow from this research for communities that have had to survive white supremacist disappearance. Students: 1) Identify their question and purpose, 2) Research; 3) Propose their idea; 4) Plan their project format; 5) Reflect and act after they complete their project. Students can present in multiple formats: artistic: collage, spoken word poem; narrative: first person accounts.</p>	<b>30-50 minutes/ homework</b>
<b>Step 14</b>	<p>Students can present their project in a variety of formats.</p>	<b>varies</b>

## C4: Conclusive Dialogue

<p><b>Connection:</b> How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?</p>	<p>Discuss: What have you learned about the ways in which white supremacy is utilized to disappear racialized communities? How do communities resist this disappearance?</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b> How will the students be assessed?</p>	<p>Student recording charts and primary source analysis and supporting quotes, 4 corners vocabulary sheets, discussion participation, and project proposals are tools to assist the teacher in responding to students in progress learning.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation:</b> How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be</p>	<p>Student projects and final discussion should yield proficient responses to the lesson goals and enduring understandings.</p>

evaluated?

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## RESOURCES AND NOTES

### Content Sources

Wilkinson, 2002 "Whatever Happened to Russell City?"

[https://explore.museumca.org/LHP/bernardo\\_russell.htm](https://explore.museumca.org/LHP/bernardo_russell.htm)

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11922175/remembering-russell-city-a-thriving-east-bay-town-raze-d-by-racist-government><https://www.kqed.org/news/11922175/remembering-russell-city-a-thriving-east-bay-town-razed-by-racist-government#:~:text=By%201966%2C%20Russell%20City%20residents,and%20rebuild%20their%20lives%20elsewhere.>

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11897843/decades-after-cultural-genocide-residents-of-a-bulldozed-community-get-apology-from-hayward>

Ohlone Image: <https://www.chabotcollege.edu/ip/land-acknowledgement.php>

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