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**BLACK  
BOY  
POEMS**

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**CURRICULUM**

**BY  
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Black Boy Poems  
Curriculum For Revolutionary Instruction  
by  
Tyson Amir  
Freedom Soul Media

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*May this work be a true way of honoring our elders who taught me with this philosophy in mind:*

*“We Want Education For Our People That Exposes  
The True Nature Of This Decadent Society.  
We Want Education That Teaches Us Our True History  
And Our Role In The Present-Day Society.”*

*- Black Panther Party 10 Point Platform and Program, Point 5*

This work would not be possible without contributions from three very talented minds that helped move this project along. Ana Benders, Nomsa Mabona and Alia Gabres. Thank you for your vision and passion. This is just the beginning. We have much more work to do.

# **Black Boy Poems Curriculum**

## **Philosophy of Curriculum**

Black Boy Poems is a revolutionary literary work that combines social/political commentary, historical and contemporary analysis with high levels of Hip Hop praxis. This accompanying curriculum allows instructors and learners to engage in a learning experience like none other. The Black Boy Poems Curriculum is necessary because too often the curricula in learning spaces are built in ways that do not engender critical thinking, enthusiasm and consistent and eager participation in our learners. One of the main reasons for this phenomena is the fact that those curricula are lacking cultural relevance and are devoid of methods and strategies that allow learners to position their varying social contexts/experiences in the learning space.

Our learning spaces are extremely diverse in terms of cultures, languages, ethnicities, learning levels/styles and backgrounds. With so much diversity it is incumbent upon us to find new ways of reaching our learners. A significant number of them excitedly and willingly participate in Hip Hop culture. The process of learning is heavily influenced by the culture(s) a learner possesses. This means that a pedagogy rooted in an authentic Hip Hop praxis firmly steeped in the context that produced and continues to produce Hip Hop has the potential to activate, inspire, empower and educate our learners.

Hip Hop pedagogy has become a popular buzzword in academia and education. However, Hip Hop is not a byproduct of either of those spaces, and has historically been shunned by those spaces. In order to arrive at an authentic Hip Hop pedagogy the creators of the culture must be the driving force behind how it's used in an educational setting. This forces the worlds of academia and education to abdicate their roles as shapers of the institutions and partner with those, and at times learn from those who have expertise in those areas.

Having a degree in teaching doesn't make one a "great" teacher. Having a mastery of the Hip Hop art form doesn't make one able to use Hip Hop as a teaching tool. What is needed is to find people who are competent in both areas. Those people must have a mastery of Hip Hop, and not just as a fan but as a practitioner; and a mastery of facilitating education in diverse learning spaces. My background as an educator, Hip Hop artist, poet, author and activist allows me to harness the best in these different disciplines and combine them in a focused and comprehensive way that promotes a quality culturally relevant learning experience.

## **Decolonizing Education**

A major part of the learning philosophy in this curriculum is decolonization. Education can either help perpetuate colonization or it can be a catalyst for liberating hearts, minds and bodies. I've adopted an approach that is intentional about decolonizing the

education process. Hence the use of specific terminology. The “work” that learners will complete is called a Learning Experience instead of a “lesson” or “assignment”.

I personally believe the words “lesson” and “assignment” in the context of education in western society reflect a level of cultural arrogance on the part of the institution. The institution of education has largely been guided by people with no real knowledge of some of these diverse learning communities. These institutions hold the decision making power that determines what learners must learn. The process of constructing and facilitating learning should be more inclusive and cooperative. When inclusion and cooperation are not present the dynamic between institution and learner becomes authoritarian. “Lessons” and “assignments” are superimposed upon a population that has no choice in the matter. Learning Experience is a term that better represents the ideal of a collaborative process of learning that all will participate in.

I also use the term “Learner” instead of student. I believe the learning space is a place where everyone will learn. There is no hierarchy when it comes to learning. The “teacher” will learn and the “students” will learn. To reflect this idea more, I chose to refer to all members in the learning space as learners. I believe this helps define the space as a space where all of us will participate and learn. Each of us will play a role in facilitating the learning process.

Most importantly the educational process has to be focused on providing an educational experience that encourages learners to think about and work for freedom and liberation instead of conforming and assimilation. Our society is in desperate need of systemic change. Our education institution is complicit in contributing to the state of our world today because we are not preparing our learners for the world, or helping them to think about ways they can contribute to changes in our world.

Every metric we use to analyze the quality of education provided to black learners and other learners of color shows that we are failing them. This is coupled with what has been termed as the school-to-prison pipeline, where the clear correlation between failing educational systems and our learners (mainly black and brown) becoming incarcerated in jails and prisons (and at times far more worse fates) has been firmly established. This is a small snapshot of the context of public education today. In the face of these realities we are still attempting to employ curricula that does not connect with the learners we have in our learning spaces. It certainly does not inspire and empower them with a sense of self and an understanding of the revolutionary power they possess.

The Black Boy Poems Curriculum was not created to perpetuate the issues in education today. It was developed specifically with the goals of providing a revolutionary educational experience that equips learners with valuable skills and encourages them to work for change in our society. Education is essential for individual growth and change. May we begin to work to provide an education that helps to produce learners who know themselves, know the world around them and contribute to changing our world for the better.

## **Structure of curriculum**

There are 16 main chapters in Black Boy Poems. The curriculum is designed to explore each chapter individually. Every chapter has at least six different Learning Experiences. Five of those learning experiences will appear in every chapter (Common Learning Experiences). This helps to build a routine that the learners will become more familiar with as they progress through the text and curriculum. Every chapter also contains at least one Unique Learning Experience that is based on the content in the poem and the chapter. More Learning Experiences will be added to each chapter as the curriculum continues to evolve.

## **Learning Experiences**

Every poem in the book has a video for the learners to watch so they can hear the poem directly from the author. Receiving the content directly from the creator of the material is culturally significant. After listening to and reading the poem the learners will be asked to work on the first Learning Experience, the Initial Poem Reflection.

The Learning Experiences are as follows:

- Initial Poem Reflection Learning Experience
- Vocabulary Learning Experience
- Second Poem Reflection Learning Experience
- Unique Learning Experience
- Deep Dive Poetry Analysis/Literary Device Learning Experience
- Chapter Review Learning Experience

I've also developed a Literary Device Tool Kit that has a list of some of my favorite literary/poetic devices. I provide definitions for each literary device and examples of how they work from my own lyrics and poems. This gives learners an opportunity to understand these concepts in a context that they'll recognize and appreciate. They'll use this tool kit in the Deep Dive Poetry Analysis Learning Experience to identify literary devices in the various poems in each chapter.

This work is very important to me and I hope it will be important to your learning space as well. A person doesn't have to be a Hip Hop expert to utilize this curriculum effectively. You do have to undergo some type of training on how to utilize the curriculum and to understand some of the rationale behind the approaches to the various Learning Experiences. I also want to develop a way for those who are utilizing the curriculum in their learning spaces to contribute to the evolution of the curriculum. Your experience with applying the curriculum and the responses of the learners to the curriculum will be extremely valuable in ensuring that we continue to work toward implementing curriculum that is culturally relevant and significant.

## Recommended use of Curriculum

Since there are Learning Experiences that will be used in every chapter this is my recommendation for how to maximize the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Begin each chapter with the learners watching the video of the poem. Let them first watch the poem video. Allow them to watch the video again while reading the text of the poem. Encourage them to underline/highlight words or phrases that stick out to them, or they'd like to understand more.

1. Playlist to Black Boy Poems video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOHtIYU3a2s&list=PLCnHtWcSg3Hg3LP7m\\_IYWA4rnasNHqeLf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOHtIYU3a2s&list=PLCnHtWcSg3Hg3LP7m_IYWA4rnasNHqeLf)
2. After watching and reading the video have the learners complete the **Initial Poem Response LE** to capture their ideas and reflections to the poem.
3. If you have a class session with a group of learners, feel free to have them participate in a group discussion based on their responses to the poem.
4. **Vocabulary LE** - this will give the learners a chance to engage with more of the language and references in the poem and chapter text.
5. After completing the Vocabulary LE have the learners read and watch the poem again and then do the **Second Poem Reflection LE**. (class discussion after the LE based upon their responses to the LE)
6. Read the section Reflections of a Black Boy and the essay for the chapter.
7. During the reading of the chapter, or after the chapter have the learners work on the **Unique LE(s)**. Some chapters have more than one unique LE. For those I'll also provide some advice for how to introduce them to the learning space. (class discussion after the LE) Depending on how many learners you have, you might choose to have the learners complete the LE as a group project.
8. After finishing the Unique LEs, you'll have the learners work on the **Deep Dive Poetry Analysis/Literary Device LE** (class discussion after the LE)
9. **Chapter Review LE** learners can use this LE as a summative experience for the poem and chapter. An extension LE from this chapter summary would be an essay response to the content of the poem and chapter. Other extension ideas are included in the Black Boy Poems Curriculum videos.

# Common Core and Content Standards

Common Core Standards for Curriculum:

## Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2

Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

## Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.10

By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

**Craft and Structure:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5

Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5

Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.10

By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### **Comprehension and Collaboration:**

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data. (Review Mixed media LE)

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used. (deep dive)

### **Text Types and Purposes:**

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.B

Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**Research to Build and Present Knowledge:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and over reliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

**Range of Writing:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Knowledge of Language:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3.A

Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's Artful Sentences) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

### **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:**

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4.A

Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.A

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5.B

Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

## **History**

### **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:**

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

### **Key Ideas and Details:**

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Social Science Content Standards

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills

The intellectual skills noted below are to be learned through, and applied to, the content standards for grades nine through twelve. They are to be assessed only in conjunction with the content standards in grades nine through twelve.

In addition to the standards for grades nine through twelve, students demonstrate the following intellectual, reasoning, reflection, and research skills.

### **Chronological and Spatial Thinking**

1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.
3. Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.
4. Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

### **Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View**

1. Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.
2. Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
3. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.
4. Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.

## Historical Interpretation

1. Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.
5. Students analyze human modifications of landscapes and examine the resulting environmental policy issues.
6. Students conduct cost-benefit analyses and apply basic economic indicators to analyze the aggregate economic behavior of the U.S. economy.

10.3 Students analyze the effects of the Industrial Revolution in England, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States.

6. Analyze the emergence of capitalism as a dominant economic pattern and the responses to it, including Utopianism, Social Democracy, Socialism, and Communism.

10.4 Students analyze patterns of global change in the era of New Imperialism in at least two of the following regions or countries: Africa, Southeast Asia, China, India, Latin America, and the Philippines.

1. Describe the rise of industrial economies and their link to imperialism and colonialism (e.g., the role played by national security and strategic advantage; moral issues raised by the search for national hegemony, Social Darwinism, and the missionary impulse; material issues such as land, resources, and technology).

2. Discuss the locations of the colonial rule of such nations as England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Portugal, and the United States.

3. Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule.

11.2 Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

6. Trace the economic development of the United States and its emergence as a major industrial power, including its gains from trade and the advantages of its physical geography.

11.10 Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights.

2. Examine and analyze the key events, policies, and court cases in the evolution of civil rights, including *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, and California Proposition 209.

4. Examine the roles of civil rights advocates (e.g., A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, Rosa Parks), including the significance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream" speech.

7. Analyze the women's rights movement from the era of Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthony and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the movement launched in the 1960s, including differing perspectives on the roles of women.

11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.

1. Discuss the reasons for the nation's changing immigration policy, with emphasis on how the Immigration Act of 1965 and successor acts have transformed American society.

3. Describe the changing roles of women in society as reflected in the entry of more women into the labor force and the changing family structure.

6. Analyze the persistence of poverty and how different analyses of this issue influence welfare reform, health insurance reform, and other social policies.

7. Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

1. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

4. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, and *United States v. Virginia (VMI)*.

## Principles of Economics

12.1 Students understand common economic terms and concepts and economic reasoning.

1. Examine the causal relationship between scarcity and the need for choices.

4. Evaluate the role of private property as an incentive in conserving and improving scarce resources, including renewable and nonrenewable natural resources.

5. Analyze the role of a market economy in establishing and preserving political and personal liberty (e.g., through the works of Adam Smith).

12.2 Students analyze the elements of America's market economy in a global setting.

8. Explain the role of profit as the incentive to entrepreneurs in a market economy.

9. Describe the functions of the financial markets.

12.3 Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.

1. Understand how the role of government in a market economy often includes providing for national defense, addressing environmental concerns, defining and enforcing property rights, attempting to make markets more competitive, and protecting consumers' rights.

12.4 Students analyze the elements of the U.S. labor market in a global setting.

2. Describe the current economy and labor market, including the types of goods and services produced, the types of skills workers need, the effects of rapid technological change, and the impact of international competition.

12.6 Students analyze issues of international trade and explain how the U.S. economy affects, and is affected by, economic forces beyond the United States's borders.

3. Understand the changing role of international political borders and territorial sovereignty in a global economy.

# **Black Boy Poems Curriculum**

## **“Family Tree”**

## Family Tree

This is a very powerful poem. Family Tree is the first of a few story poems in Black Boy Poems. The narrative is all true. It might be a good idea to give the learners advanced notice about the potential for the piece to create deep emotional reactions/responses to the content.

### **Themes:**

These are some of the themes that I believe are important to highlight before and during the exploration of the chapter.

- Addiction (causes and consequences)
- Family (keeping in mind that your learners might have very different experiences with family. As well as, very different definitions of family.)
- Intergenerational impact and trauma (Epigenetics)
- Inheritance (what we receive from those before us)
- Chemical warfare
- A more fertile soil (what do we choose to carry on from what was given to us to help create a more fertile soil for the next generation.)

### **Prerequisites and Scaffolding:**

- The Power of narrative. I inherited a culture that emphasized oral tradition as a primary way of communicating and learning. A gripping narrative can be a powerful tool for learning and documentation. This poem provides a foundation for appreciation of oral traditions, story and narrative. I provide a first person account of an experience in my family. There is a power in being able to tell stories. Being able to shed light on experiences that we sometimes are made to feel should be kept quiet.

- As mentioned in the previous section, the concept of family could be a little sensitive for some of our learners. However, the piece focuses on a family tree and some of the struggles a family faced for generations. In this regard the concept of family tree is extremely important to understand. The good, bad and other aspects of it.

- Great Migration(s) - the trips made by blacks to flee the oppressive conditions of the south. This also connects with the idea of forced migrations.
- Racism experienced by blacks in the armed services

### **Implementation of Curriculum:**

1. Initial Poem Reflection Learning Experience
2. Vocabulary Learning Experience
3. Second Poem Reflection Learning Experience
4. Unique Learning Experiences: Family Tree

This section has two unique LEs.

#### ***More Fertile Soil***

This LE has reflective and critical thinking components. The LE allows the learners to examine what has been passed on to them by “family” and “community/society”. After reflecting on both areas, they then have to decide what they will choose to carry forward with them to create a more fertile soil. This LE is a great way to build strong relationships and a culture of compassion, tolerance and understanding in the learning space.

#### ***Chemical Warfare***

This is a research based LE that allows the learners to explore historical examples of “chemical warfare” and its impact. The research methodology is similar to the one used in 41 Shots. Allow the students to select which topics they’d like to research and guide them in their research as they move through the different topics responding to the research and critical thinking questions.

I strongly recommend having the learners look at then Senator John Kerry’s report in 1989, as well as the articles published in the San Jose Mercury News in 1996 by Gary Webb as ways of finding resources that were published during or close to the actual incidents that took place if they’re researching the topic on California.

5. Deep Dive Poetry Analysis/Literary Device Learning Experience
6. Chapter Review Learning Experience

**Expansion LEs:**

Family Tree LE for learners. (let them create a story about their family tree)

Who are the winners and losers in the US Drug War

Family Tree

### **Chronological and Spatial Thinking**

Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.

Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.

Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

### **Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View**

Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.

Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.

### **Historical Interpretation**

Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.

Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

### **Standards and Learning objectives**

Identify the roles and sacrifices of individual American soldiers, as well as the unique contributions of the special fighting forces (e.g., the Tuskegee Airmen, the 442nd Regimental Combat team, the Navajo Code Talkers).

4. Compare the lives of and opportunities for free blacks in the North with those of free blacks in the South.

6. Describe the lives of free blacks and the laws that limited their freedom and economic opportunities.

## Family Tree (2000)

This is the story of my Grandfather.  
When my Mom was still a toddler,  
her mother married a man named John Oliver,  
And like many black men  
he worked in the armed service,  
it's hard to determine  
what made him nourish  
his habit  
of alcohol which made him an addict.  
The travesty  
of alcohol dependency  
which led to a tendency  
for a beast to surface  
he would eventually  
begin to  
beat,  
choke,  
cuss,  
hit,  
whip,  
inflict pain.  
A young black man  
intelligent and handsome,  
but destined  
to reclaim the anthem  
of souls destroyed by those liquid phantoms.  
He consumed demons and spirits  
with stickers and labels.  
Liquor,  
in tinted glass containers.  
Became a stranger to self  
it changed his mentality,  
became hellish  
a drunken zealot  
without any inhibition.  
His mission  
to satisfy his selfish desires  
he struggled with his sobriety.  
Even denying that he  
had a problem.  
When off the liquor,  
sober,  
he was one of the nicest men that you would ever meet.  
He was kind,  
generous,  
considerate

but you see those times were  
few and  
far in between.  
He developed a routine  
on Fridays  
to be gone for a few days  
return home early Sundays.  
The booze he paid for  
stayed on his breath,  
and the bruises he made  
became sore  
and stayed on her flesh.  
As he led his family through the church doors  
and played the role of the righteous father,  
pious.  
When he really had a dark side  
of a pirate  
a tyrant.  
I call him a domestic terrorist,  
all that violence and abuse  
sanctioned  
under the guidelines  
of legal marriages.  
My grandma sought counseling,  
she went down to the local parish  
and the church father told her like this,  
to simply, "grin and bear it".  
As if  
God wanted her to be a punching bag for this man.  
through  
sickness and health  
until death do you part,  
but she stayed strong  
knowing something was way wrong  
and kept praying to God for help  
because this man couldn't control himself.  
Her mental health and life on the line  
and at times  
when intoxicated  
you could see the devil in his eyes.  
My aunt, uncles and mom would huddle and cry.  
Hearing muffled blows on my grandma's flesh  
not knowing if she'd be alive at the time of sunrise.  
His inequities then spread to his seeds.  
You see,  
my aunt and two uncles began to emulate his deeds.  
They started with the drinking and smoking,  
but two of them didn't let it control them.  
They conquered the monster,

but the addiction was so much stronger in my Uncle Johnny.  
He named after his father,  
he took after his father  
and sought something to curb his addiction.  
He started experimenting  
injected heroin into his system through his forearm.  
One shot was all that it took,  
hook,  
line  
and sinker.  
He destined from the womb  
to be a casualty of this chemical warfare.  
The family noticed he drastically changed.  
His parents already gone their separate way.  
You see  
my grandma finally got the divorce.  
John Oliver Sr.  
he out in Mississippi  
he tipsy of course.  
Little Johnny was figity,  
he wasn't into as much physical activity  
as he used be.  
And what could it be the family would ask,  
Nothing!  
is what he'd snap back  
but it became all apparent when he forged his mom's signature to get cash  
that he had smack tracks  
on the other side of his elbow.  
He got into a rehab  
and started getting back to the Johnny we used to know  
but then them chemicals  
began to call him back  
by way of this one fast sister he used to holler at.  
You see,  
she slipped him a bag of smack  
that wasn't cut clean  
set to wreck havoc in his recovering bloodstream.  
Still he cooked it,  
he drew it up slow into the syringe.  
Tied his arm off tight,  
pushed that needle through his skin.  
My poor Uncle Johnny,  
he chasing that dragon again,  
and that evening this is what happened to him.  
He shot up,  
he dropped  
to his knees.  
His muscles seized up,  
his heart gave up

he never got up  
he a byproduct of his father's disease.  
And by now  
under his skin,  
his blood starts to chill.  
In sets the rigor mortis.  
my uncle,  
he a picture,  
a ghetto still portrait  
titled:  
"Overdose in mom's kitchen".  
My grandma  
she comes home tired from work  
not knowing his condition.  
Not knowing that her worst nightmare has just  
come to fruition.  
It's dark inside the home  
the light switch is on the other side of the room.  
She feels an emptiness in her womb  
as she passes a cold stump.  
She calls out for Johnny  
there's no answer  
he's not responding,  
she turns the light on  
and sees her son's body hunched over  
with his life gone.  
And that night  
my mom  
felt the same pain so many miles away.  
About a year later  
I join the family.  
And I'm the first after Johnny,  
and somehow because of this madness  
I know our bodies are  
oddly connected.  
John Oliver Sr. still just as reckless,  
still drinking  
still changing from a man into a demon.  
Still scheming on women,  
but one evening  
it all began to catch up.  
Payback for all them times  
and all them lives  
he done messed up.  
And for real  
it's hard to feel any remorse or sadness,  
I still don't know all the details  
but a woman who grew tired of his madness  
took him off this planet for good.

Should I feel this way?  
Truthfully, I don't even know.  
All I know is that this is a true tale,  
some of that ghetto non-fiction,  
of what happened to my family  
and all because of addiction.  
Addiction, y'all  
this is my family tree.



**Vocabulary Study Chart: "Family Tree"**

Word	Definition(s) and Synonym(s)	Copy the line or sentence from the text.	Your own example sentence
Nourish			
Travesty			
Anthem			
Spirits			

Word	Definition(s) and Synonym(s)	Copy the line or sentence from the text.	Your own example sentence
Zealot			
Inhibition			
Sobriety			
Sanctioned			

Word	Definition(s) and Synonym(s)	Copy the line or sentence from the text.	Your own example sentence
Iniquities			
Casualty			
Emulate			
Rigor mortis			

Word	Definition(s) and Synonym(s)	Copy the line or sentence from the text.	Your own example sentence
Rearing			
Inoculate			
Fruition			

**Black Boy Poems** Second Poetry Reflection Learning Experience

Poem title:

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1. Choose a quote from the section “Reflections of a Black Boy” for the poem you’re analyzing. Copy the quote here (if its long, you can use “...” to show the quote continues.)

2. Which line or lines from the poem are connected to this quote you chose? Explain the connection.

3. What ideas do you think Tyson Amir is expressing here in this section? What are your personal responses to his ideas? What personal experiences in your life does this reflection remind you of?

**Black Boy Poems** Second Poetry Reflection Learning Experience

Poem title:

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1. Choose a line or lines from the poem that you connected with. Copy the lines here (if they are long, you can use “...” to show the line(s) continues.)

2. In what ways do you connect with the lines that you selected based on your personal experience/perspective? What about the lines makes them stand out to you?

3. What message do you think the author was attempting to convey in the poem, and more specifically in the lines you selected? What do you think is the overall message of the poem? Do you feel Tyson was successful in delivering that message?



Answer these questions about the community you're from.

4. What positive cultural, social aspects are found in your community? Where did they come from? How have they benefited you and your community?

5. What "negative" cultural, social aspects have been found in your community? Where did they come from? How have they impacted you and your community?

6. In light of these "positive" and "negative" aspects which do you want to carry and share with your community and the following generations? Explain why you select these and how you plan to use them.

7. In what ways do you believe these things you've inherited and decided to carry on will contribute to a more "fertile soil"?

## **Black Boy Poems Research Learning Experience**

In the poem “Family Tree,” Tyson Amir says about his Uncle Johnny the he was, “destined from the womb to be a casualty of this chemical warfare.” In this LE we’ll explore the concept of chemical warfare. Upon completing this LE learners will have a better understanding of chemical warfare, how it has impacted peoples around the world and some of the major consequences and impacts of chemical warfare on specific communities.

Prior Knowledge:

What is your definition of chemical warfare?

What do you think is the author’s definition of the concept of chemical warfare based on how he uses it in the poem? In what ways is your definition similar or different than the author’s definition of it.

What historic or contemporary examples of chemical warfare are you familiar with?

Research three cases of chemical warfare and/or substance abuse impacting communities (one of them should be The Opium War, and two additional ones of your choice). Use at least three different sources, such as the following:

**A. Information Website Source** - (encyclopedia or other reference source you and your teacher agree upon)

**B. Social Media Source** - Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, etc..

**C. Verified News Source in Print (article)** - CNN, CBS, Fox News, Univision, etc.. (From a verified news source. Keep in mind that even “news” sources can be biased in their reporting of events.)

**D. Video Source-** Documentary, film, news broadcast

### **Research Topics**

1. The Opium War (different from the Opioid Crisis)
2. Alcohol and its impact on Indigenous/ Native communities
3. Reagan’s Cocaine, California and the Contras.
4. The Sackler Family and the Opioid Crisis

For each of the cases that you research, answer the following questions:

**Questions:**

1. Who is/was involved in this case (for example, what countries, governments, politicians, celebrities, groups of people, etc...)? When and where did it take place? What chemicals were involved?

2. What population(s) are greatly affected by this chemical warfare case? What was the motivation behind introducing this substance to that population? How did the population respond to being exposed to this substance? Who was responsible for administering the substance?

3. What were the social, economic, criminal, and political consequences to the population consuming the substance? Were these consequences merited? Explain why.

4. Was anyone ever held accountable for this act of chemical warfare? Explain what happened and why you believe it happened that way.

5. Are the people who were principally affected by these instances of chemical warfare still dealing with consequences steaming from this event? Explain.

Possible resources

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1446168/pdf/10705850.pdf>

<https://www.recovery.org/topics/native-americans-alcoholism/>

Opium War

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHmuuc7m1AA>

<https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh22-4/253.pdf>

History of heroin

<https://www.narconon.org/drug-information/heroin-history.html>

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-opioid-epidemic>

US Opioid Crisis

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>

Crack cocaine

<https://www.salon.com/2004/10/25/contra/>

But almost a decade later, in 1998, Kerry's trailblazing investigation was vindicated by the CIA's own inspector general, who found that scores of Contra operatives were implicated in the cocaine trade and that U.S. agencies had looked the other way rather than reveal information that could have embarrassed the Reagan-Bush administration.

Even after the CIA's admissions, the national press corps never fully corrected its earlier dismissive treatment. That would have meant the New York Times and other leading publications admitting they had bungled their coverage of one of the worst scandals of the Reagan-Bush era.

<http://www.cnn.com/US/9811/03/cia.drugs/>

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/10/gary-webb-dark-alliance\\_n\\_5961748.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/10/gary-webb-dark-alliance_n_5961748.html)

In 1984, CIA received allegations that five individuals associated with the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE)/Sandino Revolutionary Front (FRS) were engaged in a drug trafficking conspiracy with a known narcotics trafficker, Jorge Morales," the report found. "CIA broke off contact with ARDE in October 1984, but continued to have contact through 1986-87 with four of the individuals involved with Morales."

It also found that in October 1982, an immigration officer reported that, according to an informant in the Nicaraguan exile community in the Bay Area, "there are indications of links between [a specific U.S.-based religious organization] and two Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary groups. These links involve an exchange in [the United States] of narcotics for arms, which then are shipped to Nicaragua. A meeting on this matter is scheduled to be held in Costa Rica 'within one month.' Two names the informant has associated with this matter are Bergman Arguello, a UDN member and exile living in San Francisco, and Chicano Cardenal, resident of Nicaragua."

The inspector general is clear that in some cases "CIA knowledge of allegations or information indicating that organizations or individuals had been involved in drug trafficking did not deter their use by CIA." In other cases, "CIA did not act to verify drug trafficking allegations or information even when it had the opportunity to do so."  
"Let me be frank about what we are finding," the CIA's inspector general, Frederick Hitz, said in congressional testimony in March 1998. "There are instances where CIA did not, in an expeditious or consistent fashion, cut off relationships with individuals supporting the Contra program who were alleged to have engaged in drug trafficking activity or take action to resolve the allegations."

**Black Boy Poems Literary Devices Kit Learning Experience**

Literary Device Tool Kit:

Alliteration - Assonance - Anthropomorphism - Circumlocution - Double & Triple Entendre - Homophone - Idiom - Imagery - Jargon/Vernacular - Juxtaposition - Metaphor - Multi Syllable Rhyme - Personification - Repetition - Schematic/Thematic Writing - Simile - Advanced Alliteration\*

Identify at least 3 literary devices in this poem. (Write the names of the devices below)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Quote the lines that contain the literary devices.

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### Experiment with literary devices

- Pick one of the literary devices from above and write a short response in lyric, poem or prose form. Incorporate that literary device in your response.



5. In what ways do you see connections between your lived experience and the themes and content in the chapter? In what ways do you see connections between the content of the chapter and what is taking place in our society today? Explain

6. Give a brief summary of the chapter. Use at least two references from the chapter essay to support your summary of the text.

Black Boy Poems Curriculum  
Guided Reading Questions

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **An Homage to Richard Wright**

What was the significance of Richard Wright's book *Black Boy* for Tyson Amir? Who gave it to him and why was it important to her?

What did Tyson learn as a result of reading *Black Boy*?

Where did his love for reading and writing come from?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Home Life**

What were some factors that influenced Tyson's upbringing and home life?

What was one of the first lessons that Tyson learned, and how did he understand it?

What was the name of the room in the new home Tyson's family moved to? What materials were present in that room? List a few of the names Tyson learned about in that room.

What specialty school did Tyson and his sister attend? What did they study there?

What historical experience from "an August evening in 1989" left a lasting impact? What did Tyson's family do as a result of that moment?

In what ways were you able to access your history and culture in your home life? Explain how it did or how it didn't happen.

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **High School Years**

What is a HBC(U) and which one was Tyson accepted to? What was the lesson learned by not being allowed to attend?

What school did Tyson eventually attend and what revolutionary history was it connected to?

What came from Tyson's time at his university?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Overview of Text**

What is the formula for Black Boy Poems?

What informs the writing of the author?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Purpose of this book**

Who does the author write for, and what are some of the reasons he writes?

What is the purpose of this compilation of work?

What struggles will forever be in solidarity according to the author?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Understanding Racism**

According to the author what is the reason for inadequate definitions of racism?

What language is spoken by the most non-native speakers? What is one of the main contributing factors for this?

Have your learners look up these definitions on their own.

Have learners look up hierarchy theories of Johann Blumenbach.

Examine Kenneth B. Clark historic and contemporary doll study.

According to the author what does the English language carry without proper justification?

Why does the author believe “racism” cannot be defined adequately in the language of the colonizer?

According to the author why is “belief” not the real issue when looking at racism?

What is the most important piece that both of the definitions are lacking?

What is the author’s opinion as to why these dictionaries are not defining the term correctly?

What are some examples the author uses to show the problems with the society responsible for racism to define racism?

In what ways does the author say we are like the third category being described by Sun Tzu?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Real Definition of Racism**

According to the author whose definition of Racism is more authoritative?

Compare and contrast the Oxford and Merriam's definitions with this definition. What are the differences and similarities?

Why does the author believe race relations will not cure the society of racism?

According to the author, societies that have experienced major institutional change arrived at those changes through what means?

What is Black Boy Poems not an appeal for? What is Black Boy Poems?

According to the author racism most importantly is about...?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Freedom Fighter versus Career Race Relations Experts and Allies**

According to the author what has the industrialization of race led to?

What did Black Academics begin to set their sights on? And what did they know the price to pay for their work was?

What should this new realm that accompanies race in America make one do?

What analogous examples does the author select? What's the reasoning behind those examples?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Allies**

What is an important concept that comes up in a brief historical analysis of liberation struggles?

According to the author what has the modern world introduced that has an impact on this history?

What are some examples of historic allies that aided aspects of the black struggle?

What can be said about the examples of allies mentioned in the text?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Problems with Allies in the Modern World**

According to the author you cannot support liberation of black people if you do what?

What advice does the author offer to allies who wish to assist in the struggle for freedom and liberation?

Paraphrase the wisdom of Paul Mooney.

What are some of the examples of ally violations listed by the author?

How has Iggy Azalea violated the culture she is exploiting?

What were the major violations perpetrated by Ms. Rachel Dolezal?

What elementary lesson can be learned from the experience of Dr. King and Malcolm X?

## **Black Boy Poems** Guided Reading Learning Experience

### **Race Relations Enthusiasts**

According to the author who is a race-relations enthusiast? What makes them so problematic?

What words did Toni Morrison give to Hermione Hoby in 2015?

What does the author say one can find in this book if they're willing to look deep enough?