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OKLAHOMA
HISTORY
CENTER

Tulsa Race Massacre

5-Day Unit

OHS Education 2021

Tulsa Race Massacre 5-Day Unit

Content Standards addressed:

Grade 3:	Content Standards 1.5; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2
Grade 6:	Content Standard 5.2
Grade 9 Oklahoma History	Content Standard 5.2
High School Psychology	Content Standard 6
High School Sociology	Content Standards 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 4.2, 5.3, 6.2, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5
Grade 11 US History	Content Standards 4.1
World Human Geography	Content Skills 3.3, 3.4, 7.3

Practices addressed:

- Analyze and Address Authentic Civic Issues
- Read Critically and Interpret Informational Sources

Vocabulary:

Cause and Effect	Different	Landmark	Primary Sources	Riot
City/Urban	Discrimination	Massacre	Property	Secondary Sources
Community	Economy	Media	Race Relations	Segregation
Courage	Entrepreneur	Neighborhood	Resources	Timeline
Cultural Perspective	Equality	Point of View	Respect	Tulsa Race Massacre
Culture	Industry	Population	Rights	

Objective:

These multi-tiered lessons will help students answer the following questions/themes regarding the events in the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921:

What happened?

Why/How did this happen?

What happened after?

What do we do in order to prevent similar happenings and heal now?

Supplies needed:



Up from the Ashes by Hannibal B. Johnson or *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (for older students)

Smartboard and internet access

Handout or paper, pencil

Days 1 and 2: Explore WHAT happened

Day 1 Lesson:

Lesson Starter: What is the difference between a riot and a massacre? (Discuss, write answers on the board)

Define the terms, connecting them with modern national or local events that the students are familiar with. After a quick discussion, tell them there was an incident in Oklahoma state history; in 1921 in a Tulsa neighborhood known as the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Discuss/define the vocabulary terms. (It is essential that they understand the terms riot, race relations, segregation, cause and effect, and discrimination, at the very least, prior to the lesson.)

Introduction to the Tulsa Race Massacre by reading Hannibal B. Johnson's *Up from the Ashes* aloud to the class, or excerpts of *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* by Scott Ellsworth (for older students).

Watch: Dr. Olivia Hooker interview (survivor)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bab3nZro4gE>

Lead a discussion with your students about the Greenwood District and connect it with massacres they may have heard about or studied before. Students should be able to answer the following:

Do you think that this event should be called a riot or a massacre? Why?



Day 2 Lesson:

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lezi-fif-hA>

Senator Lankford Speaks about the Tulsa Race Massacre on the Senate Floor (0:00–9:39)

Listen to: <http://www.voicesofoklahoma.com/interview/clark-otis/>

Voices of Oklahoma, Otis Clark, Chapter 1 Intro (0:00–1:04) and Chapter 3 (0:00–2:01)

Assignment/Activity:

Ask your students the following: (have them discuss as a class, groups, or write their answers in complete sentences)

1. What were race relations like in the United States in 1921?
2. According to these sources, what event began the Tulsa Race Massacre in May of 1921?
3. What happened to the Greenwood District during the massacre?
4. Why do you think that this particular event spurred such a large, disastrous response?



Day 3: Explore HOW/WHY it happened

Explore the thriving area of Black Wall Street before the massacre; include racial tensions of the time period using newspaper articles, photos, and video clips. Ask your students, “Why did this happen, and why did others let it happen?”

Lesson Starter:

Watch *Before They Die*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_da-tHaXKU&t=2s from 1:05–3:45

Lesson:

Have students look up or discuss how the Greenwood District was founded and flourished, using the following article from *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*:

Greenwood District <http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=GR024>

Background of the Massacre from the Greenwood Cultural Center:

<https://greenwoodculturalcenter.com/1921-tulsa-race-massacre>

Then, have the students look at photos of the Greenwood District before the massacre on the Tulsa Historical Society website.

<http://tulsaistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/30F07314-BDBD-4883-9803-588410045453>

<http://tulsaistory.pastperfectonline.com/photo/7A8B7EA2-78F9-433F-A7A2-786184428213>

Read (as a class or individually) the following article from *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*:

African Americans <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=AF003>

Explore (as part of the assignment or as an extension to the Oklahoma encyclopedia reading) other areas around the nation:

The Elaine Massacre (from the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*)

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1102>

Race Riot of 1908 (from the Sangamon County Historical Society – Springfield, IL)

<http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=1486>

Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 (from the *New Georgia Encyclopedia*)

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/atlanta-race-riot-1906>



The Brownsville Incident (from the New York State Military Museum)

<https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/articles/blacksMilitary/BlacksMilitaryBrownsville.htm>

The 1919 Chicago Race Riots (from the *Chicago Tribune*)

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/politics/chi-chicagodays-raceriots-story-story.html>

Assignment/Activity:

Discuss (as a class, in groups, or write the answers in complete sentences) the following questions:

1. Knowing now what Greenwood was like before the massacre and what race relations were like in Oklahoma at that time, what conclusions can you draw from the events?
2. Why do you think the Tulsa Race Massacre happened, and how did people let it happen?
3. Was this an isolated incident within the United States at this time?
4. Why or Why not?



Day 4: Explore the AFTERmath

Explore the decimated Greenwood/North Tulsa area and show how the city has tried to heal over the past century using photographs of the 1921 rubble and newspaper articles from Oklahoma and around the country. Ask your students, “How did others around our state and around the country react to this event?”

Lesson Starter:

Watch Before They Die https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_da-tHaXKU&t=2s from 3:45-5:16

Look at photos from the Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Archives:
(search Tulsa Race Riot) <http://www.okhistory.org/research/photos>

Assignment/Activity:

Today you will be using Primary Sources. Primary sources are writings, recordings, or artifacts from a particular time period a historian is studying. These are first-hand interpretations of events that happened in that particular time period.

Explore the following newspaper articles from June 1921.

Choose two from Oklahoma and one from the Library of Congress. (This can also be done as a class, group, or as an individual student activity.)

State Sentinel, Stigler, OK

<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc99867/>

The Wapanucka Press, Wapanucka, OK

<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc136663/>

The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, OK

<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc158845/>

The Black Dispatch, Oklahoma City

<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc152336/>

The following articles from around the country from *Chronicling America*: Library of Congress

<https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-tulsa-race-riots>



Answer the following questions:

(Students) Before reading the articles, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Who wrote this article?
2. What is the author's perspective?
3. Why was it written?
4. When was it written?
5. Do you think it a reliable source? Why or why not?

Assignment/Activity:

Read the articles objectively, and answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is different about the accounts in each paper?
2. Why do you think there are differences?
3. What are the similarities of the newspaper articles?
4. Do you think these are reliable sources? Why or why not?



Day 5: Explore what happens NOW

Discuss how the Greenwood/North Tulsa area has healed, questioning students how simple acts of kindness can help heal the wounds of this and other injustices. Ask your students to think about the following question throughout the lesson:

Has the Greenwood District healed?

How?

Activity:

Using Google Earth, explore the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park in Tulsa, Oklahoma. (If you do not have Google Earth capabilities, you can also have them go to the park website and explore photos <http://www.jhfcenter.org/reconciliation-park>.)

What three phrases/words are on the statue in the Park?

What word stands out to you and why?

Assignment/Review and Assessment:

Discuss (as a class, in groups, or write answers in complete sentences) the following questions:

1. Do you think that people in the community spoke up or discussed the massacre in the past? Why or why not?
2. Why is it important that we discuss it and learn from it now?
3. What do you think we have learned from this incident?
4. Do you feel that the people of the Greenwood District have healed? Why or why not?
5. With regards to the Tulsa Race Massacre, what does “hope” mean for today?
6. How can you be a part of that hope now and in the future?



Additional resources/links that can be used with these lessons:

S.I.T. Strategy for text, images, or videos

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/s-i-t-surprising-interesting-troubling>

Library of Congress – Teacher’s Guide: Analyzing Oral Histories

https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Oral_Histories.pdf

Document Analysis Worksheets for various primary sources from the National Archives

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>

Document Analysis Form

https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/Document_Analysis_handout.v.final_.pdf

