

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

ALASKA IS: HOW WE LIVE WITH EACH OTHER PART 2: JUSTICE



Untitled

Digital
Joshua Branstetter Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2021.001.001

ANCHORAGE
MUSEUM

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Learn more about Black civil rights in Alaska, activism efforts, and representation.

Language Arts: Students will examine three photographs from the Anchorage Museum collection and create a multiple visual representations of media that resonates with them.

US Gov/ US History: Students will examine three photographs from the Anchorage Museum collection and view a Soviet propaganda short film while exploring the influence of media through character design.

STANDARDS

Alaska English Standards:

Speaking and Listening Standards

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
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 or information

Alaska History Standards:

- A.5 understand that history is a narrative told in many voices and expresses various perspectives of historical experience
- A.6 know that cultural elements, including language, literature, the arts, customs, and belief systems, reflect the ideas and attitudes of a specific time and know how the cultural elements influence human interaction
- A.8 know that history is a bridge to understanding groups of people and an individual's relationship to society
- B.1.c the origin and impact of ideologies, religions, and institutions upon human societies
- B.1.d the consequences of peace and violent conflict to societies and their cultures
- B.1.e major developments in societies as well as changing patterns related to class, ethnicity, race, and gender

Alaska Government and Citizenship Standards:

- A.4 compare and contrast how different societies have governed themselves over time and in different places
- D.2 evaluate circumstances in which the United States has politically influenced other nations and how other nations have influenced the politics and society of the United States
- D.3 understand how national politics and international affairs are interrelated with the politics and interests of the state
- D.4 understand the purpose and function of international government and non-governmental organizations in the world today

MATERIALS

Language Arts:

- 3x8.5-inch strips of blank cardstock or posterboard
- 11x17-inch cardstock or posterboard
- 5x5-inch cardstock or posterboard
- Color markers
- Wall space
- Tape

US Gov/ US History:

- Up North – [Soviet Anti-Western Propaganda](#)
- Paper
- Coloring utensils

KEY TERMS

<i>Systemic</i>	inherent to a system, as opposed to being incidentally isolated
<i>Equity</i>	the condition of fairness and impartiality
<i>Justice</i>	correct behavior and treatment according to socially established laws and norms
<i>Solidarity</i>	mutual support of feeling or action
<i>Housing covenant</i>	a legal agreement among two or more parties regarding use of a property
<i>Zoning</i>	an urban planning method by which a local government divides land

CLOSE-LOOKING

TIME FRAME Approximately 45 minutes

MATERIALS *Untitled*, Joshua Branstetter Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2021.001.001
Ed Wesley, Tony Knowles and others with Rosa Parks, Ed Wesley Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2021.004.194
Anchorage Mayor George Henry Byer with members of the Alaska NAACP, Ward Wells Collection, Anchorage Museum, B1983.91.C3504.1; B1983.91.C3504.2

DIRECTIONS 1. Begin by looking closely at provided photographs. Use the questions below to guide discussion.
[30 min.]

CLOSE-LOOKING: Look closely, quietly at the objects for a few minutes.

OBSERVE: Share your observations about each photograph.



***Untitled*, Joshua Branstetter Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2021.001.001**

ASK: What do you notice about this image?
Describe the objects and people that you see in this image.
What might the people in the image be doing?
What message do you think this image is trying to convey?
What does this remind you of?
What more can you find?



***Ed Wesley, Tony Knowles and others with Rosa Parks*, Ed Wesley Collection, Anchorage Museum, B2021.004.194**

ASK: What do you notice about this image?
Describe the people that you see in this image.
What might the people in the image be doing?
Why might someone have taken this picture?
What does this remind you of?
What more can you find?



Anchorage Mayor George Henry Byer with members of the Alaska NAACP, Ward Wells Collection, Anchorage Museum, B1983.91.C3504.1; B1983.91.C3504.2

ASK: *What do you notice about this images?
Describe the objects and people that you see in this images.
What words would you use to describe the mood of this images?
What might the people in the images be talking about?
What does this remind you of?
What more can you find?*

DISCUSS: Use the [20 Questions Deck](#) for more group discussion questions about the photographs.

2. As a class, discuss: *what does justice look like to you?.* Ask students to consider why justice is an important value in our society.

[15 min.]

LANGUAGE ARTS: ART AS US

TIME FRAME

Approximately 2 class sessions

MATERIALS

3x8.5-inch strips of blank cardstock or posterboard
11x17-inch cardstock or posterboard
5x5-inch cardstock or posterboard
Color markers
Wall space
Tape

DIRECTIONS

1. Works of art can resonate deeply with us. Invite students to share movies, songs, artists, books, and any specific piece of media that has resonated with them if they are comfortable doing so.

[5 min.]

2. Inform students that they will be creating one of the following to represent an aspect of themselves:

a playlist in the form of a CD cover (5x5-inch)
individual music widgets from various artists (3x8.5-inch)
a set list of albums (11x17-inch)
a set list of movies, books, or poem titles (11x17-inch or 3x8.5-inch)

Determine which project or projects each student wants to work on.

[7 min.]

3. Pass out materials and invite students to discuss the works that move them with their classmates as they work.

[10-20 min.]

4. After creating their selected project, invite students to collect their works into a pile. Set aside.

[2 min.]

5. Discuss with students the ways in which people use works of art for specific purposes. Invite students to consider when we play music or use quotes from books, movies, and poetry. If needed, prompt students with real life examples such as protest

music, speeches, and promotional events.

[10 min.]

6. In the next class session, ask students how they might use works of art to make statements, to express agreement, or to express dissent. Inform students that they will make a second project as a form of protest. Let students work alone or in groups.

[15 min.]

7. After students have finished with their second set of projects, collect all projects and shuffle them. Invite students to arrange their projects collectively on a wall. As students do this, discuss aloud: *what defines intent when it comes to using existing art to make a statement? How can the perception of a work of art change when there is no context to it?* Invite students to take a moment to reflect on these questions as they look at their selected works and the choices of other students.

[10-20 min.]

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed based on participation in class discussion and completion of activity name.

LEARN MORE

CIVIL RIGHTS IN ALASKA

In 1945, the Alaska Anti-Discrimination Bill passed due to the efforts of Elizabeth Peratrovich, a Lingít woman from Southeast Alaska. In practice, the enforceability of the law proved difficult as housing covenants, discriminatory hiring, and refusal of service persisted. The wording of the bill itself allowed Rudy Hill, a white business owner, to verbally refuse service to Beatrice and Robert Coleman, a Black couple, on the grounds of the bill only disqualifying written discrimination. After the dismissal of the case, Beatrice successfully appealed for a change of language in the bill to apply more broadly.

The establishment of the Anchorage chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1950 and the Fairbanks chapter in 1953 was instrumental in ensuring the enforcement of laws such as the Anti-Discrimination Act and the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Coordinated efforts by activists such as picketing demonstrations and boycotts of the Gambell location of the Carrs grocery store chain in 1962 led to Carr's hiring the first Black employee outside of a menial labor role. Further demonstrations and protests continued into the 1960s, laying the foundation for future activists throughout Alaska.

HOUSING COVENANTS IN ANCHORAGE

The city of Anchorage today covers what were once separate communities, such as the current Fairview and Spenard neighborhoods. Ship Creek, originally an area for Dena'ina fish camps, formed the beginnings of what would become Anchorage in the early 20th century, with the signing of the Alaska Railroad Act in 1914. The Alaska Railroad Act allowed for the construction of railroads into the territory. News of potential employment brought people from around the world, displacing Dena'ina people. As Anchorage expanded to accommodate a growing population, many Black Americans found themselves unable to rent or buy property within Anchorage neighborhoods.

At the time, housing covenants explicitly forbade the sale of property to non-white Americans, leaving non-white Americans the option of living in unincorporated areas like the Eastchester Flats. Though most of these covenants were difficult to put into effect by law enforcement, the typical experience of Black Americans was that of discrimination from lenders and the general public. In rare cases where a Black person was able to purchase property despite a discriminatory housing covenant, retaliation from neighbors was a real threat. The 1950 burning of the Campbell family's house in Roger's Park was one such notable incident, leading to the formation of the Anchorage chapter of the NAACP in 1951. Efforts of Black activists nationwide led to the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act, making discriminatory housing covenants no longer legally enforceable, though the legacy of redlining continues to affect many today.

READ:

Alaskool - [Copy of a covenant restriction drafted in 1948 in Anchorage, Alaska.](#)

Alaska Public Media - [Illegal for decades, many Anchorage homes still have covenants that prohibit sale to blacks and Alaska Natives](#)

NPR - [Racial covenants, a relic of the past, are still on the books across the country](#)

Howard University - [The Black Lives Matter Movement](#)

New York Magazine - [10 Years Since Trayvon The story of the first decade of Black Lives Matter](#)

KTOO - [Historian details Alaska's legacy of racial segregation](#)

NAACP - [Anchorage Chapter](#)

University of Alaska Anchorage/National Park Service - [Black History in the Last Frontier](#)

Hartman, I. C., & Reamer, D. (2022). *Black Lives in Alaska: A History of African Americans in the Far Northwest*. University of Washington Press.

SOCIAL STUDIES: DESIGN AND PROPAGANDA

TIME FRAME Approximately 2 class sessions

MATERIALS Up North – [Soviet Anti-Western Propaganda](#)
Paper
Coloring utensils

- DIRECTIONS**
- 1.** Visual media such as movies and shows can shape our perceptions from a young age. Discuss with students common caricatures and stereotypes from childhood movies and shows. Invite students to share their memories on certain characters or common plot outcomes (the hero saves the city for example).
[5 min.]

 - 2.** Invite students to consider childhood films with clearly defined protagonists and antagonists. Discuss: *what events or situations affect how people see others similar or different from themselves?*
[5 min.]

 - 2.** Show the video [Soviet Anti-Western Propaganda](#) and ask students: *why might this Soviet film want to portray western countries in this way? How might media like this influence the average Soviet citizen's perception of the west in the 20th century? How might media be similar or different today for other countries including our own?*
[10 min.]

 - 4.** Pass out paper and coloring utensils. Invite students to create quick sketches of a protagonist and an antagonist from an animated work or their imagination. Ask students to submit them when they are finished. Inform students that they will use these in the next learning session.
[10-20min.]

 - 5.** In the next class session, invite students to share their examples with the class. Encourage students to share thoughts about what design traits define the protagonist and antagonist in their sketches. Invite students to reflect on the role of characters in media that have similar traits.
[10 min.]

6. Once finished with their sketches and notes, discuss the following as a class: *how might protagonist and antagonist traits affect how we view people? Do films, shows, and visual media portray everyone equally? Why might it be important to represent people in a variety of ways?*

[10 min.]

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed based on participation in class discussion and completion of character design sketches.

LEARN MORE

HOLLYWOOD AND REPRESENTATION

Hollywood, being the largest movie industry in the United States, has been influential in shaping global perception of identities through film in the last century. During the Second World War, the United States Office of War Information (1942-1945) headed the Bureau of Motion Pictures. Its mission was to remove or alter any negative film portrayals of the United States. Cartoons from Looney Tunes and Disney would depict famous characters supporting the American war effort. Racist and unflattering caricatures of German and Japanese soldiers were common at this time in order to designate them as clear enemies to American audiences.

Though stereotypes and dehumanization of enemy troops were common in American World War 2 propaganda, Hollywood's problem of representation extends beyond wartime films. Critics have found fault with the lack of diverse role types for people of color, biographical films that cast lead people of color roles to white actors, and the reinforcement of racial and cultural stereotypes through costume, accent, and set design. Alongside these conversations, American audiences are also experiencing a wider array of global films and shows through streaming platforms, helping to break down long-held assumptions perpetuated in Hollywood films.

READ:

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation - [How Hollywood became the unofficial propaganda arm of the U.S. military](#)

Deutsche Welle - [What Hollywood movies do to perpetuate racial stereotypes](#)

National Public Radio - [Disney Warns Viewers Of Racism In Some Classic Movies With Strengthened Label](#)

JSTOR - [How Oscar Micheaux Challenged the Racism of Early Hollywood](#)

Smithsonian Magazine - [How Disney Propaganda Shaped Life on the Home Front During WWII](#)