

HISTORY



YEAR 6

WILL AMERICA EVER ACHIEVE EQUALITY?

The Big Picture

The United States of America is one of the leading powers in the modern world, but there has been a disturbing trend of discrimination in the news over recent years. Is this a new problem or is it a symptom of deeper prejudice that has its roots in the formation of the country? In this unit, we look at how the colonisation of North America, the treatment of the native population by European settlers and the unethical expansion of the Atlantic Slave Trade have led to the USA having deep-set problems with race. We also look at activists who have sought change and ask children to consider how the country could be more accepting in the future.



End Point Knowledge

- Recap of the Spanish and Portuguese colonisation of South and Central America from Y3. Explore how other European powers sought to settle from c.1600 (Britain, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden). They were looking for natural resources including sugar, tobacco and gold.
- Explore the founding of Jamestown by the Virginia Company of London in 1607, including their conflicts with the native population of Powhatans and their role in putting some of the first African slaves to work on tobacco farms. It is also worth pointing out here that many English settlers arrived as indentured servants, working off the cost of immigration for three-seven years. About 288,000 slaves would be transported from Africa between 1620-1780.
- In their Declaration of Independence, the 'founding fathers' promised "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
- Discuss the causes of the American Civil War (1861-1865) and develop an understanding of 'North' vs 'South'. Explore how the Confederate flag has been co-opted in modern times.
- Explore the 'Reconstruction Era' (1865-1876) and how it was unable to deliver on its promises of equal rights for freed slaves, including the rise of the Klu Klux Klan and the enforcement of Jim Crow laws. This also saw the worst period of anti-Chinese discrimination, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. It also saw the selling-off of Indian Reservations after the Dawes Act of 1887, further scattering the Native American population. This period (1876-1954) is known as the 'Nadir of American Race Relations'.
- Explore the Black Lives Matter and #SayHerName campaigns and the reasons behind its formation. Making links to the past consider the questions: has the US learned from its mistakes? Is the USA more divided than ever?
- We know about this period because we have official records and diaries from the British and French colonisers. We have accounts written by prominent Americans around the time of revolution and civil war. We have newspapers and, as we get closer to the modern day, audio and video records.

Key Vocabulary

Revolution, Slavery, Slave Trade, Colonisation, Civil Rights Movement, Campaign, Protest, Reconstruction