**Reparations for Slavery: Workshop Lesson Plan**

*Workshop Lesson Plan Recommendations*

*Students will be divided into discussion groups of 4-6.*

* *One student will be designated as note-taker for the group’s discussion.*

*Each discussion group will proceed through each section of this discussion (4 topics) each day over a period of four class meetings.*

*At the end of each class meeting, each group will present a summary of their discussion to the whole class.*

* *Each group member will participate equally in the summary presentations.*

*After each group has presented their summary for each section, the whole class will debrief with a discussion of the various ideas and issues.*

*- This may be in a whole class format or in small groups comprised of one student representing each of the original discussion groups.*

***Workshop Discussion Topics***

***Topic 1: What are reparations?***

The concept of *reparations* is complex and thus difficult to define, but the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) identifies a few key components: Reparations seek to **acknowledge** violations that were committed against a group of people, to **repair** the damage done by these violations, and to identify the root causes of the violations to **prevent** them from occurring again in the future.

 Reparations are generally issued by the government or group that is responsible for the violations.

* What questions or thoughts do you have after reading this definition?
* What are the types of violations that could lead to reparations?
* How can reparations seek to achieve the three goals outlined in this definition?
* How are reparations different from other ways a country can respond to injustice?

***Topic 2: What form can reparations take?***

Reparations programs have been enacted in the United States before, both by the government and by other organizations. The *New York Times* article [**America Has Tried Reparations Before. Here Is How It Went**](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/19/us/reparations-slavery.html). describes six examples of reparations programs from the past and present in the United States.

* What violation did/does this reparation program seek to address?
* What form did/will the reparations take? How well do you think this reparations program achieved/will achieve the three goals outlined in the definition of *reparations* that we reviewed in the first activity?
* What challenges did/does this reparations program face?
* How would you design a reparations program? What would you do the same as the example you read? What would you do differently?

***Topic 3: What kind of reparations should there be for slavery and other racist policies?***

In 2014, Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote an article for *The Atlantic*, [**The Case for Reparations**](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/), that helped spark renewed debate over reparations for slavery.

*Having been enslaved for 250 years, black people were not left to their own devices. They were terrorized. In the Deep South, a second slavery ruled. In the North, legislatures, mayors, civic associations, banks, and citizens all colluded to pin black people into ghettos, where they were overcrowded, overcharged, and undereducated. Businesses discriminated against them, awarding them the worst jobs and the worst wages. Police brutalized them in the streets. And the notion that black lives, black bodies, and black wealth were rightful targets remained deeply rooted in the broader society. Now we have half-stepped away from our long centuries of despoilment, promising, “Never again.” But still we are haunted. It is as though we have run up a credit-card bill and, having pledged to charge no more, remain befuddled that the balance does not disappear. The effects of that balance, interest accruing daily, are all around us.*

*Broach the topic of reparations today and a barrage of questions inevitably follows: Who will be paid? How much will they be paid? Who will pay? But if the practicalities, not the justice, of reparations are the true sticking point, there has for some time been the beginnings of a solution.*

* What is the case that Ta-Nehisi Coates makes in this passage for reparations?
* What impact do you think reparations could have?
* What are the practical concerns that stand in the way of reparations?

The section above for this workshop lesson plan was adapted from: “The Debate over Reparations for Racial Injustice,” Facing History & Ourselves:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/debate-over-reparations-racial-injustice#lesson-plans>

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The section below for this workshop lesson plan is my own creation:

***Topic 4: Design a plan for reparations for the descendants of enslaved people.***

Provide a detailed summary of your responses to the following considerations for your reparations plan:

* How would recipients for reparations be selected for eligibility?
* Would the reparations be given to specific organizations and groups, to individual descendants of enslaved peoples, or to both? Why or why not?
* How would recipients be compensated? Monetary payments, non-monetary benefits and opportunities, or both? If monetary, would it be a one-time lump sum or paid out over many years?
* How would the amount of compensation (whether monetary or other) be determined?
* In what ways (if any) would the reparations address specific inequalities, such as housing discrimination and redlining, mass incarceration, economic and employment discrimination, educational discrimination and admission to schools and higher education institutions, etc.?
* For how many generations would the reparations continue? Through those descendants living today or for a given number of generations in the future or in perpetuity? How would the end of reparations be determined, if there is an endpoint?
* Discuss any other issues that you believe should be considered in a plan for reparations.