Teaching Difficult History at Monticello
What is Monticello?
What do we do?

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation remains committed to a twofold mission:

Preservation and Education
Why Monticello?
Why Monticello?
Monticello’s Vision

Thomas Jefferson and his family lived at Monticello with enslaved African Americans and free European and American craftsmen. This infographic represents the population of this busy plantation in the late 1790s.
Run away from the subscriber in Albemarle, a Mulatto slave called Sandy, about 35 years of age, his stature is rather low, inclining to corpulence, and his complexion light; he is a shoemaker by trade, in which he uses his left hand principally, can do coarse carpenters work, and is something of a horse jockey; he is greatly addicted to drink, and when drunk is insolent and disorderly, in his conversation he swears much, and in his behaviour is artful and knavish. He took with him a white horse, much scarred with traces, of which it is expected he will endeavour to dispose; he also carried his shoemakers tools, and will probably endeavour to get employment that way. Whoever conveys the said slave to me, in Albemarle, shall have 40 s. reward, if taken up within the county, 4 l. if elsewhere within the colony, and 10 l. if in any other colony, from Thomas Jefferson.
EXECUTOR'S SALE.

Will be sold, on the fifteenth of January, at Monticello, in the county of Albemarle, the whole of the residue of the personal estate of Thomas Jefferson, dec., consisting of

130 VALUABLE NEGROES,

Stock, Crop, &c. Household and Kitchen Furniture. The attention of the public is earnestly invited to this property. The negroes are believed to be the most valuable for their number ever offered at one time in the State of Virginia. The household furniture, many valuable historical and portrait paintings, busts of marble and plaster of distinguished individuals; one of marble of Thomas Jefferson, by Caracci, with the pedestal and truncated column on which it stands; a polygraph or copying instrument used by Thomas Jefferson, for the last twenty-five years; with various other articles curious and useful to men of business and private families. The terms of sale will be accommodating and made known previous to the day. The sale will be continued from day to day until completed. This sale being unavoidable, it is a sufficient guarantee to the public, that it will take place at the time and place appointed.

THOMAS J. RANDOLPH,
Executor of Th: Jefferson, dec.

Mathe Jan. 6, 1827—2t

His

The paintings and busts of Thos. Je-
Lucy (born March 12, 1811) daughter of Lilly and Barnaby, was born at Monticello and was one of Thomas Jefferson's slaves sold at public auction at Monticello in January 1827. This photograph was taken of Lucy in the mid 1840s.

Meet Lucy
The Life of Sally Hemings


Sally Hemings (1773-1835) is one of the most famous—and least known—African American women in U.S. history. For more than 200 years, her name has been linked to Thomas Jefferson as his “concubine,” obscuring the facts of her life and her identity. Scroll down to learn more about this intriguing American.
“Was Jefferson a ‘good’ slaveowner?”

“Why do you have to talk about slavery so much? That’s in the past and nobody alive today had anything to do with it.”

“Were Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings in love?” OR “Wasn’t theirs a love affair for the ages?”

“Was Jefferson a pedophile?”

“How could the man who wrote ‘All Men are Created Equal’ be a life-long slave owner?”
“Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of color in the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race?”

“They seem to require less sleep…”

“They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be Present…”

“They are more ardent after their female: but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation…”

“They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour.”

“…in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior.”

“I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.”

Notes on the State of Virginia, 1781.
Why is it important to talk about?
Timeline of Racism's Shadow
How do we teach difficult topics?

What are some stumbling blocks?

- Not sure where to start/how to approach the topic
- Don’t feel supported by administration
- Not sure where to find resources
- Worried about offending students/parents/guests

Uncomfortable with the topic ourselves
How do we teach difficult topics?

What are some strategies?

- Acknowledge emotions attached to the topic
- Use primary sources to tell the history

- Be honest
- Practice, practice, practice!

- Be ok with being uncomfortable
- Check your privilege

- Look to resources like Teaching Tolerance
- Help students draw their own conclusions

- Be ok with being uncomfortable
- Check your privilege

- Look to resources like Teaching Tolerance
- Help students draw their own conclusions
The Arc of Dialogue

I: Community Building

II: Sharing Diversity of Experiences

III: Exploring Perspectives Beyond Our Own Experiences

IV: Synthesizing and Bringing Closure

Special Thanks to Tammy Bormann and David Campt

memory to action
Phase One Questions

- Are non-threatening
- Apply ORACLE
- Fertilize the conversation
- Are questions you genuinely want to know the answer to
Phase Two Questions

- Invite participants to think about their personal experience with a topic and share these experiences with the group.
- Help participants identify similarities and differences and why.
- Require only a participant’s personal experience to answer - ORACLE.
- Are questions you genuinely want to know the answer to.
Phase Three Questions

- Explore the topic beyond personal experiences
- Provoke participants to dig into their assumptions and opinions
- Encourage active consideration of underlying social conditions that inform a person’s perspective
- Often highlight – policy, media, identity, communication, money, responsibility
Phase Four Questions

- Encourage a sense of community amongst participants
- Help participants identify what they have learned and/or share the personal impact of the conversation
- Do not work to elicit agreement or compromise
- Create a “breath” in the space and encourage reflection
- Consider courses of action
# Arc of Dialogue

## Phase 1
- How old were you when you first learned about the idea of justice?
- Who taught you?
- What were you taught?

## Phase 2
- Describe a time when you sought justice for yourself. What were you seeking?
- Describe a time when someone sought justice from you or your family. What was this person seeking? How did you respond?

## Phase 3
- What forms of justice currently exist in the U.S.?
- What does justice look like for those in America?

## Phase 4
- What did you hear that really challenged your own way of thinking?
- What inspired you?
- What important idea will you carry away from this dialogue?
- What idea do you want to explore further on your own or with others?
Examples of how we use language at Monticello
Parallel Language

Burwell, Critta, James, Wormley or Sally Colbert, Hemings, Hughes or Hemings
Slave: noun
Enslaved: adjective

Servant, slave*
Enslaved servant, enslaved person, enslaved chef/waiter/maid etc...
Passive Voice vs. Active Voice

The food was brought up the stairs.
Slaves brought the food up the stairs.
Enslaved domestic servants brought the food up the stairs.
Master Attribution

Jefferson built Monticello.

Jefferson designed Monticello, enslaved laborers built the house.

Jefferson planted the garden.

Wormley Hughes planted the garden.
Using the universalizing "you"

This one is trickier: JUST BE THOUGHTFUL
"The only fiction worth its weight, race must be read and revisited, interpreted, and examined."
Andrew Mitchell-Davenport, 2017

"Discrimination because of sex is certainly the disfigurement because of color. It cripples the individual, it hinders progress, it sets a limitation upon mental and spiritual development."
Chicago Booth Codex, 1890

"Color has nothing to do with family."
Shay Ronda Young, Sally Hemings descendant, 2000

"Grandma Britts told me about how beautiful Monticello was. She also mentioned slavery and how wicked... it was."
Betsy Ann Bath, Willis Shilton descendant, 2005

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vivamus non mauris non ex imperdiet hendrerit. Vivamus non mauris non ex imperdiet hendrerit. XXXX

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vivamus non mauris non ex imperdiet hendrerit. Vivamus non mauris non ex imperdiet hendrerit. XXXX

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vivamus non mauris non ex imperdiet hendrerit. Vivamus non mauris non ex imperdiet hendrerit. XXXX
Resources for All Ages: monticello.org

THIS IS MONTICELLO
A World Heritage Site, historic house and plantation, museum, research institute, presidential library and private, non-profit organization.

Open Today - 8:30 am to 6 pm
More Hours ➔
Connect Your Students To Monticello Right From Your Classroom With A Virtual Field Trip

LEARN MORE
Virtual field trips and Google Cultural Institute
Download the free Slavery at Monticello App

Download for free. Explore before, during and after your visit. Use our free wifi while at Monticello!

Recent review of how a teacher is using the app – pros and cons
Virtual Field Trips

A BIG thank you to @TeachMonticello for our virtual tours through @TJMONTICELLO! The @RockyForkMS students truly learned a great deal! A special thank you to Melanie and Carrie for all the work you do to be a phenomenal resource to teachers across the US and World 🌍!

Skype in action at Stauffer! @TJMONTICELLO Learning from across the country! #historylive @jodavisTTS The students ❤️ it and learned a lot!
# Teaching Tolerance – Key Concepts

## Table 1: Data Organized by Key Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Textbooks</th>
<th>Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Slavery, which was practiced by Europeans prior to their arrival in the Americas, was important to all of the colonial powers and existed in all of the European North American colonies.</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Slavery and the slave trade were central to the development and growth of the economy across British North America and later, the United States.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Provisions for slavery were embedded in the founding documents; enslavement dominated the federal government, Supreme Court, and Senate from 1787 through 1860.</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “Slavery was an institution of power,” designed to create profit for the slaveholder and break the will of the enslaved and was a relentless quest for profit abetted by racism.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Enslaved people resisted the efforts of their enslavers to reduce them to commodities in both revolutionary and everyday ways.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The experience of slavery varied depending on time, location, crop, labor performed, size of slaveholding, and gender.</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Slavery was the central cause of the Civil War.</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Slavery shaped the fundamental beliefs of Americans about race and whiteness, and white supremacy was both a product of, and legacy of, slavery.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Enslaved and free people of African descent had a profound impact on American culture, producing leaders and literary, artistic and folk traditions that continue to influence the nation.</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. By knowing how to read and interpret the sources that tell the story of American slavery, we gain insight into some of what enslaving and enslaved Americans created, aspired to, thought and desired.</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Student scores are calculated based on the average of the correct responses percentage for the relevant questions set in the survey. Textbook and standards scores are calculated based on the average scores (0-10 points) on each Key Concept, expressed as a percentage of three.
The Key Concepts are important ideas that students must truly understand if they are to grasp the historical significance of slavery. They also serve as tools educators can use to structure their teaching.

Summary Objectives are broad student learning outcomes related to each chronological era in the framework. Each of the 21 Summary Objectives maps to at least one Key Concept.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

1. Slavery, which was practiced by Europeans prior to their arrival in the Americas, was important to all of the colonial powers and existed in all of the European North American colonies.

2. Slavery and the slave trade were central to the development and growth of the economy across British North America and, later, the United States.

3. Protections for slavery were embedded in the founding documents; enslavers dominated the federal government, Supreme Court and Senate from 1787 through 1860.

4. “Slavery was an institution of power,” designed to create profit for the enslavers and break the will of the enslaved and was a relentless quest for profit abetted by racism.

5. Enslaved people resisted the efforts of their enslavers to reduce them to commodities in both revolutionary and everyday ways.

6. The experience of slavery varied depending on time, location, crop, labor performed, size of slaveholding and gender.

7. Slavery was the central cause of the Civil War.

8. Slavery shaped the fundamental beliefs of Americans about race and whiteness, and white supremacy was both a product and legacy of slavery.

9. Enslaved and free people of African descent had a profound impact on American culture, producing leaders and literary, artistic and folk traditions that continue to influence the nation.

10. By knowing how to read and interpret the sources that tell the story of American slavery, we gain insight into some of what enslaving and enslaved Americans aspired to, created, thought and desired.
