**COMPREHENSIVE EXPANDED ACTIVITIES GUIDE FOR *HOW REAL IS RACE? March 9, 2025***

**This Comprehensive Expanded Activities Guide is part of the Companion Website for the book *How Real is Race: Unraveling race, biology, and culture.* Mukhopadhyay, C., Henze, R. and Moses, Y.T., 2026. Rowman and Littlefield.** [**https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538190869/How-Real-Is-Race-Unraveling-Race-Biology-and-Culture-Third-Edition**](https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538190869/How-Real-Is-Race-Unraveling-Race-Biology-and-Culture-Third-Edition)**. This section of the Companion Website contains detailed information on the activities referred to in Appendix B, Comprehensive Guide to Activities, of the book.**

**OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS**

**The first part of this file, Comprehensive Summary of Activities, provides of an overview of all activities in the book, organized by Parts of the Book. Within each Part, we list, chapter-by-chapter. specific activities along with brief summaries of each activity. For each activity, we provide a link to the more detailed version of the activity. The full set of detailed activity plans-instructions are also found after the initial Comprehensive Summary Guide to Activities, again organized by Part and Chapter.**

**The activities here are appropriate for a range of audiences from pre-college students to adults, and from classroom use to professional workshops or community events. Some activities are laid out in explicit steps while others present an idea for an activity or a link to a detailed activity developed by others. Many activities involve hands-on experiences, simulations, small-group projects, archival research, or web-based explorations. Most can be done in an hour or less, but we have noted where some are more involved and could require several hours or sessions.**

**The majority of activities were developed by the authors, through our own experiences as educators. But thanks to the emergence of many wonderful web-based resources, we have also included plans that are available to the public online.**

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**Example: This Activity comes from (or has been adapted from) the companion website to the book *How Real is Race? Unraveling Race, Biology, and Culture*. Mukhopadhyay, Henze, and Moses, 2026. Rowman & Littlefield; Chapter 4, Activity 4.1.**

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***COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Part I: The Fallacy of Race As Biology | |
| ***Chapter 1: Why Contemporary Races Are Not Scientifically Valid*** | |
| [Activity 1.1. How many ways are there to create “races”?](#activityoneone) | *Participants try to sort themselves into races, using conventional racial and then other visible biological traits, revealing the arbitrariness of racial groupings.* |
| [Activity 1.2 Where is the racial dividing line?](#activityonetwo) | *Participants sort into “racial” groups using visible traits that include racial and non-racial markers (e.g., skin color, height, body ratios). Illustrates key concepts of continuous vs discrete traits.* |
| [Activity 1.3 Racial traits do not covary](#activityonethree) | *Participants repeatedly sort themselves into groups using different visible traits, illustrating the concept of discordant or non-co-variance among visible traits.* |
| [Activity 1.4 What racial traits shall we choose?](#activityonefour) | *Small group activity illustrating that while racial classification is biologically arbitrary, powerful groups select racial criteria that serve their own self-interest.* |
| [Activity 1.5 How can you tell someone's race?](#activityonefive) | *Participants discuss how they can tell someone’s race, generally, using their own experiences, selected videos and media images.* |
| ***Chapter 2: Human Biological Variation: What We Don't See*** | |
|  | |
| [Activity 2.1 Sorting by blood type and race](#activitytwoone) | *Participants find out their own blood type, and then discuss whether blood type covaries with racial identity/classification* |
| [Activities 2.2-2.4 Race and rh factor, lactose intolerance, gluten intolerance.](#activitytwotwotwofour) | *Participants explore their RH factor, gluten and milk intolerance and whether these covary with racial identity/classification.* |
| [Activity 2.5 Race and smell](#activitytwofive) | *Participants explore their olfactory receptors and whether their “noseprints” correlate with racial identity/classification* |
| [Activity 2.6 Play the blood-typing game.](#activitytwosix) | *Participants play the web-based "Blood Typing Game" to learn more about human blood and what it can and cannot tell us.* |
| [Activity 2.7. Explore NHGRI resources on health and genetic factors.](#activitytwoseven) | *Visit-explore website (see Appendix A or Website Resources list)* |
| [Activity 2.8. Genome: unlocking life’s code](#activitytwoeight) | *Explore website, find what is personally relevant and share with others.* |
| [Activity 2.9. Exploring my ancestors: blood type, other traits.](#activitytwonine) | *Participants collect ABO blood type and milk-gluten intolerance data on family members as part of a broader exploration of family roots.* |
| ***Chapter 3: If Not Race, How Do We Explain Biological Differences?*** | |
| *Activities 3.1 to 3.5 focus on understanding the relationship between geography, environment and human biological variation, including the role of natural selection and other factors. Each explores a different trait. Participants use their own bodies (and ancestral geographic origins) when possible.* | |
| [Activity 3.1. Body type, climate zones, and ancestry.](#activitythreeone) | *Body type, climate zones, and ancestry.* |
| [Activity 3.2. Facial size, shape, and geographic ancestral location.](#activitythreetwo) | *Facial size, shape, and geographic ancestral location.* |
| [Activity 3.3. Ancestry and skin color.](#activitythreethree) | *Ancestry and skin color.* |
| [Activity 3.4. Milk: lactose intolerance and lactase persistence.](#activitythreefour) | *Milk: Lactose intolerance and lactase persistence* |
| [Activity 3.5. Gluten intolerance.](#activitythreefive) | *Gluten Intolerance.* |
| [Activity 3.6. More on skin color and human evolution.](#activitythreesix) | *Explore maps and activities at the Biointeractive website (see Appendix A in book or Website Resources on Companion Website)*. |
| ***Chapter 4: More Alike Than Different, More Different Than Alike*** | |
| [Activity 4.1. Human biological variation: more alike than different?](#activityfourone) | *Participants assess themselves on 5-10 visible and invisible traits, exploring variability within and between their macroracial groups.* |
| [Activity 4.2. Exploring one’s own ancestry: limitations of DNA analyses.](#activityfourtwo) | *Web-based activity in which participants discover and discuss limitations and problems with interpreting ancestry analyses.* |
| [Activity 4.3. The story of Desiree’s baby.](#activityfourthree) | *After reading Kate Chopin story, participants discuss what it says about the meanings of skin color and their roots.* |
| [Activity 4.4. Exploring my ancestry: geographic origins and marriage patterns](#activityfourfour) | *Participants explore the geographical roots of their biological ancestors.* |
| [Activity 4.5. Endless human variability.](#activityfourfive) | *Participants explore human genetic variability using Genomics on-line resources in Appendix A (book).* |
| [Activity 4.6. Genomic research collaboration.](#activityfoursix) | *Using websites in Appendix A, participants explore the history of international collaboration on genomic research.* |
| [Activity 4.7. Human evolution.](#activityfourseven) | *Participants explore the depiction of our evolutionary origins and history at two major museum websites (see Appendix A).* |
|  |  |
| Part II: Culture Creates Race | |
| *Chapter 5: Culture Shapes How We Experience Reality* | |
| [Activity 5.1. The Hug: transforming nature to culture.](#c501) | *A short activity in which participants experience and reflect on the power of culture to shape natural capacities, like our sense of touch, into complex cultural inventions called “hugs.”* |
| [Activity 5.2. The Albatross: culture as a symbolic system that shapes how we see the world.](#c502) | *Participants, through observing an elaborate “Albatross” greeting ritual, experience and then reflect on how cultural knowledge shapes what we observe and can lead to misinterpretations of other peoples’ behavior. Participants explore how greetings are complex cultural symbols. This is an author-adapted version of the original Albatross simulation. Time requirements vary from 20 min to much longer.* |
| [Activity 5.3. The pervasiveness of culture.](#c503) | *Through a listing activity followed by discussion, participants discover how much of their daily life, at the most basic levels, is shaped to some extent by their culture.* |
| [Activity 5.4. Exploring the concept of culture](#c504) | *Individual or small group activity in which participants apply the concept of culture, cultural knowledge, cultural processes to their own school or another institution (e.g. workplace, other).* |
| [Activity 5.5. Teaching about race.](#c505) | *Provides additional teaching suggestions and resources.* |
| *Chapter 6: Culture And Classification: Race Is Culturally Real* | |
| [Activity 6.1. Color terms.](#c601) | *Through a hands-on activity involving paint chips, participants will experience and then discuss the arbitrariness of color classifications.* |
| [Activity 6.2. Classifying relatives](#c602) | *Participants explore kinship terms (labels to refer to relatives) in English and if possible, in another language and culture.* |
| [Activity 6.3. Classifying in other cultures: a cultural IQ test](#c603) | *Participants take an “intelligence test” using questions based on ethnographic data collected by anthropologists.* |
| [Activity 6.4. Classifying people on social media sites](#c604) | *Participants consider the social categories available to users of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok etc. and how the meanings and use of these social categories may differ among users.* |
|  |  |
| *Chapter 7: Race And Inequality: Race as A Social Invention to Achieve Certain Goals* | |
| [Activity 7.1. Census activity.](#c701) | *Participants use historical U.S. Census questions on “race” to examine how racial classification shifted over time, reflecting cultural and historical contexts and debates.* |
| [Activity 7.2. Starpower: experiencing a stratified society.](#c702) | *Participants play Starpower, a highly interactive game simulating a U.S.-type stratification system. The game is followed by an author-created, anthropologically-oriented discussion of meritocracy, social mobility, and status. Requires about 1-3 hours plus preparation.* |
| [Activity 7.3. Ethnic diversity in the United States*.*](#c703) | *Participants use websites in Appendix A (Book), as well as direct observation, to explore the ethnic diversity in their communities (or elsewhere).* |
| [Activity 7.4. Relevant social categories on public documents](#c704) | *An archival research activity that engages participants in studying key documents such as birth certificates, drivers' licenses* |
| [Activity 7.5. Exploring my ancestry: the ethnic me—focus on Euro-Americans.](#c705) | *Participants explore, through interviews, if possible, how European American identity has evolved.* |
| [Activity 7.6. Mating choice activity](#c706) | *See Chapter 9 and relate the activity to class stratification.* |
| [Activity 7.7. Explore links between U.S. racial ideology and stratification.](#c707) | *Uses website of the documentary Race, the Power of an Illusion to explore how race developed as a form of stratification in the U.S.* |
| *Chapter 8: Cross-Cultural Overview of Race* | |
| [Activity 8.1. Census categories in other nations.](#c801) | *Using websites for other countries' national census, participants explore how the Census socially classifies their populations, and how this differs from the US Census.* |
| [Activity 8.2. How immigrants experience the U.S. racial system](#c802) | *Participants interview a person born outside the United States to shed light on social categories of their home country, family, community as well as their reactions to the US racial system.* |
| [Activity 8.3. How history and local circumstances shape racial classification](#c803). | *A more sustained research project on specific questions, such as regional diversity within the Caribbean in racial ideology.* |
| *Chapter 9: Race, Sex, And Gender: If Race Doesn’t Exist, What Are We Seeing?* | |
| [Activity 9.1. Mating activity.](#c901) | *Through an activity focusing on the characteristics of an "ideal mate", participants examine the role that socio-economic factors, social group memberships and social identities play in our mate choices, but also in the preferences of our families, communities, other relevant institutions.* |
| [Activity 9.2. Film and discussion: T*he Loving Story.*](#c902) | *Participants view and discuss The Loving Story, the film on the Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court interracial marriage decision.* |
| [Activity 9.3. Compare interracial and same-sex marriage laws.](#c903) | *Using websites in chapter 9, compares the arguments made in the Loving v. Virginia Case and in Obergefell vs. Hodges, the Supreme Court case legalizing same-sex marriage.* |
| [Activity 9.4. Race, gender, and class in popular culture.](#c904) | *Using popular culture videos and social media sites, or films such as Tough Guise, participants explore how models of masculinity or femininity intersect with race, class, ethnicity, and other themes.* |
| [Activity 9.5. The Ethnic Me (or who did my ancestors marry?).](#c905) | *Participants trace marriage choices/patterns of older generation individuals, in their own family, if possible, using family records, interviews, or other archival sources.* |
| [Activity 9.6. What does it mean to be multiracial/multiethnic in U.S. society?](#c906) | *Participants draw on their own experiences and talk with others to explore what it means to be multiethnic/multiracial in today's world.* |
| Part III: Contemporary Issues: Education, Health, And Language | |
| *Chapter 10: The Academic Achievement Gap and Equity: What Does Race Have to Do with It?* | |
| [Activity 10.1. Reflective questions](#c1001) | *Guides participants to think about how the chapter's themes relate to their own experiences.* |
| [Activity 10.2. Unequal resources:](#c1002) | *This experiential activity in small groups shows participants what it is like when resources are unequally distributed and yet participants are all expected to accomplish the same goals.* |
| [Activity 10.3. The growth of the suburbs and the racial wealth gap:](#c1003) | *Explores video segments and teaching activities based on the film Race, the Power of an Illusion.* |
| [Activity 10.4. How much does your zip code affect your opportunity?](#c1004) | *Based on an article from the New York Times, includes teaching activities about how the neighborhoods we live in affect our opportunities.* |
| [Activity 10.5. IQ tests and culture:](#c1005) | *Three hands-on activities that examine how much cultural information is embedded in sample IQ tests that try to measure our intelligence.* |
| [Activity 10.6. Funds of knowledge in families and communities:](#c1006) | *Draws on three short videos to explore the ways in which family and community knowledge can potentially enhance students' classroom learning.* |
|  |  |
| *Chapter 11: Unpacking the Health Consequences of Racial Stratification* | |
| [Activity 11.1. The life-and-death stakes of health inequality](#lifeanddeath) | *Developed by a sociologist and a neuroscientist, this series of activities explores historical and present-day health inequities in the US.* |
| [Activity 11.2. Learn more about epigenetics.](#epigenetics) | *Through videos and interactive lessons, participants learn how environmental influences affect our bodies and create a pattern known as "weathering" that can affect future generations.* |
| [Activity 11.3. African American maternal and infant mortality](#infantmortality) | *Participants explore a three-part video series focusing on the history of medical care for African American women and how we can solve the crisis.* |
| [Activity 11.4. African burial ground project: connecting historical trauma and resilience to the present.](#africanburialground) | *Participants learn about the National Park Service's African Burial Ground Project and consider questions about how past trauma is related to present inequities.* |
| [Activity 11.5. Environmental justice: air pollution.](#environmentaljusticeair) | *Participants watch videos related to environmental pollution and formulate their own questions about environmental issues they would like to investigate in their own communities.* |
| [Activity 11.6. Environmental justice: water.](#environmentaljusticewater) | *In this role play activity focusing on the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, participants adopt the roles of different people affected by the crisis in order to better understand the connections among housing, healthcare, governance, class, and race.* |
| *Chapter 12: Dismantling the Racial World View*  *This is the concluding chapter and it has no activities.* | |

**ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL**

**NOTE: Please Review Prior Citation Requirements if Using or Adapting These Activities.**

**Part I. The Fallacy of Race as Biology (Mukhopadhyay)**

***Chapter 1: Why Contemporary Races Are Not Scientifically Valid***

Each activity illustrates a major conceptual point in this chapter. Activities sometimes apply to multiple chapters.It is useful to have visual illustrations of human variability, especially if your community is relatively homogeneous. The internet can easily supply such images along with websites mentioned in Appendix A, such as <https://www.genome.gov/dna-day/15-ways/human-genomic-variation>, and within each relevant chapter.

Some of the activities below include detailed instructions. Others provide briefer descriptions, and some provide links to lengthy, detailed activity plans.

**Activity 1.1. How many ways are there to create “races”?**

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Review chapter’s scientific definition of a biological race.

Step 2. Try to apply the definition. Compile list of visible biological traits to separate people into groups. How close are these to conventional racial traits? If close, why might that be and why have we not used other traits?

Step 3. Participants examine (in pairs, small groups) people around them looking for differences in faces, bodies, hair, height, etc. Participants may be surprised at how much biological variation they find once they go beyond U.S. racialized traits.

Step 4. Add traits missed by participants (e.g., tongue curling, hairiness, hitchhiker’s thumb, etc.). Save list for later activities in this and other chapters.

Step 5. Discuss key chapters points illustrated by this activity.

Step 6. Potential follow-up: Look at a broader range of people and identify additional visible human differences. Add to “master” list.

**Activity 1.2. Where is the racial dividing line?** **Continuous vs. Discrete Traits**

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Review concepts of discrete versus continuous

Step 2. Select three to five traits (e.g. from Activitiy1). Include racial and non-racial markers (e.g., skin color, height, body ratios)

Step 3. Try to find one discrete trait to separate participants into groups. There are few truly discrete traits. Use a relatively discrete trait like tongue-curling or hitch-hiker thumb. Most people will either have or not have the trait. How many groups are created?

Step 4. Try to find a second discrete trait. It will be difficult because most traits are not discrete, but continuous, a key point.

Step 5. Height. Participants align from shortest to tallest. Then divide into “races.” Discuss—how many, where to divide, and would it be stable with a different and/or more globally diverse group? Note the arbitrariness of category boundaries for continuous traits.

Step 6. Select a racialized trait, like skin color. Participants compare skin color on the inside of their arms. Variations in skin color and a continuum of shades should appear even among racially homogenous groups, once we start noticing! Next, try to divide the group into three to five racial “categories.”

If participants want a broader spectrum of humans, consult the Internet or websites in Appendix A and listed below. Try to avoid human extremes (very pale-very dark skin or hair; very straight or very tightly curled hair). Instead, concentrate on the majority of humanity which falls along the continuum (e.g. people in South Asia, along the Mediterranean Sea (Italy-Greece-Spain-Morocco-Tunisia-Egypt etc.); around the Indian Ocean (e.g. Tanzania, Yemen, Oman, Pakistan-West India, through Indonesia), Asian-Pacific Islands like Philippines; Central-South America. Any major urban city in the United States also has people from all around the world.

Participants could develop a PowerPoint (or similar) collage of global human variability in body shape, height, limb lengths, hairiness and other visible traits. This collage could then be used to illustrate the complexities of trying to classify people into conventional US “racial groups” using racialized traits.

**Activity 1.3. Racial traits do not covary****.**

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Select several visible traits to use, including skin color, hair form, nose shape, and eye features.

Step 2. Identify different parts of the room as “homelands” for each racial group. Select the first racial trait, let’s say skin color. Use 3-5 categories. Participants go to homelands based on their skin color. If they have difficulty, remind them boundaries are often arbitrary. List members of each group.

Step 3. Select a second, racialized trait, such as hair, eye, lip or nose shape. Select what works best. Use this trait to reshuffle participants into new racial groups. Most traits will require arbitrary divisions (e.g. natural hair: tightly curled, wavy, straight). Do the groups remain stable? Generally they do not, if your class is fairly diverse. Record the results, including any new combinations the 2nd trait produced (e.g. darker skin-straight hair). You could create more races to cover these new combinations;

Step 4. Select a third trait, one that is variable within your own class (e.g., nasal index, eye or hair color, tongue curling, body shape). Repeat the “racial shuffle.”

Step 5. Summarize results using a version of Table 1.1.

**Table for Activity 1.3: Sample chart showing that many physical traits do not covary**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Student Name*** | ***Trait 1: Color*** | ***Trait 2: Hair*** | ***Trait 3: Body Shape*** |
|  |  |  |  |
| JS | Medium | Curly | Round |
| CM | Lighter | Wavy | Round |
| SD | Darker | Straight | Linear |
| AM | Darker | Wavy | Round |

Continue with additional traits until participants understand the concept of *discordant* or non-co-variance among visible traits.

**Activity 1.4. What racial traits shall we choose?**

*Objective:* Understand that while racial classification is biologically arbitrary, powerful groups select racial criteria that serve their own self-interest.

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Introduce activity. Everyone will be placed into a racial group but races will not have equal power or status. Only one race will determine each group’s grade on this activity. Race A is top-ranked; Race B next; Race C is lower, etc.

Step 2. Arbitrarily divide participants into two to five groups, of 6-10 people each.

Step 3. Have each group select one visible racial trait that will be used to rank the entire larger group into races A and B (and perhaps C or D). People with the trait will be in Race A.

Step 4. List the traits selected by each group. See if participants can agree on a trait for classifying people.

Step 5: Discussion: Reflect on how participants selected traits. Participants will probably try to select a racial trait that will enable them to end up in Race A. Since the groups were arbitrarily divided initially, it may be difficult to find a common trait. But participants are creative and will probably come up with one that works. This serves to make the point that racial categories are in part social inventions, and those who invent them often are motivated by the desire for power. They select traits that will put their own group at an advantage.

Step 6. Tell participants this will prepare them for Part II which describes the social invention of race, the racial worldview and racial stratification in the United States.

**Activity 1.5. How can you tell someone’s race?**

Participants discuss how they can tell someone’s race, in general, and then using concrete examples, perhaps even media images. What type of information is being used? What do they mean by race? This could be used in conjunction with the beginning of scientist Dr. Nina Jablonski’s video which shows an array of faces of people from Brazil. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOnqQEbHTiI>

***Chapter 2: Human Biological Variation: What We Don’t See***

*Overview:*

These activities link to other chapters in part I.

*Objective:*

To understand that significant invisible genetic variation, such as in the ABO blood system and in people’s tolerance/intolerance for milk, does not covary with race.

*Other Information:*

Participants may need to know their ABO blood type and, if possible, their Rh status (from family members, health providers, blood bank, etc.). Milk or gluten intolerance may have to be inferred. Similar information about other family members is useful. Participants will see if their own (and family) data match chapter predictions about the geographic distribution of these traits, based on their or their ancestor’s geographic origins. And if not, what other factors might explain the results.

Family ancestry can be a sensitive issue for some participants. One alternative is to work in groups using only one “volunteer” from the group; or to interview people with known ancestors.

Maps showing the geographic distribution of blood types can be found at the Palomar website: <https://anthropology-tutorials-nggs7.kinsta.page/vary/vary_3.htm> . Dean 2005, also has maps and charts on variability in blood types, on-line and downloadable as a Pdf file at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2264/>

**Activity 2.1. Sorting by blood type and race.**

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Calculate frequencies of each blood type in the group.

Step 2. Assign people of each blood type to a separate room area.

Step 3. Each blood type group records its members’ “races” using self-identification and the 2020 Census race & ethnicity categories. Multiracial participants can select more than one racial category. For Census categories see, <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/questionnaires-and-instructions/questionnaires/2020-informational-questionnaire-english_DI-Q1.pdf>See p.3 for Ethnicity (6), Race (7) questions**.**

Step 4. Summarize results in a matrix or table such as in Table 2.1. Is there any pattern? Can you predict blood group from knowing race?

Step 5. Use here or with chapter 3. Participants compare their geographic ancestry (even if many generations ago) to maps showing the geographic distribution of blood types (see chapter 2 links). Discuss findings. Brainstorm what factors (historical, environmental) might be linked to geographic variations in blood types.

**Table for Activity 2.1. Sample matrix of blood types using Racial Categories in U.S. Census (**to be filled in by facilitator)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Blood Type by Race** | *African American* | *Asian American* | *Native American* | *Hawaiian*  *or Pacific Islander* | *Latino or Hispanic* | *Euro-*  *American* |
| A |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| B |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| AB |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| O |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Activities 2.2–2.4. Race and Rh factor, lactose intolerance, gluten intolerance.**

Follow same procedures as above except participants group by RH; Lactose status; Gluten tolerance status. Are there any similarities among groups?

**Activity 2.5. Race and smell.**

Explore human genetic variations in our olfactory receptors, that is what we can smell. See the specific directions at the website below. Then evaluate the extent to which individual “noseprints” correlate with racial identity/classification.<https://achems.org/web/resources-education-activity-6.php> *.*

**Activity 2.6. Play the blood-typing game.**

<https://educationalgames.nobelprize.org/educational/medicine/bloodtypinggame/> .

**Activity 2.7. Explore NHGRI resources on health and genetic factors.**

Visit and explore the National Human Genome Research Institute website. Explore the **About Health** and **Genetic Disease** sections. Share your findings with other participants.

For websites see Appendix A, <https://www.genome.gov/> and <https://www.genome.gov/health>

**Activity 2.8. Genome: Unlocking life’s code.**

Explore this website. What did you find particularly relevant to this book or to you personally. Share your findings.

See Resource Library, <https://www.unlockinglifescode.org/resource-library>

See: <https://www.unlockinglifescode.org/about>

See: <https://www.unlockinglifescode.org/the-exhibit>

**Activity 2.9. Exploring my ancestors: Blood type, other traits.**

Collect information on the ABO blood type and milk tolerance of family members (immediate, more distant) as part of a broader exploration of your own ancestral roots (or of someone else, if preferable). Be as precise as possible about ancestral background, for example, at minimum, the country and region if available. For example in India, West Bengal state; in Europe, the country and region (e.g. Italy, Sicily); in China, Shanghai; in Africa, West Africa, Nigeria; in South America, Brazil, southern region; so forth.

Examine whether the blood type and milk tolerance of these relatives match the worldwide geographic regional patterns that have been identified in Chapter 2 and elsewhere in Part I. If they don’t match, what might be the reasons? For example, could it be due to migration patterns of ancestors, variability within regions, within populations, marriage patterns, adoption?

For maps, Palomar College link is still useful <https://www.palomar.edu/anthro/vary/vary_3.htm> Dean 2005, also has good maps, is available on-line and downloadable as Pdf. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2264/>

***Chapter 3: If Not Race, How Do We Explain Biological Differences?***

*Overall Objectives:*

Understand relationships between geography, environment, and human biological variation for several traits, including the role of natural selection as well as other factors. Explore hypothesis testing.

*Other Information:*

Participants will try to measure their own or other peoples’ body type, head form, nose shape and skin color*.* They will also assess their lactose and gluten tolerance. They will then discuss whether results match chapter predictions about the geographic distribution of these traits, based on their or their ancestor’s geographic origins. And if not, what other factors might explain the results.

Ancestry can be a sensitive issue for some participants. One alternative is to work in groups using only one “volunteer” from the group; or to interview people with known ancestors.

For information on how to make measurements and for maps that show the geographic distribution of various traits, see material in chapter 3 and in earlier chapters.

Activities 3.1 to 3.5 focus on understanding the relationship between geography, environment and human biological variation, including the role of natural selection and other factors. Each explores a different trait. Participants use their own bodies (and ancestral geographic origins when possible).

**Activity 3.1. Body type, climate zones, and ancestry.**

Step 1. Participants measure their body types and explore the relationship of body type to climate described in this chapter. Or participants can develop their own measures of the relationship between body size, body proportions, and ancestral climate: compute the ratio of finger length to hand width; arms to their total height; measure noses, using the nasal index or develop some other measure.

Step 2. Using a world map that shows climatic zones and body types, participants compare their body type or other body features and see where they “fit” geographically. Is this where their ancestors came from?

Step 3. Discussion. Are results consistent with the “climate” hypothesis of body types? If not, why not? Could your ancestors have come from a different region, earlier in time? Could culture be more important in survival these days than natural adaptations to climate? How does your body type (or body parts) compare to those of family members, especially older family members? Have any changes occurred?

**Activity 3.2. Facial size, shape, and geographic ancestral location.**

Follow the same procedures as above, except measure head shape using calipers, if available. Otherwise, use “cephalic index” or other participant- developed measures.

**Activity 3.3. Ancestry and skin color.**

(see also Activity 6 below for more resources)

Participants analyze skin color on their inner arm (see Chapter 1 activities). If a spectrometer (more technically, a spectrophotometer) is available, actual measurements can be taken. Otherwise, compare visually, lining up by shades, for example. If the group is too homogeneous, add pictures from other sources. Participants discuss if there is a relationship between family ancestry (geographic roots) and skin color. What other evolutionary factors (e.g., gene flow or migration) could be at work?

**Activity 3.4. Milk: Lactose intolerance and lactase persistence.**

Participants assess their own and their family and friends’ tolerance for milk (see also chapter 2) Then look at book and Web-based information on the global distribution of lactose tolerance and intolerance. In what regions and what types of agricultural practices is lactose tolerance most common? Finally, explore the relationship between one’s own milk tolerance and geographic ancestry.

**Activity 3.5. Gluten intolerance.**

Adapt the above procedures to explore gluten intolerance, and its relationship to ancestry, geography, and agricultural practices.

**Activity 3.6. More on skin color and human evolution.**

Explore the videos, maps and other resources, including hypothesis testing activities, at the excellent and comprehensive Biointeractive website.

<https://www.biointeractive.org/classroom-resources/biology-skin-color>; <https://www.biointeractive.org/classroom-resources/skin-color-and-human-evolution>; <https://www.biointeractive.org/professional-learning/educator-voices/biology-skin-color-and-hypothesis-testing>

***Chapter 4: More Alike Than Different, More Different Than Alike***

*Overall Objectives:*

These activities build on and summarize earlier chapters.

**Activity 4.1. Human biological variation: More alike than different?**

*Objective:*

Illustrate there is more variability within than between racial groups.

*Process:*

Participants will follow procedures in chapter 1 activity, but using both invisible and visible traits. After dividing into macroracial categories, they will assess themselves on 5-10 genetic traits. DNA samples could also be used. Groups will explore variability within and between racial groupings.

*More Detailed Activity Plan:*

Step 1. Participants create a list of visible and invisible genetic traits, drawing on earlier chapters and websites.

Step 2. Reduce list to about ten traits (including some invisible traits) that participants can describe in themselves and other people. This is harder for invisible traits, like ABO blood group. Create a matrix of these traits (see samples).

Step 3. Divide participants into racial groups. You can use the 2020 census categories. Do not force multiracials to select one category. They can create a separate “multiracial” category if they wish. If you have virtually no racial diversity, use religion or gender as the basis for groupings. Using gender groups can illustrate how much variability lies *within* each gender.

Step 4. Participants assess themselves on each item on the chart of traits.

Step 5. Each group summarizes the data for their racial group (counts or frequencies/percentages). Compare groups’ results. Participants should discover that there is more variability within than between the groups.

Step 6. Explore the possibility of collecting DNA samples to further explore the amount of variability within U.S. racial groups.

**Activity 4.2. Exploring one’s own ancestry: Limitations of DNA analyses.**

Visit “Tracing Ancestry with mtDNA,” from NOVA Online at http:// [www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/neanderthals/mtdna.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/neanderthals/mtdna.html). Discuss limitations and problems with interpreting ancestry analyses. See also relevant sections and references in Chapter 4.

**Activity 4.3. The story of Desiree’s baby****. *(also relevant to Part II, chapter 9)***

The activity begins with participants reading a short story by Kate Chopin published in 1893 entitled *Desiree’s Baby.* <https://www.katechopin.org/pdfs/desirees-baby.pdf> The story makes a poignant statement about racism (and gender). In doing so, it illustrates how skin color is not mainly about biology but about the meanings that individuals, society, and culture give to skin color.

The discussion can explore *culturally rooted* environmental factors that influence skin color. These include occupation (farming or other outdoors versus indoor work), recreational activities, cosmetic products that lighten, darken, or in other ways affect skin color, and the recent popularity, among some U.S. Americans, of the tanning salon. Participants can also discuss the role gender plays in the story and in the significance attached to skin color.

**Activity 4.4. Exploring my ancestry: Geographic origins and marriage patterns*****.***

*Overview:*

Participants, when possible, investigate the home countries or regions of their biological ancestors, prior to coming to the United States (except for people who are Native Americans, the only true “natives”). Most participants will have multiple ancestral origins. If ancestry is a problem, participants can work in groups or interview others. Can be used with other “The Ethnic Me” activities.

*Detailed Activity Plan:*

In conjunction with part II activities, map family geographic ancestry more carefully, using information from family history interviews and family kinship chart. Focus initially on immediate family members, then move farther out. If used with “The Ethnic Me” in part II, participants could also trace marriage patterns to see to what extent their ancestors married “out” with regard to region, ethnicity, religion, education, or other local marriage criteria.

Once participants have some idea of a family tree, regardless of how crude or small, they can apply several activities in part I to their relatives. For example, they could literally map ABO blood types, body shapes, skin color, or nose form onto geographic origins of relatives. They could also look at environmental influences, such as the effect of diet on height, by comparing heights of different generations of their relatives. For more details, see http://[www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay](http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay) .

**Activity 4.5. Endless human variability.**

Explore human genetic variability using on-line resources at NHGRI, MedlinePlus and other websites listed under **Genomics Section** in Appendix A. See for example, <https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/understanding/genomicresearch/snp/>

**Activity 4.6. Genomic research collaboration.**

Explore the history of international collaboration on genomic research. See **Appendix A (or Website Resources in Companion**  for some websites. What type of organizations, institutions, and countries have been involved in these collaborations? What issues arose in the early stages? What have been the benefits of expanding the collaboration to be a more global, worldwide effort?

**Activity 4.7. Human evolution.**

Explore the depiction of our evolutionary origins and history using at least two major museum websites (see several listings in **Appendix A** including in the US, the UK, and Australia). Are there any differences in the interpretations, labels, time-lines, or actual depictions of human ancestors in these different museums? What might be possible reasons for these differences? Does the location or country of the museum make a difference? Museum exhibits are in many ways telling a story about a topic, offering a narrative account. In what ways are these exhibits subtly telling a particular story, from a particular perspective. Whose story is being told? What other perspectives are possible, or are missing and could be added?

See <https://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-fossils/species/homo-sapiens>

**Part II. Culture Creates Race (Mukhopadhyay)**

**Activity 5.1. The Hug: Transforming nature to culture.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

*Objectives:*

Participants experience and reflect on the power of culture to shape natural capacities, like our desire for touch, into complex cultural inventions called “hugs.”

*Additional Information:*

This activity requires no materials, takes only a few minutes, is participant centered, interactive, and appropriate for all ages and all sizes of groups, from a minimum 2 to well over 100 people. It may be particularly useful to do at the beginning of a class, workshop, or even a shorter presentation on culture and cultural diversity, including race/ethnic or gender/sexuality. Participants are simply asked to “hug” someone next to or near them. Then a facilitated discussion takes place (10-30 minutes). The facilitator needs to be familiar with the concepts in chapter 5 to lead the discussion that follows the brief activity.

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Facilitator asks participants to stand up. Pause for a few seconds until they are all standing.

Step 2. Ask participants to hug the person next to them (or nearby). You may have to repeat it a second time, or even a third time, since some people may feel hesitant, reluctant, uncomfortable.

Step 3. Ask them to sit down and then begin the discussion.

Step 4: Discussion. Reflect on what has occurred and what it illustrates, especially the key points made in chapter 5.

* A hug is a culturally shaped way of greeting through touch. It requires complex, detailed cultural knowledge. Try to identify the cultural knowledge a Martian might have to know in order to “hug” in a culturally appropriate manner.
* Explore the where, what, how, and how long, and by and to whom cultural “rules” that underlie a simple “hug.” This creates an opening to discuss hugging rules that reflect one’s social identity (including gender, religion, relative status), social relationship (e.g. strangers vs. non-strangers), and also social context.
* Explore the extent to which cultural knowledge of hugging is taken for granted, stored as a cognitive pattern, a cultural schema, at an unconscious level. Note that an intrinsically meaningless set of sounds uttered by the facilitator immediately evoked a rather complex behavioral image, the “hug,” and then a set of actions. Ask, naively, if participants had to consciously think of “how” to perform a hug, what to do, whether to use their feet or their upper torso, what to do with their eyes, and so on. Explore the processes through which they might have “learned” the “hug.”
* You can also explore variations in participant responses to this activity. Mild discomfort (“embarrassment”) may come from violating implicit social norms, such as that one doesn’t hug strangers in a workshop or class. This illustrates the internalized nature of culture as well as how informal sanctions, such as embarrassment, and other forms of social pressure, work.
* Microculture-based Variations in Responses. Some participants may experience more distress because of their own microcultural background, gender, religion, ethnicity, or race. These variations and their meanings can be examined, including cultural attitudes about touch, sexuality, and same-sex or male-female physical interactions.
* Cultural rules on touching, including hugging, often are linked to broader themes in a cultural system. As a prelude to discussions of race, explore cultural “rules” for hugging across racial lines, historically and today; and how these intersect with gender (i.e. same-sex vs. male-female interracial hugs). These informal rules can be linked to other features of the broader U.S. racial system, such as historical sanctions on interracial mating and marriage and gender power hierarchies (see Chapter 9)

**Activity 5.2. The Albatross: Culture as a symbolic system that shapes how we see the world.**

*Objectives:*

Participants, through observing an elaborate “Albatross” greeting ritual, experience and then reflect on how cultural knowledge shapes our perceptions of “reality”, shapes what we observe, and how we interpret what we see, and can lead to misinterpretations of other peoples’ behavior. Participants explore how greetings are complex cultural symbols.

*Additional Information:*

Requires 10-20 minutes for the greeting ritual and then 20-60 minutes for discussion. The Albatross ritual can either be performed “live”, using group members along with a facilitator; or using a DVD version Mukhopadhyay recorded many years ago. The “live” version requires preparation, mainly by two people who will play the role of the Albatross couple. Participants in the greeting ritual are drawn from workshop/class members. Both males and females are required, ideally in equal numbers, usually from one to four pairs. The facilitator leads the discussion that follows the performance of the ritual.

The Procedure section below briefly summarizes the major steps, including discussion guidelines. A more detailed lesson plan and explicit instructions for a live performance are available in the downloadable RACE project teachers guide at <https://understandingrace.org/pdf/racemiddleschoolteachersguide.pdf>, Lesson Plan 1, Culture Shapes How We See the World., p.34.

For access to the on-line version of the activity, see <https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/race/>

*Procedure: Brief Version*

Step 1. Participants view a live or videotaped greeting behavior sequence in a hypothetical culture called Albatross.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the live version, one to four male-female pairs are selected to participate in the greeting ritual.

Step 2. After the ritual, participants describe (orally, in written form) the Albatrossian culture, especially gender (male-female) relations and female status, as illustrated in specific features of the ritual. Facilitators can list each micro-feature of the ritual. Participants uniformly perceive it as a male-dominated culture and provide evidence from the ritual. For example, unlike men, women take off their shoes, sit on the floor, are served after the men, and the Albatrossian woman seems to be dominated by the Albatrossian man, as indicated by her serving him and by her frequent “bows” to him.

Step 3. The discussion facilitator (or the Albatrossian couple) reveals this is a female-dominant culture. Women are regarded as superior to men, as reflected in numerous parts of the ritual. For example, only women are pure enough to sit on the ground, the sacred earth. Women also own all the land and the food it produces; hence the Albatrossian man is only a “guest” while the woman is the “host”.

Step 4. Discussion. Compare participant interpretations of specific elements in the greeting ritual to their meanings in the Albatrossian culture. Facilitator notes that misinterpretation occurs because participants, predictably, have interpreted the ritual through a U.S. cultural lens. This illustrates how culture is internalized, inside our heads, as cultural models that shape our perceptions and interpretations of what we see and believe about other people, especially people from other cultures. Facilitator can also point out how verbal descriptions of behavior can encode interpretation, such as “the woman *bowed* her head to the man” or “the women *had* to sit on the floor.”

Step 5. Prepare participants for how other cultural inventions, like race, shape our perceptions and interpretations. How might misunderstandings occur in cross-racial and cross-ethnic encounters? How might the lessons of the Albatross simulation help us to understand tensions between members of different ethnoracial, religious, or other cultural backgrounds or lifestyles? Have participants discuss instances of cultural misinterpretation they’ve encountered.

Step 6: Extension of discussion to cultural misunderstandings that can occur in school, work, law enforcement, health, recreational and other public settings; and to interpersonal encounters.

*School Settings Example:*

Ask participants to apply the lessons of Albatross to an encounter with someone from another racial, ethnic, or religious group in their school (e.g., in a classroom, the cafeteria, other settings). What types of misinterpretation could occur?

How might this lesson have a bearing on which students seem to be “smart” or “good students” or “bad students”? What specific behaviors do students or faculty use to form impressions of each other? Could “speaking out” in class be considered disrespectful in some cultures? Antisocial and competitive? What alternative interpretations are possible?

How might people from different cultural backgrounds differently interpret student-related behavior (e.g., student clothing, kissing in public, playground activities, disagreeing with the teacher in class, etc.). Can behavior of school personnel, such as teachers, administrators, staff also be misinterpreted?

**Activity 5.3. The pervasiveness of culture.**

*Objectives:*

Participants discover how much of their daily life, at the most basic levels, is shaped to some extent by their culture.

*Additional Information:*

Takes 10-20 twenty minutes, depending on how facilitator handles the discussion. Participants list everything they did, used, from the time they awoke that was to some extent “cultural” vs. “natural”. Include handling basic bodily functions, like sleeping (where, in what, when), bodily waste, and nutrition, body cleansing and adornment products. Discuss and relate to this chapter. See also Activity 4.

<https://perspectives.americananthro.org/teaching/Gender-and-Sexuality-Learning-Resources.pdf>

**Activity 5.4. Exploring the concept of culture**

*Objectives*:

Participants apply the concept of culture, cultural knowledge, cultural processes to their own school/college or another institution (e.g. workplace, medical, recreational, public safety-related, other government, etc )

*Additional Information:*

Participant-centered. Pretend to be a Martian trying to understand or navigate the school or other cultural/institutional settings. What cultural knowledge would be required to appropriately behave in or interpret this culture? What misinterpretations could occur. Participants can focus on a single behavior (e.g. greetings) or event (assembly/meeting) or a site (bathroom, cafeteria).

**Activity 5.5. Teaching about race.**

Explore additional activities at <https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/race/>

***Chapter 6: Culture and Classification: Race Is Culturally Real***

The activities below utilize and build on material here and elsewhere.

**Activity 6.1. Color terms*.***

*Objectives:*

Participants will experience the arbitrariness of color classifications.

*Additional Information:*

All Ages. Interactive. Materials Needed: Organizer or participants will obtain, and then number, paint chips in a wide continuum of colors that fall within basic color categories: brown, blue, green, red, yellow, and so on. Participants divide chips into basic color categories and discuss areas of agreement and disagreement (e.g. boundaries). Note any gender differences. If all are native English speakers, try to interview people from other language-national backgrounds. Discuss what might influence results (e.g. gender, occupation/field of study, ethnoracial background, income level).

*Procedure:*

Step 1. List basic color terms on board.

Step 2. Participants divide paint chips into basic color categories (whole group, led by facilitator; or in small groups)

Step 3. Chart paint chip numbers, listing under basic color terms. Participants are most likely to disagree on boundaries of color terms. Participants from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, nationalities, or genders may group same colors differently.

Step 4. Discuss results and significance. Point out that reality is a continuum but language arbitrarily divides reality into distinct categories. This reinforces the concept of “continuous distribution” in chapter 1.

Step 5. Find some participants fluent in another language, preferably a non-European language, and have them list the basic color terms in their language. They may have a different number. Or there may be the same number, but the boundaries between colors may differ (i.e., a chip called “blue” in English may be labeled “green” in Spanish or Tagalog).

**Activity 6.2. Classifying relatives.**

*Overview:*

Participants explore kinship terms (labels to refer to relatives) in English and if possible, another language and culture. Participants will understand that labels for relatives, like for color, are somewhat arbitrary divisions of reality. Participants can use a standard cultural anthropology text like the Open Source book, *Perspectives*, chapter on Kinship, <https://pressbooks.pub/perspectives/chapter/family-and-marriage/>) to construct a kinship chart with “native” labels for each category of kin. Discuss results including variations among participants and changes over time in terms. This can be linked to activities in other chapters in which participants explore family background (see for example Chapter 5).

*More Detailed Procedure*:

Background: Participants explore *kinship terms* or labels for relatives in English and also, if possible, in another language and culture. Kinship terms are labels used to *refer to* relatives, such as “uncle” or “sister.” We may use different terms when *addressing* relatives. For example, we talk about someone being our “sister.” But if we see her, we generally address her by her name (“Hi, Shana!”). We are not concerned here with the way relatives are addressed. Participants should focus on the labels used when we formally *refer* to relatives, such as the label “sister” or “cousin.”

Step 1. Describe the concept of kinship terms—ways of classifying and categorizing relatives (see conceptual background material).

Step 2. Show participants how to construct a “kinship chart,” a chart that uses symbols to represent different types of relatives. See any standard cultural anthropology text such as the on-line Open Source book, *Perspectives*, chapter on Kinship, <https://pressbooks.pub/perspectives/chapter/family-and-marriage/> ).

Step 3. Participants construct kinship chart of their family (including beyond their household).

Step 4. Participants identify U.S. American English *kin terms* for each relative on their chart (in small groups or individually).

Step 5. Discuss which kinship-biological distinctions are ignored and which are recognized. Discuss possible reasons, such as roles of various relatives, living arrangements, economic sharing, restrictions on marrying certain relatives, gender ideology.

Step 6. Discusses changes in kinship terms reflecting contemporary family patterns, including multiple marriages, blended families, and same-sex marriages.

Step 7. Compare American English kinship terms to those from another language, using either bilingual participants or other multilingual people that participants can interview.

Step 8. Summarize the key point: Cultures, through language, classify the same biological reality in different ways, reflecting cultural and historical context.

**Activity 6.3. Classifying in other cultures: A cultural IQ test.**

*Overview:*

Participants take an “intelligence test” using questions based on ethnographic data collected by anthropologists. Participants will experience different criteria for classifying the same set of items. Participants discuss how US IQ tests may require equally culturally-specific knowledge.

*Objective:*

Participants will be able to recognize and cite examples of different ways and criteria for classifying the same set of items. Participants will recognize that most IQ tests are at least partially based on cultural knowledge and classification systems that are learned and culturally specific.

*Procedure:*

Give participants a hypothetical “test” of their aptitude and intelligence using examples that partially come from ethnographic data gathered by anthropologists (see, for example, Lee, 1974: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15417692>/). For each example, participants select the *most different* of the set of items. These activities can also be used with chapter 10.

*Additional Information*:

No materials except to record responses. Time: Five to 15+ minutes.

*Set 1. Turtle, Basket, Bird*

*Discussion:*

Participants from the United States often select basket, utilizing a familiar cultural distinction: animals versus nonanimals (animate versus inanimate). But there are other possible classifying devices, like self-propelling versus can’t move (basket). Some non-Western cultures emphasize size and shape and would select birds as most different because they are relatively angular versus rounded compared to turtles or their baskets. Thus correctness on this “test” would be culturally dependent.

*Set 2. Laundry, Beer, Clothing*

*Discussion:*

Participants often, with great assurance, select beer as most different. For U.S. culture, functionality is major classifying device and so this would link clothing and washing machines. Yet, at least one culture views visual appearance as most salient. From this perspective, clothing is most different because laundry and beer are both “foamy.” U.S. slang for beer (“suds”) also recognizes the attribute of foaminess.

*Set 3. Chair, Spear, Couch*

*Discussion:*

Participants in the United States again tend to select the “wrong” answer—at least according to some Ashanti in Ghana (Lee, 1974). U.S.

Americans tend to emphasize *use,* thus placing couch and chair together as types of sitting devices (i.e., furniture). In Ashanti culture, both a chair and a spear can symbolize authority, making the couch the most different.

*Set 4. Pig, Cow, Horse, Goat, Snake or try different combinations of three (e.g., Cow, Pig, Snake) or add other animals*

*Discussion:*

This hypothetical example can generate discussion of alternative classifying devices, both in theory, and classifications that reflect cultural or religious beliefs. One can use scientific taxonomy, mammals versus nonmammals. An alternative classifying device could be edible versus inedible animals, or culturally defined “food” versus “not food.” But the category placement of a cow, pig, or horse as “food” would depend on the culture and the religion; for example, whether Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist. Some Bengali Hindus make an “edibility” distinction, on religious grounds, between fish which feed only on plants (vegetarian fish, which are edible) and those which feed on animals (nonvegetarian fish; not allowed).

*Discussion:*

Participants explore other alternative responses and what they might reflect.

**Activity 6.4. Classifying people on social media sites.**

Explore the default social categories into which you can place people on Facebook or similar social media platforms. Discuss how you and others categorize people, what criteria are used, and what that reveals about our culture or about the microculture of the classifier. What do concepts like “Friend” “close friend”, Acquaintance, “family” mean? How does one’s classification affect how you feel about your own or other people’s behavior, identity, attitudes, feelings, relationship? What other language is used to classify people on such sites and what does that mean? (e.g. “Unfriend”, “Hide”, “Block”, “Ghost”)

***Chapter 7: Race and Inequality: Race as a Social Invention to Achieve Certain Goals***

**Activity 7.1. Census activity.**

*Brief Overview.*

Participants use historical U.S. Census questions on “Race” to examine how racial classification shifted over time, reflecting cultural and historical contexts and debates. Participants discuss social distinctions reflected in the Census categories, wording, possible relevance to that historical time period, the impact of census taker deciding on racial category; how participants might be classified. Begin with the earliest 1790 census, (see Table 7.1), then move to other decades. Interesting years might be 1870 (postslavery); 1920 and 1930, 1990, prior to the 2000 Census changes (see chapter 9), 2020, and the recent 2024 changes. For sources see US Govt, 2002. <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/measuringamerica.pdf>, and <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2002/dec/pol_02-ma.pdf> See also Census links in the chapter and in Appendix A. This activity works with other Part II chapters.

This activity can also be used with Chapter 5, 9, and Part III, especially chapter 12.

**Table for Activity 7.1. 1790 U.S. Census Data**

*Sample Census Data*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1790 Census (12 States). August 2, 1790 | Total Population: 3,929,2142 |
| head of household |  |
| number of free white males ages 16 and older |  |
| number of free white males under the age of 16 |  |
| number of free white females |  |
| number of all other free persons |  |
| number of slaves |  |

Source: <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2002/dec/pol_02-ma.pdf>

*More Detailed Activity Plan*:

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Introduce participants to the U.S. Census. Tell them they are going to analyze census categories over time. This link provides many visualizations related to race, some of them over time. <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race.html>. See also. <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/measuringamerica.pdf>, and <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2002/dec/pol_02-ma.pdf> and Appendix A for other Census Bureau links.

Step 2. Present participants with 1790 census categories (see table 7.1). Participants first identify relevant social distinctions. For example, one census category is “free white male ages 16 and older.” This indicates four relevant social distinctions: “free” versus “slave”; “white” versus “nonwhite; “male” versus “female”; and age, “over 16” versus “under 16.”

Step 3. Participants explore reasons why these distinctions might be relevant in 1790 to the government.

* Take the distinction between “slave” and “free,” which could affect representation in the House of Representatives, based on population. But how were those enslaved to be counted? Were they property or legal persons? Plantation slave owners wanted all slaves to be counted to increase their states’ (and their own) political power in Congress. Non-slave owners and states objected, probably for similar reasons—political power. The “compromise” was to count “free persons” as 1.0 and “slaves” as .6 of a person for purposes of political representation.
* Another reason to count enslaved persons separately was probably for taxation purposes, since they were legally property.
* Apparently those enslaved were not listed by name on the census, unlike free persons. This may reflect slaves’ status as property rather than persons. And since they couldn’t vote or serve on juries, there may have been no need for their formal names.
* Gender (male or female) information may reflect significant legal rights not available to females, such as the right to vote or serve on juries or be drafted. And married women couldn’t sign legal contracts or own property in their own names.
* Age was probably useful for the draft, voting, and serving on juries, except for enslaved people and free White females who both lacked the full legal rights of adult White males.
* Notice that the only reference to “race” is for White (for males and females). Other free persons existed, but their race was not specified. Nor was a racial distinction made for enslaved persons. Why might that have been the case? See chapter 9 for some possibilities.

Step 4. Participants discuss how they would have been classified in the census. Point out that until 1970, the census maker made that decision, using visual criteria. Discuss old and new self-identification methods. This is particularly relevant to chapter 9 and 12.

Step 5. View other historical census categories. For example, select a post-slavery census, such as 1870 (see below) and discuss how the end of slavery is reflected in the census. For example, the category “slave” disappears and more races are listed (in addition to White, Black, mulatto, Chinese, and Indian). This activity could also work with chapter 9 or chapter 6.

Immigration patterns and politics are reflected in questions about foreign birth and whether males (but only males) are citizens (and eligible to vote). Indicators of marital and socioeconomic status, like property ownership, value of real estate, occupation or trade, and literacy also appear. Other interesting census years, for racial categories, are 1920 and 1930.

Step 6. Examine and discuss the 2020 U.S. Census racial and ethnic questions and categories (<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/questionnaires-and-instructions/questionnaires/2020-informational-questionnaire-english_DI-Q1.pdf>See p.3 for Ethnicity (6), Race (7) questions**.)** Note changes, as well as stability in the major racial categories used, and in the labels or descriptive terms. Note the proliferation of new ethnic categories, and how “Hispanic.Latino, or Spanish origin” is handled. Does this make sense? Note new information, items that have disappeared. Point out that people can select their own racial and ethnic classification and, starting in 2000, can select more than one race or ethnicity. Category labels and numbers of categories have changed. This activity could also be used in part III.

Step 7. Discuss racial and ethnic classifications, participant opinions on and reasons for their views, the larger societal impacts of who (and how many people) end up in each census category, or the impacts of redefining and creating new categories. Reinforce the key points that categories are shifting, unstable constructions motivated by self-interest and have significant impacts. They are under human control.

Step 8. Review the new Census guidelines on race and ethnicity that went into effect in April 2024, why they were adopted, and what you think of them (see Chapter 12 for details; also chapter 9 for background). <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2024/04/updates-race-ethnicity-standards.html>

Step 8. Connect to contemporary educational and societal issues, such as the controversy over whether racial and ethnic data should be collected at all, and if so, what categories should be used, for what purposes. This dovetails nicely with Part III.

**Activity 7.2. Starpower: Experiencing a Stratified Society.**

*Overview:*

Participants play the simulation game, Starpower, which creates a U.S.-type system of stratification, based on the idea of a meritocracy, with some mobility, but in which prior group membership is the primary determinant of social, economic, and political status. It is highly interactive, intense, and emotional, takes one to three hours, and requires one to two hours of preparation the first time, unless you have access to a Starpower “kit.” However, it is well worth the effort and provides participants with a visceral, direct experience of how the U.S. system of stratification works and feels. Participants will come out understanding the concept of a meritocracy as a legitimizing ideology in a class-stratified society. Participants also will experience and understand the concepts of “ascribed” (vs. achieved) status and how ascribed status can affect motivation and achievement.

An anthropologically oriented adaptation of the original Starpower simulation, “Experiencing Inequality”, by Mukhopadhyay, with detailed step-by-step instructions and postgame discussion, is available in the RACE Project Teacher’s Guide (p.51-58), downloadable as a PDF file at <https://understandingrace.org/pdf/racemiddleschoolteachersguide.pdf>

It is also available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay>

**Activity 7.3. Ethnic diversity in the United States**

Explore ethnic diversity in your local community (or elsewhere if you live in a small, fairly homogeneous community). Use the following links:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=30d2e10d4d694b3eb4dc4d2e58dbb5a5>

<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html>

Or see Appendix A resources under the US Census section. You might also use more ethnographic methods, like simple observation, walking around, listening, noticing neighborhood details, to find data that reflect the presence of multiple, diverse ethnic groups within each major racial category (White or European; Asian; African; Native American; Latino/Hispanic). For example, names of towns (Little Italy), neighborhoods, streets, buildings, libraries , parks, and within major urban areas, civic and religious organizations, local shops, newspapers and magazines, and restaurants, reveal the multiplicity of ethnic groups and their distinct identities. Census data is also revealing, such as birth country, languages spoken at home, or in schools. English has not always been the only language spoken at home or even in U.S. schools, as older census data (19th century, early 20th century) will reveal. Even as English-only schools arose as part of the 20th-century attempts to assimilate Southern and Eastern European immigrants, immigrants sent their children to after-school programs to learn their parents’ native language. This is continuing today (see Chapter 9 and Chapter 12).

**Activity 7.4. Relevant social categories on public documents.**

Participants explore (using library, family documents, Web sources) the kinds of social categories previously used on key documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, medical forms, police reports, school forms, real estate rental or loan forms, and employment applications. Note any references to race, ethnicity, religion, gender and the language used. What changes, if any, have occurred?

**Activity 7.5. Exploring my ancestry: The Ethnic Me—focus on Euro-Americans.**

Incorporate participants prior investigations of their own ancestry in earlier chapter activities here. Explore especially what happened, over time, to distinct European nationalities and ethnic identities among U.S. “Whites.” Interview, if possible, European-Americans, especially older people or recent migrants, about their ethnic or other identities? Is “White” an identity? A culture? How is it expressed? In what contexts? What about rituals, holidays, food traditions, music, marriage and other social patterns? Relatives? Travel patterns? Examine older media (films, magazines) for popular representations of various European ethnic groups, their languages, foods, cultural patterns. How have they changed over time and in comparison with today. See Mukhopadhyay website for a more detailed description of this activity, <https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/race/>

**Activity 7.6. Mating choice activity.**

See Activity 1 in chapter 9 and relate the activity to class stratification.

**Activity 7.7. Explore links between U.S. racial ideology and stratification.**

Developed for the *Race: Power of an Illusion* Video Series, this educator-oriented Companion website, <https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/resources/> , although mainly pre-2004 materials, contains some potentially useful activities and resources, especially historical documents. See for example its digital archive, “Virtual Jamestown?” (<https://www.virtualjamestown.org/page2.html>), its parental digital archive (<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/> ), and the Module Jamestown: Planting the Seeds of Tobacco and the Ideology of Race, <https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/lessons/jamestown-planting-seeds-tobacco-and-ideology-race>.

***Chapter 8: Cross-Cultural Overview of Race***

*Overall:*

Participants explore cross-cultural variations in racial and other systems of social classification as well as difficulties people from other cultures might have adapting to the U.S. system. These activities work well with other chapters.

**Activity 8.1. Census categories in other nations.**

Explore how the Census in other countries socially classifies their populations. Note especially how they treat ancestry, ethnicity/race, language, religion, nationality, birth, etc. What ethno-racial categories, if any, do they use? Do they recognize multi-ancestry people as a distinct category, such as *Mestizo* or *Pardo* (Brazil). For examples from English-language countries see Australia, Barbados, Belize, Canada, India, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad. If you speak or have access to other languages, this expands the possibilities (cf. Brazil, France, Germany, Morocco, Spain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, China, Vietnam).

For India from 1872-2011, see <https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/CENSUS_ques> .

For Barbados: [https://www.gov.bb/Visit-Barbados/demographics#:~:text=Ethnic%20groups%20The%20population%20of%20Barbados%20is,East%20Asians%20(0.1%)%20and%20Middle%20Easterners%20(0.1%)](https://www.gov.bb/Visit-Barbados/demographics#:~:text=Ethnic%20groups%20The%20population%20of%20Barbados%20is,East%20Asians%20(0.1%25)%20and%20Middle%20Easterners%20(0.1%25)).

For Belize, see page 20 of this report*:* <https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2010_Census_Report.pdf>

**Activity 8.2. How immigrants experience the U.S. racial system.**

Interview (individually or in a group) someone born outside the United States, preferably who does not easily fit traditional U.S. categories. Develop interview questions that explore the social categories of their home country, family, community as well as their reactions to the US system, including how they respond on official forms and questionnaires that request ethnic or racial data.

**Activity 8.3. How history and local circumstances shape racial classification.**

Use a more sustained research project as a way to understand how history and local circumstances shape systems of racial classification. Sample research topics include the following:

* European Plantation Slavery System and Regional Diversity in Latin America and the Caribbean. Participants (individually or in groups) study different countries. Use census data or other sources to identify racial and other relevant social categories. Compare plantation and nonplantation economies. Then look at diversity within plantation economies. Participants explore historical and other conditions with diversity.
* European Colonial Impact. Look at places where there was no slavery, like Kenya, India, Indonesia, and Nigeria. How have racial categories evolved there?

***Chapter 9: Race, Sex, and Gender: If Race Doesn’t Exist, What Are We Seeing?***

**Activity 9.1. Mating activity.**

Can use with other chapters.

*Brief Overview*.

Participants explore the role socio-economic factors, social group memberships and social identities play in our mate choices, but also in the preferences of our families, communities, other relevant institutions (e.g. legal). Participants list characteristics of their own “Ideal Mate”; then the “Ideal Mate” families, especially older generations, would choose for them; then the Ideal Mate for their children. Participants analyze, discuss results, especially contrasts in the type of traits on their own vs. family lists.

*Objectives:*

* Understand the role social factors (vs. individual desires) play in mate choices, especially in family preferences, cultural norms, and societal laws.
* Be able to provide examples of social criteria (group traits) versus individual criteria (attributes of the person).
* Understand the continuing role of racial endogamy in mate/date choice.

*Time:*

Thirty to sixty minutes, depending on how much time is spent analyzing participant responses.

*Materials Needed:*

Sheets of paper for participants to write individual responses and to summarize group responses.

*Procedures:*

Step 1. My Ideal Mate. Participants list characteristics of their “ideal mate” on a piece of paper. Tell them to imagine writing an ad for a long-term mate. What characteristics or attributes would they be looking for? Give them five to ten minutes. They should do this individually.

Step 2. My Parent’s Ideal Mate for Me. OR My Ideal Mate for My Children. Participants make a separate list of the kind of characteristics or traits parents or other adult family members would look for if they were choosing a long-term mate for their offspring. Again, have them do this individually.

Step 3. Participants analyze results (in small groups or together), beginning with their ideal mate. Ask participants to look for patterns in the type of traits they listed. Do some types appear more often than others? See what participants come up with.

Step 4: Then analyze their lists using the following framework.

* Usually, participant trait lists can be classified into three main categories—physical traits, personality or character traits, and common activities-interests-goals. For example, ask how many participants listed physical features and if so, what kinds? You could make a list on the board, under Physical Traits. You might discuss if some physical features have cultural elements (e.g., does the concept of “physically fit” have a cultural dimension? Is “a nice smile” really an indicator of culturally valued personality traits?). Or try to get them to be specific about what traits make someone “attractive” or what is meant by “good features” and whether these are culturally shaped notions. Point out that many seemingly “physical traits,” like “being fit” or having a “good body,” have additional culturally shared meanings.
* Ask what other types of traits besides physical traits are listed. Participant lists tend to emphasize personality or character traits. So you might create another list on the board, Personality/Character Traits, and have participants add items that fit. You may need a third list, Common Activities or Interests, for additional traits not covered by the first two categories.
* Next, introduce the notion of individual traits versus social characteristics of persons (see chapter 7 for a discussion of *social status* and related terms). Point out that their ideal mate traits usually refer to the individual person, with respect to physical, personality, or interest considerations. Virtually all fall into a more comprehensive category called Individual Traits. Contrast this with the concept of Social Traits—that is, traits having to do with one’s social status or group membership, whether achieved or ascribed (see chapter 7). These would include things like religion, race, ethnicity, gender, occupation, nationality, social class, sexual orientation, age, or family background. Ask for any ideal mate traits on their lists that would fall in this category (sexual orientation is often one, although unspoken; race or religion may be others).

Step 5. Participants compare their own list to the list their parents/family elders would create (in groups or as a class). Notice similarities and differences. This time, ask them to use the different categories (especially the notion of social vs. individual traits) when comparing lists. Generally, they will find that families are much more interested in social status characteristics (and sexuality/gender) than in individual traits, like looks or personality.

Step 6. Discuss the most common type of social status characteristics. Even in culturally diverse settings, we have found that race, ethnicity, gender, and religion are the most frequently mentioned. This provides an opportunity for discussion! What is often less vocalized but also present are economic and social status considerations, such as money, job, educational level, family background, and family status. Another rarely mentioned consideration, especially by heterosexuals, is the sex/gender of a mate.

Step 6. Link results to earlier chapters on class and racial stratification. See if there are any links to the material in Part III.

*Follow-Up:*

To add a cross-cultural comparative aspect and to provoke discussion and reflection on U.S. culture, introduce participants to a culture with a different system of mating, marriage, and perhaps family arrangements. See Mukhopadhyay and Blumenfield for an overview ("Gender and Sexuality" in. [*Perspectives*. 2nd ed 2020.](https://perspectives.pressbooks.com/chapter/gender-and-sexuality/) ) For videos see Appendix A, including *Maasaii Women, Dadi’s Family,* or other films at Documentary Educational Resources ([https://www.der.org](https://www.der.org/) ) See also Women Make Movies (<https://www.wmm.com/catalog>) for films like *India’s Daughter* (<https://www.wmm.com/catalog/film/indias-daughter>) and *Pink Sari* (<https://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c789.shtml>). For arranged marriages, see popular films by Mira Nair or an accessible article by Serena Nanda on arranged marriages in India (2000). For a U.S. setting which also includes race, see the classic film *Mississippi Masala*.

**Activity 9.2. Film and discussion: *The Loving Story.***

View and discuss *The Loving Story*, the film on the *Loving v. Virginia Supreme Court* interracial marriage decision. See original documentary at <http://www.icarusfilms.com/new2012/ls.html>. Discuss changes since 1972, perhaps with Activity 9.1 discussion.

**Activity 9.3. Compare interracial and same-sex marriage laws.**

Review arguments in *Loving v. Virginia* and other cases on interracial marriage (see links in chapter). Compare to arguments in Obergefell vs. Hodges, the Supreme Court case legalizing same-sex marriage (<https://www.oyez.org/cases/2014/14-556> ). Discuss similarities and differences, including historical context and motivations of those supporting and opposing the laws.

**Activity 9.4. Race, gender, and class in popular culture.**

Explore gender-race images/themes in popular culture videos and on social media sites. Or view videos from The Media Education Foundation**,** [https://www.mediaed.org](https://www.mediaed.org/). Their documentaries explore intersections of race/ethnicity with issues of masculinity, femininity, class, and popular culture. See *Tough Guise 2*, *Hip-Hop Culture*, *Dreamworlds III*, *Latinos Beyond Reel*, *The Great White Hoax*, *The Bro Code*, and *Killing Us Softly 4*. Website also contains discussion guides, handouts, and full transcripts of films. Women Make Movies also produces relevant films (See earlier examples).

Discuss how models of masculinity or femininity intersect with race, class, ethnicity, religion and other themes.

**Activity 9.5. The Ethnic Me (or who did my ancestors marry?).**

This examines another facet of the earlier “Exploring My Ancestry” activities. Participants trace marriage choices/patterns of older generation individuals, in their own family, if possible, using family records, interviews, or other archival sources. Explore attitudes and behavior re: interreligious, interethnic, interracial dating/marriage. For additional Exploring My Ancestry and The Ethnic Me materials see earlier chapters and <https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/race/>

**Activity 9.6. What does it mean to be multiracial/multiethnic in U.S. society?**

Explore what it means to be multiethnic/multiracial in today’s world. Draw on participants’ own experiences, talk with other people, look at chapter or other on-line resources. Probe how people respond on questionnaires/Census, how they describe themselves vs. how others see or want to categorize them. Explore the complexities.

**Part III: Contemporary Issues. Education, Health, and Language.**

***Chapter 10:* *The Academic Achievement Gap and Equity: What Does Race Have to Do With It? (*Henze*)***

**Activity 10.1.** **Reflective questions.**

* Which of the explanations for the achievement gap have you heard before? Do people in your school or college or community talk openly about the racial achievement (or opportunity) gap? What do they say about it? Which explanations do you think seem most plausible, and why?
* Has your school, college, or community taken any actions or developed policies to try to reduce the achievement gap? How have those worked out? What more could be done? What barriers stand in the way?
* Have you heard people in your community express doubts about the idea of righting a historical wrong through the notion of acting affirmatively? What kinds of factors might contribute to people's concerns about affirmative action? How do these ideas relate to the idea and the reality of merit?

**Activity 10.2. Unequal Resources****.**

This experiential activity shows participants what it is like when resources are unequally distributed and yet participants are all expected to accomplish the same goals. The activity places small groups in different positions of advantage/disadvantage, some receiving more resources and others less. Eventually the groups start to collaborate and share resources to accomplish their goals. After the small group activity, the whole group debriefs through processes that help them examine socioeconomic inequality and its intersections with race in their own school, college, or community. A final extension activity asks participants to examine wealth inequality in other countries and the reasons why the US has such vastly unequal wealth distribution.

This plan is adapted from Youth Together’s unpublished curriculum (<https://www.youthtogether.net>). Another activity that can accomplish similar objectives is “Starpower”; (see Chapter 7).

*Objectives:*

Participants will be able to

* understand what people do to protect what’s theirs and what happens when people work together,
* identify what inequalities of resources exist in their school/community, and
* identify what they can do about negative conditions in their school/com- munity.

*Other Information:*

* This activity, appropriate for high school and college courses, requires three or more class sessions. Materials needed include the following: 4 envelopes, 4 instruction sheets, 1 pen, 1 pair of scissors, 1 glue stick, 1 ruler, 1 pencil, and a package of multicolored construction paper (see below).

*Procedure:*

Step 1. Prior to class, prepare the contents for the four envelopes. Each envelope should contain the instruction sheet plus the following: Envelope 1: one pen, two sheets of gold paper; Envelope 2: one pair of scissors, one glue stick, two sheets of white paper; Envelope 3: one ruler, one pencil, two sheets of black paper; Envelope 4: two sheets of blue, two sheets of red, and two sheets of green paper. The instruction sheet should say:

Please create each of the following items:

* a three-colored flag
* a four-ring chain
* a 3” X 3” gold square
* a 2” X 4” rectangle
* a T-shape that is 3” high and 3” across

Step 2. Divide the participants into four groups and place them at different tables or in different corners of the room, well-spaced. Have participants leave their belongings aside. You will provide them with all they need for the activity. Tell the groups you are giving each of them a packet that includes instructions inside. When all groups are ready, ask them to open their packets and begin.

Step 3. The groups will need to work together to complete the instructions, but they have to discover that. Do not give clues if you can avoid it. Do not allow groups to use their packet envelope or instruction sheet as supplies (they can be reused). Do not allow them to get supplies from backpacks, closets, purses, and so on. If you stay in the room, you may want to take notes on what you observe. For example, how long does it take for groups to start working together? Who starts the sharing? What are the conditions placed on sharing? What do you hear people saying?

Step 4. When all groups are finished, ask them to show their finished products and explain how they made them.

Step 5. Ask the participants the following questions:

1. What happened in this activity? How did you make it work?
2. Did you have any problems or frustrations? Explain.
3. Although you had the same instructions, did different groups solve problems differently? Is that okay? (make note of the diversity of group responses).
4. The name of this activity is “Unequal Resources.” Does this relate to your life? In what ways do groups have unequal resources? How are they shared or protected? How does it make you feel when you have less than others? How does it make you feel when you have more than others?

Step 6. Assessment activity: Have participants write about what happened in the activity and how it felt for them to have less or more than others.

Step 7. Preparation for next class: Ask participants to think about an example of unequal resources in their own school or college. Be prepared to discuss the situation in class.

Step 8. Extension: Read the information on the following website about global inequality. Discuss in class why the United States is the most unequal of all the industrialized nations (see <https://apps.urban.org/features/wealth-inequality-charts>/ )

**Activity 10.3. The Growth of the Suburbs and the Racial Wealth Gap****.**

Video segments and teaching activities for high school or beyond based on Part 3 of the film *Race: The Power of an Illusion.* The weblink provides a detailed plan for 4 or more class sessions in which participants explore how the opportunity to accumulate wealth has been racialized. The plan was developed by David Seiter in 2003, and it is in many ways still relevant in 2025.

Additional questions for a more updated discussion:

1. What valuable points does this teaching unit make, especially about the structural aspects of racism? About the significant difference between “wealth” and “income”?
2. In what ways is it a bit outdated, given current data as well as the analytical approaches in this chapter (and the book).
3. How might one update the material, especially the lesson plans, to reflect today’s more complex, intersectional understanding of ethnoracial groups, including their internal variability? Consider factors discussed in Chapter 10 such as gender, education, immigration, segregation of students both racially and economically?
4. Wealth inequality has risen dramatically in the US since 2003, as noted in Chapter 10. How does this widening wealth gap affect educational inequality today? (See Step 8, in Activity 10.2)**.**

<https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/lessons/growth-suburbs-and-racial-wealth-gap>

**Activity 10.4. How much does your zipcode affect your opportunity?**

This NYT article asks educators as well as students aged 13 and above to respond to the question, "How much does your zipcode affect your opportunity?" Educators and students in cities all over the US responded, sharing experiences of how the neighborhood children live in affects their futures. The article includes questions for students to reflect on what changes would have to happen for everyone in the US to have equal opportunities. Students can ask their parents to answer the questions as well.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/19/learning/how-much-has-your-zip-code-determined-your-opportunities.html>

**Activity 10.5.** **IQ tests and culture****. (Mukhopadhyay and Henze)**

The activities that follow aim to illustrate how much "cultural" information is embedded in tests that purport to measure intelligence.

1. Examine old and nonmainstream U.S. IQ tests using the US Army Group examination Alpha, Form 5. Which items do you think measure intelligence? achievement? Personality? <https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah_1213725>
2. Take this Appalachian Language Quiz: <https://dialects.wvu.edu/survey-and-quizzes/appalachian-language-quiz>. Afterwards, discuss what it would take to do well on this quiz?
3. Construct an IQ test that measures knowledge specific to your peer group or generation. This can be done in groups or individually. Then give the test to a variety of people, and have the designers of the test score it. Discuss the results.
4. Analyze a current test that is designed to measure intelligence, achievement or aptitude. In what ways is it biased? Consider religious, regional, class, rural urban, gender as well as ethnic/cultural biases.

**Activity 10.6. Funds of knowledge in families and communities****.**

For educators at all levels. Look at the following series of 3 short videos describing the Funds of Knowledge project, mentioned earlier in this chapter. What "funds of knowledge" and skills existed in your family and community while you were growing up? Did teachers consider your family and community as a resource in the classroom or school? Were they ever invited to your class to talk about a subject they know well, or show how to do a particular kind of work? How do you think this could enhance students' learning and feelings of inclusion?

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/dsl22-sci-ets-fundsofknowledge-en/professional-development-funds-of-knowledge/>

Also in Spanish/Español: <https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/dsl22-sci-ets-fundsofknowledge-es/formacion-profesional-fondos-de-conocimiento/>

***Chapter 11:* *Unpacking the Health Consequences of Racial Stratification (*Moses, Henze, and Mukhopadhyay)**

**Activity 11.1. The life and death stakes of health inequality****.**

The link below takes readers to a detailed plan for adults, including health care professionals, to learn more about health inequities. The lesson focuses on historical inequities in the medical treatment of African Americans in the US, with detailed examples covering the Tuskegee experiment, infant mortality rates among African American women, and sterilization of African American women in North Carolina. The lesson concludes with a discussion about recent research in epigenetics. Developed for PBS in 2019 with contributions from sociologist Alondra Nelson and neuroscientist Christopher Cross.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/lesson-plans/2019/01/the-life-and-death-stakes-of-health-inequality-lesson-plan>

**Activity 11.2. Learn more about epigenetics.**

Epigenetic patterns are the result of our bodies genetic interactions with environmental influences such as malnutrition, air pollution and toxic fumes and gases. As chapter 12 explains, prolonged exposure of the body to stressors involved in poverty, sexism, and systemic racism can result in changes inside the body described as "weathering". The link below from the University of Utah provides information and activities that challenge the simplistic notion that we are who we are because of our genes. Instead, it is the complex interaction of genetics and the environment that makes us who we are.

<https://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/epigenetics/>

**Activity 11.3. African American Maternal and Infant Mortality****.**

Explore in more detail the biological, social and cultural complexities surrounding this issue. This special three-part series looks in depth at the heightened risks faced by African American mothers in the U.S. This public health project focuses on the history of medical care for African American women and the racism behind this crisis. While it doesn’t address the gender and socioeconomic factors also at play, it does explore ways to change the situation with recommendations for policymakers, hospitals and practices, community advocates, and the next generation of medical practitioners.

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2023/solving-the-black-maternal-health-crisis>

**Activity 11.4. African Burial Ground Project: Connecting Historical Trauma and Resilience to the Present?**

The African Burial Ground Project allows the descendants of enslaved people to understand the ways in which their ancestors lived in New York City in the 17th century. Through an analysis of their skeletal remains, we can see the trauma and the violence they suffered. But the burials also show the cultural resilience and reverence of the family members who buried them. Also learn about the present-day connection of African descendant people in New York City to that past. Questions to explore: To what extent is historical trauma of the past connected to the present-day experiences of African descendant people? To what extent is it connected, if at all, to the health of the African descendant community? See Appendix A for a complete description of the African Burial Project.

<https://www.nps.gov/afbg/index.htm>

**Activity 11.5. Environmental Justice****: Air pollution.**

**Authors Note:** The original video links we identified for this activity, including some produced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are no longer available, as of March 9, 2025 (“Video unavailable. This video is private”). We believe this may reflect post-Trump era changes, including the apparent disappearance of the Environmental Justice website section of the EPA website.

We suggest readers explore the EPA website (see website resources) to see if these topics (or related videos) continue to exist, perhaps elsewhere on the website.

When available, we have identified a substitute video on the same topic.

**Activity:** Divide participants into small groups of three or four. Assign one of the following short videos to each group to watch together, or at home. Discussion: Ask each group what key things they learned from the video and would like to share with others. What are 1-2 questions each participant would like to investigate after seeing these videos?

* Original EPA series: "Smells like Progress" about growing up in "Cancer Alley", Louisiana, <https://youtu.be/9hE3SyXr9bw>
  + **Alternative** video on this topic by Human Rights Watch, 2025: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IAoNhl2mtU&ab_channel=HumanRightsWatch>
* Can one community change...? <https://youtu.be/6eF9D5VAGnI> Savannah GA
  + **Alternative**: Taking a stand against environmental injustice (from Blue Chalk Media, 2018, about 7 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD_5bC_dy4s>
* Chicagoland is breathing a little easier. <https://youtu.be/uK2HQdeTd0c>

**Activity 11.6. Environmental justice: Water.**

Developed in 2023 by Matt Reed and Ursula Wolfe Rocca for *Rethinking Schools*, this lesson for high school and beyond focuses on Flint, Michigan's water crisis. Participants take a variety of different roles, including Flint residents, doctors, environmental experts, and activists. Through exploring stories by people in these roles, students come to understand the interconnections among housing, health and healthcare, governance, racism, and socioeconomic status.

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/water-and-environmental-racism/>

1. “The Hug”, by Carol C. Mukhopadhyay © was originally published as **“The Hug: Transforming Nature into Culture”,** in *Strategies for Teaching Anthropology*, edited by Patricia C. Rice and David W. McCurdy, 4th edition. 2007. pp. 162-165. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This is an adaptation of a simulation called “The Albatross,” which was circulating among multicultural education people in the 1970s. Although the basic ritual is similar, the pedagogical context, principles illustrated, and discussion aspects are different. For more detail see: https://www.sjsu.edu/people/carol.mukhopadhyay/race/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)