

## 3.4 SCHOOLS WITHOUT RACISM

### How are the experiences of racism and discrimination for U.S. and German youth similar, and how might antiracism policies help improve their school experiences?

<b>C3 Framework Indicator</b>	<p><b>D2.Civ.1.3-5.</b> Distinguish the responsibilities and powers of government officials at various levels and branches of government and in different times and places.</p> <p><b>D2.Civ.3.3-5.</b> Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.</p> <p><b>D2.Civ.6.3-5.</b> Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, workplaces, voluntary organizations, and families.</p>	
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	Students will examine racial identity and discrimination in schools within the United States and Germany to determine whether antiracism policies will help minimize negative school experiences.	
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b>
What does racial discrimination look like for diverse students in the United States?	What does racial discrimination look like for diverse students in Germany?	What is “School without Racism—School with Courage,” and could this type of initiative work in the United States?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
After watching a video on racial discrimination, students will identify the emotional impact of racism on youth.	With a partner, students will read selected profiles and determine the emotional impact of racism and discrimination.	Students will examine Germany’s School without Racism initiative and determine strategies on how to incorporate the initiative in their school.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<p><b>Source A:</b> Handout 3.4.2</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> WNYC Radio – Kids on Race</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Handout 3.4.3</p> <p><b>Source B:</b> Standing Up for Equality in Germany’s Schools</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> Handout 3.4.4</p>
<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<p><b>Argument:</b> Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical or contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Research antiracism policies established in your school or any school in the United States.</p>	
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p><b>Understand:</b> We have been exposed to misinformation about groups to which we and others belong.</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> Examine and reflect on your racial identity and experiences with racism</p> <p><b>Act:</b> Write a one-page diversity statement explaining your experiences with and commitment to diversity and antiracism.</p>	

## ? COMPELLING QUESTION

- **How are the experiences of racism and discrimination for U.S. and German youth similar, and how might antiracism policies help improve their school experiences?**

### INQUIRY OVERVIEW

In this inquiry, students will examine racial identity and discrimination in schools within the United States and Germany to determine whether antiracism policies will help minimize negative school experiences.

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

It has been said that a country's educational system reflects its values. A student's schooling experience helps them to determine what is most important in society and reinforces many societal norms. Unfortunately, inequality and discrimination are problems within society that are mirrored in school settings.

In schools, racially motivated harassment and bullying manifest in numerous ways, from verbal insults to physical injury. In the US, Black children, in particular, bear the disproportionate burden of racially motivated peer harassment in school. According to the most recent data available from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights data, in the 2015–2016 school year, Black children comprised about 15% of the US public school population, but 35.5% of those who reported being harassed or bullied on the basis of race, color, or national origin; a similar disproportionality can also be observed among American Indian and Alaska Native youth, who are represented among those racially bullied or harassed at a rate twice that of their presence in the overall student population. (Rivas-Drake, 2020)



In addition, racist attitudes toward youth of Asian origin have increased following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and around the world.

"In Germany, racial discrimination has also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic with the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (ADS), sharing that the number of discrimination cases reported in Germany rose by almost 10%. Racial discrimination account for up to 33% of the cases dealt with by the agency, which is its largest share" ("Racism on the Rise in Germany," 2020). Statistics on discrimination in German schools are not perfectly clear due to legislation that bans the collection of race data. However, there are some data that point to trends within eleven countries, including Germany, that both migrant and non-migrant adolescents bully more when there are adolescents with a migration background at a school. Since Germany has 17 million residents with a migration background, it can be concluded that migrant students of various ethnicities most likely experience stereotypes and racism in schools (Demmrich and Akgül, 2020).

To address discrimination, students and youth workers in Belgium developed the idea behind "School without Racism—School with Courage" in 1988. Due to the success of the program, it was introduced in other European countries. German schools have embraced the School without Racism initiative to empower students to have a voice and stand up against discrimination. This is an initiative that requires 70 percent or more of students, teachers, and all other school staff to sign a membership request and confirm that they will stand up for the organization's goals. School without Racism has more than 2,400 member schools, with a total of roughly one million students across Germany. Participating students advocate to ensure that their schools offer activities and initiatives that tackle discrimination. At least once a year, each school organizes a project dealing with racism or

other kinds of discrimination. Students at a member school also agree to speak up and show courage when others are perpetuating violence at their school or discriminating against anyone.

In this inquiry, students will explore their identities and discuss racial discrimination in schools. Students will examine firsthand accounts of students in the United States and Germany to compare experiences. Also, students will review the School without Racism—School with Courage pledge to determine if this type of initiative is helpful in addressing racial inequities. The inquiry will culminate with students working in small groups to create their own pledge against racism and discrimination.

### ► Teacher Note

Please consider the sensitivities of students before introducing this inquiry to the class. The suggested readings below will help in providing resources on how to discuss the sensitive nature of the topic in the classroom and beyond.

Learning for Justice. Preparing to Teach, 'The New Jim Crow.' Retrieved October 28, 2021, from <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/preparing-to-teach-the-new-jim-crow>.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Justice Consortium, Schools Committee, and Culture Consortium. (2017). Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom: A Resource for Educators. Los Angeles, CA, and Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. [https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/addressing\\_race\\_and\\_trauma\\_in\\_the\\_classroom\\_educators.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/addressing_race_and_trauma_in_the_classroom_educators.pdf).

Teaching Tolerance. Let's Talk! | Discussing Race, Racism and other Difficult Topics with Students. Retrieved October 28, 2021, from <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/TT%20Difficult%20Conversations%20web.pdf>.

It is also encouraged that educators reflect on their own identities, recognizing their own positionality in relationship to these topics. Teachers must be able to acknowledge their own biases, privileges, and experiences that could affect how they think about racism. To discuss racial identity and bias with children, this means acknowledging that people are different and that the world is not colorblind. As a result, all student responses will not be positive as they engage in such a difficult topic. It would be best to develop a plan in case students express concerns about how the school currently handles racial bullying incidents. Also, remind students that for the purpose of confidentiality, it is better not to publicly refer to incidents that either they or other students have experienced. Please let students know that they can speak to you after class if they have specific concerns about themselves or someone else.

### ► Sources

- Demmrich, S., & Akgül, S. (2020). Bullying Experience among Adolescents with a Turkish Migration Background in Germany: Ethnic Class Composition, Integration, and Religiosity as Protective Factors? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(13), 4776. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134776>.
- Racism on the Rise in Germany. (June 9, 2020). Deutsche Welle <https://www.dw.com/en/racism-on-the-rise-in-germany/a-53735536>.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2018). 2015–2016 Civil Rights Data Collection: School Climate and Safety. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf>.
- Rivas-Drake, D. (2020, November 2). *When Bullying Is Racially Motivated: Recognizing It for What It Is and Supporting Kids to Be Anti-Racist Upstanders?* Committee for Children. <https://www.cfchildren.org/blog/2020/11/when-bullying-is-racially-motivated-recognizing-it-for-what-it-is-and-supporting-kids-to-be-anti-racist-upstanders/>.
- Schule ohne Rassismus. (2021). Schule ohne Rassismus – Schule mit Courage. <https://www.schule-ohne-rassismus.org>.

 **TIME:** Two to three 45-minute classes

## INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

- Who Am I? (**Handout 3.4.1**)
- Video Reflection Sheet (**Handout 3.4.2**)
- Standing Up for Equality in Germany's Schools (**Handout 3.4.3**)
- School without Racism Pledge (**Handout 3.4.4**)
- Open Society Justice Initiative. (2013, October). *Standing Up for Equality in Germany's Schools*. <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publications/standing-equality-germanys-schools>.
- WNYC Radio. (2015, July 7). *Kids on Race*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6xSyRJqle8>. (4:17)



www.goethe.de/  
top/letsexplore

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Explain to students that they will engage in an activity to learn more about their classmates. Ask students to find a partner whom they have not worked with often in class. Once each student has a partner, instruct the pairs of students to select one as Partner A and one as Partner B. Pass out the list of statements from **Handout 3.4.1**.

- My full name is . . .
- It comes from or means . . .
- I am \_\_\_\_\_ in my family, and my family is \_\_\_\_\_
- I identify as . . .
- I see myself as (character, future something)
- When I walk down the street, I think people see . . .

Instruct Partner A that they have 2 minutes to respond to the statements to the best of their ability. Partner B listens and does not say a word until Partner A is done. If Partner A finishes before the 2 minutes are up, Partner B must still remain silent. Once the 2 minutes are completed, students will switch roles, and Partner B will answer the statements, and Partner A will listen in silence for 2 minutes. Teachers may model this activity by finishing the statements and reinforcing the importance of being silent for 2 minutes.

Once the activity is done, ask students whether anything was different about these types of questions. Students might share that the questions were centered around their racial identity, background, family, and how they think of themselves or how the world sees them. Ask students to share some of their responses and write the various identities on the board. Explain to students that this inquiry will be about identity and discrimination and racism in schools, which will require students to be honest, open, and sensitive to other students' thoughts and feelings. The practice of listening and silence will be key, and students should have demonstrated this ability in the warm-up.

### ► Resource

- Who Am I? (**Handout 3.4.1**)

## SUPPORTING QUESTION 1

### *What does racial discrimination look like for diverse students in the United States?*

#### ► Formative Performance Task

Students will watch the WNYC Radio video on racial discrimination in the United States. A Video Reflection Sheet (**Handout 3.4.2**) is provided for students to identify the emotional impact of racism on youth.

Play the video, pausing at intervals to allow students to ask questions if needed. Once the video has completed, ask students to finish their handouts. Ask students to share their thoughts on the impact of racial bullying and discrimination in schools.

► **Resources**

- Video Reflection Sheet (**Handout 3.4.2**)
- WNYC Radio. (2015, July 7). *Kids on Race*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6xSyRJqle8>. (4:17)

## ❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION 2

### *What does racial discrimination look like for diverse students in Germany?*

► **Formative Performance Task**

Explain to students that Germany has a diverse population similar to the United States, with a history of racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. Tell students that they will read stories from students and parents on how they have experienced discrimination based on their race, religion, food, culture, customs, appearance, and accents. Although there have been laws passed to fight discrimination, migrant children still experience discrimination in schools.

With a partner, students will read selected profiles and determine the emotional impact of racism and discrimination (**Handout 3.4.3**). Challenge students to find similarities and differences between the U.S. Kids on Race video and the German profiles.

► **Resources**

- Standing Up for Equality in Germany's Schools (**Handout 3.4.3**)
- Open Society Justice Initiative. (2013, October). *Standing Up for Equality in Germany's Schools*. <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publications/standing-equality-germanys-schools>.

## ❓ SUPPORTING QUESTION 3

### *What is “School without Racism—School with Courage,” and could this type of initiative work in the United States?*

► **Formative Performance Task**

Explain to students that Germany has an initiative within schools to fight racism. German students can use their voice to make their school a “School without Racism—School with Courage.” With this initiative, students—who are the largest group in schools—make a commitment to stand against racism with their teachers and other school staff. Students actively work to create the conditions needed to get 70 percent of their fellow students and school staff, including cleaning staff, to pledge to be a School without Racism.

Ask students their thoughts on this initiative and what they think the pledge says. After they have guessed, pass out the English version of the School without Racism Pledge (**Handout 3.4.4**). Read the pledge with your students and answer any vocabulary questions.

Once the pledge is read, place students in groups of three or four to have a discussion using the questions in the handout. Once the group discussion is completed, ask groups to write their own commitment against racism and to identify three strategies they would use to get 70 percent of their school to make this pledge.

If a group feels that a pledge is not the best strategy to fight racism, the group must identify three reasons why, along with three different strategies to fight discrimination in school.

If time allows, pass out chart paper and markers and ask each group to write their ideas, which will then be put up on the wall. Post all work and allow groups to view different pledges and/or strategies. Once all of the groups have viewed the posted work, ask them to vote on the one that best represents the class. Students will be able to sign their names at the bottom of the pledge or strategic plan with the most votes as evidence of their commitment to fight racism.

► **Resource**

- School without Racism Pledge (**Handout 3.4.4**)

✓ **SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE TASK**

*How are experiences of racism and discrimination for U.S. and German youth similar and how might antiracism policies help improve their school experience?*

Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.

⊕ **EXTENSION (OPTIONAL) TASK**

Research antiracism policies established in your school or any school in the United States.

★ **TAKING INFORMED ACTION**

**Understand:** We have been exposed to misinformation about groups to which we and others belong.

**Assess:** Examine and reflect on your racial identity and experiences with racism.

**Act:** Write a one-page diversity statement explaining your experiences with and commitment to diversity and anti-racism, and share it with your teacher or school principal.

**CONCEPTS LIST**

- Racism
- School without Racism—School with Courage
- Racial bullying
- Stereotypes
- Assumptions
- Discrimination
- Segregation
- Migrants
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Race
- Religion
- Pledge
- Ballot