

## **Where Have All the Brothers Gone?**

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**Overview**

**Rational**

**Objectives**

**Strategies**

**Classroom Activities**

**Annotated Bibliography/Resources**

**Appendices-Standards**

### **Overview**

Research shows that the make up of the American family unit has been changing. What was once considered the typical American family, (Dad, Mom, two kids, one pet, house, white picket fence, etc.) is more mythical than actual. Over the last 100 years there have been dramatic and historical events that have impacted the composite of the American family and this has caused impact upon how America operates as a nation. On the whole however, it can be stated that the American family has made chameleon-like adjustments to adapt during the times. Time has proven that social cultures and mores have allowed the family unit to build and rebuild itself into a body that can withstand pretty much anything.

One particular family group within the American population seems to have had more turbulence than others. Although the report card for this group is not complete, more recently it leans toward a negative grade. Historically, one would think that a person would learn from the struggles that they go through. To illustrate, the words of the great lion for justice, Frederick Douglass come to mind, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." Those that were in the struggle that he was speaking of were African Americans and since the early arrival of Africans to this land there has been both struggle and progress. A reminder of some of the more recent "progress" is noted in the book endorsed by motivational social mentor and talk show host Tavis Smiley, The Covenant, where it states, "*The black middle class has quadrupled, the African American poverty rate has been cut in half, and there are more African American doctors, lawyers, business owners, and elected officials than ever before in our nation's history. There are more African-American corporate executives in board rooms than ever before and three of America's largest Fortune 500 companies are headed by African Americans.*" After reading a passage such as this it could be assumed that African Americans, on a large part would be on their way towards "Easy Street" but this is far from the truth. Across the board there is still much need for improvement and even more consideration must be

focused towards domestic life. Despite noticeable gains in many areas one of the pillars of the African American family unit, which had already been standing on shaky ground, has been crumbling and the breakdown is causing a quake in the African American culture. This unsteady foundation has begun a systematic disintegration in the African American community and subsequently, the after-shocks can be felt in American society.

This learning unit will address the disappearance of the positive African American Male in the American family and culture and the repercussions that currently resonate into American society. This unit will attempt to provide teachers and educators with academic strategies that will assist adults and students to recognize this situation and use instructional methods to meet state standards in the subjects of reading, writing, research, ecology and history. By no means is this unit to be considered an answer to the situation or should the objectives be tailored solely to the African American population of Pittsburgh Public Schools. Although the African American population of the school system has already been identified as that most at risk and the academic achievement gap continues to loom over this city and nation, it is hoped that all students in our academic system can benefit from this unit and teachers are able to use it in part or as a whole for instruction.

## **Rationale**

One of the most noticeable groups in America's society is the group that identifies themselves as African American Males. To do justice to this unit, it is important that we give attention to certain aspects of American history. It must be understood however that the situation surrounding African American males has never been ideal. This is simply an attempt to provide a somewhat chronological account of what has happened to lead to the current state of conditions. This is by no means meant to be all-inclusive or complete.

Since the practice and abolition of slavery, few other people have been as studied, exploited, feared, but seldom respected as often as those in this group. American History explains that a very large portion of African American males was used as the primary labor force during the years of slavery. Standing not alone, African American females were thrust into this predicament as well. Regarded as chattel, African Americans as a people faced tremendous hurdles at maintaining family life. The burden of slavery made family life formidable. Add in the fact that many families were separated against their will making domestic cohesiveness nearly impossible. Through all of this however, the concept of the "family unit" remained a cherished and highly coveted covenant. To African Americans this concept of a "family unit" almost became obsolete because of forced separation, however the want and need for unity also became a prime motivator for freedom. African Americans wanted the freedom of each individual and the people as a whole. Upon their arrival much of the traditional family customs that were endearing to those recently removed from Africa were prohibited. If the African people survived, they later became the generation that adopted some of the family customs of those in their environment. Ultimately, this led to a hybrid of different family values and is now

structured into a position in which many of the ancient customs are hardly recognized. Part of this confusion continues to exist but it has not prohibited many African Americans to attempt to identify with what they believe to be authentic customs and traditions.

An example would be the usage of the traditional Kente cloth. Kente cloth is a colorful material that is woven into intricate patterns and used to identify tribal and family affiliations amongst some of those from African descent. The patterns and colors are specific to regions and particular people much like the patterns used in Scottish kilts. The cloth itself tells its own story. Many African Americans are not aware of the significance placed upon the Kente cloth however they do recognize its beauty and powerful connection to Africa and this helps them feel free to claim ownership. Although, the Kente cloth's usage has been often misinterpreted it symbolizes the connection to a part of the history that has been lost. It is remindful of the plight of the positive African American male.

As the practice of slavery continued, African Americans became even more determined to cling to the concept of family unity. History demonstrates that when a group is living under tremendous oppression, there is a tendency to cling to those who are closest for life support. Jews did this during the horrible years of the Holocaust and despite everything that they went through, their faith and cohesiveness as a people became the foundations of their survival. Their oppressors realized the importance of family and worked hard at destroying their existence. Adolf Hitler promoted the anti-Semitism movement and attempted to reduce Jewish people to be less than human. "In his hatred, Hitler considered all Jews unclean, subhuman, like maggots in a rotting body." As mentioned earlier, the perseverance of the Jewish people prevented their total annihilation and aided them to eventually overcome this travesty and to never look back. The Holocaust will never be forgotten and the Jewish people will never let the world ignore their heritage.

Before, during and after America's Civil War, individual African Americans and families risked life and limb to obtain freedom and many died in the process. The African Americans and those sympathetic to emancipation worked together in various ways to deliver those from bondage and those who managed to escape, oftentimes started a new family if their original family could not be found. It was not uncommon for new families to emerge from whoever was left in the vicinity. Many tried in vain to reconnect with their kinfolk but the hardships that they had to endure nullified their efforts. Their search supports the notion that African Americans truly valued kinship even to those that were not biologically connected or connected through marriage. Documented narratives and interviews with slaves and former slaves of the time period indicate that bond ships of this kind were quite common. African American men felt a sense of self worth in their roles within the family if nowhere else and it was understood within the culture that mothers and fathers not only shared the responsibility of keeping the family together but also stood together for the purpose of survival. An example of how the need and existence of a family structure is indicated in the statistics from slave recollections. Data from South Carolina dictate that the mention of the maternal relationships surfaced 85% of the time. The mention of paternal relationships was mentioned 76% and the recollection of marital unions were mentioned during 64% of the discussions.

Family unity was important and respected but these statistics indicate that family unity was not perfect. It shows that there was a tendency to uphold maternal relationships more than that of the father. One of the reasons for this could be that many African American men were not available because they were used as laborers for both sides of the Civil War effort. It can be interpreted that if a two-parent household was ever intact then there was a good chance for the male to leave because of the demands placed upon him. Furthermore there was also a significantly higher population of African American Women in the Southern states than there were African American men. According to the book, "Domestic Revolutions" *"In many cities slave women outnumbered slave men by more than 50 percent and free black women outnumbered men by more than 25 percent."* It should also be noted that there was a high adult mortality rate among African Americans during this time particularly for the Black male.

After the Emancipation, African American men continued to work and strived to uphold family structure in the same manner of those in other ethnic groups but because of this country's unwillingness to accept them as men that should have been treated with fairness and equality, they were at a severe disadvantage. Even with the newly founded "freedom" the lack of opportunity, education, resources, and money were concepts that did not present itself to many African American Males. As they struggled through hard times, deprivation, and oppression, the idea of family structure became even more elusive. Yet there remained an invisible but powerful force that stressed that the African American Male was essential to the uplifting of the African American people. This unseen power may have been another motivating presence to keep the families together.

African American Men later served in our nation's military forces and participated during every military conflict. When Black veterans returned from WWI and WWII, they found that they were still considered "second class" citizens in America. They were not afforded the benefits of military veterans and were segregated and given the worst jobs during their enlistment. After successfully completing their military obligations, veterans of other races were able to use their military experience as a springboard to further education and make themselves employable. It was not easy but they fared better than the African American male veteran. Naturally their families benefited as well over time. When times became tough for most of America, the times were even tougher for African Americans. Despite the conditions of overall neglect, these African American men continued to help build this nation, but regardless of the strides that America was making, it was the African American men that became stagnated.

This experience again exemplifies how many African Americans have a distrust of certain activities concerning the American government and authority figures. The military was not fair towards African American men because unfairness was legal. Distrust was also evident during the time periods of colonial America until the present when African American men were subject to scientific experiments involving health care. In some cases deliberate injections of deadly diseases, bloodletting, and exposure to lethal practices caused painful death and long suffering particularly in the South and the rest of the country. Unfortunately our history books do not explain the details of these

circumstances and to many this part of history never existed, however in this process, many African American men and women were conditioned to believe that their lives are of little worth.

During this time of reckoning, African American men such as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington strived to uplift the race. They emerged on the scene to stress the importance of education. Although they disagreed about which form of education African Americans should take, be it an education based in skilled trade or academics based in intellectual pursuits, both men realized that learning was paramount for progress. African Americans took heed to this discussion and families did their best to see that the children went to school whenever possible. African American men and women sacrificed their own educational dreams to open the doors of opportunity for their children. Specialty schools began to sprout up all around the country that were specifically designed to teach skilled trades to African Americans because education was not yet integrated. Years later when segregated schools were challenged in the South, families, churches, and communities pulled together to support the movement because the schools that were available to African Americans were deprived.

Our nation's Great Depression saw our country at one of its most impoverished states after enduring a time where prosperity seemed to peak. If a large part of the American families were hungry then African American families were famished. If there was a large part of our population that remained unemployed then it was assured that the African American male was not on the list of those considered employable. When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's government stepped in and provided relief to those who needed it in the form of social security, it wasn't long before the federal welfare system was established. The welfare system was originally created for families with no fathers. It was designed to provide aid to the mothers with children who had no other means of support. Rather than having these families institutionalized, it was believed that families would be served better if they stayed intact within their homes. This aid was informally known as "mother's pension".

In many American communities there are families that have assumed the welfare system as the way of life. Support from the welfare program has been commonplace and seemingly handed down in some households for generations. Some people believe that the welfare system has become a crutch that has handicapped family economic progress because though the benefits provide a means for families to meet the very basics, it also provides a means for keeping members of the family separated. In many cases adult male members of the family must remain invisible to prevent the family from being removed from the welfare rolls.

The 1974 movie "Claudine" illustrates this when actress Dianne Carrol plays the role of a mother who single-handedly raises 5 children in the streets of Harlem. In order to continue the government support that her family desperately needs, she hides the relationship with her boyfriend so that he would not be considered a husband. Presently there are many single parented families that are headed by African American women

whose sole means for support is the welfare system. In these cases, many adult African American men become truant from the household or only exist on a temporary basis. Sadly, there are also times when the provision of the welfare system creates barriers within the home whenever the leverage of the title “breadwinner” is misused by the woman. Because her name and children are in the welfare records, she can legally have a man removed from the vicinity if she chooses. On the flipside, there are African American men who purposely seek out women that receive welfare benefits to woo them for temporary shelter and companionship based on shaky commitment. When the relationship becomes too demanding, the men flee to someone else until the stress level evaporates. There is much history and discussion of the exploitation of the welfare system and its impact is important when considering its roll in the African American family culture.

A few years before the Civil Rights era, African American Men and Women led the nation in a talent expose that proved their abilities and achievements in the realm of the humanities. In Harlem, New York a renaissance of sorts showcased the latent skills of a people who were not readily recognized for being learned musicians, authors and artists. In these works, noted individuals such as Langston Hughes, Jacob Lawrence, and Dizzy Gillespie used their respective artistic abilities to further the advancement of their people and support the importance of family life as well as expressing how they felt about African Americans who were dealing with the struggle. The subject of the family unit became popular. Langston Hughes and other authors used some of their poetry and stories to create images of Black love and family life. Some of Hughes’ works produced exclusive tribute to the Black matriarch and exposed the folly of the African American male. The body of Hughes’ work was derived to make African Americans look at themselves in an effort to better themselves. Jacob Lawrence used his own family experience as a youngster to promote the necessity of the African American family. Incidentally, many of the artists of the Harlem Renaissance were African American men who understood the anguish of not being able to fully achieve their destiny but were able to make profound statements that stood as testaments of their strength.

During this same era athletic figures such as Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens and Joe Lewis stood as monuments of African American manhood. These individuals excelled in their respected sports and also possessed a demeanor of quiet and unassuming dignity that was able to withstand racism on the national and world level. Though they were world heroes and surely larger than life within African American culture, they faced the racial divide that was persistent in America. They were determined to become role models for African American men to emulate for years.

A few decades later, dramatic changes occurred. The Civil Rights demonstrations forced America to look at herself through different lenses because this was the first time that the world at large was exposed to an America that was not so pretty. When the teenaged Emmitt Teal was unmercifully murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman, the lives of all African American men were put on notice. Again, many Americans were shamed by this act and demanded a call for action. When Americans of all races and

backgrounds risked their lives and their life-styles by choosing to stand up against the racist system that denied African American people the basic human rights that most had taken for granted, it shook the framework on which America existed. African Americans were in this struggle to make change and African American Men proved to be the leaders on several fronts. At last, it seemed as though African Americans would get the opportunity to provide a quality living for themselves and their families.

Men such as Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood tall in the movement and were visible family men. Incidentally, they were also men of faith who used their personal religious beliefs as a backbone to support social change. It is evident by the freedom songs and historic speeches that purposely make reference to the doctrine of their faiths. Their respected religious affiliations also stressed family structure and togetherness and statistics prove that there were more African American men that regularly attended faith based functions during that time period. According to *The African American Family Album*, "Over 11 million African Americans, more than one third of the total black population, belonged to one of the branches of the Baptist church". Black churches are a powerful institution in this nation and have proven to be the cornerstone for many successful movements. As in other cultures, it is also the gathering place for family and during those trying times, the Black church made room at the table for other faiths to band together in a stance for justice.

It was a large percentage of the people of the Black church that dedicated themselves to stand up for equal rights at all levels. The voice of the people is what the government heard that forced the changes in the laws. Several African American religious factions that might not have agreed in doctrine, and were willing to support this common cause supported the movement. Once again many African American men were strong representatives in this effort and their courageous walk was observed, admired and respected worldwide.

On a large scale, African Americans seemed to become more prosperous after the struggles of the Civil Rights era. A sense of cultural pride was birthed from the Black Power Movement and this feeling was energized and reemphasized in the Black home. The male presence in the movement was evident and although the struggle continued, there were across the board advances in education, employment, and income. College enrollment grew and many took advantage of the newly found opportunities for progress.

During the 1980s there was an epidemic that swept through the nation that put America into a tailspin. The African American family caught the brunt of its force. The illegal use of drugs has always been a problem in this country and during the early to mid part of the 80's, cocaine was the drug of choice. When the cheaper, more accessible form of cocaine, "Crack" became prevalent, it lit the fuse to the powder keg that is still sending explosions deep inside of the African American communities. The ready availability of the drug made it easy for users to become addicted. The illusion of profit that drug dealers made became legendary and too many African American men chose drug dealing as a career.

Even families that did not have members that were affiliated with the crack business still suffered the consequences of its existence because many once successful neighborhoods became ghost towns. Businesses and those families that could afford to leave migrated and took a piece of the hopes and dreams with them. The manufacturing, distribution and selling of this drug also boosted the occurrence and population of illegal gang activity and homicide across the country. Furthermore, the mandatory sentencing for anyone possessing the crack form of cocaine was a lot more severe than those that dealt with cocaine in the powder form. This sent many African American men to prison for several years thus ruining their chances for legitimate occupational careers if they were ever to get out of incarceration. Their sentencing took the best years of their lives and when they did return to society they were past their prime with little or no job experience, and oftentimes had to deal with a formal educational experience that was fragmented or incomplete. On too many occasions they returned to the occupation that they knew and the cycle continued.

The introduction of crack cocaine to the country's inner city is one of the most detrimental forces that have deeply undermined the progress gained by the civil rights movement. This social problem is cancerous and the tumors are still growing without a promise for a cure. Even noteworthy African American males throughout the country that hold prominent positions have fallen in different ways to this epidemic and have since to recover. The problem is evident to everyone but few have come up with a plan to deal with this situation.

On October 16, 1995, the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan executed a historical movement to not only shake the nation but to shake the loins of African American men. The dramatic situation surrounding the drug problem was only one of the motivating factors for Farrakhan to mobilize the Million Man March. The Million Man March was designed as a call to action for all African American men to unify. Part of the concept of this movement was for the participants to become active in all positive aspects of society and to stand up and be recognized. This Day of Atonement asked all African American men to become responsible citizens in their homes, communities, and nation. If nothing else, Farrakhan asked African American men to become a "Man" in the true sense of the definition and to emerge as a positive force. The experience of the Million Man March was deeply emotional to those that attended because it brought together Black men of all walks of life from all over the country, ignoring age, religion, station and class.

This march was necessary because despite a lot of criticism, reportedly a million African American men left Washington D.C. under the oath that they would do their best to change what was recognized as a dire situation when regarding the quality of life of African Americans. Unfortunately, the execution of the plan was not carried out to its fullest because of the lack of infrastructure. Farrakhan was able to gather the soldiers but he had no concrete follow-up scheme to see that the mission was accomplished. Regardless of the disappointment however, it should be emphasized that someone did foresee that the national problems did exist and an effort was made to change them.

Focusing on the present status of the African American male, it is plainly evident that there is a lot of work that must be done. Many of the largest obstacles that plagued African Americans in the past no longer exist and it is hard to understand why the struggle is as hard as it is. In spite of all previous efforts that were routinely spearheaded by positive African American men, it appears that today growing numbers of younger African American males are facing a future that leaves them apathetic. According to the University of California professor John McWhorter, today's problem is not entirely based in racism. He asks in his controversial book *Losing the Race: Self Sabotage in Black America*, "Why do so many African Americans—even comfortably middle-class ones—continue to see racism as a defining factor in their lives?" An answer could be that many African Americans, especially males, refuse to see the roles that they play in the cause of the problem and the possibility that they themselves have the solution. It is easy for some to blame the problem on racism. It is of no doubt that racism exists but at some point responsibility must be taken by the very same group that racism exploits to overturn the situation.

Some consider poverty as one of the main ingredients that perpetuates the lack of positive African American male role models. Poverty is a dilemma that surely affects the quality of life of a people however poverty does not have to define character. There are plenty of financially well off African American men that are not reflecting sound character and some of these same individuals use their financial status as license to justify negative behavior. Some actually shun the idea that they are indeed role models if they wish to be or not. It seems that they want the trappings that fame and financial security brings but don't want the responsibility. In the prior days of American history, many African American men that were famous or prosperous stood for what they thought was right and served as truly respected role models.

At the time of this writing there are several reports and discussions that speak on the situation of Black America and many of these findings focus on the African American male. The July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article, "*Pittsburgh's Shame*" highlights what is going on locally and it is not encouraging to read that African Americans in this city are worse off than they were fifty years ago. Social Scientists Larry E. Davis and Ralph Bangs explain in a recent study by the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems that in the areas of job unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and criminal activity, African Americans are leading the race and most of the participants are African American males. The research in this investigation coincides with the Urban League's State of Black America report and also that of presidential candidate Barack Obama. Incidentally, there have recently been rumblings of a movement here in the communities of Pittsburgh that will address the situation. This movement is being led and mobilized by African American men.

The time has come again for the Positive African American to become visible. Part of this concern is because Pittsburgh has been identified as one of the livable cities for African American males and the 2007 edition of the *State of Black America*, published by the Urban League reports exclusively on the plight of the African American male

nationwide. This document points out that some of our country's biggest dilemmas have occurred because few have been able to come up with solutions while attempting to deal with this problem. This situation is finally getting some recognition. The local African American publication, the New Pittsburgh Courier, reports that the condition goes back to slavery and that history suggests that the young African American male is set up for failure. According to sociologist Dr. Elijah Anderson, *"It goes back to slavery. I feel. It's about the inability for so many African-Americans to participate in this society as they should."* Yet the history of racism cannot be ignored, what is to be said about the total disregard of the opportunities that are available?

Unfortunately it is not considered "cool" anymore for young African American males to represent anything positive. There is a lot of pressure from America's culture to relive the negative stereotypes that are served in the media. If a young African American male is interested in getting good grades or speaking proper English they are accused of "acting white." To gain attention from young females, many African American males feel as though they must be "thuggish" in order to gain respect. Worst of all, many wealthy and talented African Americans in the field of entertainment consistently display inappropriate behavior without restriction that is then courted by the media. Sadly, they get away with it all too often and their negative behavior sends the wrong message. On the flip side, those individuals that strive to be positive role models become overshadowed. America seems infatuated with the "Bad Boy" image because it is interesting. What our country seems to forget is that the damaging effect is not contained in one neighborhood because it eventually seeps out into the rest of the country in a matter of time.

This unit is designed for students at the middle to high school grade level. These students should be able to benefit most because they are at the transitional period in the lives when the most significant risk of dropout occurs. Although this unit could benefit all students, it is hoped that teachers that have African American males utilize the discussion because the information speaks to them directly. Hopefully all students will be able to understand and identify the situation addressed in this subject. This unit could be part of a social study or psychology curriculum. Part of the information researched could also be part of a Graduation/Senior Project. This document may also be used by civic minded organizations or mentoring groups.

Presently, there is no other curriculum that addresses this situation in part or in whole directly because though statistics indicate that the problem exists, there has been nothing done to address the need for change.

## **Objectives**

The purpose of this unit is to provide the Pittsburgh Public School District with a possible way to encourage the African American male population of students to become more productive and ultimately for them to attempt to close the achievement gap. In doing so,

it is hoped that these students will continue onward towards a pathway of positive, successful endeavors that they will maintain and pass on to future generations. It is also hoped that this document will provide a vehicle to develop character amongst the young African American male student population. In doing so, perhaps a decrease of anti-social behavior, which subsequently leads to school expulsion, will occur. As earlier stated, America's past history shows that there are several examples of how African American men have overcome obstacles to achieve the accomplishments that all Americans benefit from today. During the last two decades however, it seems that many of the African American youth have grown apathetic or have simply given up.

By using this curriculum it is expected that students will be able to:

Use traditional and technological tools for researching information as defined in the communication standards.

Organize, store and retrieve and comprehend information gathered as defined in the communication standards.

Be able to present information found from research.

Be able to recognize the difference and influence of positive and negative role models.

Be able to use primary and secondary sources of information as outlined in the communication standards

Be able to become a positive role model or mentor to someone else.

Students will also be able to identify historical social changes that were significant in the African American community as defined in the Civics and Social Studies Curriculum.

### **Strategies**

In order for students to be able to become positive role models they must be able to identify the characteristics and personality traits that positive role models have. Teachers will research and provide a list of individuals that share these characteristics to their students in small groups and engage discussion. Although teachers should not limit themselves to identifying African American males as the positive role models, some effort must be made to ensure that this group is willfully included. Teachers will attempt to find interesting individuals that are not the commonly recognized men that are typically in the history books and should strive to find individuals who are contemporary to today's youth. If local individuals are available then they should be given priority. The individuals do not have to be famous because students need to know that the unsung hero plays an important part in social development.

During discussion students will attempt to define "What is a positive role model?" and "Who they admire most." Students will be encouraged to talk about people that have

influenced their own lives and will be given the opportunity to explain why the individual(s) they selected were chosen.

This strategy will allow students to express what they believe to be a positive role model and will also provide the motivation for their research. Students will use a journal to record their information.

Teachers will identify reliable local mentors who are willing to meet with students on a bi-weekly schedule. The mentors should come from a wide range of professions and experience. The mentors will assist the students with identifying positive character traits and recording the information in the student's journal.

Teachers will then arrange for the students to become mentors to students younger than themselves. It is hoped that the middle/high school aged students will be able to visit local elementary schools to find students that need mentorship. They can assist in the monitoring of classroom work, homework assignments and overall having someone older that they can look up to. This will develop a chain of responsibility at the adult, young teen, and elementary aged individual thus expounding on the adage, "Each one teach one". Hopefully this will create a sense of pride in all that participate.

Teachers will provide each student with a booklist that the students and their mentor will choose from. Student and mentor will read a book of their choice and discuss the personality traits that the characters have within the book to highlight what is considered positive or negative. Students will then be required to give an oral report on their findings.

Another strategy will focus on the impact of negative roll models and the messages that they convey. Teachers will present the documentary "The Delinquents", which focuses on a pack of rogue elephants that are let loose to their own upbringing after the adult bull elephants are exterminated. Teachers will also allow students to discuss and write about the terms "endangered species" and how this phrase may be applied to the positive African American male.

### **Classroom Activities**

The curriculum and its activities will be broken down into a 3-4 week timeframe. High school students will be required to work with the elementary aged students for at least one semester to earn community service credit.

The first week will include the introduction of the expectations for the students and give them an opportunity to arrange and prepare for the meeting of their mentors. Teachers will provide a list of individuals for each student to choose from. The individuals will be African American men of character who have proven themselves with the ability to overcome barriers that would otherwise prevent them from achieving success. After making their selection, students will use traditional and technological research practices to organize and write a three-paged report on the individual complete with works cited page. Teachers will also present students with a list of local role models that the students

must contact. Students will set arrangements for a meeting during classroom time and explain to the mentor that they will be working together. They will also ask their mentor for an investigative interview to hone primary sources of researching skills.

The second week will be used for the mentors and the students to work together on their investigative interviewing skills, the choosing of their book, and the meeting of the younger student that will be mentored by the high school student. Teachers will arrange for each student to have a “young mentee” that will be acquired from local elementary schools. The high school student mentor will assist his young mentee in classroom work, homework, and social skills much like that of a big brother. The student and adult mentor will be required to read a book from the suggestion list and give a five-minute oral report that is accompanied with a written report that will be given to the teacher after completion.

The third week will be used for the viewing of the video “The Delinquents.” Students will be required to define the terms and to respond to the worksheets that accompany the video.

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**The Makings of a “Delinquent”  
Or  
How to Stay off of the “Endangered Species” List**

**Student Objectives**

Define terms: *Delinquent, Musth, Hierarchy, Role Model* as it pertains to this unit.

**Reading, Writing, Speaking Standard 2.5**

Be able to locate region of concern on map.

**Geography Standard 7.1**

Be able to determine the percentage of the endangered White Rhino that were killed.

**Math Standard 2.5 Environment and Ecology Standard 4.7**

Discuss situation between elephants and rhinos in this article and make a correlation to their own lives.

**Methods**

Demonstrate ability to use reference tools (dictionary, online, etc.) or “context clues” to define terms.

Demonstrate ability to use atlas, encyclopedia, maps, globes, or Internet to show location of region.

Demonstrate ability to use Internet for latest list of endangered species and determine if protection methods are working for white rhino.

Discuss importance of role modeling and setting a positive example. Discuss how their lives would be if there were only negative role models. Ask if they feel that they are on the “Endangered Species” list.

List strategies for young males to get and stay off of “Endangered Species” list.

Make a timetable or plan of attack to eradicate delinquent behavior.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Per. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Work independently to answer the following questions about the “Delinquent” elephants and the rhinos. You can use the library reference materials to answer some of the questions. You can also refer back to the article.

Define these terms

Delinquent- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your information? \_\_\_\_\_

Musth- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your information? \_\_\_\_\_

Hierarchy- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your information? \_\_\_\_\_

Role Model- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your information? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did this occur? Continent \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Longitude/latitude \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your information? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Per. \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ \

**Endangered Species List:**

How critical is the white rhino situation? \_\_\_\_\_

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Approximately how many are in existence? \_\_\_\_\_

What measures are being taken to control their growth? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are African American teenaged males endangered? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is being done about this? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who in your life is a positive role model? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are the traits of a positive role model? \_\_\_\_\_

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How can you become a positive role model? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Appendix-Content Standards**

### **Booklist for Students**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
Harlem Hustle	Janet McDonald
Brother Hood	Janet McDonald
The Covenant	Tavis Smiley
Bud Not Buddy	Christopher Paul Curtis
Bucking The Sarge	Christopher Paul Curtis
Tyree	Cloe Booth
Makes Me Want to Holler	Nathan McHale
Bang	Sharon Flake
Tears of a Tiger	Sharon Draper

### **Reading, Writing, and listening Standards**

#### **1.2. Reading Critically in All Content Areas**

- A. Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
- Differentiate fact from opinion across a variety of texts by using complete and accurate information, coherent arguments and points of view.
  - Distinguish between essential and nonessential information across a variety of sources, identifying the use of proper references or authorities and propaganda techniques where present.
  - Use teacher and student established criteria for making decisions and drawing conclusions.
  - Evaluate text organization and content to determine the author's purpose and effectiveness according to the author's theses, accuracy, thoroughness, logic and reasoning.

- B. Use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced.
- Select appropriate electronic media for research and evaluate the quality of the information received.
  - Explain how the techniques used in electronic media modify traditional forms of discourse for different purposes.
  - Use, design and develop a media project to demonstrate understanding (e.g., a major writer or literary period or movement).
- C. Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

### **1.3. Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature**

Read and understand works of literature.

- A. Analyze the relationships, uses and effectiveness of literary elements used by one or more authors in similar genres including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style.

### **1.5. Quality of Writing**

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
- Identify topic, task and audience.
  - Establish and maintain a single point of view.
- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
- Gather, determine validity and reliability of, analyze and organize information.
  - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
  - Write fully developed paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.
- C. Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.
- Sustain a logical order throughout the piece.
  - Include an effective introduction and conclusion.
- D. Write with a command of the stylistic aspects of composition.
- Use different types and lengths of sentences.
  - Use precise language.

- E. Revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how questions of purpose, audience and genre have been addressed.
- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
- Spell all words correctly.
  - Use capital letters correctly.
  - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
  - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
  - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).
- G. Present and/or defend written work for publication when appropriate.

## **1.6. Speaking and Listening**

- A. Listen to others.
- Ask clarifying questions.
  - Synthesize information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
  - Take notes.
- B. Listen to selections of literature (fiction and/or nonfiction).
- Relate them to previous knowledge.
  - Predict solutions to identified problems.
  - Summarize and reflect on what has been heard.
  - Identify and define new words and concepts.
  - Analyze and synthesize the selections relating them to other selections heard or read.
- C. Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.
- Use a variety of sentence structures to add interest to a presentation.
  - Pace the presentation according to audience and purpose.
  - Adjust stress, volume and inflection to provide emphasis to ideas or to influence the audience.

- D. Contribute to discussions.
- Ask relevant, clarifying questions.
  - Respond with relevant information or opinions to questions asked.
  - Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
  - Adjust tone and involvement to encourage equitable participation.
  - Facilitate total group participation.
  - Introduce relevant, facilitating information, ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.
  - Paraphrase and summarize as needed.
- E. Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.
- Initiate everyday conversation.
  - Select and present an oral reading on an assigned topic.
  - Conduct interviews.
  - Participate in a formal interview (e.g., for a job, college).
  - Organize and participate in informal debate around a specific topic.
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- Use evaluation guides (e.g., National Issues Forum, Toastmasters) to evaluate group discussion (e.g., of peers, on television).
- F. Use media for learning purposes.
- Use various forms of media to elicit information, to make a student presentation and to complete class assignments and projects.
  - Evaluate the role of media in focusing attention and forming opinions.
  - Create a multi-media (e.g., film, music, computer-graphic) presentation for display or transmission that demonstrates an understanding of a specific topic or issue or teaches others about it.

## **1.8. Research**

- A. Select and refine a topic for research.
- B. Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.
- Determine valid resources for researching the topic, including primary and secondary sources.
  - Evaluate the importance and quality of the sources.
  - Select sources appropriate to the breadth and depth of the research (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses, other reference materials, interviews, observations, computer databases).
  - Use tables of contents, indices, key words, cross-references and appendices.
  - Use traditional and electronic search tools.

- C. Organize, summarize and present the main ideas from research.
- Take notes relevant to the research topic.
  - Develop a thesis statement based on research.
  
  - Anticipate readers' problems or misunderstandings.
  - Give precise, formal credit for others' ideas, images or information using a standard method of documentation.
  - Use formatting techniques (e.g., headings, graphics) to aid reader understanding.

## History Standards

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### 8.1. Historical Analysis and Skills Development

- A. Evaluate chronological thinking.
- Sequential order of historical narrative
  - Continuity and change
  - Context for events
- B. Synthesize and evaluate historical sources.
- Literal meaning of historical passages
  - Data in historical and contemporary maps, graphs and tables
  - Different historical perspectives
  - Data presented in maps, graphs and tables
  - Visual data presented in historical evidence
- C. Evaluate historical interpretation of events.
- Impact of opinions on the perception of facts
  - Issues and problems in the past
  - Multiple points of view
  - Illustrations in historical stories and sources
  - Connections between causes and results
  - Author or source of historical narratives' points of view
  - Central issue
- D. Synthesize historical research.
- Historical event (time and place)
  - Facts, folklore and fiction
  - Historical questions
  - Primary sources
  - Secondary sources
  - Conclusions (e.g., Senior Projects, research papers, debates)
  - Credibility of evidence

## **Geography Standards**

### **7.1. Basic Geographic Literacy**

A. Analyze data and issues from a spatial perspective using the appropriate geographic tools.

- Spatial patterns of human features that change over time (e.g., intervening opportunity, distance decay, central place theory, locational preference)
- Physical patterns of physical features that change over time (e.g., climate change, erosion, ecological invasion and succession)
- Human and physical features of the world through mental maps

B. Analyze the location of places and regions.

- Changing regional characteristics (e.g., short- and long-term climate shifts; population growth or decline; political instability)
- Criteria to define a region (e.g., the reshaping of south Florida resulting from changing migration patterns; the US-Mexico border changes as a function of NAFTA; metropolitan growth in the Philadelphia region)
- Cultural change (e.g., influence on people's perceptions of places and regions)

## **Environment And Ecology Standards**

### **4.2. Renewable and Nonrenewable Resources**

A. Analyze the use of renewable and nonrenewable resources.

- Explain the effects on the environment and sustainability through the use of nonrenewable resources.

- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of reusing our natural resources.
- B. Analyze factors affecting the availability of renewable and nonrenewable resources.
- Evaluate the use of natural resources and offer approaches for using them while diminishing waste.
  - Compare the economics of different areas based on the availability and accessibility of the natural resources.
- C. Analyze factors that influence the availability of natural resources.
- Compare the use of natural resources in different countries.
  - Determine how delivery systems influence the availability of resources at the local, regional and national level.

