

Say Their Names: Black Lives Matter Teacher Resource

Say Their Names: Black Lives Matter explores topics of racial injustice, police brutality, and social justice. These are complicated subjects that aren't always easy to understand or comfortable to confront. This brief guide was created to help educators address potential questions that may arise as students complete the Say Their Name: Black Lives Matter lesson.

How do I talk about race and racism with my students?

Discussing racism can be a sensitive and challenging subject to confront. We recommend seeking additional resources online to help with this based on your unique needs. We recommend the Teaching Tolerance Guide '[Let's Talk!](#)' which has tips for educators to prepare for discussions about race, plan for student conversations, and links to dozens of other professional development and student resources.

What is the Black Lives Matter Movement and why was it created?

According to the official Black Lives Matter (BLM) website (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/>), BLM is a social justice movement co-founded by three black women Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. It started as a #hashtag on Twitter in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman who was accused of killing Trayvon Martin. It gained momentum in 2014 after the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York. In addition to focusing on issues of police brutality toward the black community, BLM focuses on many other issues that impact the black community such as issues of racial injustice, criminal justice reform, economic injustice, LGBTQ IA+, healthcare, human rights, and many more.

Although BLM started in the U.S. it has become a global movement and is a global organization with chapters in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom.

How do I explain the Black Lives Matter Movement to my students? Don't all lives matter?

According to an official response from BLM (Bloomberg, 2016) One of the biggest misconceptions of the BLM Movement is “that we only care about Black people. **We are clear that all lives matter**, but we are living in a world where that’s not actually happening in practice. So, if we want to get to a place where all lives matter, then we have to make sure that Black lives matter too.”

The Black Lives Matter Movement exists to raise awareness and the need for change to support Black lives. To say that Black lives matter is not to say that other lives do not. In fact, it is to recognize that all lives do matter and acknowledge that Black people are often treated differently because of systemic racism among many other things.

What are the guiding Principles of the BLM Movement?

According to the Black Lives Matter website the mission of BLM is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on black communities by the state and vigilantes.

Affirmations:

- We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement.
- We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum.
- We are working form a world where Black Lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.

- We affirm our hierarchy, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

These Affirmations are identified as [13 Guiding Principles](#).

What role has social media played in the Black Lives Matter movement?

According to the Black Lives Matter website, BLM started as a #hashtag on Twitter in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman who was accused of killing Trayvon Martin. In today's age of information gathering and communicating, social media has become a primary means of communicating and getting the word out about anything from world news, local news, social justice movements, and beyond.

Because of its availability and ease of use in bringing awareness to issues, social media has allowed for the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement. One of the primary positive impacts that social media has had on the BLM movement has been around resource mobilization primarily in sharing information, strategies, ideas, and getting the word out about issues. According to an interview of a sample of BLM leaders, the majority said that social media was extremely central to organizing and publicizing protests. "A march was organized online after the police shooting of Philando Castille and Alton Sterling, the word spread like wild fire over social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) as a result the event had about 1500 attendees".

Additionally, a Pew Research conducted an analysis of tweets and found that "as of May 1st, 2018, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter had been used an average of 17,000 times per day and the issues raised were predominantly regarding race, violence, and law enforcement" (Anderson, 2019).