

The Tulsa Race Massacre

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	75 minutes
Course	Oklahoma History		

Essential Question

How do we know what happened during a historic event, such as the Tulsa Race Massacre?

Summary

This lesson is intended to help students develop a deeper understanding of the causes of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Students begin by observing historical photos and making inferences about them. They then build on their knowledge by watching a video that includes primary sources and interviews with experts, and they further their understanding by reading an excerpt about the Tulsa Race Massacre that provides some historical context for the time period and taking a virtual tour of John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. Students conclude the lesson by returning to their initial observations and revising them based on what they've learned.

Snapshot

Engage

Students look at a series of photos from the Tulsa Race Massacre and use a graphic organizer to caption the series as a whole based on what they can infer.

Explore

Students watch a short video clip covering the events of the Tulsa Race Massacre and think about how the information in the video helps add context and understanding to the photos from the previous activity.

Explain

Students use a close-reading strategy to review an excerpt about the events leading up to, during, and just after the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Extend

Students take a virtual tour of John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, which memorializes the Tulsa Race Massacre.

Evaluate

Students go back to their graphic organizers and revisit their original captions. They make changes to the captions based on their new knowledge and understanding. The graphic organizer can also serve as a

formative assessment.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
CLR403: Draw simple logical conclusions in more challenging passages
WME401: Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

OKH.5.2: Examine multiple points of view regarding the evolution of race relations in Oklahoma, including:
OKH.5.2A: growth of all-black towns (1865-1920)
OKH.5.2D: emergence of "Black Wall Street" in the Greenwood District
OKH.5.2E: causes of the Tulsa Race Riot and its continued social and economic impact.

Attachments

- Caption This—The Tulsa Race Massacre - Spanish.docx
- Caption This—The Tulsa Race Massacre - Spanish.pdf
- Caption This—The Tulsa Race Massacre.docx
- Caption This—The Tulsa Race Massacre.pdf
- Lesson Slides—The Tulsa Race Massacre.pptx
- Reading Passage—The Tulsa Race Massacre - Spanish.docx
- Reading Passage—The Tulsa Race Massacre - Spanish.pdf
- Reading Passage—The Tulsa Race Massacre.docx
- Reading Passage—The Tulsa Race Massacre.pdf

Materials

- Lesson slides (attached)
- Caption This graphic organizer (attached; one per student)
- Images of the Tulsa Race Massacre (viewable in the lesson slides)
- Tulsa Race Massacre Reading Passage (attached; one per student)

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Context

This lesson focuses on the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 and the events that immediately preceded it and is meant to be taught within a larger context that includes the evolution of race relations in Oklahoma. Students should have some prior knowledge regarding the evolution of race relations in Oklahoma before beginning the lesson. Consider teaching this lesson along with other lessons that encompass the social and economic impacts of the massacre as well as the role that labels played on the events.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the instruction, beginning with **slide 2.** Briefly read the lesson objectives. Ask students to think about the following question: How do we know what happened during the Tulsa Race Massacre? Pass out the attached Caption This graphic organizer.

Display **slide 3,** which includes the first photo in a series of photos of the Tulsa Race Massacre. Ask students to think about what they are seeing in the photo. Give them about 30 seconds to do so. Repeat the same process for the photos on **slides 4 and 5**. Ask students to share with a partner what they think is happening in the photos, giving them a minute or two to discuss.

Show **slide 6**, featuring all of the photos on one slide. Ask each pair to write a one-sentence caption in the top box of their graphic organizer, answering the question: Based on inferences from these pictures, what conclusions can you make about what the photos say about this time in our history? Ask a few pairs to share out their answers and have a brief discussion about the pictures and things that they noticed, also answering any questions that students might have. Transition to the next activity by telling students that they are going to keep building on their knowledge of what happened in the pictures.

Explore

Teacher's Note: Preparing Students For The Video

The following activity includes showing a video about the Tulsa Race Massacre. It includes primary resources (both photos and videos) that display potentially sensitive language, as well as interviews with historical experts about the events. You will want to preview the video and prepare students for the language and events that they will be experiencing.

Display **slide 7**. The video that students are about to watch will help them understand what was happening in the previous activity's photos. As they watch, tell students to use the second box of their Caption This graphic organizer to jot down notes from the video that add information and understanding.

Embedded video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yceK9LHFSA

After the video is over, ask students to share the new information they wrote down with their partner. If their partner caught something that also adds to their understanding, have students add these details to their own notes. Ask the students to quickly discuss how this video helped them understand what happened in Tulsa. Invite a few students to share out what they picked up from the video, and answer any questions they may have. Again, transition to the next activity by telling students that they are going to keep building on their knowledge of what happened in the photos and video.

Teacher's Note: Foreshadowing

During the video, Professor Baradaran discusses the shot that was fired and which served as a catalyst for the riot, but she does not include a key detail regarding why the shot was fired. That detail will be revealed in the Explain section of the lesson. Mention to students that more information about the gunshot is coming up so their attention will be focused on this information, and then point out the differences in the accounts after the next activity.

Explain

Display **slide 8.** Pass out copies of the Tulsa Race Massacre Reading Passage handout. This reading comes from the Oklahoma Historical Society. As they read, students will use Why-Lighting to highlight any part of the reading that they think is critical to their understanding of what happened immediately before, during, or immediately after the Tulsa Race Massacre. For any passage that they highlight, students should note the reason why in the margin, providing a brief explanation of why it is a critical piece of information to help their understanding.

After giving students sufficient time (around 10–15 minutes) to complete their reading and Why-Lighting, have them reunite with their partners. Display **slide 9**. Tell students to share what they highlighted and why with their partner. Have them fully explain how the passages they highlighted helped them build understanding about what happened. Ask students to also discuss how the information from the text might help them answer the lesson's Essential Question: *"How do we know what happened during the Tulsa Race Massacre?"*

Invite some students to share out what they highlighted and why. If there is any additional information you need to provide your students about the Tulsa Race Massacre, do so now before moving on to the next part of the activity.

Teacher's Note: Noting Added Details

Be sure to point out the added details from the reading regarding the catalyst of the riot—specifically that a white man tried to disarm a Black veteran—that resulted in a shot being fired.

Extend

Teacher's Note: Touring John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park

The virtual tour of the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park includes information about the statues in Hope Plaza and the Tower of Reconciliation. Some of the language used in the pop-ups is racially sensitive, specifically regarding the statue representing hostility. If you prefer to have students avoid this language, you can take the virtual tour as a class, walking students through the specific locations listed below and providing context and information via discussion. If you have never been to John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park or taken the virtual tour, take some extra time to read through the background information about the memorial located on the park's website.

Display **slide 10**. Tell students that they are going to take a virtual tour of John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. The park memorializes the Tulsa Race Massacre and is a result of the 2001 Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921.

Before beginning the tour, ask students to think about why our country memorializes events. Remind students to jot down notes in their Caption This graphic organizers regarding any information from the tour that helps them understand what happened in Tulsa, as well as anything that might help them answer the previous question about why we memorialize events.

Teacher's Note: Navigating The Tour

In the upper right corner of the virtual tour, use the top button to enable full-screen mode and the middle button to toggle rotation on and off. To move through the tour at your own pace, pause the rotation and use the arrows that appear when you rest your mouse pointer along the ground to navigate.

Start the virtual tour at Hope Plaza. Point out the three main statues: Humiliation, Hostility, and Hope. Provide some brief information about why each was chosen, and show the original image that each statue was based on. (Click the image or the i next to each statue to see additional information.) Give students a minute or two to take notes on their graphic organizers, and then ask a few students to share what they have written down.

Next, move on to the Tower of Reconciliation. After showing the tower and giving some context about it, select Story Board Panels 7: Great Greenwood and 8: Greenwood Burned from the menu in the upper-left portion of the page. You can either read what is on the panels or ask the students to read independently. Again, students should jot down notes on their graphic organizers. Ask a few students to share what they have written down.

Now move to the Tower of Reconciliation. Return to the menu and select the "Statehood, Black Wall Street, Success, and Statehood" and "1921 Race Holocaust Pogrom" options. Ask students to look at these parts of the tower closely and make notes on their graphic organizers.

Conclude the activity with a class discussion, inviting students to explain why they think Americans memorialize events and why different elements they observed were included in this memorial.

Possible Student Answers

We memorialize tragic events to share untold stories, to create places for people to pay their respects to the deceased, to honor people who lost their lives in the events, and to establish permanent records of the events. The statues in this memorial were chosen to represent the humiliation to which members of the Black community were subjected, the hostility they faced from the white community, and hope for the future.

Optional: Further Exploration Of John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park

If you have more time, feel free to show students all of the Story Board Panels and every part of the Tower of Reconciliation, as it depicts the history of people of color in Oklahoma. Please be aware that some of the additional areas of the virtual tour and their corresponding information contain racially-sensitive language that may be offensive and inappropriate for your classroom. Review each element of the tour before sharing it with your class to determine appropriateness and be sure to discuss the content and language with your students prior to sharing.

Evaluate

Display **slide 11**. Have students go back to their Caption This graphic organizers. Ask them to use the information they have learned through each of the previous activities to write one final caption for the series of photos. The students' final captions, along with all of the content in their graphic organizers, will serve as formative assessments for the lesson.

Resources

- Brooks, R., Brophy, A., Ellsworth, S., Franklin, J., Goble, D., O'Dell, L., Rankin-Hill, L., Snow, C., Stubblefield, P., Warner, R., & Witten, A. (2001). Oklahoma commission to study the Tulsa race riot of 1921, prepared by the commission for the Oklahoma state legislature, T. D. Churchwell, chairman. Oklahoma History Center. https://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf
- Ellsworth, S. (n.d.). Tulsa race massacre. The encyclopedia of Oklahoma history and culture. https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=TU013
- Center, J. (n.d.). John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation (http://www.jhfcenter.org/reconciliation-park/). Retrieved June 15, 2020, from http://www.panowalks.com/embed/7izaQPRaovbF5JjZm8KtkyrzkzD4/
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- THIRTEEN. (2019, April 18). Greenwood and the Tulsa race riots | BOSS: The black experience in business | PBS. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/-yceK9LHFSA