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Prejudice

Theme Summary

Prejudice is an important word for students to understand. Students need to embrace tolerance and learn to respect those who are different from themselves. In this pair of texts, students will read and respond to a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar and a speech by Robert Kennedy announcing the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This text pair will enrich and enlighten students' impressionable minds.

Answer Key

"A Difficult Day" Response (page 13)

1. D. an effort to understand
2. Do Need: love, wisdom, and compassion toward one another
Do Not Need: division, hatred, violence, or lawlessness
3. The three things that the vast majority of people in America want to live together, to improve the quality of life, and to have justice for all humans.

"Sympathy" Response (page 16)

1. C. a prayer
2. The bird wants to *be free* and would rather be on a *bough a-swing* than in a cage.
3. The author sympathizes with the bird and shares the same desires of freedom. That's why he uses the phrase *I know* throughout the poem. He knows how the bird feels.

Let's Compare! Pledge Against Prejudice (page 17)

Students' pledges will vary, but should include words from the provided word bank.

Standards

- Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic.
- Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.


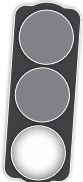



Materials

- *A Difficult Day* (pages 12–13)
- "A Difficult Day" Response (page 13)
- *Sympathy* (page 15)
- "Sympathy" Response (page 16)
- *Let's Compare! Pledge Against Prejudice* (page 17)
- *Thinking About Prejudice!* (page 18)
- pencils
- online resources

Comparing the Texts

After students complete the lessons for each text, have them work in pairs or groups to reread both texts and complete the *Let's Compare! Pledge Against Prejudice* activity page (page 17). Finally, students can work to complete the *Thinking About Prejudice!* matrix (page 18). The matrix activities allow students to work on the important literacy skills of reading, writing, vocabulary, and fluency.

A Difficult Day

| | Lesson Steps | Teacher Think Alouds |
|---|--|--|
|  <p>Ready, Set, Predict!</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the title aloud. Tell students this text is about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy (President John F. Kennedy’s younger brother). Ask students to use prior knowledge to list what they already know about these men. Note: You may wish to have students research information about Robert Kennedy prior to implementing the activity. Have partners share their lists. | <p>“Before I begin to read a text, I stop and think of all the things I already know about the topic. This helps me to better understand what I am about to read.”</p> |
|  <p>Go!</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the text to students and display a larger version of it. Ask students to read the text independently. When students are finished, read the text aloud. Model fluent reading and pausing. Pair students. Have them reread the text one more time together. Challenge students to circle any words they think younger students might find tricky. | |
|  <p>Reread to Clarify</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell students to reread the text to clarify it. Discuss the different strategies students can use to clarify the words they circled in the <i>Go!</i> section (e.g., <i>discuss with a partner, reread, read on</i>). Have students discuss the words they circle and the strategies they use to clarify them. | <p>“I do not know what the word <i>lawlessness</i> means, so I chop it into parts. I know what the word <i>law</i> means. I know the suffix <i>-less</i> means ‘without’ and <i>-ness</i> means the ‘state of,’ therefore the word means ‘having no laws.’”</p> |
|  <p>Reread to Question</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to reread the text to question. Instruct partners to select and reread paragraphs. Then, ask them to form discussion questions to ask other pairs about their paragraphs. Direct students to use evidence from the text while discussing prejudice and tolerance. Have students respond to the question and prompts on page 13. | <p>“As I read the second paragraph, I want to ask the question ‘Why does the senator not give the speech he originally planned on giving?’ By asking this question, I am able to remember that Mr. Luther King Jr. was killed, and the senator wanted to share the sad news with the crowd.”</p> |
|  <p>Reread to Summarize and Respond</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell students to reread the text to summarize. Have them share aloud anything new they learned about prejudice, tolerance, Dr. King, or Senator Kennedy. Invite students to add these items to the lists they made at the beginning of the lesson. | |

***Note:** For more tips, engagement strategies, and fluency options to include in this lesson, see pages 122–128.

A Difficult Day

April 4, 1968, was a sad day for Americans. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and killed. Dr. King had spent most of his life fighting for equal rights for African Americans. He wanted all people to be treated the same under the law.

One very sad person that day was Robert F. Kennedy. He was the younger brother of former President John F. Kennedy. At the time, he was a United States senator from New York. The senator was in Indianapolis, Indiana, to give a speech to a group of African Americans. Kennedy had just heard the news about Dr. King's death. He realized the crowd did not know yet. He did not give the speech he had planned. Instead, he told the sad news to the crowd. Here are some excerpts from what he said.

"I have some very sad news for all of you, and, I think, sad news for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee."

"Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice between fellow human beings. He died in the cause of that effort. In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it's perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. . . . you can be filled with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge."

"Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand, and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand, compassion and love."

"For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States, we have to make an effort to understand, to get beyond or go beyond these rather difficult times."

"What we need in the United States is not division. What we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness; but is love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another . . ."

