
Why Are Reparations Controversial?



Myers, Barton. "Sherman's Field Order No. 15," 1868, Sketch. Accessed from: [New Georgia Encyclopedia](#).

Supporting Questions

1. How did Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws harm African Americans post-Civil War?
2. How have organizations and governments used reparations?
3. What were arguments made for and against the passage of HR 40?
4. Why are reparations currently being discussed?

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™

Compelling Question	Why are reparations controversial?
Standards and Practices	<p>USH.25A Explain actions taken by people to expand economic opportunities and political rights for racial, ethnic, gender, and religious groups in American society.</p> <p>USH.17D Identify the actions and outcomes of government policies intended to create economic opportunities for citizens such as the Great Society, affirmative action, and Title IX.</p>
Staging the Compelling Question	Generate questions surrounding the concept and forms of <i>reparations</i> (The Question Game: Creating Questions about Primary and Secondary Sources).
Sources to Stage Compelling Question	<p>Source A: “Ta-Nehisi Coates, Danny Glover, and Senator Cory Booker Speak at House Hearing on Reparations,” (19 June 2019). Hearing in the House Judiciary regarding legislation on slavery reparations. <i>NBC News</i>. YouTube Video. Accessed from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWZY-tSd1bs</p> <p>Source B: “Oklahoma Judge Dismisses Tulsa Race Massacre Reparations Case File by Last Known Survivors” (8 July 2023). <i>CNN</i>. Newspaper Article. Accessed from: https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/08/us/tulsa-race-massacre-reparations-case/index.html</p>

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
UNDERSTAND			
How did Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws harm African Americans post-Civil War?	How have organizations and governments used reparations?	What were the arguments made for and against the passage of HR 40?	Why are reparations currently being discussed?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Create two bubble thinking maps demonstrating the impacts of Jim Crow Laws and Black Codes on African Americans.	Jigsaw readings (group of 4) to complete graphic organizer about four reparation organizations answering the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What violation did/does this reparation program seek to address? • What form did/will the reparations take? • What challenges did/does this reparations program face? 	Summarize arguments for and against the passage of HR 40 (“Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act”) by completing “Civil Conversation Guide.”	Purposeful reading: Write an evidence-based claim considering why reparations are being discussed in the country today using annotated notes from readings.

Featured Sources

Source A: "Poll Tax Payment Certificate," (29 January 1966). Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Artifact. Accessed from: [Poll Tax Payment Certificate from the state of Alabama](#)

Source B: Telegrams to the White House Urging Protection for African-American Voters (25 June 1946). Artifact. Accessed from: [Telegrams Urging for African-American Voter Protection](#)

Source C: Equal Justice Initiative Convict Leasing. Article. Accessed from: <https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-convict-leasing/>

Featured Sources

Source A: Indian Claims Commission. *Final Report*. 96th Cong., 2ND sess., 1980, H. Doc. 96-383. [Accessed from: Encyclopedia of the Great Plains](#)

Word Document: [Indian Claims Commission](#)

Source B: "The Thorny History of Reparations in the United States," (22 July 2023). HISTORY/A&E Television Networks. Article. Accessed from: <https://www.history.com/news/reparations-slavery-native-americans-japanese-internment>

Word Document: [Hawaiian Homes Commission](#)

Source C: Wills, M. (9 February 2016). "A Formerly Enslaved Woman Successfully Won a Case for Reparations in 1783," *JSTOR Daily*. Web Article. Excerpt. Accessed from: [A Formerly Enslaved Woman Successfully Won a Case for Reparations in 1783](#)

Source D: Hassan, A. (12 April 2019). "Georgetown Students Agree to Create Reparations Fund." *New York Times*. Newspaper Article. Accessed from: [Georgetown Students Agree to Create Reparations Fund](#).

Additional link: <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/georgetown-students-demonstrate-how-reparations-can-be-made-to-african-american-students#:~:text=On%20April%2011%2C%20two%2Dthird%20of%20the%20university%20from%20bankruptcy>.

Featured Sources

Source A: "Perspectives on Reparations," (2021). Constitutional Rights Foundation. Article. Accessed from: [Perspectives on Reparations](#)

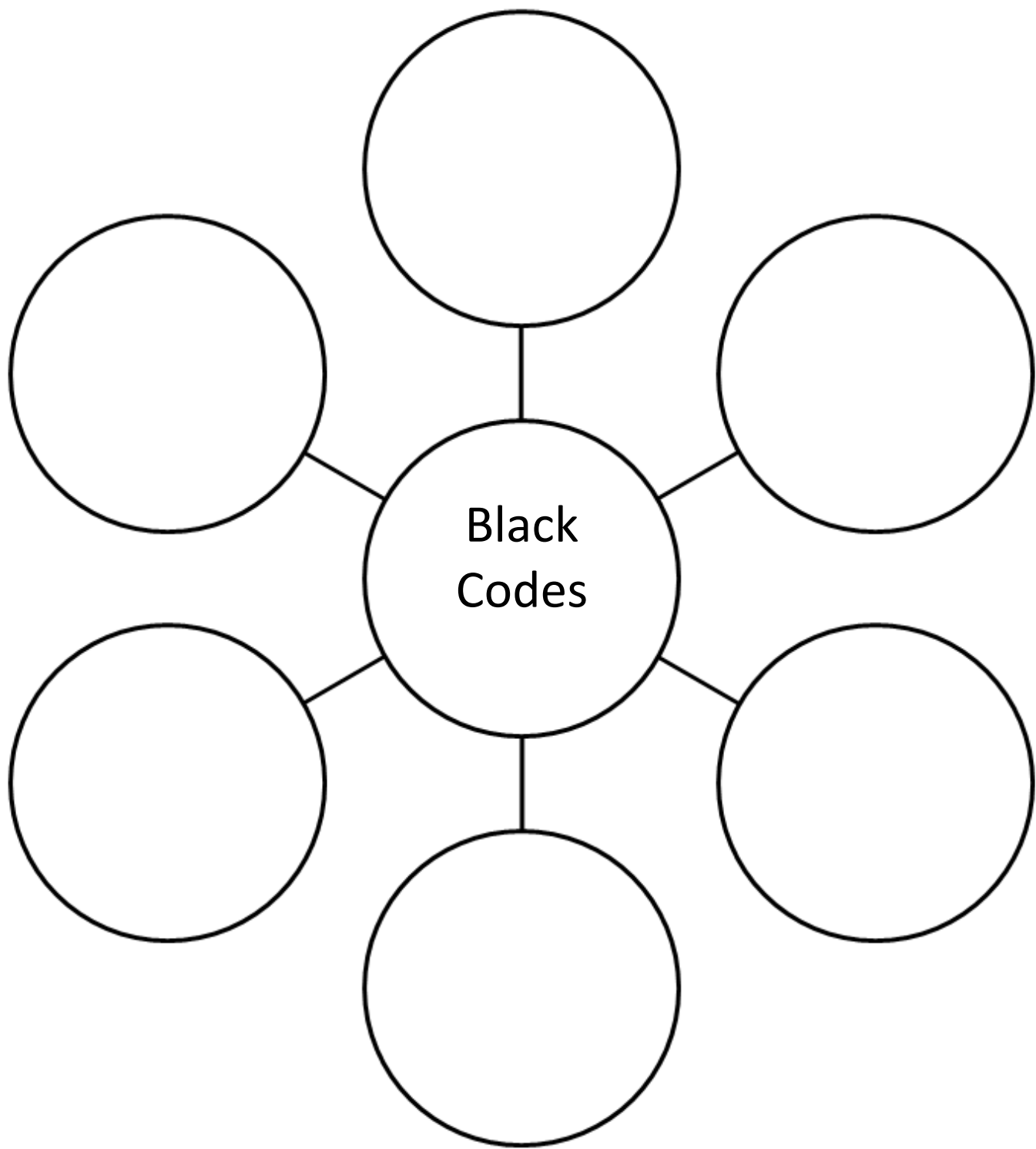
Featured Sources

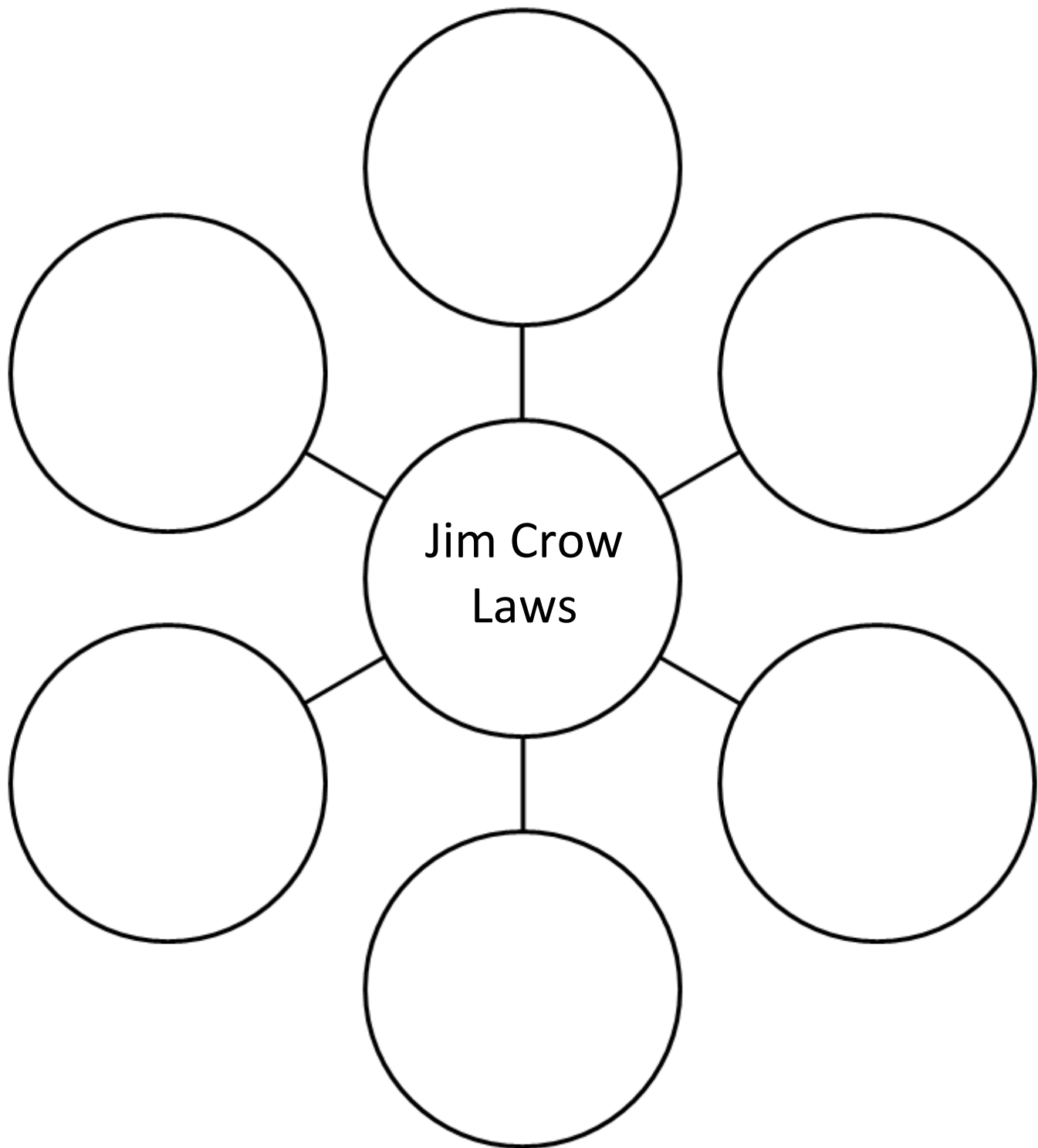
Source A: Younis, M. (29 July 2019). "As Redress for Slavery, Americans Oppose Cash Reparations." Gallup. Report. Excerpt.

Accessed from: [As Redress for Slavery, Americans Oppose Cash Reparations](#)

Source B: Newport, F. (1 March 2019). "Reparations and Black Americans' Attitudes About Race," Gallup. Report. Excerpt. Accessed from: [Reparations and Black Americans' Attitudes About Race](#)

Summative Performance Task	<p>ARGUMENT Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that evaluates the controversies surrounding reparations using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical and contemporary sources, while acknowledging competing views.</p> <p>EXTENSION To extend their arguments, students can research international examples of reparations (or reparations debates).</p>
Taking Informed Action	<p>UNDERSTAND <i>Embedded in the inquiry's supporting questions.</i></p> <p>ASSESS Deliberate on the potential impact of reparations.</p> <p>ACT Create a student guide explaining the situation and reparations, including a list of credible resources for learning more about reparations.</p>





Name of reparation organization	What violation does/did this reparation organization seek to address?	What form did/will reparations take?	What challenges does/did this reparation program face?

CIVIL CONVERSATION GUIDE

Name: _____

Class: _____

Title of Reading: _____

Step 1: Read.

A. Read through the entire selection without stopping to think about any particular section.

B. Re-read the selection and annotate (“talk to”) the text:

- Underline the main/most important points. You can comment on these points in the margins.
- Circle words or phrases that are unknown or confusing to you.
- Write down any questions you have in the margin labeling them with a “?”.
- Draw an ➡ in the margin next to text that connects to something you know from outside the text. Note what the connection is, such as a news item or personal experience.

Step 2: Think about the reading to prepare for the discussion.

A. This reading is about...

B. The MAIN POINTS are:

C. In the reading, I agree with:

D. In the reading, I disagree with:

E. What are two questions about this reading that you think could be discussed? (The best questions for discussion are ones that have no simple answer and that can use the text as evidence.)

1.

2.

Step 3: Discuss and listen.

RULES FOR CIVIL CONVERSATION

1. Everyone in your group should participate in the conversation.
2. Listen carefully to what others are saying.
3. Ask clarifying questions if you do not understand a point raised.
4. Be respectful of what others are saying.
5. Refer to the text to support your ideas.

You will have _____ minutes to discuss. Your goal is to engage with each other and the text to gain insight about your own point of view while finding a shared understanding of the issue.

At the end of the reading, you will likely find at least one discussion question. Use that question to get started. If time permits, you can also discuss questions you came up with in Section E above.

If the reading does not provide discussion questions, choose questions to discuss from Section E.

Step 4: After your conversation...

A. Compared to others in your group, did you speak? ___ Less than, ___ About the same as, ___ More than others.

B. Note some of the ways you added to the discussion.

C. What evidence did you use from the text to add to the discussion? Why was this evidence helpful?

D. What did you learn about the topic from the Civil Conversation? (Be sure to reference the text!)

Summative Performance Task

Compelling Question	Why are reparations controversial?
Formative Performance Task	Construct an argument that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from contemporary sources while acknowledging competing views.
Cognitive Skills	Argumentative Claim: Students apply this skill by using evidence-based claims to develop a clear argument stance in response to the compelling question. Students' argumentative claim will clearly show the structure through which they will respond to the compelling question.
	Integration of Evidence: Students apply this skill by providing clear analysis of how the evidence they selected supports their response. Evidence of this skill can be found in the body paragraphs of the inquiry response.

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined laws and regulations that have disproportionately impacted Black people and the ways in which governments and organizations have attempted to make amends with marginalized groups. Students should be able to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and ability to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students are asked to construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question: *Why are reparations controversial?* Students' arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay. To support students in their writing, teachers may provide sentence starters for claims and evidence.

Argument Stems

Students' arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- Reparations are controversial because people cannot agree on which form they should take, whether money or other resources.
- Reparations are controversial because there are disagreements about whether the oppressive acts of slavery and Jim Crow laws justify a reparation payment.
- Reparations are controversial because there are disagreements about the lasting impact of the institution of slavery and oppressive laws that followed.
- Reparations are controversial because it contributes to divisiveness in today's political environment.

EXTENSION To extend their arguments, students can research international examples of reparations (or reparations debates). Using this research, students compare the precedents set by the respective government who authorized the reparations; or if a debate, students compare the different perspectives on the issue. Students should note the unique stories and situations of each.

Some examples include: British reparations to the Mau Mau; Iran to Kuwait for the 1990-91 Gulf War; Colombia's "Victims Law"; reparations to African countries for European colonialism (e.g., Belgium in the Congo; United Kingdom's Africa Reparations Movement; Germany's role in the Herero and Namaqua genocide).

Taking Informed Action

Action Question	Why are reparations controversial?
Civic Theme	KNOWLEDGE: Students seek truth and access to factual information.
Action Task	Create a student guide explaining a current situation and reparations. Within the guide, include a list of credible resources for learning more about reparations.
Cognitive Skills	Informational/Explanatory Thesis: Students apply this skill by using historical sources to construct explanations and convey information through clear, well-organized, and relevant ideas. Evidence of this skill can be found in the flyer's content and structure.
	Selecting Relevant Evidence: Students apply this skill by using relevant evidence to support claims. Evidence of this skill can be found in the flyer's selected evidence

Structure of Taking Informed Action

Taking informed action tasks have three steps to prepare students for informed, reasoned, and authentic action. The steps ask students to (1) *understand* the issues evident from the inquiry in a larger and/or current context; (2) *assess* the relevance and impact of the issues; and (3) *act* in ways that allow students to demonstrate agency in a real-world context.

For this inquiry, students have the opportunity to take informed action by drawing on their understanding of reparations to create a student guide explaining reparations and why they should be informed about this policy.

UNDERSTAND The *understand* step of Taking Informed Action is embedded within the inquiry's supporting questions.

ASSESS Students deliberate on the potential impact of reparations.

ACT To act, students create a student guide explaining the situation and the role of reparations. Within the guide, include a list of credible resources for learning more about reparations.

- In the spirit of this inquiry, students are not necessarily taking a stance on the issue. However, students may choose to advocate for their informed perspective on reparations, using this action task as a Public Service Announcement with a call-to-action.

CIVIC THEME This task reflects the civic theme of *knowledge*. When students engage in knowledge-building civic action, they seek truth and access to factual information. By creating a guide with a student audience, they are helping their classmates be better informed, as well as providing the means for further investigation.