DOES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HURT STUDENTS?

THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 90 MINUTES. IF STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO REVIEW MEDIA FOR HOMEWORK, IN-CLASS TIME SHOULD BE 45 TO 60 MINUTES.

INVESTIGATE

Read, watch, and listen to the three media resources on the Thinkalong module. Students can use the Investigate graphic organizer to summarize each piece of media and record new information. Below are summaries of the three pieces of media curated in the Thinkalong module.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: CRASH COURSE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS #32
CrashCourse| September 26, 2015 |Video
7:13 minutes

A Crash Course video explaining what affirmative action is, who it's supposed to benefit, and why it still exists.

- Affirmative Action is a government or private program designed to redress historic injustices against specific group by making special efforts to provide members of these groups with access to educational and employment opportunities.
- In order to increase access to jobs and education for members of groups that are historically discriminated against, affirmative action programs try to ensure that they get special access, which is where the controversy begins.
- Affirmative action started with President Lyndon Johnson ordering government agencies to ensure that people of color were represented, but the first supreme case about the program happened in 1973 when the court ruled that the racial quotas for admission at the University of California Davis Medical School was unconstitutional because it was not narrowly tailored to meet government interest, such as diversity.
- While most affirmative action programs have been struck down, the idea that universities can use affirmative action to maintain diverse student bodies has been upheld by the Supreme Court.
- While the Supreme Court says that redressing historical injustices is not enough to justify affirmative action laws, some people believe they are, which is why affirmative action continues to have support.

DOJ LOOKS INTO WHETHER HARVARD DISCRIMINATES AGAINST ASIAN-AMERICANS
WGBH | August 3, 2017 | Audio
3:37 minutes

A story from WGBH on the Department of Justice's decision to investigate whether Harvard University decimates against Asian-American student applicants.

- More than 60 organizations are accusing Harvard University of holding Asian-American applicants to higher standards than Black and Latino applicants.
- The group asked the federal government to investigate two years ago, but the claim was dismissed. Now the new administration has decided to look into the claims, citing their goal to protect all American from illegal race-based discrimination.

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

- Tomiko Brown-Nagin, a professor at Harvard, says that the decision by the new administration to target policies designed to make schools more diverse comes as racial tensions are rising on many campuses.
- Harvard says their admissions policy complies with the law and they are committed to filling their class with diverse students.
- Opponents like Swan Lee, a member of the coalition that accused Harvard, hopes that the investigation encourages other Ivy League schools to look closely at their discrimination policies.

ROUNDUP: REACTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S SUPREME COURT DECISION ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

NPR | November 9, 2017 | Article
1,031 words

An article from NPR about reactions to the 2016 Supreme Court decision to uphold the University of Texas' affirmative action policy.

- In 2013 a woman named Abigail Fisher sued the University of Texas, claiming that she was denied admission because she was white.
- On June 2016, the Supreme Court rules that the school's admissions program, which does take race into account, was lawful because the policy seeks to increase diversity.
- Victor Goode from Colorlines wrote that the decision by the Supreme Court was a victory for civil rights.
- An article from the news company Vox, wrote that white women benefit the most from affirmative action, but are some of its strongest opponents.
- Michael Harriot, a writer at The Root, says Abigail Fisher had lower grades than most of the students accepted to University of Texas that year. He argues that since her parents went to the school, she felt entitled to go despite more qualified candidates.
- However, some people of color believe that that affirmative action hurts them. Zhang Tianpu wrote that the "model minority" stereotype works against Asian-Americans.
- The University of Texas has a policy that guarantees admission to high school students that are at the top 10% of their class.
- Even as more black and Hispanic students enroll in college, the top-tier universities have about 6% of black undergraduate students.

KEY WORDS

Look out for these important keywords in the news stories. Discuss the definitions with your classroom and see how they affect the understanding of the story.

- Affirmative Action
- Department of Justice
- Injustice
- Minority
- Discrimination

CONTEMPLATE

Using public media — video, audio and digital reports — about newsworthy topics, these classroom-based exercises help students to think critically about media messages, develop informed opinions, and practice how to take a stand.

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Students will use media literacy questions to critically engage with news by thinking about its purpose, searching for bias and discussing missing perspectives. They will answer the 5 Key Questions of Media Literacy created by the Center for Media Literacy, which are:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
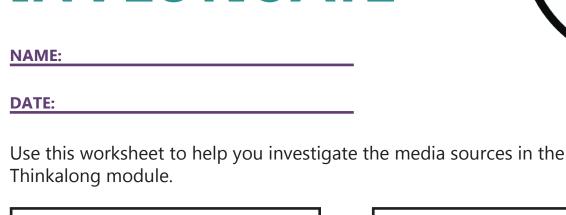5. Why is this message being sent?

A graphic organizer is included in this guide and the Thinkalong website to help students answer these five questions about each piece of media.

DEBATE

Students will engage their peers in an evidence-based debate using the media they just analyzed. Use the debate tool on the module webpage to help form an evidence-based response to the debate question.

In addition to rich in-class discussions, teachers can also connect with other classrooms through the Thinkalong website. Sign up here to be connected.

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LET'S INVESTIGATE

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Use this worksheet to help you investigate the media sources in the Thinkalong module.

SUMMARIZE THE TOPIC	KEY VOCABULARY

MEDIA RESOURCE 1

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

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MEDIA RESOURCE 2

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

MEDIA RESOURCE 3

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

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CONTEMPLATE YOUR SOURCES

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

After watching the media in the module, answer the questions below.

1. AUTHORSHIP: Who created this message?

MEDIA 1	MEDIA 2	MEDIA 3

2. FORMAT: What creative techniques are being used to grab my attention?

MEDIA 1	MEDIA 2	MEDIA 3

3. AUDIENCE: How might different people understand this message differently than me?

MEDIA 1	MEDIA 2	MEDIA 3

4. CONTENT: What values and points of view are represented? What's left out of this message?

MEDIA 1	MEDIA 2	MEDIA 3

5. PURPOSE: Why is this message being sent?

MEDIA 1	MEDIA 2	MEDIA 3

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CREATE YOUR ARGUMENT

NAME:

DATE:

Create strong arguments for both sides from the resources in the Thinkalong module.

DEBATE QUESTION

PRO ARGUMENT

CON ARGUMENT

REASONING

REASONING

EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE