

# SHOULD REPARATIONS BE PAID TO AFRICAN-AMERICANS?

**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.

### ONE WORD OR LESS: REPARATIONS TO BLACK AMERICANS?

Point Taken | May 10, 2016 | Video

2:12 minutes

A short clip from *Point Taken* that uses one word – just – to discuss the pros and cons of reparations.

- Black Americans, throughout history, have been subjected to 250 years of slavery, 90 years of Jim Crow laws, and 60 years of “separate but equal” and segregation until the 1960s, while discrimination still happens today.
- Opponents say that paying reparations is unworkable and complicated. How would it be calculated? Who would pay? Should the many Americans who moved to the United States after slavery ended be held accountable?
- The trauma of slavery is physical, emotional, and financial, and can be seen today.
- While history can’t be rewritten, it can be redressed.

### WHO GAINS AND WHO’S LEFT OUT OF GEORGETOWN’S REPARATIONS PLAN

NPR | April 28, 2017 | Audio

3:51 minutes

A radio story that describes Georgetown University’s steps to pay reparations to the descendants of slaves sold to pay a debt owed by the university.

- For descendants like Scott Williams, learning his family was part of the sale hurt him deeply. He is certain that the university owes the descendants something.
- The university apologized and has pledged to invest in research and scholarship on slavery. It also will offer preferential admissions.
- The preferential admissions probably won’t help most descendants – older people, those who have already gone to college, those who don’t have the grades, and those who don’t want to move to DC. Scott Williams thinks that the university instead owes descendants money.
- Williams says he knows other people will be upset and say that slavery happened hundreds of years ago. His son, Sheldon, says that asking the university for money doesn’t seem right.

*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.*

**TA-NEHISI COATES ON REPARATIONS: 'WE ARE GOING TO BE IN FOR A FIGHT'**

Tell Me More | May 27, 2014 | Audio

11:47 minutes

An interview with *The Atlantic's* Ta-Nehisi Coates, where he talks about his essay advocating for reparations.

- Coates describes years of government-directed efforts to deprive African-Americans of the ability to generate wealth as a moral debt and says that until the debt is paid, the country can't be whole.
- Martin and Coates talk about the case of Clyde Ross, the son of Mississippi farmer who was cheated out of the family's successful farm through tax debt. Ross served in the Armed Forces, moves to Chicago, and is subjected to housing discrimination. Coates says that stories like Clyde's aren't hard to find.
- Discriminatory housing policies – like excluding neighborhoods from Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans through redlining and GI Bill benefits – kept African-Americans from participating in one of the largest wealth-building projects in the US.
- While those practices were outlawed in 1965, Coates says that the damage done by discriminatory policies has not been repaired and continues into communities today.
- Coates says that the real problem critics have with reparations isn't who should pay, but rather that it admits that America was made possible by slavery.

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**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.

- Reparations
- Slavery
- Jim Crow laws
- Segregation
- Redlining
- GI Bill

**CONTEMPLATE**

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?

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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

## MEDIA RESOURCE 2

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

## MEDIA RESOURCE 3

TITLE

DATE PUBLISHED

MAIN IDEAS

# 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



# 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