

# African American Voices Lesson Plans

**Lesson Plan:** Blood Diamonds and How They Affect Us

**Subject:** Language Arts, American History, World History

**Grade:** 9, 10, 11

**NGSSS-SS:** **SS.912.E.3.4:**



Understand the fundamental concepts and interrelationships of the United States economy in the international marketplace.

**(World History):** Assess the economic impact of negative and positive externalities on the international environment.

**Description/  
Abstract of Lesson:** The students will learn and discuss what “Conflict Diamonds” are and how they fuel civil wars on the African continent. The students will offer solutions to the problem.

**Objective(s):** The students will accomplish the following:

- Understand historical concepts through multiple forms of media
- Read and comprehend literature.
- Initiating civic responsibility
- Developing global perspectives on social problems

**Materials:**

- Video: *Bling: Consequences and Repercussions*
- Magazine or Internet pictures of entertainers wearing diamond jewelry

**Duration:** Several Class Periods

**Lesson Lead In/  
Opening:** 1. The teacher will display images of entertainers wearing expensive diamond jewelry from magazines (or internet websites through the use of a smart board).

2. The teacher will engage the students in discussion about how they feel the diamond jewelry makes the entertainers look, how they feel when they wear them, etc. The teacher will ask the students “Do you know where the majority of diamonds in the world come from?” The teacher will point out that the majority of diamonds in the world come from Africa and how there are wars being fought in West Africa in which diamonds are being traded for guns as a way of fueling the wars.

**Activity 1:** 1. Show the class the short documentary *Bling: Consequences and Repercussions*. (The documentary can be played directly or downloaded from <http://www.wghfilms.com/bling.htm#>)

2. After showing the documentary, engage the students in a discussion on the key historical and cultural points highlighted. Discuss what is currently being done internationally against the sale of conflict diamonds.

3. Have the students write letters to prominent figures in the entertainment industry expressing their concerns about the wars in West Africa being fueled by the diamond trade. In a persuasive manner, have the students make suggestions to the prominent figures about how they could play a role in a solution to the problem (i.e. The artists making public service announcements for fans to only buy conflict-free diamonds, give to charitable organizations involved in exposing the problem, etc.)

4. After rough drafts have been corrected, have the students write the letter professionally and mail them to the prominent figure.

**Activity 2:**

1. Have the students read the book Blood Diamonds by Greg Campbell.
2. Have the students write a report on the book.

**Assessment:**

Teacher observation and evaluation of student letters/reports. Check for historical accuracy as an indicator of comprehension.

**Higher Order**

**Thinking Questions:**

1. What does the term "Conflict Diamond" sound like to you? What do you think it means?
2. How do you think people in general would respond if very well known artists would come out and discuss the blood diamond problem?
3. Why do you suppose diamonds are so expensive?
4. As citizens and consumers, what can we do to help end wars fueled by the sale of diamonds?

**Suggested Books  
In Lesson:**

Campbell, G. (2004) Blood Diamonds, Westview Press.

**Web Resources:**

<http://www.wghfilms.com/bling.htm#>

<http://www.un.org/peace/africa/Diamond.html>

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/amnestynow/diamonds.html>

<http://www.stopblooddiamonds.org/>

<http://www.sprol.com/?p=293>

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061208-blood-diamonds.html>

