

Lesson Plan for “Made in Mississippi” by Randall Weeks

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CCSS Standard(s): CCS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.RH.11-12.2, 6, 8 ([Social Studies](#))

Objective(s): To consider the Confederate flag as a mythic symbol

Essential Question(s): How does the meaning of a symbol change with its use? What is the role of and proper place for the Confederate battle flag in the modern South?

Preparation for Teacher (Strategy and Purpose): Few symbols draw as much controversy as the Confederate flag. Its mythic status could relate to its varied uses over the course of the last century and a half, but there is no shortage of pronouncements about its meaning today. From the [“Myths and Misunderstandings”](#) page on the website of the American Civil War Museum to a [May 2021 examination](#) in *Teen Vogue*, writers, editors, historians, bloggers, politicians, pundits— everyone has an opinion to share. Here, Randall Weeks comments on the Confederate flag, its Mississippi roots, and its ongoing use.

Preparation of Students (Strategy and Purpose): The teacher will provide students with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History’s History Now [“A Brief History of the Confederate Flags”](#) resource and the *National Geographic* January 2021 article [“How the Confederate Battle Flag Became an Enduring Symbol of Racism,”](#) both of which deal in the facts of the flag’s actual history. Students should read these prior to class.

In-class activities (recommended): On day one, the teacher will ask students to choose one of the following positions, anonymously and privately, turning in their choice to the teacher:

1. keep the flag/monuments where they are, protect them with anti-removal laws
2. remove the flag/monuments, place them in publicly funded museums
3. have private citizens/groups remove them to place them on private property
4. remove the monuments immediately and destroy them

After allowing each student to learn something of the history behind these symbols, then to choose an initial position, the teacher will provide students with Randall Weeks essay “Made in Mississippi,” the PBS programs “Meltdown in Dixie” and “The Neutral Ground.” Students should be given time to read and view the essay and the programs. On returning to this lesson, the teacher will return to the position statements, asking each student to choose again, anonymously and privately. (Some students will choose to change, and some will remain the same.) After students have had the opportunity to choose again, the teacher will assign a narrative documented essay that has the student writing about why they changed positions or why their position remained unchanged. Support from the assigned materials should accompany the students’ ideas.

Lesson Follow-up (Recommendations): Students will write narrative essays on one of the following two topics: “Why did your position change?” or “Why did your position not change?”

Technology: SmartBoard, Elmo, other device for sharing the texts

Tiered Instruction/Intervention/Differentiation: Accommodations per needs, IEPs, or 504s

Assessment: The teacher will grade the narrative essay. Points should be allotted to clear articulation of the position(s) and to adequate support from the assigned resources.

Homework: See assessment suggestion above.

Comments: This lesson will require a particular degree of sensitivity and a delicate kind of navigation, especially in classes that are racially mixed.