



HOPE: Thematic Ideas and Lesson Plans for Teachers

The following are seven different themes that can be used in Middle or High School classrooms to engage students in various subjects. Literature, Music, History, Visual Art, Science, Math and Activism can all be addressed by using the Registry. This site can provide material to draw from, create from, and explore.

These Unit plans are constructed to make use of the site, to encourage ways of creating lessons that are interdisciplinary, and interactive, while still meeting standards.

So often *teaching from a theme* can be inclusive and deep as opposed to teaching separate units on “black poets” African American music.” In this way we do not “other” a culture, race or community, but rather weave them into the inclusive world we want to create in our classrooms while still emphasizing the importance of their unique identity.

As you will see, the Registry provides a natural resource into many themes that connect to student lives, concerns and passions.

Note: You can pick or choose among the suggestions for each Thematic Unit. It could be an activity from the Unit that takes one day; or you may want to pick and choose what activities and lessons you want to do that amount to one week of exploration and instruction. The Registry is ideal in its flexibility. These Units aim to be flexible as well.



MDE Social Emotional Goals—All Are Part of Every Unit Plan for the Registry

- Self-control of feelings and behavior
- Shared use of space and materials
- Identify of self in relations to others
- Social and emotional understanding
- Relationships and social interactions with familiar adults
- Relationships and social interactions
- Conflict negotiation
- Responsible conduct as a group member

Standards Addressed in the Unit: Celebration

Standards addressed in this unit include

Citizenship and Government --Civic Skills, 8.1, 9.1

Geography—9.3,

Historical Thinking Skills—9.

United State History—Indigenous and Slave labor-9.4.4.16.5

United States History—Slaves struggle for rights-9.44.19.4

United States History—Jim Crow –racism 9.4.4.20.5

Language Arts:

Conventions of English when writing or speaking: 6.11.1.1

Consulting Reference Materials 6.11..44

Evaluate Content in Diverse Media 6.5.77

Write Narratives and Other Creative Texts—7.7.3.3- 12 th grade

Prepare for and Participate in range of conversations –7.9.1.1- grade 12

Communicate using traditional or digital multimedia formats—7.9.8.8

Write Narratives and other Creative Texts—9.7.3.3



Theme: Hope: What makes us resilient? How do we keep going if times are tough? Often the emotion that gets us through is hope. This can be hope for ourselves, that we survive a tough exam, an illness, a sports competition, and come out of it learning and believing in ourselves. Hope is important for long term plans and short, every day experiences. Below are 7 different experiences for students around this theme. Pick and choose or decide to do the whole unit.

Age Range: Middle and High School

Goal: So often we are told that resilience is one of the key characteristics we want to encourage in our students. We want them to be able to bounce back when things go wrong, or slug through a difficult subject we are teaching to them. Resilience involves believing at a basic level that we can accomplish what we set out to do, even when it seems our goal is unrealistic or unattainable. This belief in self is fueled by hope. The following unit aims to instill in students a way to find hope and to become resilient in the face of difficulty.

Materials: Computer and Screen or White Board if possible

Note books or paper for students: Have students create four sections for their notebook:

Section 1- Journal responses to lessons in class

Section 2: Homework assignments

Section 3: A continuing list of things, small and large, that give them hope

Section 4: Letters to younger students to inspire them to hope, to keep trying.

Art paper and colored pens to create a children's book.



Steps: [Hope | Definition of Hope by Merriam-Webster](#)

Introducing the Unit: *Hope: the feeling of wanting something to happen and thinking that it could happen; a feeling that something good will happen or be true; the chance that something good will happen; someone or something that may be able to provide help; someone or something that gives you a reason for hoping.*

Ask students: What gets in the way of your hope? Is it what people say? Is it your own fear of trying something? It is what you believe is possible, or impossible for you to do given your gender or race or ability? From the Registry, play the video from two list. One of [Judge Pamela Alexander](#) and another of [T. Mychael Rambo](#) an actor and teacher.

Ask students to discuss what gets in their way when they think about the future? Their ability? Their assumptions about themselves? What other people say about them?

Step 1. Give students an assignment to research famous people who have had to overcome obstacles to do what they want to do in the world. They can take time to explore people they have heard of and whom they admire. Ask them to find times when these people have felt they could not go on. Who inspired them to believe in themselves?

Start with a definition of resilience: [resilience | Definition of resilience in English by Oxford Dictionaries](#)

Definition of resilience - the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness, the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

Students can even include family members or community members as examples of people who have bounced back, have had resilience or a kind of self-hope.

Ask students to Search the Registry for people who appear on their own birthdate. They can use those who are listed to choose from to write their Portrait in Hope.

Step 2. Ask them to present their example of such a person to the entire class as a **Portrait of Hope and Resilience.**

As a follow-up to this class project they can send a letter to the person they have researched, or they can interview this person if they live nearby. Use letter-writing requirements as a lesson in this unit.



Activities

1. Find Maya Angelou's Poem "[And Still I Rise](#)" on the Registry.

Ask students to listen to you read the poem and then ask them to find the words or phrases that express her belief in herself, her hope. What is the "attitude" she has in this poem? What attitude does it take for her to succeed? How do you express a belief in yourself? Through music, art, dance, writing, working? Ask them to list the things they do where they feel they can do well. The things they hope to do well at in the future.

2. Use Voices That Guide Us on the Registry to view [Tammy Sinkfield-Morey](#) and [John Thomas](#).

One mentions having a passion for something, the other mentions what you like to do as ways to guide you into what you want for your future to be.

List your Passions

List Things You like to do now, currently in your life.

What Careers come to mind when you look at your lists?

Research what you must do to start on a career after high school or college.

Use the Registry to find career descriptions for your own hopes, dreams for your future.

(Type in "Careers" in the General Search Engine. Scroll through videos that feature men and women in various careers and what they say about their work.)

Make a chart of the steps it will take to get where you want to be by College? High School Diploma? Tech School? Licensure?

3. Show the Video from Voices that Guide Us "[A Desire for Black Women and Girls](#)" with Mary Easter.

Both males and females can learn something valuable from this clip. She really hopes, for black women and girls, the chance to work hard and believe they can become what they want to become.

In this activity, *ask students* to think of people who make them feel hopeful, that they can do something even though it may be hard. Ask them to think back to elementary school. Which teachers, or people in their family, in their place of worship or community gave them hope when times were tough?

Ask them to write about one of these people: describing what was going on in their own life and what the person did to encourage them. They can write this in poetry form, or in a song, or in an essay. They can also write it as a letter to the person, describing how they helped them. The letter can be sent, or not.



4. Look up Robert Hayden on the Registry.

Read the poem: [“Those Winter Sundays.”](#) Also look at the video of [Patricia Smith](#), another poet, talking about everyday language and what we can create from what we already know.

Ask students to think of people *in their ever day life, who give them hope or encouragement*, not the person who coached them necessarily, or was their fourth-grade teacher as in the exercise above, but to dig deeper and think about now, today, and the small acts of daily kindness they do not always acknowledge, as Hayden realizes in his poem.

Ask them to create a Map of Hope by drawing a map of where they go each day of the week and indicate who they encounter who smiles, or stops to talk, or fixes their broken bike, serves them ice cream, nods her head, his head, at the end of church or synagogue or mosque services. Sometimes we receive hope in ways we don't even realize, all along the way.

5. Write A Children's book that gives hope.

Go to the Lesson Plan [“How to Write a Book”](#) in the Teacher's Forums “Lesson Library.” This is a set of videos and lesson plans (click on “files” when you get to the lesson plan video)

Play the videos. This will give students ideas for creating a simple children's book. It will also show students some role models who write children's books.

Ask them to think of their sisters or brothers, neighbors or cousins who are younger than middle or high school--between 5 and 10 years old. What gives small children hope?

Have students go to the town or city library. Ask them to check out some children's books. You can also go to the library and bring some back into your classroom.

Have a day where students can read over books to get a sense of what authors do to keep a child's attention. Have them list ideas about what makes a good children's book on the board. on the board as a large group.

Have them make a class list of ways to encourage hope in young children. How did it happen in their own growing up?

Give students time to meet in their *book creation group* to decide on the main parts to a story they want to tell for their book. Groups can be as small as pairs, as big as five.



Have them work on the book together. They can plot out the book on a story board, using newsprint to show each page with what will appear on the page.

Combine with an art class to create the illustrations or have a drawing sub group in the book creation planning.

Ask students to put the book together, matching text to words, without too many words on each page.

If possible, arrange for students to visit an elementary class to read their books to the younger ones.

6. Have students view two videos from the Registry: [Generation Gap, Christina Doan](#) and. [Black Love, Julie Anderson Mann](#).

These can also be found by going to “Search the Registry” and scrolling down the subject category to “Youth Views.”

Ask students to talk about their connection to the generations before them, their grandparents and parents, Uncles or Aunties, elders in their life. Have a class discussion on what encourages hope between the generations, and what discourages it, what keeps them from feeling encouraged about the communication between generations. What would help and what prevents such communication?

Ask them to write a letter to the editor of the paper about how they feel about the future, how their elders felt about it and what is changing, what needs to change.

7. Read the [“Progress of Liberty”](#) by James Bell by going on the Search the Registry, under poetry and lyrics and searching under the heading “Freedom” in the subject list, James Bell.

While this is an old-fashioned poem, it has words and sentiments that are important for today. There is an important emphasis on self-respect and on being respected.

List things your students want to be respected for. List things they respect. They can write an essay on this topic and its connection to hope. How does respect connect to making them feel hopeful? What do they have to overcome to get respect?

You can also *assign history* or research topics to your students around the subject of respect and hope. Who are individuals who did not always receive respect yet kept hope alive and went on? They can also *research* the *Psychology of Hope*, as a way of understanding what state of mind we need to be able to be in to have hope for our future, our children’s future.