

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
ALEX GIBNEY AND
STEVEN SPIELBERG

WHY WE HATE

Discovery



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WHY WE HATE:

The Origins of Hate Classroom Activity

Overview

In this activity, students examine the biological, psychological, and sociological genes of hate. They learn about the behavior of chimpanzees and bonobos and compare it to human behavior. They then explore the phenomenon of bullying through an examination of its prevalence, its connection to brain science, and the stories of several young people, including one who became an anti-bullying advocate after years of bullying. Using their understanding of humans' capacity to change the narrative related to hatred, students design and implement anti-bullying campaigns. Finally, students can extend their exploration of hatred and human evolution by conducting research about genocides and viewing eyewitness testimonies about perpetrators' remorse from the USC Shoah Foundation's extensive testimony collection.

Key Learning Objectives

Students will:

- consider reasons why human beings feel hatred toward others.
- describe the similarities and differences between humans and our closest biological relatives: chimpanzees and bonobos.
- examine the prevalence, causes, and effects of bullying.
- design and communicate anti-bullying messages.

Target Audience

6-8 Social Studies; 9-12 Biology, History, Psychology, Sociology

Activity Duration

Two 45-minute class periods

Materials

- ["WHY WE HATE Selects: Origins"](#) video clip from Discovery Education Experience
- Chart paper and markers
- *Changing the Narrative Action Project* handout (one per student)
- *Genocide and Healing* handout (one per student)
- USC Shoah Foundation's Teaching with Testimony Videos

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Enduring Understandings

- Humans have innate senses of good and bad, as well as right and wrong, which play a crucial role in governing their interactions.
- If treated poorly or unfairly, humans can feel persecuted or threatened and it can release the darker side of their nature, leading to hate and violence.
- Most young people who bully – and those who are most effective at it – are often popular and abuse their power with the support of peers.
- People can learn not to hate or act aggressively toward others.

Essential Questions

- Is hate a uniquely human experience?
- Why do humans act aggressively toward each other?
- Can people learn not to hate and, if so, how?

Background Information/Links

Bonobos and Chimpanzees

Bonobos and chimpanzees are human beings' closest living relatives. Human beings have 99% the same genetic makeup as these apes. Evolutionary anthropologist Brian Hare studies these apes to try to understand their similarities and differences and to gain insights into human behavior.

Bonobos and chimpanzees have much in common with each other. They have rich social relationships and form long-term bonds. They also live in common habitats and eat many of the same things. Yet, they have evolved differently and exhibit very different behaviors.

Scientists believe that chimpanzees and bonobos split from a common lineage over six million years ago – a separation enhanced by the Congo River. Chimpanzees evolved north of the river where they had to compete for resources. Competition for limited resources made aggression and hostility critical attributes for chimpanzees to survive.

Bonobos evolved south of the river where food was more abundant. In response to the lack of competition, they developed in a more social, peaceful society. Research conducted by Hare indicates that bonobos seem to tolerate strangers, share resources with random bonobos, and exhibit a form of empathy called contagious yawning.

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Evolutionary anthropologist Christopher Krupenye and colleagues at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland have discovered that bonobos willingly sharing food with each other, a behavior that is very uncommon among animals. Krupenye states, “We do see food sharing in other species, but in the vast majority of cases it is that one individual tolerates another taking something from them.”

Bullying

According to Tracy Vaillancourt, a developmental psychologist, bullying occurs in every context in which it has been studied, and its prevalence is surprisingly consistent around the world. In youth, roughly 30% will be occasionally bullied, while 7-10% will experience daily bullying. National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice statistics indicate that between 1 in 4 and 1 in 3 U.S. students say they have been bullied at school.

Most bullying occurs in middle school, and the most common types are verbal and social bullying. Young people who are perceived as different from their peers are often at risk of being bullied.

Bullying is a group phenomenon. It does not usually involve a simple interaction between a student who bullies and a student who is bullied. Instead, young people who bully – and the ones who do it with greatest effect – are often popular and able to abuse their power with impunity because their peer group supports the abuse. However, it is important to note that there is not one profile of a young person who bullies. While some bullies are socially connected, others can be marginalized and may themselves be the victims of bullying.

Bullying prevention approaches that show the most promise involve entire school communities and focus on creating a culture of respect and zero tolerance for abuse. Adults can help prevent bullying by talking with young people about bullying, expressing and modeling kindness, love, and respect, and encouraging young people to pursue their passions and to get help if and when they need it.

Sources:

- <https://www.discovery.com/shows/why-we-hate>
- <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/09/11/646786340/whats-mine-is-yours-sort-of-bonobos-and-the-tricky-evolutionary-roots-of-sharing>
- <https://www.stopbullying.gov/media/facts/index.html>
- <https://www.sapiens.org/evolution/bonobos-meal-sharing/>

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Procedure

Ask

- Post the following questions on a board or piece of chart paper and ask students to write responses in journals or notebooks: “Why do you think human beings hate? Is hate the result of biology (nature) or upbringing (nurture)?”
- Call on student volunteers to share their responses. Ask follow-up questions, as needed, to elicit examples and/or explanations.

Analyze

- Introduce Part 1 of the video clip by explaining that it will help answer the essential question, “Is hate a uniquely human experience?” Promote active viewing by asking students to take note of the differences between bonobos and chimpanzees and the factors that promote aggression in chimpanzees (see Background Information).
- After the class has finished viewing, ask students how they would answer the essential question – “Is hate a uniquely human experience?” – based on the clip. Answers may vary as some students may not equate aggression with hate and others may question how much insight into human behavior we can draw from animals. Before moving on, ensure that students understand that aggression is present in non-humans as well as humans.
- Explain that bonobos and chimpanzees are human beings’ closest biological relatives and that we have 99% the same genetic makeup. Ask students whether they believe that research on apes can explain why some humans are aggressive or develop feelings of hate towards others. Challenge them to support their answers with specific examples.
- Remind students of the questions they answered in the writing assignment at the start of class: “Why do you think human beings hate? Is hate the result of biology (nature) or upbringing (nurture)?” Ask whether students’ opinions have shifted.

Apply

- Write the following information from WHY WE HATE on a sheet of 8 ½ x11 paper and glue that paper to a large sheet of butcher paper: “I get asked a lot if people are prewired to bully.

Bullying appears in every context in which it is studied. So it happens around the world. And what’s really striking is that the prevalence rates are very similar. About 30 percent of youth are

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bullied occasionally. And about 7-10 percent of youth are bullied ruthlessly every day. It suggests that it's perhaps rooted in our evolutionary past."

- Distribute markers and invite students to write reactions or questions about this information on the sheet of butcher paper. Review the questions and reactions together.
- Call on one or more volunteers to provide a definition of bullying. Before moving on, ensure that the class has a shared understanding of the term ("abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, more powerful, etc.").
- Distribute the *Changing the Narrative Action Project* student handout and ask students to record the definition at the top of the page.
- Introduce Part 2 of the video clip by explaining that it discusses the prevalence of bullying and how it's perceived by the broader society. Promote active viewing by asking students to consider whether bullying is common among people their age and how it impacts individuals who are bullied.
- After students have finished viewing, share additional information about bullying from the Background Information section. Then, ask students to individually write down 2-3 facts they didn't previously know about bullying. Call on student volunteers to report out their previously unknown facts, making sure they cover the key information from the video.

Act

- Explain that research on the human brain has revealed that social exclusion hurts in exactly the same way as physical pain – the same areas of the brain light up. This helps explain why people want to be part of groups.
- Introduce Part 3 of the video clip by explaining that it recounts one young woman's experiences of bullying and describes how she changed her narrative by going from being a bully to being someone who speaks out against bullying. Promote active viewing by asking students to consider why Cicela Hernandez became a bully and what led her to change her thoughts and actions.
- After students have finished viewing, work as a class to generate a list of the factors that led Cicela Hernandez to become a bully and a list of factors that led her to change her personal narrative (Cicela became a bully because she was angry and tired of being bullied and because she got positive reinforcement from peers; she stopped being a bully when an adult showed her kindness and offered support).
- Explain that Cicela's example provides hope that other bullies can change their ways. Introduce the action project by explaining that students will work in small groups to create anti-bullying

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campaigns. These campaigns can take a variety of forms and suggestions are provided on the activity sheet.

- Allow time for students to work in small groups to create and execute their action plans. (Note: This may require one or more additional class periods.)
- Challenge students to reflect on what they've learned about bullying and hate and their capacity to change the narrative.

Extend

- Distribute the *Healing After Genocide* handout and explain that students will have an opportunity to learn about perpetrators and ancestors of perpetrators who, like Cicela Hernandez, felt remorse about hate-filled actions.
- Assign students to small groups and assign each group one of the following conflicts to research: the Armenian Genocide, the Nanjing Massacre, or the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda.
- After students have conducted their research and taken notes on the key facts of the conflict, explain that each group will view a testimony from the USC Shoah Foundation's Teaching with Testimony collection to learn about how a survivor met with a perpetrator or with the ancestors of perpetrators who felt remorse. Note: These testimonies can be found in the "WHY WE HATE" channel in Discovery Education Experience or on TeachingwithTestimony.com
 - Krikor Guerguerian, Armenian Survivor
 - Guixiang Chen, Nanjing Massacre Survivor
 - Consolee Nishimwe, Tutsi Survivor
- After students have viewed the clips, encourage them to use the handout to reflect on how the survivor felt about the perpetrator's remorse or ancestors' attitudes and whether or not it helped with healing.
- Invite each small group to share what they learned about the genocide and survivors' and perpetrators' ability to move forward. Ask, "Do you believe in human beings' ability to learn not to hate? Why or why not?" Challenge students to support their answers with specific details.

Connections

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Connection to student lives

Students who are able to recognize bullying and its individual and societal costs are better able to respond appropriately. In their personal lives, students can raise awareness about bullying and other forms of hate when and where they see them negatively impacting themselves and others.

Connection to contemporary events

Students can connect their learning to contemporary events by hearing the stories of young people like them and taking action to build connections in their school community.

Connection to the future

As students see examples of hate in their own lives and in society at large, they can recognize the causes and effects of hate and help to draw attention to our capacity to learn not to hate through their discussions or actions.

National Standards

College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards

- D2.Civ.7.9-12 Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with other.
- D2.Civ.10.9-12 Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interest and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.
- D2.Civ.14.9-12 Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.
- D4.6.9-12 Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems, instances of such problems in multiple contexts, and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
- D4.7.9-12 Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy, identification, and complex causal reasoning.

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Common Core State Standards/ELA Anchor Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



Changing the Narrative Action Project

"The human brain is a fundamentally changeable system. It's not easy to change, but when circumstances are right, the changes are often radical." – André Fenton

What is bullying? Write definition below.

How can we use what we've learned about human beings' capacity to change to stop bullying?

Create an action plan for an anti-bullying campaign in your school. Suggested ideas for the campaign are below:

1. **Secret Admirers:** Write positive and inspirational notes to classmates. Then slip the notes into people's lockers without being seen or have friends or classmates deliver the notes to their intended recipients.
2. **Random Acts of Kindness:** Look out for examples of classmates being kind to each other over the course of a day or week. Then give the students credit by recognizing these acts of kindness. You can include shout-outs during morning announcements, at an assembly, in the school newspaper, or by creating a wall and posting sticky notes.
3. **Anti-bullying Artwork:** Create a wall with anti-bullying images and messages in a location where lots of students will see it. Include statistics and facts about bullying as well as ideas about how you and your classmates can stop bullying in your community.

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How will we implement our action plan? Write down the resources you will need, who will do what, and a timeline for developing your plan and putting it into action.

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Genocide & Healing

Research Notes

Name of Genocide:

Causes:

Effects:

Key Events & Dates:

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Teaching with Testimony Notes

Name of Survivor	How did the survivor feel about meeting with the perpetrator or his/her ancestors?	Did hearing of the perpetrators' remorse or meeting with his/her ancestors help the survivor heal? Why or why not?