

UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



Rainbow Nation (Social Studies, History, Visual Arts)

Desmond Tutu coined the term “Rainbow Nation” to refer to his dream of South Africa: a nation that uplifts its diverse identities and lives in harmony. Take some time with your students to research the Rainbow Nation and the indigenous tribes of South Africa that comprise it. Each week, learn about a native tribe, like the Zulu, Xhosa or Ndebele, and research their culture and histories. Learn about their art, such as their beadwork and weaving, and lead discussions on how these tribes exist today in South Africa, with questions like: *What language does this tribe speak? What is this tribe known for? Where do they live?* Afterwards, use the idea of the Rainbow Nation to inspire your class’s artwork. Using chart paper, create a large poster or mural that represents your school’s community and unity. Prompt each student to draw or write something that represents what “Rainbow Nation” means to them directly on the paper. This could be a short poem, a colorful scene or a piece of history from their research. Hang the poster on your classroom’s wall as a reminder for all the ways that your students can uplift each other and be in community throughout the year.

To support this unit, use the Weaving Our Stories Together Activity in the Respond and Connect section.

These Boots Are Made for Gumboot (Dance, History)

Ready, set, stomp! Introduce your students to gumboot dance using this video: [“The History of Gumboot Dancing.”](#) Include a discussion on the dance’s history, mentioning that it was born out of necessity for enslaved miners in the 19th century. After learning about its history, have your students get on their feet and try out some basic steps. Mirroring the video, encourage everyone to practice the three elements of gumboot: stomping, slapping and clapping. With these elements, invite them to create an 8-count of their own, combining stomps, slaps or claps, in whatever sequence they choose. Next, host a call and response game in which each student dances their 8-count one-by-one and the rest of the class responds with the same 8-count. Then, try combining everyone’s rhythms into one giant gumboot dance, adding on another student’s 8-count every week until you have a whole dance piece! Culminate the unit by performing your class’s unique gumboot dance for another class or film it to post on social media.

To support this unit, use the Step, Slap, Echo Activity in the Discover and Create section.

A Change of Art (Social Studies, Theater)

Art has the power to change how people see the world. Inspire your class to harness this power by using activism, the intersection of art and activism, to create tangible change in their community. To start, ask your class to focus on one change they would like to make in their community or school. Remember that the more specific the message or action is, the easier it will be to communicate. After your class has agreed on what issue they would like to focus on, it’s time to create a performance that addresses it! Prompt each student to create a piece of art that represents the change they would like to see—this may be a song, skit, dance or drawing. Give your class ample time to work on their section individually or collaborate in small groups. Then, combine every student’s act into a variety show with your activist goal being the theme that connects them all. As the classroom teacher, act as emcee and introduce each student’s act. When it’s ready, invite your school’s administration or community leaders to the show so that they can hear your message! For more information on activism, visit the [Speak Up, Act Out: Activism in Action School Tool Resource Guide](#) in the NEW VICTORY Arts Education Resource Library.

To support this unit, use the It’s Time to Change Creativity Page in the Discover and Create section.

