



Razia's Ray of Hope Curriculum (Grades 6-8)

***Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education*, written by Elizabeth Suneby and illustrated by Suana Verelst, is the compelling story of a young Afghan girl who dreams of becoming educated.** In Razia's small village, girls haven't been allowed to attend school for many years. When a new girls' school opens in the village, a determined Razia must convince her father and oldest brother that allowing her to attend school would be good for Razia, their family, and their community. The book is based on true stories of students at the Zabuli Education Center outside of Kabul, founded by a generous and resourceful woman named Razia Jan, a CNN Hero, who also appears in the story. *Razia's Ray of Hope* is the latest book in Kids Can Press CitizenKid collection, which explores complex global issues and makes them accessible to younger readers.

Theme

Discrimination

Essential Questions

- How are individuals and groups within society affected by discrimination?
- Do we have an obligation to uphold (or to secure) the rights of individuals and groups?
- Which genres (e.g., nonfiction, poetry) and resource types (e.g., text or multimedia) provide the greatest insights to my questions?

Outcomes

- Students will explore the theme of discrimination as it relates to an individual's right to education.
- Students will work cooperatively, utilizing multiple resources to investigate the theme.
- Students will inquire, research, and draw conclusions (citing specific textual evidence) on the theme.
- Students will draw from multiple sources to present findings orally, visually, and in writing.
- For the Service Learning component, students will build awareness and take action based on their learning.

Common Core State Standards

Key Ideas and Details

- 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.1](#)).
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2](#)).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](#)).
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9](#)).

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.9](#)).

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:



- Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.4](#)).
- Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.5](#)).

Social Studies Connection

The context of *Razia's Ray of Hope* provides educators and their students with an opportunity to explore multiple themes among the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, including: culture; people, places, and environments; individual development and identity; power, authority, and governance; global connections; and civic ideals and practices (www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands).

Service Learning Connection

Students can choose to create their own service project utilizing ideas from the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation (www.raziasrayofhope.org/fundraising-ideas.html) that align with the following Service-Learning Standards: meaningful service, youth voice, link to curriculum, reflection, progress monitoring, and diversity. (For more information on Service-Learning Standards, see www.nylc.org/k-12-service-learning-standards-quality-practice.) Students are also encouraged to develop their own ideas and share them with the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation.

Core Texts

- *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education* by Elizabeth Suneby, illustrated by Suana Verelst
- Langston Hughes' poems: "Harlem" and "Democracy" as read by Langston Hughes
www.albany.edu/history/HIS530/HarlemProject/democracy.html
- Informational texts (PDFs):
 - www.raziasrayofhope.org/education-in-afghanistan.html
 - www.raziasrayofhope.org/documents/Razias_Ray_of_Hope_About_Afghanistan_10.2009b.pdf
 - www.sos4tkhf.com/downloads/SOS_Journal_No_1.pdf
- Malala Yousafzai interview from NPR:
www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=234730460&m=234730463
- Video: A student-led tour of the Zabuli Education Center, the school featured in *Razia's Ray of Hope* (5-minute runtime): www.sos4tkhf.com/videos_RROH_greeting.php
- UNESCO 2013 brochure, "The Global Learning Crisis: Why Every Child Deserves a Quality Education"
www.globaleducationfirst.org/files/Global_Learning_final_web_spread.pdf

Other Materials

- Sticky notes and butcher paper or chart paper for graphic organizers labeled: "Source | Quotes | Facts | Thoughts" for each team

Preparation

- Gather core texts, and print or download internet sources ahead of time, if internet access is limited
- Review lesson plans
- Set up investigation centers as needed

Vocabulary

Discrimination, rights (and additional vocabulary from each of the selected texts)



Lesson Activities

Building Schema

(Time varies)

Assessment Expectations

Create a shared understanding of expectations via a class rubric for participation and academic outcomes.

Core Texts Preview

Share the resources the class will have at their disposal:

- 1) *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education*, written by Elizabeth Suneby, illustrated by Suana Verelst
- 2) The Langston Hughes' poems "Harlem" and "Democracy"
- 3) An audio interview with Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani student who was shot for championing girls' rights to education
- 4) Various informational texts/infographics
- 5) Teacher and student selected resources, as applicable
- 6) Video: A student-led tour of the Zabuli Education Center, the school featured in *Razia's Ray of Hope* (5-minute runtime): www.sos4tkhf.com/videos_RROH_greeting.php

Social Studies Connection: A Look at Afghan Culture

Learning about Afghanistan can be tied to social studies objectives. For example, as part of the culture strand, students can examine the influence of culture on human behavior. Share the Zabuli Education Center video tour and ask students to identify cultural differences. Extend this analysis to the reading in the activities section. How does culture develop across time and place? Where do our cultures share commonalities?

For Visual Learners

Suana Verelst, the illustrator of *Razia's Ray of Hope*, employed mixed media to illustrate the story. Ask students to analyze an illustration from the book. What do they see (digital images, photos, found objects, watercolor, sketches, etc.)? Ask students to create an illustration of a school activity employing similar methods.

Further Resources

Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation and the Khaled Hosseini Foundation offer a wealth of video and photo imagery that can be used to build schema for students: www.raziasrayofhope.org/photos.html and www.sos4tkhf.com/videos.php.



Inquire

(20 minutes)

Anticipatory Set

Ask students to quick-write or discuss what they know about the theme of discrimination. Students can share examples from history, current events, personal experiences, etc. As students discuss, direct the conversation to discrimination against school-age children—specifically the right to an education. Share the fact that in Afghanistan under Taliban rule, girls were banned from attending school, riding bicycles, wearing brightly colored clothes, and laughing loudly (source: www.raziasrayofhope.org/women-and-girls-in-afghanistan.html). Ask students to envision what it would be like to be banned from attending school. Ask students to speculate why some children around the world may not have the right to an education (e.g., gender discrimination, race discrimination, poverty, absence of child labor laws, etc.). Tell students they will have an opportunity to investigate this topic using multiple types of resources. Ask students to contribute to a class chart detailing what students would like to know and what they expect to learn.

Investigate & Analyze

(2-5 class periods)

Guided Instruction

Share with students that they will investigate the theme of discrimination through the resources that have been introduced (in pre-lesson). To keep track of their investigations, students will use sticky notes and a graphic organizer made from butcher or chart paper. Model for students reading or listening to an excerpt of one of the sources, followed by adding “sticky note” comments in the appropriate sections.

Based on students’ prior knowledge and their questions from the Inquiry session earlier, break students into teams to rotate through one, some, or all of the Investigation sources.

Source	Quotes	Facts	Thoughts
<i>Razia's Ray of Hope</i>		(From back of book) 69 million kids are not in school – same number of people in Texas and California	That's a lot of people who can't read!
Langston Hughes poems: "Democracy" and "Harlem"	"I live here, too. I want freedom just as you do."	N/A	I think this is a valid point.
Etc.			



Synthesize & Act

(Time varies)

Collaborative Learning

Summarize student-driven questions and students' prior knowledge from the previous period. Break students into teams and ask them to seek relevant answers to their questions using any of the previewed resources. Ask each team to record their investigation findings on their graphic organizers.

Ask student teams to share their most impactful research findings. Student responses can be presented orally, visually, or in writing. How do their findings compare to their prior knowledge? Which resources provided the greatest insights? Do they feel compelled to take action? Do they feel they have an obligation to fight for the rights of individuals? Encourage students to act in a way that makes sense to them. Provide students with the opportunity to synthesize their learning by:

- Writing a three-minute speech to be delivered at the United Nations, using logical arguments and data to support their point of view
- Creating an infographic of their findings, using data to support their point of view (see example here: www.globaleducationfirst.org/infographics.html)
- Videotaping a public service announcement using logical arguments and data to support their point of view
- Creating a symbolic piece of art
- Through additional student-driven ideas

If students are so inclined, they can translate their learning into action by raising money to help send a girl to school through the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation, or by designing a relevant service project of their own. Information on fundraising and school projects can be found at the Razia Ray of Hope Foundation's website (www.raziasrayofhope.org/fundraising-ideas.html).

This curriculum was made possible through the generous support of the Khaled Hosseini Foundation and Kids Can Press. Razia's Ray of Hope is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Afghan girls through community-based education at the Zabuli Education Center in Deh'Subz, Afghanistan.