

# BLACK LIVES MATTER

"Our lives begin to end the day we begin to be silent about things that matter."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In 2013, three **radical** Black organizers-Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi-created a Black-centered political movement project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the **acquittal** of Trayvon Martin's killer, George Zimmerman.

The project is now a global network of more than 40 chapters. Members organize and build on local resources to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities.

According to BlackLivesMatter.com, Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political **intervention** in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity...contributions to this society, and...**resilience** in the face of deadly **oppression**.

"As #BlackLivesMatter developed throughout 2013 and 2014...groups used it to amplify anti-Black racism across the country...Tamir Rice, Tanisha Anderson, Mya Hall, Walter Scott, Sandra Bland-These names are important."

The space that #BlackLivesMatter held and continues to hold helped **propel** the conversation around the...violence they experienced. They particularly highlighted the ways in which Black women, specifically Black **trans** women, are violated. #BlackLivesMatter was developed in support of all Black lives.

There have been many reactions to the Black Lives Matter movement. The U.S. population's **perception** of Black Lives Matter varies considerably by race. The phrase "All Lives Matter" sprang up as a response to the Black Lives Matter movement, but has been **criticized** for **dismissing** or misunderstanding the message of "Black Lives Matter". Following the shooting of two police officers in Ferguson, the hashtag Blue Lives Matter was created by supporters of the police.

# BLUE LIVES MATTER

Blue Lives Matter is a movement in response to Black Lives Matter in the United States. It was started after the killings of NYPD officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu in Brooklyn, New York, on December 20, 2014, after they were **ambushed** in their patrol car. Blue Lives Matter NYC is an organization and current nationwide movement that was created to help law enforcement officers and their families during their times of need. [1]

On December 20, 2014, in the wake of the killings of officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, a group of law enforcement officers formed Blue Lives Matter to counter media reports that they perceived to be anti-police. Blue Lives Matter is made up of active and retired law enforcement officers. [1]

Due to the nature of the profession, law enforcement personnel are seen as easy targets and are consequently bullied by slander, **illegitimate** complaints, frivolous lawsuits, and physical attacks. Unjust attacks from the news media, celebrities, and politicians have damaged community relations and endanger the lives and safety of law enforcement officers. [2]

America watched as criminals destroyed property and assaulted and murdered innocent people, and they labeled these criminals as victims. Personal responsibility for one's actions went away, replaced by accusations of racism and an unjust government. It seemed that almost every media organization was spreading the absurd message that people were being shot by law enforcement simply because of the color of their skin. [2]

Feeling the limitations of being contained to Facebook, the Blue Lives Matter news website was launched to provide accurate coverage of law enforcement news, from a law enforcement perspective. [2]

1. Wikipedia. "**Blue Lives Matter**". [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue\\_Lives\\_Matter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Lives_Matter). Retrieved December 29, 2017.

2. "**Blue Lives Matter**". <https://www.themaven.net/bluelivesmatter/pages/rF54b2VNMUOrl7wfh8vRXQ>. Retrieved December 29, 2017.

# ALL LIVES MATTER

"When I say 'Black lives matter,' it is because this nation has a tendency to say otherwise. Racial discrimination does affect all minorities but police brutality, at such excessive rates, does not. A black person is killed extrajudicially every 28 hrs, and Black men between ages 19 and 25 are the group most at risk to be gunned down by police. Based on data from the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, young Blacks are 4.5 times more likely to be killed by police than any other age or racial group." -Julie Craven, The Huffington Post

"Of course all lives matter. But there is no serious question about the value of the life of a young white girl or boy. Sadly, there is a serious question-between gang violence and this police violence-about the value of the life of a young black girl or boy. So those who are experiencing the pain and trauma of the black experience in this country don't want their rallying cry to be watered down with a generic feel-good catchphrase." - Donna Brazile, CNN Political Commentator

"To say that Black lives matter is not to say that other lives do not; indeed, it is quite the reverse-it is to recognize that all lives do matter, and to acknowledge that African Americans are often targeted unfairly (witness the number of African Americans **accosted** daily for no reason other than walking through a White neighborhood-including some, like young Trayvon Martin, who lost their lives) and that our society is not yet so advanced as to have become truly color blind. This means that many people of goodwill face the hard task of recognizing that these societal ills continue to exist, and that White privilege continues to exist, even though we wish it didn't and would not have asked for it." -Reverend Dan Schatz, Unitarian Universalist

"**Demonstrators** who chant the phrase are making the same declaration that voting rights and civil rights activists made a half-century ago. They are not asserting that Black lives are more precious than white lives. They are underlining an indisputable fact-that the lives of Black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued." -The New York Times Editorial Board

# TERMINOLOGY



1. **Radical:** based on complete social or political change or reform
2. **Acquittal:** a judgment that a person is not guilty of the crime with which the person has been charged
3. **Intervention:** action taken to improve a situation
4. **Resilience:** the ability to recover quickly from difficulty
5. **Oppression:** a long period of unjust and unfair treatment
6. **Propel:** spur or drive something forward
7. **Trans:** An abbreviation for transgender, a person whose sense of personal identity and gender do not correspond with their birth sex.
8. **Perception:** the way a person or group views something
9. **Criticized:** Found fault with and disapproved of
10. **Dismissing:** to treat as unworthy of serious consideration
11. **Ambushed:** surprise attacked
12. **Illegitimate:** not authorized by the law
13. **Accosted:** approached aggressively
14. **Demonstrators:** People who take part in public protests

# TRAYVON MARTIN



On the night of February 26, 2012, in Sanford, Florida, United States, George Zimmerman fatally shot Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African American high school student. Zimmerman, a 28-year-old mixed race Hispanic man, was the neighborhood watch coordinator for his gated community where Martin was visiting relatives at the time of the shooting.



On the evening of February 26, 2012, George Zimmerman observed Martin as he returned to the townhouse he was staying at after having walked to a nearby store. At the time, Zimmerman was driving through the neighborhood on a personal errand.

At around 7:09 p.m., Zimmerman called the police to report a suspicious person. He said, "We've had some break-ins in my neighborhood, and there's a real suspicious guy." He also mentioned that Martin was wearing a dark hoodie.

About two minutes into the call, Zimmerman said, "he's running." The dispatcher asked, "He's running? Which way is he running?" Zimmerman followed Martin, eventually losing sight of him. The dispatcher asked Zimmerman if he was following him. When Zimmerman answered, "yeah," the dispatcher said, "We don't need you to do that." Zimmerman responded, "Okay." Zimmerman ended the call at 7:15 p.m.

After Zimmerman ended his call with police, a violent encounter took place between him and Martin. It ended with Zimmerman fatally shooting Martin 70 yards from the rear door of the townhouse where Martin was staying.

On July 13, 2013, Zimmerman was found not guilty of second degree murder.

# REKIA BOYD



Rekia Boyd, a 22-year-old African-American woman, was fatally shot on March 21, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois, by Dante Servin, an off-duty Chicago police detective. Servin, an off-duty cop, drove his car to Douglas Park on the West Side of Chicago after calling the police to make a noise complaint. He then approached a group of four individuals who had been partying in the park and had some form of verbal altercation with them.

Servin fired on the group, hitting Rekia Boyd in the head and Antonio Cross in the hand. Initially, the Chicago police department claimed that Servin had discharged his weapon after Cross had approached him with a gun. The Boyd family quickly responded that the object was, in fact, a cell phone. No weapon was ever recovered from the scene.

In November 2013, Servin was charged with "involuntary" manslaughter, but was cleared of all charges on April 20, 2015, by Judge Dennis J. Porter.

Servin claimed he fired because someone in the group was holding a gun, but it was actually only a cellphone. Witnesses said that Servin appeared drunk at the time of the incident.

In November 2015, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and police superintendent Garry McCarthy both suggested that Dante Servin should be fired by the Chicago Police Board. The city paid \$4.5 million to Boyd's family.

Servin resigned on May 17, 2016.

# TAMIR RICE



The shooting of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy, occurred on November 22, 2014, in Cleveland, Ohio. Two police officers, 26-year-old Timothy Loehmann and 46-year-old Frank Garmback, responded after receiving a police dispatch call of a black male that "keeps pulling a gun out of his pants and pointing it at people." A caller reported that a male was pointing "a pistol" at random people in the Cudell Recreation Center.

The caller repeatedly said, "It's probably fake." Toward the end of the two-minute call, the caller stated "he is probably a juvenile;" however, this information was not relayed to Loehmann or Garmback on the initial dispatch. The officers reported that, upon their arrival, they both continuously yelled, "Show me your hands," through the open patrol car window. Officer Loehmann claimed that instead of showing his hands, it appeared as if Rice was trying to draw a weapon. In response, the officer shot twice, hitting Rice once in the torso. The officers later found that the gun was an Airsoft gun which had had its orange safety tip removed.

A surveillance video of the shooting was released by police on November 26. It showed Rice pacing around the park, occasionally extending his right arm, talking on a cellphone, and sitting at a picnic table. A police car moves at high speed across the park lawn and then stops abruptly by the gazebo. Loehmann then jumps out of the car and immediately shoots Rice from a distance of less than 10 feet.

Neither officers provided any first aid to Rice after the shooting. Almost four minutes later, a police detective and an agent from the FBI arrived on the scene and treated the boy. Three minutes after that, paramedics arrived and took him to MetroHealth Medical Center. He died the following day.

# WENJIAN LIU & RAFAEL RAMOS



On December 20, 2014, Ismaaiyl Abdullah Brinsley killed two on-duty New York City Police Department officers. The shooting occurred just weeks after the acquittal of 2 police officers who were involved in the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, young black men.

The acquittals resulted in large protests in New York City and across the nation against police brutality and the lack of accountability for it. Brinsley's motive to kill the NYPD officers was motivated by outrage over the two deaths.

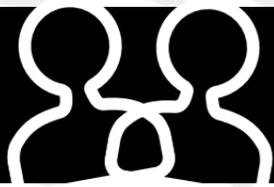
Before Brinsley arrived in Brooklyn, he shot and seriously wounded his ex-girlfriend, Shaneka Nicole Thompson. The second shooting occurred when Brinsley approached the passenger window of an NYPD patrol car occupied by Rafael Ramos, 40, and Wenjian Liu, 32, of Brooklyn's 84th Precinct. He then fired a semiautomatic handgun four times through the open window, striking Ramos and Liu in the head and upper body, killing both officers instantly.

After NYPD officers responding to the scene chased him onto the subway, he committed suicide with the handgun.

Wenjian Liu was the only son of Chinese immigrants; He and his family came to the United States from China, when he was 12 years old. He was a seven-year veteran officer of the NYPD who had married his wife, Pei Xia Chen, 2 months before he was gunned down.

Rafael Ramos, married with two sons, had joined the NYPD as a school safety agent, before being promoted to officer in January 2012.

# DISCUSSION



## 1. Define RACISM.

a. Give an example of racism that you've experienced, read about, or seen.

## 2. The article, "Black Lives Matter" discusses 3 different movements:

**"Black Lives Matter, Blue Lives Matter, and All Lives Matter."**

a. Which movement do you think is most effective or most necessary?

b. Is saying "Black Lives Matter" a form of racism?

c. Can people of color be racist?

## 3. Is it reasonable to blame an entire group of people for the actions of some?

a. Who is responsible for the deaths of Trayvon Martin? Rekia Boyd?  
Tamir Rice?

b. Who is responsible for the deaths of Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos?

## 4. Of the 5 specific people you read about, **whose story is the most moving to you?**

a. Why?

## 4. Do you think communities had a right to engage in violent protests after the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Rekia Boyd, and Tamir Rice?

a. How do you think the violent protests affected the communities?

b. Why might violent protests be LESS effective than peaceful protests?

## 5. How can communities peacefully demonstrate their message and still be heard?

a. Many violent protests occurred after the deaths of Trayvon Martin. What other ways could the community have expressed their feelings?

# PERFORMANCE TASK



## PROMPT:

Based on your reading of the anchor texts as well as the supplemental texts and your own research, please respond to the prompt below:

**Write a letter to a person of your choice to share your new knowledge and perspective about the Black Lives Matter movement. What role can you play in this movement?**

Use the sources provided as well as your own research to analyze the "Black Lives Matter" movement. Discuss the various sides to this movement, including "All Lives Matter" and "Blue Lives Matter." Cite quotations, specific events, and facts you have learned.

Your letter can be addressed to a friend, parent, elected official, or President of the United States. Include what you know about the Black Lives Matter movement, what you think about it, and how it has inspired your own activism and interest in social justice. Be sure to use proper citation format, strong evidence that supports your explanation of the information, and clear reasoning.

# PERFORMANCE TASK RUBRIC

W.S. 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information

Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions	Exceeds standard 15 Meets standard 12 Approaching Standard 10 Below Standard 8	
Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts.	Exceeds standard 15 Meets standard 12 Approaching Standard 10 Below Standard 8	
Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify concepts	Exceeds standard 15 Meets standard 12 Approaching Standard 10 Below Standard 8	
Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.	Exceeds standard 15 Meets standard 12 Approaching Standard 10 Below Standard 8	
Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.	Exceeds standard 15 Meets standard 12 Approaching Standard 10 Below Standard 8	
Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented	Exceeds standard 15 Meets standard 12 Approaching Standard 10 Below Standard 8	

## CONVENTIONS OF ENGLISH STANDARD 1-2

Correct Punctuation	Exceeds standard 10 Meets standard 8 Approaching Standard 6 Below Standard 4	
Correct Grammar & punctuation	Exceeds standard 10 Meets standard 8 Approaching Standard 6 Below Standard 4	

# STANDARDS ALIGNMENT



## READING (ANCHOR TEXT & SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS)

### READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS 9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS 9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS 9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

### READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS 9-10.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### SPEAKING AND LISTENING 9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### SPEAKING AND LISTENING 9-10.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

#### SPEAKING AND LISTENING 9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

#### SPEAKING AND LISTENING 9-10.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

# STANDARDS ALIGNMENT



## PERFORMANCE TASK

### WRITING 9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### WRITING 9-10.2A

Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

### WRITING 9-10.2B

Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

### WRITING 9-10.2C

Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

### WRITING 9-10.2D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

### WRITING 9-10.2E

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

### WRITING 9-10.2F

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

### WRITING (RESEARCH) 9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### WRITING (RESEARCH) 9-10.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Identity	Anchor Text(s)	Supplemental texts/videos	Discussion	Performance Task
Develop positive social identities			X	X
Develop language & historical/cultural knowledge to affirm and describe membership in multiple identity groups	X	X		
Recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create complex individuals			X	X
Express pride, confidence, self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of others			X	X
Recognize traits of cultures and how they negotiate their own identities in multiple spaces	X	X	X	X

Diversity	Anchor Text(s)	Supplemental texts/videos	Discussion	Performance Task
Express comfort with people who are similar and different-engage respectfully			X	
Develop language & knowledge to describe how people are similar and different	X	X	X	X
Respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others with an open mind			X	
Respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding, and connection	X	X	X	X
Examine diversity in social, cultural, political, and historical contexts	X	X		X

# SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

Justice	Anchor Text(s)	Supplemental texts/videos	Discussion	Performance Task
Recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals	X	X	X	
Recognize unfairness on the individual level and injustice at the institutional level	X	X	X	
Analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world				X
Recognize that power and privilege influence relationships and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics				X
Identify figures, groups, events, strategies, philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world		X		

Action	Anchor Text(s)	Supplemental texts/videos	Discussion	Performance Task
Express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they, themselves, experience bias	X	X	X	X
Recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice, and injustice			X	X
Speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias			X	X
Make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice			X	X
Plan and carry out collective action against bias and injustice in the world and evaluate what strategies are most effective				X