

## Resources to Support Extended Learning Opportunities

*The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed  
and Love, Life and Loss*



**In honor of the lives of:**

**Michael Brown. Trayvon Martin. Oscar Grant. Eric Garner.  
Kenneth Chamberlain. Amadou Diallo. John Crawford.**

## **Resources to Support Extended Learning Opportunities**

### ***The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed and Love, Life and Loss***

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This document provides resources to support extended learning opportunities that supplement the educational resources for the documentary film *Love, Life, and Loss* and the choral performance of *The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* by the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club (available at <https://sevenlastwords.org/>). This guide contains suggestions and tools to engage your students in creative production around art for social justice, and in research into the issues of race and police violence raised by the documentary and the musical performance of *The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*. The materials are designed for use in high school classrooms but can be easily adapted for use in undergraduate education as well.

The resources include:

1. Options for a creative project in which students respond to the aforementioned works and the issues of race and police killings of unarmed Black men through their own artistic production.
2. Ideas, tools, and information to support an extended research project that can be carried out either as individual or group work to extend the learning about the issues raised in film and discussion guide.

## ***Love, Life, and Loss Creative Project***

### ***Overview:***

The arts provide powerful tools to explore difficult issues, and they allow us to express our ideas and feelings in dynamic, innovative ways. In this project, designed to be carried out after students have watched the *Love, Life, and Loss* video and engaged in the discussion activities, students will explore their own responses to the issues of police violence and racism. They will then create their own work that voices their thoughts and invites others to respond and take action.

### ***Planning and preparation:***

Before engaging students in this creative project, have them view the documentary film, *Love, Life, and Loss* (<https://sevenlastwords.org/>), and go through the discussion and reading activities in the educational resources on the website. Students will need to develop some background knowledge about art for social justice and also about the larger issues of police violence and the killings of unarmed Black men before they respond artistically. Be sure that you have read the introductory section in the discussion guide document on engaging students with potentially controversial issues.

This project format provides students with a range of options to choose from, and a proposal process that requires them to develop and share their plans before they actually begin production. Depending upon the context of your class or group, you may want to adapt these or even limit the choices. For example, a visual arts class or group might prefer to focus in on projects using sculpture, drawing, painting, etc. and not expand into musical responses. These resources are meant to help you get started, but we hope that you integrate your own ideas, and those of your students or participants, and create even more dynamic projects. Please feel free to adapt and improve our ideas!

Another area of choice to consider prior to beginning the work are the actual topics or subject matters that students take on through their art. At a minimum, students should address contemporary issues of social justice, but you might choose to have them continue to consider issues of race and police violence, or you might open the discussion and work up to other current issues of concern.

There is a guide to artist's statements that you can use and/or adapt, as well as a sample rubric for the project that you can use as is, or that you can adapt to your own classroom and assignment needs. Be sure to review the rubric and make any changes you want, or to create your own rubric, before you actually assign the project to students.

### ***Sequence of activities:***

- 1) As already stated, begin by engaging with the video and the accompanying discussion guide ([sevenlastwords.org/educational-resources/](https://sevenlastwords.org/educational-resources/)).
- 2) Explain to the students that they are going to produce their own work of art to express their thoughts and invite dialogue and action around these important issues, or about other issues they care about. Before giving them time to work, take some time to explore the concept of art for social justice, and also share and discuss different examples of artwork that take on issues of race and violence.

To discuss art for social change, consider showing the students one or more of the following videos of artists talking about their own work and their approach to art for social justice:

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLg8LMK\\_Ct4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLg8LMK_Ct4) (Marcus Ellsworth; spoken word; TED Talk, *Art as Activism*)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjpZoYMw\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjpZoYMw_E) (Shannon Galpin; visual art; TED Talk, *Art as Activism*)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjKDF746E44> (Alexa Meade and Jon Boogz; TED Talk, *Color of Reality: Painting and Movement Artistry*)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDK18j5Pm6Q> (Climbing Poetree; spoken word and music; Bioneers, *Creativity – The Antidote to Destruction*)

To help students consider and discuss the ideas being shared, post the following discussion questions and have them Turn and Talk about them with a partner in relation to whichever video you watch, and then bring the whole group together to share ideas and ask further questions:

- What is the artistic story being told here... what art forms are being used and to what ends?
  - What issues are being addressed?
  - What audiences for art are discussed, and how does the artist try to engage with this audience?
  - What ideas resonate with you?
- 3) To inspire your students and help them generate ideas, you can also share some examples of artistic work around issues of social justice such as gun violence, racism, and police violence. Have students engage with these (examples provided below) or other works and discuss the medium and the message of each using the following questions:

- What is each artist trying to communicate and achieve, and what means of expression are they using?
- Are they effective?
- What response do you think they are trying to evoke in their audience? Why do you think this?
- Are different art forms mixed together in this work? If so, how and to what effect?

Examples:

- Collaborations of Jon Boogz and Lil Buck (video, Movement Artists, Dance)
- *Color of Reality* (Collaboration with visual artist Alexa Meade)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq1tm5TqYsg>
- *Am I a Man*
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muYauTtXLgg>
- Honor thy Mother:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asdQGCqR2gM>
- ClimbingPoetree (video of spoken word, music performances)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3C59TSZoQx8>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCx8Anb03Fc>
- Sirin Barghi (article and samples of visual art)
  - [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/an-artist-heartbreakingly-illustrates-police-brutality-victims-lastwords\\_us\\_55d33167e4b0ab468d9e4cbb](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/an-artist-heartbreakingly-illustrates-police-brutality-victims-lastwords_us_55d33167e4b0ab468d9e4cbb)
- Article about various artists responding to police brutality with images of visual art pieces
  - <http://www.somarts.org/artistsrespond/>

- 4) After students have explored different works by other artists, pass out the handout for the ***Love, Life, and Loss Creative Project Guide*** (found below). Review the driving questions first, then go over the project options with students and have them engage in informal brainstorming sessions in small groups to list out possible projects and issues of concern (unless you are focusing them in on particular art forms and/or issues). Have different groups share some developing ideas after a few minutes.

- 5) Next, pass out the rubric and review it with students so they have some sense of the requirements. Give students time to ask questions about the rubric and the project guide.
- 6) Now provide the proposal outline and give students time to develop their proposals as you move around the room to answer questions and help students as needed. When they are done, quickly review them to make sure that students have a solid idea of what they are going to create. This can also be assigned for completion outside of class time. Advanced classes where students are accustomed to working independently might choose to skip this step.

Again, for classes that are focusing in on a particular area of the arts, this process can look very different, so feel free to improvise in the spirit of the arts!

As needed provide students with the artist's statement guidelines (below) and review these as well, clarifying your expectations for length and depth.

- 7) Provide structured work time, checking in with students as they create.
- 8) Consider displaying final student works in some sort of public event or forum as a means to provide authentic experiences to student artists as well as to generate community dialogue around these important issues.

## ***Love, Life, and Loss Creative Project Guide***

### ***Questions to consider:***

- ***How can we use the arts to respond to injustice?***
- ***How can we use the arts to humanize the victims of injustice like police killings of unarmed Black men?***
- ***How can we use the arts to tell human stories and inspire action for greater social justice?***

### **Each project/product should:**

1. Center on addressing a contemporary problem of social justice in your community.
2. Explore or represent the human impact of the problem.
3. Raise important questions about the problem and how we think about it.
4. Inspire both reflection and action around the problem.
5. Speak to a target audience.

***Choose one of the following projects as a way to raise awareness and inspire action connected to a social justice problem in the community, OR develop your own idea and submit it to your teacher for review and approval:***

<b>Performance w/ artist statement</b>	<b>Multi-media product w/ appropriate written statements</b>	<b>Written product ideas</b>
Creation and performance of an original song, rap, or spoken word piece – with lyrics, artist’s statement, and references if needed.	Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign with content outline, accompanying posters, brochures, or video, and references.	Short story.
Short play – with script and references as needed, as well as an introductory overview.	Graphic Novel, with references for data and historical information.	Poetry collection.
Interpretive dance or musical performance with artist’s statement and analytical outline.	Visual art piece with artist’s statement and visual analysis, and references as needed.	Testimony / oral history project with a written plan for how it will be used to raise awareness.
Instructor approved student proposal (can be in any category).	Mini-documentary script or storyboard as well as a director’s statement.	

*Note: All final products will involve some form of written reflection, but they will vary with the form of product selected.*

## ***Creative Project Rubric (for use and/or adaptation)***

	<i>Not Meeting 0</i>	<i>Approaching 1</i>	<i>Meeting 2</i>	<i>Exceeding 3</i>
Product / Performance	The student inconsistently demonstrates an understanding of the principles and elements of the art form in use, and has difficulty demonstrating sensitivity to, and creativity with, the medium chosen. The work produced is of substandard quality, and is presented in a nonprofessional manner.	The student demonstrates an understanding of the principles and elements of the art form in use, and demonstrates some sensitivity to, and creativity with, the medium chosen. The work produced demonstrates a developing quality, and is presented in an acceptable manner.	The student demonstrates an understanding of the principles and elements of the art form in use, and demonstrates sensitivity to, and creativity with, the medium chosen. The work produced demonstrates quality, and is presented in a developing professional manner.	The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the principles and elements of the art form in use, and demonstrates sensitivity to, and advanced creativity with, the medium chosen. The work produced demonstrates high quality, and is presented in a professional manner.
Analysis	The student does not demonstrate an ability to analyze and interpret the art form in use. The student does not demonstrate any clear understanding of this art form.	The student demonstrates a developing ability to analyze and interpret the art form in use. In this, the student demonstrates an understanding of this art form at a beginning level.	The student demonstrates proficient ability to analyze and interpret the art in use. In this, the student demonstrates a good understanding of this art form at a medium level.	The student demonstrates an exemplary ability to analyze and interpret the art form in use. In this, the student will demonstrate an excellent understanding of this art form at a high level.
Content / ideas	The student does not include relevant content/subject matter and does not communicate ideas connected to a social justice issue.	The student includes basic content/subject matter and attempts to communicate ideas connected to a social justice issue.	The student includes relevant content/subject matter and communicates ideas connected to a social justice issue.	The student includes relevant and clear content/subject matter and effectively communicates ideas connected to a social justice issue.
Message / purpose	The student does not communicate a clear message with the work and the purpose of the work is difficult or impossible to determine.	The student communicates a basic message with the work and suggests a general purpose for the work of art.	The student communicates a clear message and creates a work of art with a discernible purpose.	The student powerfully and effectively communicates a clear message and the purpose of the work of art is clear.
Other				

Adapted from: [https://www.otis.edu/sites/default/files/Fine\\_Arts\\_Rubric\[6\].pdf](https://www.otis.edu/sites/default/files/Fine_Arts_Rubric[6].pdf)



### **Guide to Producing an Artist's Statement** *(required for some of the project ideas):*

An artist's statement is a written piece that accompanies a work of art, and it functions to introduce audience members to the artist and their work, focusing in particular on the specific project in question. The following components generally make up an artist's statement:

- 1) A short, introductory paragraph that focuses on the basic ideas and form of the work in question.
- 2) A second paragraph that provides more detail about the representation of key ideas or issues in the work.
- 3) Additional items that can be included in a full page statement include:
  - a. The rationale and history behind the work.
  - b. The overall vision of the artist.
  - c. What the artist wants the audience to consider and/or experience.
  - d. How this work ties to previous work by the artists, or how it departs from past work.
  - e. How this work connects to the work of others, and it how it fits into the history and trends of the particular art form.
  - f. Inspirations, influences, and sources for representations, images, etc.
  - g. Important techniques and/or materials for this piece.
  - h. How this piece represents a particular philosophy or approach of the artist.
- 4) A final paragraph can restate the most important points, invite the audience in, and raise any final questions you hope they will consider.

### Creative Project Proposal:

<b>Who?</b>	Name(s):		Teacher Comments
<b>What?</b>	Message:		
	Statement of Purpose: (what do you hope to communicate and accomplish with this piece?)		
	Deliverable/Product		
<b>How?</b>	Medium / mode / art form		
	Materials Needed:		
<b>Why?</b>	Rationale: Why does this issue matter? Why did you choose this particular art form or means of expression?		
	Connection and Contribution: How will your work connect to other works of art? How/what are you contributing to the conversation around this issue?		
<b>When</b>	Timeline		

## Love, Life, and Loss Research Project

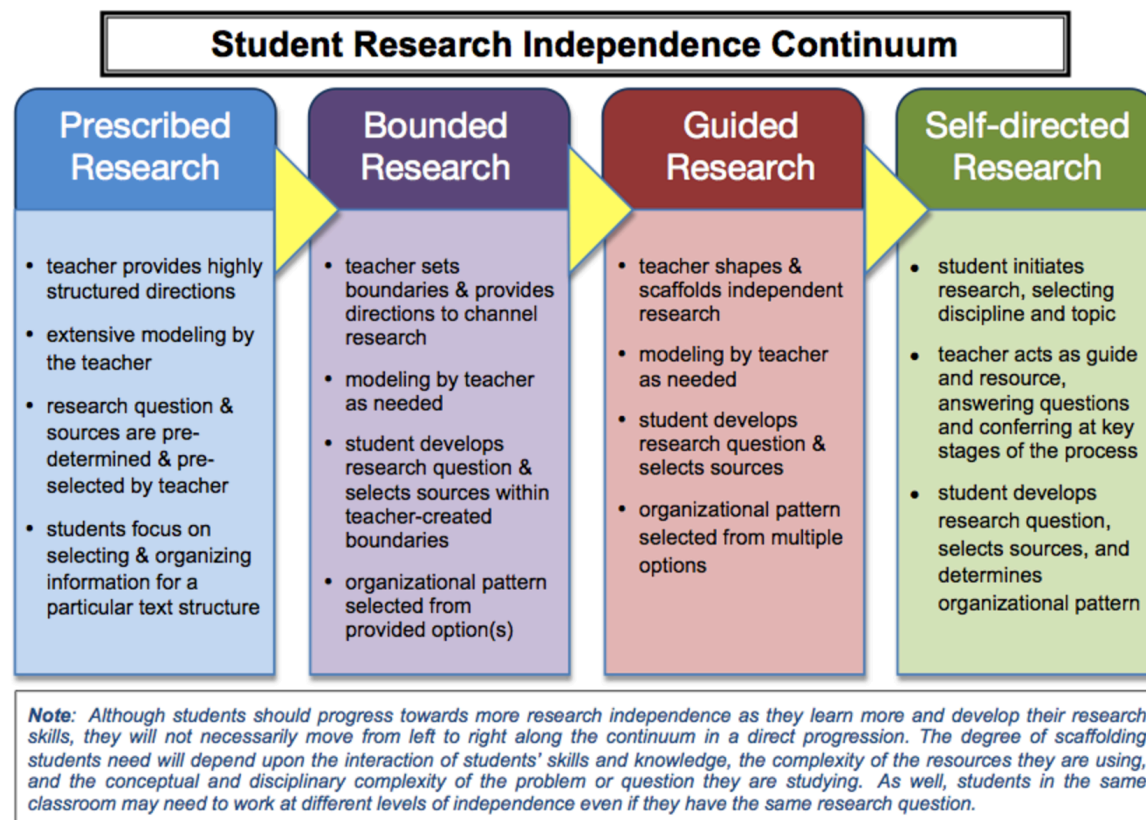
### Overview:

Social justice issues like the killings of unarmed Black men by the police in the United States are complex problems, deeply rooted in our history and connected to a range of other sociopolitical issues. The film *Love, Life, and Loss* and the accompanying discussion guide activities are designed to start important conversations around these issues, and to generate new questions in the process. Students can engage in group or individual research to pursue these developing questions and to deepen their understanding of both problems and solutions. The resources here can help teachers plan and organize student research projects.

### Planning and preparation:

1) To prepare for engaging students in research, you first need to decide how much independence students will have during the research process. Think about your students' level (e.g. 10<sup>th</sup> grade students or juniors in college?) and their experience with research. The Student Research Independence Continuum (to the right) can help you think about the level of research independence that is appropriate for your students.

For example, younger students with less experience doing research will probably do better with a more prescribed experience. In this context, you would select the research question and sources so that students focus on gathering and organizing information.



- 2) Once you have decided on the level of independence that students will have, begin organizing the research project. One of the first sets of decisions to make is around parameters and format. Are students developing and delivering PowerPoint presentations, for example, or are they writing more traditional research papers? If they are presenting, how long should presentations be, and if they are writing, how much should they write?

In addition, if you are having students work with a prescribed project, decide upon which research question(s) you want to use and which resources. You will also have to gather the resources and have them ready in either print or online format depending upon resources and access to technology.

For other levels of research independence, you will need to organize the supports and resources you will provide. For all levels you should also develop a timeline so that students submit the project in phases (initial idea, annotated bibliography, outline, rough draft, etc.) to allow you to better monitor their progress.

Remember that research assignments can vary in length, and that they can be structured as collaborative group work as well. The ideas and resources below are meant to be general supports that can easily be adapted to your context.

### ***Sequence of Activities:***

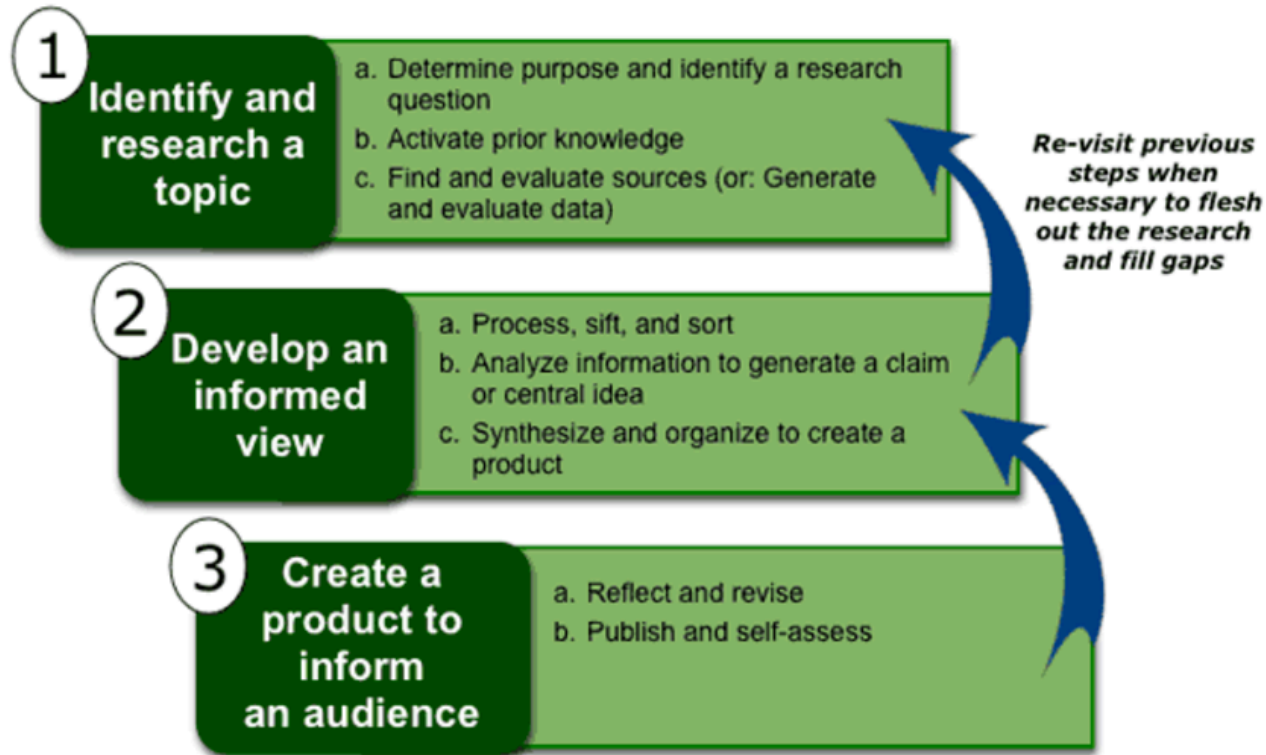
- 1) Introduce the research project to students as a follow up to watching the video and engaging in the discussion guide activities. Present the students with their assigned research question if using a prescribed model, or allow them to choose from questions such as the following:
- Explore the case of one of the men represented in Seven Last Words of the Unarmed. What happened and why, and what is the current status of the case? What policies or police practices could have prevented this tragedy?
  - What is the experience of other communities of color with respect to police violence and police killings? Are there specific cases of people in other communities of color (e.g. Latinos, Native American) that are similar to any of the seven cases you learned about and that seem to represent larger patterns of police violence?
  - What are different explanations for the problem of police violence and the killings of unarmed Black men? Which explanations have the strongest evidence base?

- What is the history of police violence? Are the recent killings of unarmed Black men part of a recent pattern? Is this a new problem, or has it been happening for a long time? If not new, has anything changed?
- What is the role of social media and technology today in terms in providing tools to publicize, prevent, and hopefully stop police violence?
- What are the primary legal questions involved in these cases, and how has the law been applied so far?
- What solutions are currently being implemented to address police violence? Is there any evidence for success?
- What other artists have addressed this issue, and what art forms have they used? Compare and contrast the way that two different artists have taken on the issue of police violence.
- What is the historical role of music in addressing issues of racism and social injustice?

2) Walk students through the research process, making visible the steps you expect them to take. You can use one of the models below or one you already use. Explain that they are in the first phase of identifying their topic, and that their next task is to find and evaluate sources that can help them answer their research question. As they find reliable sources, they should take notes and begin the process of organizing the information they are finding.

For suggestions and resources related to teaching the necessary research skills (e.g. evaluating a website), visit the Oakland School Teaching Research Writing website: <http://www.osteachingresearchwriting.org/>

## RESEARCH SKILLS PROGRESSION OVERVIEW



<http://www.osteachingresearchwriting.org/>

## Research Process:

1. Identify topic area and formulate a research problem.
2. Consider what you already know and think about the problem.
3. Survey the literature. What information is available? As you do this, evaluate potential sources for reliability, and seek to find reliable sources the offer up potentially different perspectives you can compare.
4. Read the topic and take initial notes. Eliminate sources that are not reliable.
5. Process and organize information that helps you understand the research problem / question.
6. Begin to formulate a claim.
7. Organize data, information, and evidence that seem to support the claim.
8. Outline your argument with claim, supporting evidence, and the reasoning that explains how the evidence supports the claim.
9. Revise as needed as you encounter new information.
10. Identify and consider information that seems to counter or challenge your claim, identify counter-arguments, and develop a refutation or challenge to the counter-argument (in the face of this information, why do you still think your claim is valid?)
11. Complete a draft and obtain feedback.
12. Reflect, revise, and publish.

- 3) Below is a list of digital sources you can provide to students depending upon their research topics, as well as a list of books that your school or local librarian can try to find for you. Also included is a research planning guide you can provide (or adapt and provide) to your students, along with a sample rubric.

Provide the resources that will be most helpful to your students, review the timeline, and then have them begin the research process. Build in regular check-in moments to monitor their progress. At a minimum, you should check their developing reference list and outline before they begin drafting, and before they publish, you should try to review a draft.

**Links to information about the national issue of police shootings:**

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/police-shootings-2017/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/series/counted-us-police-killings>
- <http://killedbypolice.net/>
- <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

**Resources about the history of policing, including articles on historical examples of police violence**

- <http://plsonline.eku.edu/insidelook/history-policing-united-states-part-1>
- <http://plsonline.eku.edu/insidelook/brief-history-slavery-and-origins-american-policing>
- <http://time.com/4779112/police-history-origins/>
- <https://washingtonspark.wordpress.com/2013/04/20/shootings-by-dc-police-spark-fight-against-brutality-1936-41/>
- <http://origins.osu.edu/article/policing-police-civil-rights-story>
- <https://hub.wsu.edu/law-justice-realtime/2015/12/16/public-perceptions-of-police-brutality-in-post-slavery-america/>
- <http://inthesetimes.com/article/19433/in-milwaukee-a-history-of-racist-violence-fuels-mistrust-of-the-police-depa>
- <http://time.com/4237832/citizens-filming-rodney-king/>
- <http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/chicago-police-brutality-harassment-records>
- [http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/List\\_of\\_cases\\_of\\_police\\_brutality\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/List_of_cases_of_police_brutality_in_the_United_States)

**The history of the militarization of the police**

- <http://www.ibtimes.com/police-militarization-history-stretches-back-civil-rights-movement-photos-1926956>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/us/ferguson-images-evoke-civil-rights-era-and-changing-visual-perceptions.html>



## Hip-hop responds to police brutality

- <http://www.thedailybeast.com/hip-hops-history-with-police-brutality-why-we-should-live-in-the-now>

## Resources dealing with police violence and other racial groups

- [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=612](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=612)
- [http://inthesetimes.com/features/native\\_american\\_police\\_killings\\_native\\_lives\\_matter.html](http://inthesetimes.com/features/native_american_police_killings_native_lives_matter.html)
- <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/police-killed-native-americans-2016-previous-year/>
- <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/native-americans-police-death-murder-investigation-jacqueline-salyers-a7371861.html>

## Arguments about solutions to police violence:

- <http://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/police-training-must-reformed/>
- <https://www.aclu.org/other/fighting-police-abuse-community-action-manual>

## **Books:**

McSpadden, L. & LeFlore, L.B. (2016). *Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil: The Life, Legacy, and Love of My Son Michael Brown*. New York: Regan Arts.

Nelson, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Police Brutality: An Anthology Paperback*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Taibbi, M. (2017). *I Can't Breathe: A Killing on Bay Street*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Yancy, G. & Jones, J. (Ed.s). (2014). *Pursuing Trayvon Martin: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Manifestations of Racial Dynamics*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Darden, R. (2014). *Nothing but Love in God's Water: Volume 1: Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

Lampert, N. (2015). *A People's Art History of the United States: 250 Years of Activist Art and Artists Working in Social Justice*. New York: The New Press.

Research Planning Guide		
Topic:  Research question:		
What do you already know and think about this issue?		
Initial Search	Source	Is this a reliable source? How do you know?
Jot down or cut and paste possible sources to the right.	1)	
	2)	
	3)	
	4)	
	5)	

Select the three sources that are most reliable AND most useful. Read and take notes below:		
#	Citation or link	Notes... summarize the most important information that helps you answer your question:
1		
2		
3		

- What big idea or claim can you make now that is supported by the information above? What conclusion are you reaching? (draft some thoughts on a separate sheet and share with your teacher). With support from your teacher as needed, you are now ready to develop an outline for your paper. Plan and outline before you start writing your first draft!

<b>RUBRIC</b>	<b>3 Advanced</b>	<b>2 Proficient</b>	<b>1 Developing</b>	<b>0 Missing</b>
Introduction and claim about a social justice issue	Clearly states a claim connected to the assignment and previews the evidence that will support this claim.	States a claim connected to the assignment, but claim is not sufficiently clear or evidence is not adequately previewed	States a claim but does not preview reasons, or claim is not clearly connected to the assignment.	No claim is made.
Use of reliable sources and content	Effectively uses important concepts and ideas from multiple, reliable sources to support argument.	Uses concepts and ideas from a few sources, but in need of some development or more rigorous source evaluation.	Attempts to use limited ideas from sources, but incorrectly interprets or uses content, and/or uses inappropriate sources.	Writing is done without use of clear content and/or without any use of sources.
Use of Evidence and Reasoning	Sufficient evidence is presented to support the claim, and reasoning effectively and logically connects evidence to the claim... the connection between claim and evidence is explained.	Evidence is presented that relates to the claim, but it is either not enough, or not clearly connected to the claim through reasoning and explanation.	Attempt to use limited evidence, but several places lack clear reasoning.	Lack of clear evidence and support for the claim.
Conclusion	Sums up reasoning and re-states main claim	Conclusion made, re-states claim, but does not adequately sum up reasoning	Attempt at conclusion, but unclear or does not sum up reasoning.	No clear conclusion.
Mechanics and Organization	The essay is clearly organized and free of major mechanical errors.	Organized but with a few errors or structural issues.	Some problems with organization and a few mechanical errors.	No clear organization and/or several major problems.