

Handout

Building a Toolbox for Racial Justice

In this unit, you explored the murder of Emmett Till by learning about the historical context of white supremacy, the choices made by Ida B. Wells and Mamie Till-Mobley to confront racial violence, the effect Till’s murder had on American society, and the relevance of Till’s murder today. In this assignment, you will apply the lessons you have learned to create a toolbox for racial justice.

Your Task: In this project, you will create a real, tangible toolbox that includes “tools” you’ll need to pursue racial justice. Your toolbox can take a variety of forms: an actual box with a new design or decoration, a hollowed-out old book, a soft-sided sewn object, a picture frame, a shadow box, or something else that represents or relates to your topic. Your “tools” can also take many forms: paintings, collages or other forms of visual art, poems or favorite quotations, or symbolic objects, to name just a few.

To complete the project, you will need to reflect on what you have learned in the unit and formative activities and your answer to the essential question: *As we pursue racial justice today, what can be learned from the choices people have made in response to racial violence in the past?*

You should also consider the questions that follow when deciding which items to include in your toolbox:

- What will I have in my toolbox that will extend my knowledge about what it means to achieve racial justice today?
- What will I have in my toolbox that will help me translate that knowledge into action?
- What will I have in my toolbox that will connect me to the work of previous generations who have fought for racial justice?
- What will I have in my toolbox that will connect me to other young people pursuing racial justice?
- What will I have in my toolbox that will empower me to be a truth-teller like Ida B. Wells and Mamie Till-Mobley?
- What will I have in my toolbox that will help me harness the power of images/and or the media?
- What will I have in my toolbox that will sustain me when this work gets hard?

In addition to the toolbox, you will also complete a short writing assignment that explains your tools, how you imagine you will use each of them, and how they connect to some of the topics addressed in the unit (e.g., the role of truth-telling to expose and challenge injustice, the impact of images and the media, and the power of youth activism).

Your toolbox should:

1. Be a tangible, constructed, creative, three-dimensional box that is filled with at least **five** items that are your tools.
2. Demonstrate effort, thoughtfulness, and insight into our unit of study.
3. Clearly and thoughtfully convey answers to some of the questions listed above, through the tools and possibly the toolbox itself.
4. Be accompanied by a well-composed, thoughtful piece of writing that clearly explains the tools found in your toolbox, their meaning to you, and how they will help you participate in your community to build a just and equitable society.