



The Tulsa Race Massacre

One-Day Lesson Plan

Standards Addressed:

- **Grade 3:** Content Standards 1.5; 2.1; 3.1; 3.2
- **Grade 6:** Content Standard 5.2
- **Grade 9 Oklahoma History:** Content Standard 5.2
- **High School Psychology:** Content Standard 6
- **High School Sociology:** Content Standards 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 3.2, 4.2, 5.3, 6.2, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5
- **Grade 11 US History:** Content Standards 4.1
- **World Human Geography:** Content Skills 3.3, 3.4, 7.3

Practices Addressed:

- Analyze and Address Authentic Civic Issues
- Read Critically and Interpret Informational Sources

Objective:

This multi-tiered lesson will help students answer the following questions/themes regarding the events in the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921:

- What happened?
- Why/How did this happen?
- What happened after?
- What do we do in order to prevent similar happenings and heal now?

Time Needed:

One class period

Supplies:

- *Up from the Ashes* by Hannibal B. Johnson
- Smartboard and internet access (for older students)
- Handout or paper, pencil

Vocabulary:

- Different
- Community
- Property
- Respect
- City/Urban
- Industry
- Neighborhood
- Timeline
- Courage
- Landmark
- Culture
- Economy
- Population
- Resources
- Entrepreneur
- Rights
- Equality
- Media
- Discrimination
- Point of View
- Segregation
- Cultural Perspective
- Race Relations
- Tulsa Race Riot
- Primary Sources
- Secondary Sources
- Cause and Effect
- Massacre
- Riot

Lesson Starter:

What is the difference between a riot and a massacre? (Discuss, write answers on the board.) Define the terms, connecting them with modern national or local events students are familiar with. After a quick discussion, tell them there was an incident in Oklahoma history: the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921, in a Tulsa neighborhood.

For older students, you can show photos on the smartboard and listen to a short account of the events from people who were there. (Excerpts of [Black Wall Street Massacre](#): 6:31. Teachers may want to preview for racial language content) [youtube.com/watch?v=I_da-tHaXKU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_da-tHaXKU)

Plan: Read Hannibal B. Johnson's *Up from the Ashes* aloud to the class.

Assignment/Activity:

After reading the book, ask **elementary students** the following:

- What kind of place was Greenwood before the massacre?
- Why do you think that the massacre happened?
- What happened after the massacre was over?
- What are some things that we can do today to prevent this from happening again?
- How do we help the Greenwood community of Tulsa heal?

Older students can write their answers in complete sentences, discuss them in groups, or discuss them as a class.

- What kind of place was Greenwood before the massacre?
- Why/how did people move to Greenwood?
- Why do you think that the massacre happened?
- Besides the rumors of what happened to Sarah, what else may have contributed to the violence?
- What happened in Greenwood after the massacre was over?
- What do you think would have happened if the technologies of today were present during this time? (television, social media, etc.)
- Do you think this event should be considered a riot or a massacre? Why?
- How do we help the Greenwood community of Tulsa heal?

Watch:

Dr. Olivia Hooker's interview (survivor) youtube.com/watch?v=bab3nZro4qE

Review/Assessment:

Short discussion or writing activity of reflection expanding on the question "What are some things that we can do today to prevent something like this from happening again?"

Extension Activities

Project

Have your students create a timeline of changes in the Greenwood area from 1900 to the present, using historical images they have found or drawn. This can be done on a wall in the classroom, the hallway, or on a large poster board. Each student gets a year or a specific event, making this a larger class project. Have students not only use photos or drawings, but also explain what their images are and what those images meant at the time. (Expand by assigning a research project where they examine primary sources, photos, and oral histories.) Students can then reflect on the whole incident, considering what was going on in the world at the time and see how much (or how little) some things have changed since then.

ELA/Art

Have the students write a poem about the Tulsa Race Massacre, with an emphasis on healing. Have each student present their poem to the rest of the class or draw a picture/poster of their reactions and reflections.

Further Information

- [The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, "Tulsa Race Massacre"](https://okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=TU013)
okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=TU013
- [Tulsa Historical Society](https://tulsahistory.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre)
tulsahistory.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre
- [Greenwood Rising](https://greenwoodrising.org)
greenwoodrising.org