

Game Changer: Kyle Korver Speaks Truth on Privilege

Compelling Question: How does recognizing our own privilege make a difference?

Grade Level		Time	Common Core Standards
K-2	3-5	45–60 Minutes	Reading: R1, R2, R5 Writing: W3, W4 Speaking & Listening: SL1 Language: L4, L6
MS	HS		



Web Related Connections

Lessons

- [Athletes and Activism](#)
- [Believe in Something: Nike, Kaepernick and Social Change](#)
- [Exploring Solutions to Address Racial Disparity Concerns](#)
- [Privilege, Discrimination and Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System](#)

Other Resources

- [10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism](#)
- [Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment](#)
- [How Should I Talk about Race in My Mostly White Classroom](#)
- [Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism](#)

Key Words

(See ADL’s [Education Glossary Terms](#).)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| accountable | opting in |
| affirmative action | persist |
| ambiguity | perspective |
| amplify | policies |
| apartheid | privilege |
| conscious | random |
| demographically | recognized |
| discomfort | reflex |
| heckler | reparations |
| incarcerated | systemic |
| marginalized | |

LESSON OVERVIEW

In April 2019, Kyle Korver, a U.S. professional basketball player who plays with the Utah Jazz, wrote an essay on racism and white privilege that received a lot of acclaim and attention. In the essay, Korver, who is white, reflects on several biased incidents involving his African-American teammates and his reaction to those incidents; he reflects on his own white privilege and what he and others can do to act as allies to help bring about racial justice.

This lesson provides an opportunity for students to learn more about privilege, explore how it manifests in different ways and reflect on their own relationship to privilege.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will examine Kyle Korver’s recent essay on privilege and how it relates to their own experiences.
- Students will construct a definition for privilege, explore its various manifestations and strategize how to use privilege to engage in ally behavior.
- Students will explore their own experiences with privilege and write an essay that reflects their experiences and perspective.

MATERIALS & PREPARATION

- “Privileged” (*The Players’ Tribune*, April 8, 2019, www.theplayerstribune.com/en-us/articles/kyle-korver-utah-jazz-nba, one copy for each student)
- [Quotes Activity](#) (one copy for each student)
- Index cards (one for each student)

PROCEDURES



Reading Activity: “Privilege”

1. Start the lesson by asking: *Do you know who Kyle Korver is? Why has he been in the news lately?* If students don’t know, explain that Kyle Korver is a U.S. professional basketball player who plays with the Utah Jazz. In April 2019, he wrote an essay on white privilege that received a lot of acclaim and attention. Explain that we are going to read the essay and talk about privilege.

2. Before reading the essay, ask students: *What is privilege?* Have them jot down a few thoughts and then share those thoughts aloud.

Note: For some students, the word privilege carries a very strong negative connotation. For that reason, some may feel reluctant to share and participate in the discussion. You may want to check in with students before approaching the conversation to assess the extent to which students feel privilege is positive or negative. It will be helpful in creating some neutrality around the word privilege so students can have a productive discussion.

Elicit/explain the definition as follows and write it on board/smart board for classroom viewing throughout this lesson:

Privilege: A term for unearned and often unseen or unrecognized advantages, benefits or rights conferred upon people based on their membership in a dominant group (e.g., white people, heterosexual people, males, people without disabilities, cisgender people, etc.) beyond what is commonly experienced by members of the marginalized group.

Privilege reveals both obvious and less obvious unspoken advantages that people in the dominant group may not recognize they have, which distinguishes it from overt bias or prejudice. These advantages include cultural affirmations of one's own worth, presumed greater social status and the freedom to move, buy, work, play and speak freely.

3. Distribute a copy of the essay, "[Privileged](#)," and read the essay aloud, asking different students to take turns reading. As the essay is being read aloud, tell students they can underline any words, phrases and quotes that stand out to them.

Optional: Assign the reading of this essay the night before for homework.

4. After reading, engage students in a brief discussion by asking some or all of the following questions.
- What does Kyle Korver say about privilege? According to Korver, is privilege positive or negative? Why do you think that?
 - What does Korver mean when he says, "It's not like it was a conscious thought. It was pure reflex."
 - What does it mean that you have the privilege to "opt in" to conversations about race?
 - What is the relationship between guilt and responsibility that Korver expresses in the essay? How can you apply that in your own life?
 - How has your thinking shifted by reading this article?
5. Distribute the [Quotes Activity](#) handout. Instruct students to read the essay again silently and as they read/review this time, record their responses to each prompt on the handout.
6. After students have completed their handouts, tell them they will use a concentric circles activity to share their identified quotes with others in the class. Have students count off by twos. Taking their completed quotes handout with them, ask participants who are #1's to form a large circle in the center of the room, facing outward. Ask participants who are #2's to form a second circle outside the first circle and to face a partner in the inside circle. Explain the concentric circles process as follows:
- a. You will read aloud the prompt for each quote (based on the handout), after which each pair will have **two minutes total** to share with each other their quote and why they chose it.
 - b. One person in the pair will have one minute to share, while the other person listens. When one minute is up, you will signal by calling "switch." At this signal, the first speaker will become the listener and the second person will have one minute to share.
 - c. At the end of each prompt and after both members of the pair have responded, you will instruct the outside circle (#2's) to move one space to their left, joining with a new partner for the next prompt.

Remind students to practice good listening skills, and not to interrupt while the other person is speaking. Clarify that each person will have **one minute** to respond to each prompt, and **one minute** to listen to his or her partner's response to the same prompt.

Note: If your classroom space doesn't allow for concentric circles, have students turn and talk with someone sitting next to them. When you call switch, they can switch to other pairings with students sitting near each other.

7. Conduct the concentric circles activity. Go through each of the six prompts on the [Quotes Activity](#) handout, allowing two minutes per prompt. If you have time limitations, choose 2–3 prompts for the concentric circles activity.
8. After the concentric circles activity, engage students in a discussion by asking the following questions.
 - Would anyone like to share one of their quotes and the reason they chose it?
 - What did you learn by sharing your quotes with different partners?
 - What's your biggest takeaway from reading the essay and/or talking to different people about it?
 - Why do you think Kyle Korver wrote the essay?
 - What impact do you think Korver's essay will have?
 - What actions does Korver suggest for white people to act as allies to address racism?
 - In what ways does privilege impact individuals and society as a whole?



Information Sharing: White Privilege

1. Make sure the definition of privilege is still on the board/smart board. Ask students: *What kind of privilege does Kyle Korver refer to in his article?* Explain that he is referring to **white privilege**.
2. Explain to students that people identify themselves in many ways, such as race, gender, gender identity, age, religion, sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, etc. People can be privileged by certain aspects of their identity and disadvantaged by others.

For example, if a heterosexual girl holds hands in the hallway with a guy she is dating, she does not have to worry about name-calling or harassment. The same young woman, however, does not have privilege as she walks on the street late at night, worrying about being harassed or attacked.
3. Ask students for other examples of privilege that they have seen, experienced, heard about or witnessed. Record the list on the board, which may include examples like the following:
 - I can feel free to call the police when there's trouble.
 - I can walk into most clothing stores and find something that is my size.
 - I can use the restroom that matches my gender identity without being harassed.
 - I am able to take tests in my native language.
 - I can challenge my teacher without them thinking I'm being defiant or rebellious.
 - I can purchase makeup that matches my skin complexion.
 - I can be sure to not have tests and important school functions scheduled on days of religious observance.
 - I am not usually questioned as to whether I am American.
 - I don't have to worry about whether transportation, a building or street is accessible.
4. Engage students in a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - From this list, what can you say about how privilege works?
 - How can we become more aware of our privilege?
 - How does it feel to acknowledge your own privilege?
 - How can people in privileged groups act as allies to those in marginalized and targeted groups?
 - How does what Kyle Korver said about guilt and responsibility relate to privilege in your lives?



Writing Activity

1. Divide students into small groups of 4–5 students each. Explain that as a group, they are going to create a poem that uses one quote from each person in the group.
2. Give students 2–3 minutes to select one of their quotes from the Quotes Activity and have them write it on an index card or piece of paper. Instruct them to work together in their groups to put the words/sentences together to create a group poem that is cohesive. Explain to students that if they need to, they may take out or add a few words in order to make the poem work and sound better. Remind them poetry doesn't have to rhyme but sometimes poems have some kind of rhythm or sound pattern, alliteration (word sounds), symbolism, repetition and evoke imagery.
3. Give students 10 minutes to rearrange their sentences and create their group poem.

Closing

Have each group read their poem aloud. Provide them with a few options for reading aloud—each member of the group can each read one line of it, they can all read it together in unison or they can have one person read it for the group.

Homework Assignment: My Relationship to Privilege

As a homework assignment, have students reflect on Kyle Korver's essay, the discussions they've had during this lesson and write an essay that reflects their relationship to privilege and what insights they have about it. The following essay prompts can be used, if needed:

- Have you personally benefitted from unearned privilege as a result of an aspect of your identity? How so?
- What is an example of how you have been impacted by privilege?
- In what ways have your self-reflections about privilege instigated you to take action? Or in what ways could those self-reflections made a difference in the future?

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

- "[LeBron James Salutes Kyle Korver for His Essay on White Privilege in America](#)" (DiversityInc., April 9, 2018)
- "[White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism](#)" (The Good Men Project, April 9, 2015)
- "[What is Whiteness?](#)" (*The New York Times*, June 20, 2015)
- "[When Whites Just Don't Get It](#)" (*The New York Times*, August 30, 2014)
- "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)" (Wellesley College Center for Research on Women)

Common Core Standards

CONTENT AREA/STANDARD
Reading
R1: 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.
R2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
R5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
Writing
W3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.
W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Speaking & Listening
SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
Language
L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
L6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Quotes Activity

Directions: Read and use the “Privileged” essay by Kyle Korver to record your responses to the prompts below.

One quote I **agree** with: _____

One quote I **disagree** with: _____

One quote I **don't understand**: _____

One quote I can **relate to**: _____

One quote I want to **investigate** further: _____

One quote that **sums up** the essay for me: _____
