INTRODUCTION TO REPARATIONS | STUDY GUIDE

Essential question
How have Americans documented historical injury and debated what repair should look like?

Follow the curriculum
1. Slavery and the Founding of America. Trace how law and forced labor shaped the economy, then examine family life, resistance and emancipation.
2. Reconstruction and Its Reversal. Ask how freedpeople exercised political power and why land, labor and enforceable citizenship mattered.
3. Jim Crow, Redlining and Civil Rights. Examine how voting rules, housing practices and employment barriers worked, and how people challenged them.
4. The Modern Reparations Movement. Compare organizing strategies, proposals and ways to measure whether remedies reach affected people.
5. Counting the Cost of American Racism. Distinguish unpaid labor valuations, modeled earnings shortfalls and comparisons of household wealth.

Words to know
Reparations: measures intended to repair a documented harm.
Redlining: restricting access to credit based on where people live.
Income: money received over time, such as wages.
Wealth: assets minus debts at a point in time.
Home equity: what a home is worth minus what is owed against it.

Read an example
The District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act ended slavery in the District. As you read, identify whose claims the law compensated and whose labor was taken. Ask what that choice reveals about who the law recognized as having suffered an economic loss.
Source: https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/dc-emancipation-act

Check your understanding
1. Why might two people with equal pay own very different amounts of wealth?
2. How can housing discrimination affect a generation that never applied for the mortgage in question?
3. What would you need to know before treating an estimate as a measure of loss caused by a specific policy?

Check your answers
1. Assets, debts, savings and inheritances can differ even at equal pay.
2. Denied ownership can reduce the equity available to pass down.
3. Identify the affected population, period, comparison and assumptions. Check whether other estimates already include the same loss.

Continue at the Learning Center
https://kpjustb.wixsite.com/reparations-history/learning-center