

**LESSON**

# What Is Power?

## Overview

### About This Lesson

In this lesson, students explore how the stories we tell about ourselves can shape how we understand our own identities, as well as how others may perceive us. Students also consider the risks and rewards that come with sharing aspects of who we are with others, both in person and online.

These activities prepare students to read and analyze an informational text about “narrative identity” and apply the concept to their own lives as they reflect on how the stories we tell ourselves can help us to construct our own sense of self.

### Essential Questions

- How do I empower myself to take action on behalf of myself and others?

### Guiding Questions

- What is power?
- What are the different ways that an individual or group can have or experience power?

### Facing History Learning Outcomes

- Practice perspective-taking in order to develop empathy and recognize the limits of any one person’s point of view.
- Identify examples of injustice and unfairness in the literature they read and in the world today. Examine how an individual’s identity, group membership, and relationship to systems of inequity can impact their sense of who they are and their agency when faced with a moral dilemma or choice.

### What’s Included

This lesson uses the following texts and materials. Access materials and a lesson Plan-on-a-Page in this [Google Folder](#).

- **Plan on a Page: What Is Power?**
- **Handout: Perspectives on Power: Big Paper Quotations**

- **Handout: What Is Power? Anticipation Guide**

## Preparing to Teach

### A Note to Teachers

#### 1. Preparing Four Corners

Before class, familiarize yourself with the [Four Corners](#) teaching strategy, which you will use in the first activity. Make four signs—Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree—and hang them in the corners of the classroom.

#### 2. Preparing for a Big Paper Silent Discussion

Before teaching this lesson, familiarize yourself with the [Big Paper: Building a Silent Discussion](#) strategy, which you will use in Activity 2. The activity calls for students to reflect on five quotations that you can find on the **Perspectives on Power: Big Paper Quotations** handout. Affix each quotation onto a big piece of paper before the lesson.

## Lesson Plan

### Activities

#### 1. Consider What Power Is and Isn't

Pass out the **What Is Power? Anticipation Guide** handout and have students complete Steps 1 and 2. Then debrief using the [Four Corners](#) teaching strategy. To provide opportunities for everyone to voice their opinions, have students share with others in their corners before facilitating the class discussion. Then have students complete Steps 3 and 4 on the handout. They can share their definitions in pairs or small groups, adding any new ideas that arise.

#### 2. Engage in a Silent Discussion of Power

Let students know that they will read and reflect on five different perspectives about power and consider the ways in which each one confirms, challenges, or changes their initial thinking about the concept. Explain the [Big Paper](#) strategy and provide students with markers. Give them time to circulate silently, read, annotate, and

write their ideas, connections, and questions on each paper. Consider projecting the following questions for students to refer to as they interact with the quotations:

- What, if any, ideas about power from the anticipation guide does the quotation explore? What new ideas does it add to a conversation about power?
- How does the quotation change, challenge, or confirm your own thinking about power?