

Intersectionality Packet

Important vocabulary:

- Intersectionality
- Diverse
- Identity

Grade level(s):

- 9-10
- 11-12

Description of activities:

- Reading on what intersectionality is and how it impacts people
 - ◆ 6-8 grade reading level
 - ◆ 9-10 grade reading level
 - ◆ 11-12 grade reading level
- Reading on the impact of economic inequality
- Do Now
- Reflection Question
- Intersectionality Puzzles

Teacher tips:

- The economic inequality reading can be used as an example of how identity can impact many realms of a person's life and experiences
- Intersectionality, as a concept and practice, can be applied to most topics that discuss identity or society. It is also very helpful for students to get to know themselves and others.
- Using this as a starting point for discussing other topics can allow students to have a deeper understanding of the role that identity plays in things like housing, healthcare, community wellness, democracy, and education.

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Readings

Understanding Intersectionality

(Level III reading)

In any diverse society, people have various identities and experiences that shape who they are. No two people are the exact same, even if we all have so much in common. *Intersectionality* provides a valuable framework, or way to understand, for examining the complex ways in which different identities intersect and interact. To intersect means to overlap or collide. If you think of all your identities and how they layer together, overlapping and colliding, making you who you are, you can start to understand what this framework revolves around. Coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality offers insights into the overlapping dimensions of social categorizations such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability.

At its core, intersectionality acknowledges that people's identities are multifaceted. This means that they have many sides. Someone cannot be understood by considering a single aspect about who they are. Instead, intersectionality emphasizes the interconnected nature of social identities and recognizes that individuals may face unique experiences and forms of oppression resulting from the overlap of multiple identities. Some of our identities may provide privilege, or unearned advantages granted to certain individuals based on their social identities, while some pose risks for discrimination or lack of opportunity. Some people have more privilege or discrimination risk than others. Intersectionality helps us understand these experiences, and most importantly, think about how those people can best be supported.

The intersection of various identities leads to diverse experiences that differ from those of individuals who do not share the same intersectional identities. For instance, a queer person of color may encounter distinct challenges related to their racial and sexual identities. By recognizing the unique experiences resulting from multiple identities, intersectionality encourages us to listen to and learn from individuals with different lived experiences.

Intersectionality sheds light on the compounded effects of multiple forms of discrimination, enabling a deeper understanding of the challenges individuals face. An example of intersectionality frameworks being used to understand someone's experience is considering the healthcare system. For example, statistically, women are less likely to be taken seriously by medical professionals. Further, medical schools do not always teach aspiring doctors what certain conditions look like with Black patients. So, for a Black woman trying to navigate getting a diagnosis for a skin condition, it can be more difficult for someone who does not face those barriers, like a White man.

Another example is LGBTQ+ healthcare access. Transgender people in particular often have difficulty simply accessing care: statewide, only 57 percent of self-identifying transgender participants in the DataHaven's 2019 Community Wellbeing Survey reported that their primary care provider can provide them with trans-inclusive services, and 44 percent said they had forgone medical care in the past year for fear of harassment or mistreatment. The outcomes of healthcare access being interrupted or lacking trust from the patient can be very impactful.

Intersectionality also highlights the complexities of privilege and power dynamics within society.

Privileged identities include being White, male, heterosexual, or wealthy in societies that tend to give power to White, male, heterosexual, and wealthy people. For example, when analyzing wages, or how much an individual is paid for their job, identity plays a role in how much money people bring home.

Looking at the chart, can you recognize which groups hold privilege when considering wages?

Recognizing

intersectionality helps to uncover the ways in which

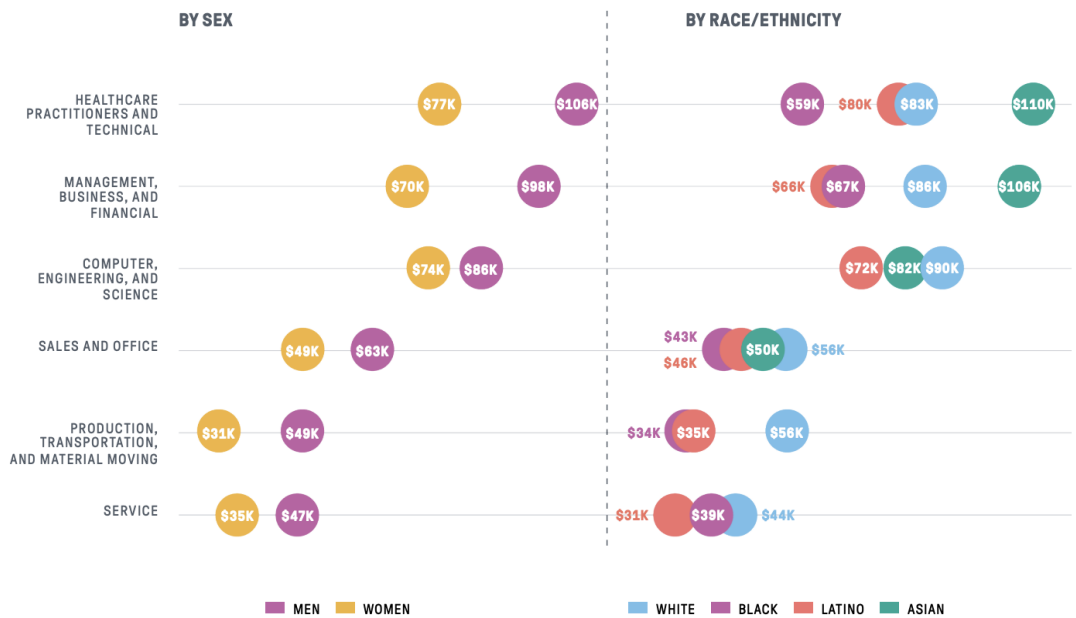
different forms of privilege intersect and come together to help the individual. It also shows the importance of acknowledging and challenging systems that perpetuate, or continue, inequality and oppression.

Intersectionality provides a lens through which to approach advocacy and social change efforts. By understanding the intersecting identities and experiences of individuals, we can develop more inclusive and effective strategies for addressing various forms of discrimination and inequality. Intersectionality promotes solidarity among different marginalized groups and encourages collaboration to work towards a more equitable and just society.

Intersectionality serves as a powerful tool for examining the complexities of identity and the interconnected nature of various forms of discrimination. By recognizing the intersection of multiple social identities, we gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges individuals face.

Intersectionality enables us to advocate for social change and create a more inclusive society that respects and values the diversity of human experiences.

Wide wage gaps exist by sex and race/ethnicity, even within occupational groups
MEDIAN EARNINGS BY MAJOR OCCUPATION GROUP, SEX, AND RACE/ETHNICITY, GREATER NEW HAVEN ADULTS AGES 25+ WORKING FULL-TIME, 2020



Understanding Intersectionality

(Level II reading)

People have many different identities and experiences that make them who they are. No two people are the exact same, even if we all have so much in common. *Intersectionality* provides a valuable way to understand the complex ways in which different identities *intersect* and interact with each other to make someone's life experiences. To intersect means to overlap or collide. If you think of all your identities and how they layer together, overlapping and colliding, making you who you are, you can start to understand what this framework revolves around. Coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality considers social identities such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability.

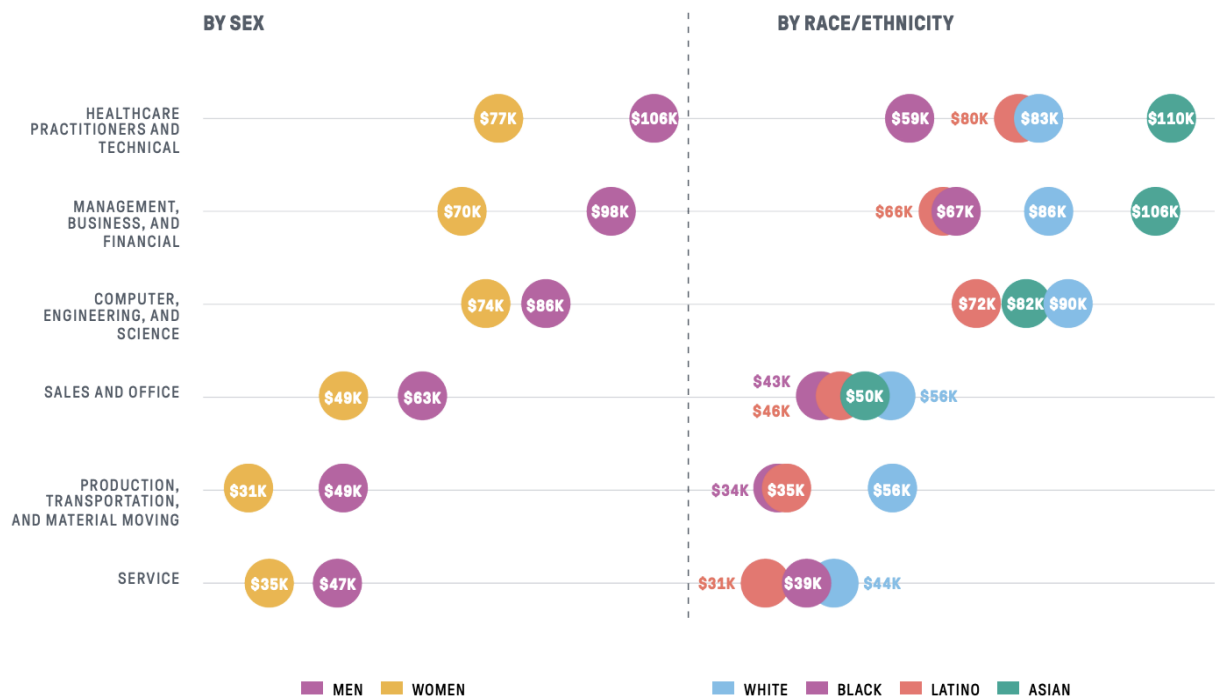
At its core, intersectionality acknowledges that people's identities have many sides, opportunities, and risk factors. Someone's life cannot be understood by considering a single aspect about who they are. Instead, intersectionality emphasizes the connected nature of social identities and recognizes that people may face unique experiences due to who they are. Some of our identities may provide privilege, or unearned advantages granted to certain people based on their social identities. Some pose risks for discrimination, like unfair treatment based on skin color, age, etc, or lack of opportunity. Some people have more privilege or risk than others. Intersectionality helps us understand these experiences, and most importantly, think about how those people can best be supported. By recognizing the unique experiences resulting from multiple identities, intersectionality encourages us to listen to and learn from people with different lived experiences.

Intersectionality shows different ways discrimination can happen, allowing a deeper understanding of the challenges people

can face. An example of intersectionality frameworks being used to understand someone's experience is considering the healthcare system. For example, statistically, women are less likely to be taken seriously by medical professionals. Further, medical schools do not

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always teach aspiring doctors what certain conditions look like with Black patients. So, for a Black woman trying to navigate getting a diagnosis for a skin condition, it can be more difficult for someone who does not face those barriers, like a White man.

Intersectionality also highlights the complexities of privilege and power dynamics within society. Privileged identities could include being White, male, heterosexual, or wealthy. For example, when analyzing wages, or how much a person is paid for their job, these identities could play a role in how much money people bring home. Looking at the chart, can you recognize which groups hold privilege when considering wages? Recognizing intersectionality helps to uncover the ways in which different forms of privilege help people, while lack of privilege can hurt people.

By understanding the intersecting identities and experiences of people, we can develop more inclusive and effective ways to address various forms of discrimination and inequality in our world. Intersectionality promotes solidarity, or working together, among different marginalized groups that face discrimination and encourages people to work together towards a more equitable and just society.

Intersectionality is a powerful tool for examining the complexities of identity. By recognizing the intersection of multiple social identities, we gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges people face. This helps us to advocate, or speak out, for social change and create a more inclusive society that respects and values everyone.

Understanding Intersectionality

(Level I reading)

To intersect means to overlap or collide. *Intersectionality* is a way of understanding that everyone is different in many ways. It recognizes that we all have multiple parts that make us who we are. Imagine you have a colorful puzzle piece that represents a part of your identity. Your identity can include your gender, race, religion, culture, abilities, and more. Intersectionality helps us see how these puzzle pieces fit together to create a beautiful picture: you! Everyone has a puzzle, and everyone's pieces look different when put together. Even if you share a piece with someone, like both following the same religion, the rest of their pieces might look different from the rest of yours. People have many different identities and experiences that make them who they are. No two people are the exact same, even if we all have so much in common.

Intersectionality gives us a way to understand how someone's identity makes their life experiences. What is it like to be them? What is easy for them? What is hard for them?

Let's explore some of these puzzle pieces or aspects of our identity. Each piece is unique and important, just like you! For example, some puzzle pieces may be different colors, like being born in a particular country or having a different skin tone. Others might represent things we believe in or what we can do, like speaking different languages or having a special talent. Some may be able to do a task like walking easily, while others may need some support in doing this task.

Intersectionality doesn't just show us how we are different. It also shows us which people might have a harder time being accepted because of who they are. For example, a girl might have a harder time joining the class kickball game with the boys. The boys might think she is not able to kick the ball because she is a girl. If another boy tries to join the game, he is picked for a team right away! The players think he can kick the ball because he is a boy. However, they never saw either the new girl or boy kick the ball. What they don't know is that the girl can kick the ball better than most of the boys - but they assumed she couldn't based on her gender. They assumed the boy could because of his gender.

Another example would be if a classmate who has trouble hearing tries to join the kickball game. Again, they might have trouble being accepted onto a team if the other players don't think they can play due to their hard time hearing. Hearing isn't that important for kickball, but it doesn't matter. Their identity impacts their ability to join the game. If they are also a girl, then they might be told no based on their hearing and their gender. This is *intersectionality*. It makes us look at the person, and who they are, and think about what life might be like for them.

Intersectionality reminds us to celebrate and respect our differences. It teaches us that we are all equal and deserve love, kindness, and fairness, no matter what puzzle pieces we have. Some people may need more support, but that is okay! It teaches us to appreciate and respect the things that make each person special. Remember, no matter what puzzle pieces you have, they all fit together to create the wonderful person you are! Together, we can create a world where everyone feels loved, included, and valued for who they are!

Economic Inequality's Impact

(Level II reading)

What Is Economic Inequality?

Economic inequality is when some people have a lot of money and others have very little. It can impact people in many ways. It is important to understand how this type of inequality changes how someone might live. Economic inequality isn't just about money; it's about the unequal opportunities and resources available to different people in our society. Here are some examples:

Education: One way economic inequality impacts our lives is through education. Some students have access to great schools, lots of books, and helpful tutors, while others may not have these opportunities. This can make it harder for kids with fewer resources to do well in school and achieve their dreams. It can affect future prospects.

Staying healthy: Economic inequality also affects our health. People with more money can afford better healthcare and medicine. They can see doctors when they're sick and get the care they need. But if you don't have much money, it can be tough to stay healthy. Many people cannot afford to see a doctor or get the care they need when they are sick. Medical debt is another economic pressure that people face. Economic inequality can also affect the food we eat. Some families can afford healthy meals with lots of fruits and vegetables, while others might have to rely on less nutritious food because it's all they can afford. Eating well helps keep us strong and healthy.

Housing: Where we live is another way economic inequality plays a role. Some people can afford big, safe homes, while others may have to live in places that aren't as safe or comfortable. Those with lower incomes may live in overcrowded or unsafe conditions, affecting their overall quality of life. Having a good place to live is essential for our well-being.

Jobs and Opportunities: Economic inequality can make it harder for some people to find good jobs. People with more money often have more opportunities to learn and grow, while others may not have those chances. People from more affluent backgrounds often have access to better internships, networks, and career guidance. This also makes it harder for someone to gain more money and break "cycles" of poverty.

Stress and Well-being: Lastly, economic inequality can lead to stress and worry. Families with less money might always be worried about paying bills and having enough to get by. That stress can make life tough for kids and adults alike. Economic inequality can also affect how people relate to one another. High levels of inequality can lead to social tensions and divisions within communities.

Do Now

1. You will have 30 seconds to list some parts of your identity. These are the things that make you you. Think about who you are as an individual. Write them below.

2. Find someone in the room that shares an identity with you, or has one that you can relate to. For example, you both practice a religion! This will require you to introduce yourself to your classmates and discuss parts of your identity. Record your thoughts about these conversations below. You can write your thoughts, feelings, questions, concerns, or other things that come to mind.

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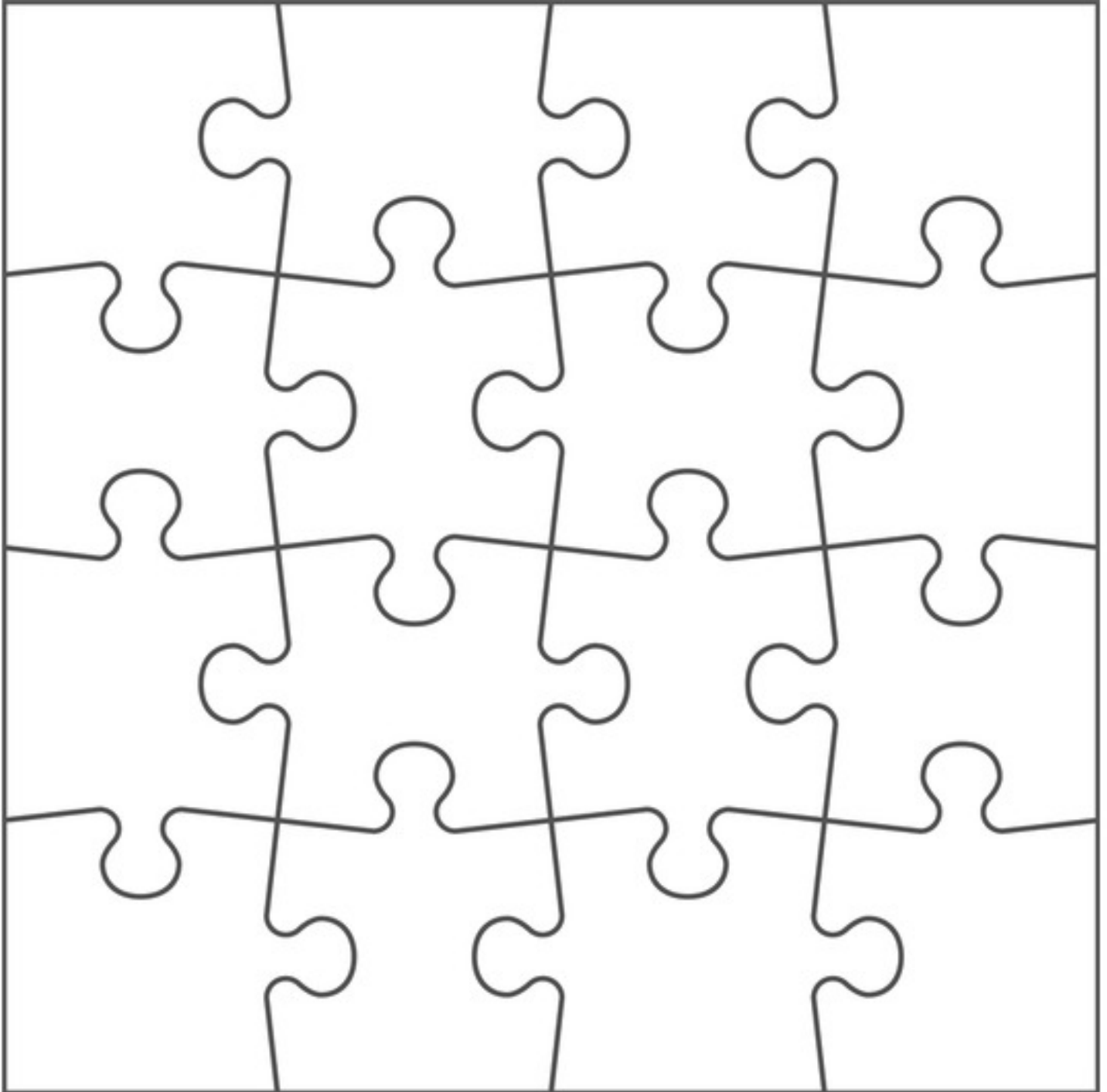
Final Reflections

In small groups or individually, answer the final reflection questions about intersectionality below.

1. What does the word "intersectionality" mean to you? How would you explain it to a friend in simple words?
2. Think of two or more things that make you who you are, like your age, gender, or interests. How do these things intersect and influence each other?
3. Do you think it's important to learn about other people's experiences and perspectives? Why or why not?
4. What are some ways we can celebrate and appreciate the uniqueness of each person or group?

Intersectionality of Identity Puzzle

Directions: On each puzzle piece, write a word that describes part of your identity. You can think about your gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, languages, age, (dis)abilities, personality, religion, values, and hobbies. When we are done labeling our puzzle pieces, walk around to see who has similar pieces to you. When you find someone with a similar or matching puzzle piece, talk about how that part of your identity *impacts* or *changes* your life or experiences.



Final Reflections

1. What similarities did you share with your classmates?
2. What are some *unique* things about you that you don't share with a lot of your classmates?
3. Why is it important to think about identity?