



FOUNDATION
AGAINST
INTOLERANCE
& RACISM

Lesson and Unit Titles: FAIR Video #2, The Human Condition: United or Divided?

Recommended Grade Levels: K-12

Recommended Pacing: 45-270 minutes, depending on teacher/class interest

FAIR Standards and Objectives: All

Theme(s): All

Era(s): All

Areas of Focus: Evolution, Tribalism, Humanity, Cooperation

Lesson Objectives:

- Become conversant in:
 - the evolutionary origins of competition
 - the evolutionary origins of cooperation
 - the evolutionary origins of morality
 - the evolutionary origins of tribalism
 - the differences between zero-sum and synergistic forms of social interaction
 - the human tendency to form in-groups and out-groups
 - the pro-human approach to overcoming the human tendency to put people in out-groups and to discriminate against them

Teacher Instructions:

1. Discuss vocabulary words for this lesson
2. Watch FAIR Video # 2 together: The Human Condition: United or Divided?
3. Take quiz on FAIR Video #2 either during or after the video
4. Discuss the quiz questions and answers
5. Homework assignment possibilities

6. Time and interest permitting, continue by watching together the video and/or reading the *Atlantic* article on tribalism
7. Assign to students the quiz(es) on the video and/or the *Atlantic* article on tribalism during or after studying them
8. Discuss the quiz questions and answers
9. Assignment on tribalism: Read the summary of the scholarly article and write two paragraphs for homework
10. Time and interest permitting, continue by giving class time or a homework assignment to read one or both articles on the evolutionary origins of morality
11. Discuss the article(s) together
12. Time and interest permitting, lead a discussion of and assign an essay on a take-away for the extended lesson

1. Key Vocabulary:

Zero sum: The condition in which for someone to succeed, someone else must fail

Synergistic: The condition in which someone's success can help every succeed

Cooperation: Working together respectfully toward a shared goal

In-group: An exclusive group of people who value each other and share a common interest

Out-group: A group of people who are not valued and are excluded from an in-group

Tribalism: The tendency of human beings to form exclusive in-groups and out-groups

Partisan Bias: The tendency of human beings to believe what binds their in-groups together more than what is accurate

2. Watch FAIR Video #2 together: <https://youtu.be/7rSuwznSvU4>

3. Take quiz on Video #2 either during or after the video:

1. From the perspective of biological evolution, why are living beings competitive?
 - a. Because competition is good for society.
 - b. *Because living beings need to eat to survive and pass on their genes.*
 - c. Because living beings aren't moral enough.
 - d. Because living beings are not intelligent enough.
2. From the perspective of biological evolution, why did human beings begin caring for each other in groups?
 - a. *Because all else equal, larger groups tend to outcompete individuals or smaller groups.*
 - b. Because humans are essentially kind.
 - c. Because it was the morally correct thing to do.

- d. Because being in a group is more fun.
3. From the perspective of biological evolution, why did human beings first develop a sense of right and wrong?
- a. Because they had a conscience.
 - b. Because they decided to be altruistic.
 - c. Because the law forced them to be.
 - d. *Because they needed to keep their groups united.*
4. True or False: Tribal conflict is a human invention.
- a. True
 - b. *False*
5. What alternative to zero-sum competition have human beings created?
- a. Survival of the fittest
 - b. *Working together to create more for everyone*
 - c. Winner takes all
 - d. Tribal in-groups
6. What is one way that overcoming the human tendency to engage in tribal fighting is so difficult?
- a. Because tribal fighting leads to good outcomes for everyone
 - b. Because legal systems promote tribal fighting
 - c. Because people always prefer fighting to peace
 - d. *Because the human brain tends to categorize people into groups and to favor its own groups over others*
7. What is one way some cultures have successfully overcome the human tendency to form destructive in-groups/out-group dynamics?
- a. Limit participation in civic groups
 - b. Limit the existence of social classes
 - c. Limit the number of political parties
 - d. *Encourage people to engage in many civic groups so that the overlap between groups unites communities together.*
8. What is one strategy that dictators often use to gain power?
- a. Empower people to speak their minds
 - b. *Appeal to and deepen divisions between groups*
 - c. Encourage different groups to find common ground
 - d. Foster mutual respect among citizens

9. What is one strategy that many people have used successfully to overcome racism and intolerance?
 - a. *Treat people primarily as human beings rather than as primarily members of groups*
 - b. Trust that the problems will take care of themselves over time
 - c. Appeal to and deepen divisions between groups
 - d. Shame the offending groups until they stop

4. **Discuss** quiz questions and answers

5. **Homework assignment:** In a paragraph, explain why you think treating people as human beings would likely succeed or fail in overcoming the human bias toward putting people in out-groups and discriminating against them.

6. Time and interest permitting, **watch** the video on tribalism together and/or have the students **read** the article.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7y-b7f6CK2M>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/membership/archive/2018/10/trouble-tribalism/573307/>

7. **Assign** to students the quiz(es) on the video and/or the *Atlantic* article on tribalism during or after studying them (quiz questions and answers still in development).

8. **Discuss** quiz questions and answers (quiz questions and answers still in development).

9. **Assignment on tribalism:** Have the students read this summary of a scholarly article as a prompt for thinking and writing. Time, interest, and ability permitting, students could read the entire article.

Humans evolved in the context of intense intergroup competition, and groups comprised of loyal members more often succeeded than groups comprised of nonloyal members. Therefore, selective pressures have sculpted human minds to be *tribal*, and group loyalty and concomitant cognitive biases likely exist in all groups. Modern politics is one of the most salient forms of modern coalitional conflict and elicits substantial cognitive biases. The common evolutionary history of liberals and conservatives gives little reason to expect

pro-tribe biases to be higher on one side of the political spectrum than the other. This *evolutionarily plausible null hypothesis* has been supported by recent research. In a recent meta-analysis, liberals and conservatives showed similar levels of partisan bias, and several pro-tribe cognitive tendencies often ascribed to conservatives (e.g., intolerance toward dissimilar other people) were found in similar degrees in liberals. We conclude that tribal bias is a natural and nearly ineradicable feature of human cognition and that no group—not even one’s own—is immune.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0963721419862289>

Discussion and/or writing assignment on the topic of tribalism as a human feature that requires discipline to remember and to overcome in ourselves and others:

Question #1: *What realities that groups face may make having the same beliefs more important to them than having accurate beliefs?*

Question #2: *Do you think the authors’ conclusion that pro-tribe biases are universal is accurate? Why or why not?*

10. Time and interest permitting, continue by giving class time or a **homework assignment** to read one or both articles on the evolutionary origins of morality.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/12/evolution-of-morality-social-humans-and-apes/418371/>

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/03/05/kin-kind>

11. Discuss the article(s).

12. Time and interest permitting, **discuss** and perhaps **assign** as an essay the following topic: *Throughout history, people have placed their fellows in in-groups that included and out-groups that excluded. Drawing upon what we have studied together in this lesson, write an essay in which you answer the question whether it is possible to form meaningful in-groups that don’t also force other into out-groups. Explain why you think as you do. If you do think it is possible, explain how you think it could happen?*