

Race: Lesson 1 – Similarities and Differences

ELOF Alignment: Goal P-SE 6, Goal P-SE 11, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 2, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6, Goal P-LIT 4

Note: This lesson should be spread over multiple days, especially if you are working with younger children. Each day, you should begin with the "Us Time" welcome song and conclude with the "Thank You" song. In between, you should pick one or two short discussions/activities to focus on for a short mini-lesson.



Lesson 1 Goals

- ♥ Notice different skin tones
- ♥ Establish vocabulary for discussing skin tones
- ♥ Learn why skin is different

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ On the Playground illustration
- ♥ Skin tone markers, crayons, or paper
- ♥ Large paper or board for documenting students' ideas

Vocabulary



- ♥ **Melanin** - a pigment in the body that makes our hair, skin, and eye color appear darker when we have more of it and lighter when we have less. The more melanin someone has in their body, the darker their features will be.
- ♥ **Similar** - alike but not the same
- ♥ **Different** - not the same as each other, unlike



Find a printable poster-sized version at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race

Similarities and Differences



Us Time Song (Play at the start of each Us Time session; 1 min)

Open Us Time with the "Us Time" song. Sing it together or play the video ([available at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs)).



Review Agreements (~2 mins)

Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Review the list that the class created. You can add, modify, or just recommit.



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Discussion: At the Playground? (Day 1; 3-10 minutes, depending on age of students)

- ♥ Share the illustration “On the Playground” and go around the circle to give each student a chance to share what they notice in the picture.
- ♥ Select two children or a group of children in the illustration and point out their similarities and differences For example, “Can you find two children playing with a football? What is the same about them? What is different?”
- ♥ Repeat with a few different pairs or groups of children in the illustration to help children observe what is similar and different about the different people in the playground illustration.



Voice & Body Break: Celebrate Our Difference (Introduce on Day 1, and incorporate into other mini-lessons; 2 mins)

Listen to "Celebrate Our Difference" by Oh, Hush!, Grayson DeWolfe, and Matrik from Noggin's Big Heart Beats Album. Sing and dance along — and listen to the lyrics about celebrating the differences in the world around us.

- ♥ Find the song online at bigheartworld.org/discussingrace
- ♥ Find more learning resources about the song online at: bigheartworld.org/big-heart-beats-album-celebrate-our-difference



Find the song online at bigheartworld.org/discussingrace



Activity: Skin Color Matching (Day 2; 5-15 minutes, depending on age of students)

Use skin tone markers, crayons, or paper to illustrate one particular skin tone. Ask students to identify a person in the “On the Playground” illustration with a similar skin tone.

Introduce the word **melanin** to explain skin tone.

♥ There’s something called melanin that everyone has in their body. Melanin gives color to our hair, skin, and eyes. The more melanin someone has in their body, the darker their hair, skin, and eyes will be. Each of us has our own color.

♥ For example: “This person has a lot of melanin that makes their skin darker. This person has a little bit of melanin — their skin is lighter!”

Repeat the color comparison with different skin shades, using the On The Playground illustration or other pictures from books or life.



Activity: Tell a Story (Day 3; 7-15 minutes, depending on the age of the students)

Use the "On the Playground" illustration to inspire a group storytelling activity.

- ♥ Tell the class that you will all work together to make up a story about a pair or group of people in the illustration.
- ♥ Select an image from the illustration inspired by your students’ interests.
- ♥ As the teacher, tell the first line of the story, writing on the board or on large paper.
- ♥ Move around the circle of students, with each student adding an idea or sentence. Pause every few students to read the story aloud and keep everyone on track.
- ♥ When 2 or 3 students are left to share, prompt the class to work toward an ending for the story.
- ♥ Optional extension: If this collaborative story-telling exercise goes well, try turning your class story into a book. Put each child’s contribution on a separate page and invite them to illustrate. Keep your book on the classroom bookshelf.





Every day, we are surrounded by similarities & differences!

In this unit, we used an illustration of a playground scene to prompt conversations and tell stories about the similarities and differences in the world around us! Let's finish by remembering what we learned!



Closing Discussion (Day 4; 3-7 min, depending on the age of your students)

There are many ways people are different, and those differences make each of us special and unique! There are also many ways that we are the same, both in how we look and what we like to do. There are some things that we can tell about a person by looking at them, like the color of their skin or what they are doing. There are also lots of things that we CAN'T tell about someone by looking at them, like where they are from, what they are good at, or what they think, feel, or believe.

1. What are some similarities and differences we noticed in the illustration?
2. What are some ways we are similar and different from each other.



Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (At the end of each Us Time session; 2 min)

Conclude with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. This song marks the end of Us Time. Find the song [online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs](https://www.playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs).



For Their Backpacks

Available free online



Celebrate Our Differences is part of Noggin's Big Heart Beats album



Community Colors Upload a picture of your skin color and put yourself on the map! There are so many colors in our big, shared world community!

If your school or organization is a Sparkler partner, share these in-app activities to help families play along at home and connect with the curriculum. Scan the QR to play along in the app!



I Spy Friends leads families through a game using the same "On the Playground" illustration



Color Match an at-home version of the skin-tone matching activity