**Welcome!**

This curriculum is a resource for educators interested in teaching and learning about American history through the writings, ideas and contributions of key, but often erased or understudied, figures. One such figures is Anna Julia Cooper (August 10, 1858 – February 27, 1964), prominent educator, sociologist, author, theorist and activist, who argued for the central place of Black women in the battle for equal and civil rights. The Colored Conventions Project Curriculum Team created it to provide educators with a resource for participating in the Douglass Day events. Douglass Day commemorates the life and legacy of Frederick Douglass, and this year’s celebrations will center the work and life of his contemporary, Anna Julia Cooper. This curriculum explores Cooper’s work and the ways she used education to uplift African Americans in the period immediately after Reconstruction.

Students will learn about Cooper’s life and her writings as a lens through which to consider her vision of education as a strategy and tool for progress. Students will view a short video titled “The Life of Anna Julia Cooper” and examine her likeness on a U.S. Postal Stamp.

As a professional educator, you know your students, your school system, the standards and school district specific expectations of the ways that content needs to be presented in your classroom. It is with this in mind, that this unit is offered as a resource not a guide. Please read and choose what you might want to use in your classroom in whatever format would work best. Feel free to modify, shape and tailor what is here to meet the demands and needs of your own pedagogy and context. But when you do, please do let us know.

We believe that the work of education is not just lifelong but a collective responsibility. It is in this spirit we offer this resource as a collaborative initiative, not bound by limitations of place or time. Email us at info@coloredconventions.org, contact us on [twitter](https://twitter.com/CCP_org) or on our [website](https://coloredconventions.org/). Let us know if you used the curriculum in its entirety, a single element or elements; what worked, what was most useful, what was not useful and or the ways you might have been inspired by what we offered and created your own lesson plans, units or classroom resources to celebrate Frederick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper and or other notable African American people, places, events or time-periods. We look forward to hearing from you!

Colored Conventions Project Curriculum Team 2020



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**Title:** “This is the School that We Built: Anna Julia Cooper, Access and Education”

**Text:** “The Life of Anna Julia Cooper” <https://www.c-span.org/video/?313125-1/life-anna-julia-cooper>

**USPS Image of Anna Julia Cooper:** [**https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2009/pb22258/html/info1\_007.htm**](https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2009/pb22258/html/info1_007.htm)

**Grade/Subject:** 5th

**Materials Needed:** paper, pens/pencils, “The Life of Anna Julia Cooper” video clip Internet access, Image of USPS stamp of Anna Julia Cooper,

**Ideas/Values:** Access, Education, Progress, Uplift, African American civil rights, Women’s Rights, Visionary,

**Description:** Through a Paideia Seminar, students will be able to gain a deeper understanding of Anna Julia Cooper as a visionary educator and her work and ideas on educating African Americans during the period immediately after Reconstruction. Students will analyze the connections between progress and education using the resources (image of Cooper in the USPS stamp, and video).

**Summative Assessment:** Students will write narratives describing how they would run a school that would focus upon preparing children for bright futures. Narratives should be three paragraphs and include sufficient supportive details.

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**Pre-Seminar Content**

**Launch Activity:**

Write the words “Access” and “Education” on the board and the question, “What might “Access and “Education” mean to African Americans during and after Reconstruction?

**Inspectional Viewing**

Prior to playing the video, provide students with some brief background information on Anna Julia Cooper. Inform students they are about to view a short video on her life, titled “The Life of Anna Julia Cooper.” Ask students to anticipate what they might expect to see in the video. *List on a piece of paper three concepts or ideas that you might expect to learn about Anna Julia Cooper ideas about education based on the idea that she was a visionary.*

**Background Information:**

**Share as appropriate or to elaborate on the information included in the video:***Dr. Anna Julia Cooper was an educational leader, feminist, and advocate for the rights of all African Americans, particularly black women, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. She educated all United States citizens about sexism and racism through her writing, speeches, and decades of community service.*

*Cooper was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. Cooper was the daughter of Hannah Stanley, a slave of the Haywood family. She had two older brothers, Andrew and Rufus. Although she was born before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Cooper had no memories of her life as a slave. Hannah Stanley taught Anna the importance of using her “voice” to support her family and the black community.*

*In 1867, the Episcopal Church and Freedman’s Bureau built St. Augustine’s Normal School and Collegiate Institute on land owned by the Haywood family. St. Augustine’s educated freed slaves and their families. In 1868, Cooper received a scholarship to become one of the school’s first students. There Cooper developed a love for learning that would stay with her the rest of her life. When Cooper was very young, she decided that she wanted to be a teacher who encouraged all children to learn. Cooper earned part of her tuition by tutoring her classmates.*

*St. Augustine’s focused on preparing its male students for the ministry of higher education. Because the administrators believed that women went to school to find a husband, female students could only take a series of basic classes known as the Ladies’ Course. This frustrated Cooper, who longed for more challenging studies. “I constantly felt . . . a thumping from within unanswered by any beckoning from without,” she later said. She decided to raise her “voice” to fight for the right to take the same classes as the men.*

*While at St. Augustine’s, Anna took a Greek class taught by George A.C. Cooper, a former slave who was studying to become a minister. The two fell in love and were married on June 21, 1877, after Anna finished her studies at St. Augustine’s. On September 27, 1879, just two months after becoming the second black ordained minister in North Carolina’s Protestant Episcopal Church, George suddenly died. Anna said he died from working too hard. She never remarried.*

*In 1881, Mrs. Cooper started attending Ohio’s Oberlin College, one of the first co-educational institutions to admit both women and African Americans. She wrote letters to the school’s president for free tuition and a job so she could afford room and board. Among her classmates were Mary Eliza Church (Terrell) and Ida A. Gibbs (Hunt), future black leaders. All three women took classes in Latin, Greek, modern European languages, literature, philosophy, science, and mathematics.*

*After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics in 1884, Mrs. Cooper taught Greek, French literature, and science at Wilberforce University, a historically black school in Xenia, Ohio. Because she wanted to live closer to her mother, she returned to teach at St. Augustine’s in 1885. Two years later, Oberlin awarded her an honorary master’s degree.*

*In 1887, Mrs. Cooper was recruited to teach math and science at the Preparatory High School for Colored Youth in Washington, D.C., the nation’s largest high school for African Americans. This school was later known as M Street and today as Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. On January 1, 1902, Mrs. Cooper became the principal of M Street High School. She set high academic standards, hired capable teachers, and offered tutoring. She helped students believe that, regardless of their race or gender, they could achieve their dreams. While Mrs. Cooper was principal, many students at M Street earned scholarships to study at important institutions such as Harvard, Brown, Oberlin, Yale, Amherst, Dartmouth, and Radcliffe.*

*During this period, many Americans believed that blacks weren’t as smart as whites. Mrs. Cooper, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington believed differently. Mr. Washington thought black students should take vocational education courses and work their way up through society starting as manual laborers. Mr. Du Bois believed that blacks should study the classics and become community leaders. Because Mrs. Cooper agreed with both men, she offered courses in the liberal arts plus vocational and industrial education. Because the D.C. Board of Education preferred Mr. Washington’s methods, it did not renew Mrs. Cooper’s contract. She stopped being a principal in June 1906. Then she taught languages at the Lincoln Institute in Jefferson City, Missouri, until 1910, when she was rehired to teach Latin at M Street High School.*

*In 1914, Mrs. Cooper started working on her doctorate at Columbia University in New York City. On December 25, 1915, she became the guardian of five orphaned great-nieces and nephews ranging in age from 6 months to 12 years. Because of her teaching and family responsibilities, she was unable to go to Columbia full time to finish her degree, so she enrolled at the University of Paris, Sorbonne. On March 23, 1925, Mrs. Cooper earned her Ph.D. She was the fourth African-American woman to hold a doctorate. On December 29, 1925, D.C. Commissioner William Tindall awarded her degree in a special ceremony at Howard University.*

*On June 15, 1930, Dr. Cooper retired from M Street High School. She became president of Frelinghuysen*

*University, which provided social services, vocational training, and educational programs for black, working-class adults in Washington, D.C. She also established the Hannah Stanley Haywood Opportunity School in honor of her mother. When Frelinghuysen lost its building in 1931, Dr. Cooper let the school use her home at 201 T Street. She didn’t charge rent or accept a salary. In 1940, Dr. Cooper resigned as president but continued to work as the school’s registrar. She made arrangements for her home to be used to promote black education after her death.*

**Vocabulary:**

Ask students to discuss the meaning of the words: “Higher Education” “Genius” and “Life-Long Learner” and the context in which they were referenced in the video.

Ask students to write down any questions they have about the content or other unfamiliar ideas and words in the video. Discuss with students.

**Analytical Viewing:**

Project the USPS image of Anna Julia Cooper on a screen.

 Have students examine the image of Anna Julia Cooper and list all the ideas or things her image represents the potential of African Americans during Reconstruction. Stress to students that Anna Julia Cooper was 10 in 1868 and went to school during the Reconstruction period in the South. They should underline the three things that they think are most important in the picture and how Anna Julia Cooper represented one expression of freedom ...the ability to gain access to an education.

**Seminar Questions:**

Opening (Identify the type of image: portrait, event, family landscape, etc.):

The USPS Image is titled “Black Heritage.” Think of another great title for the image of

Anna Julia Cooper that is related to education.

Write it on a piece of paper and then share. (round-robin contributions)

Why did you choose that title? (spontaneous discussion)

**Pre-Seminar Process:**

**Define and State the purpose for the seminar.**

Explain to students what a Paideia seminar is:

 “A Paideia seminar is a group discussion about a text or video.“

“The main purpose of the seminar is for us to arrive at a fuller understanding of ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.”

**Teachers should explain their responsibilities to students.**

“I am primarily responsible for asking challenging questions, and I will take a variety of notes to keep up with the flow of ideas.

“I will help move the discussion along in a productive direction by asking

follow-up questions based on my notes. “I am asking you to think, listen and

speak about your thoughts, reactions and ideas.”

You can help each other do this by using each other’s names. “You should raise your hands in order to speak and wait your turn to talk.”

“You should try to both agree and disagree in a courteous, thoughtful manner. For example, you might say, ‘I disagree with Aria because…,’ focusing on the ideas involved not on individuals.

**Have students set a Personal Goal.**

“Now, please reflect on how you participate in a discussion as a group. “

“What goal can you set for yourself that will help the flow and meaning of the seminar?

“Please consider the list of personal participation goals – either on the Speaking and Listening Checklist or on the board.”

* To speak at least three times
* To refer to the video
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

“Is there one that is most relevant for you?

 Please choose one goal from the list or that you feel is best and commit to achieving it during the discussion we are about to have… write down (or circle) your personal goal.”

**Agree on a Group Goal.**

For this seminar, I will suggest our group goal

*Teachers can establish a goal that is best for the class* (display for all to see).

**Seminar Questions:**

**Opening (Identify main ideas from the video and the image of Anna Julia**

 **Cooper):**

* What is the one word that comes to mind when describing the video of Anna Julia Cooper’s life? (facilitate a round robin response)
* Why did you choose this word?

 **Core (Analyze textual details)**

 **Video**

* Play 00:42 -01:12, what does the narrator mean when he says that Anna Julia Cooper was “literate even before it became legal?” Why would it be illegal for Anna Julia Cooper to read as a child? **Teacher can remind students that slavery was legal when Anna Julia Cooper was born in 1858**
* How did being a life-long-learner help Anna Julia Cooper provide “access” to education that allowed African American girls and women to move beyond traditional domestic roles?
* What did Anna Julia Cooper believe that black minds could create with education?
* Play 3:28-3:40, based on the context of the video, what does the phrase “the least of these” mean? Why was it important for Anna Julia Cooper to provide access to this group? Can you think of a group in your or another community that might be described as “the least of these?”
* Play 7:01- 7:09, how did education help Anna Julia Cooper “light a way for others?” and create progress for African Americans? **Teachers should remind students of the connection education and progress had for students during Reconstruction.**

**USPS Image of Anna Julia Cooper**

* Show USPS image. How does the expression on Anna Julia Cooper’s face in USPS stamp help you understand her commitment and passion about education?
* Play 5:10-5:44 of video. How does the USPS Image help express how Anna Julia Cooper resisted against ideas that stated the women and African Americans were subservient?

**Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas)**

* If you could share the video of Anna Julia Cooper’s life or the image of the USPS image of Anna Julia Cooper with a family member, who would it be? Why? What would you want them to learn about Anna Julia Cooper’s life?

**Post-Seminar Process:**

**“Thank you for your focused and thoughtful participation in our seminar.”**

**Have students do a written self-assessment of their personal goal.**

“As part of the post-seminar process, I would first like to ask you to take a few minutes to reflect on your relative success in meeting the personal process goal you set prior to beginning the discussion. Please review the goal you set for yourself and reflect in writing to what extent you met the goal. In addition, note why you think you performed as you did”. (Pause for reflection.)

 **Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of the seminar.** “Now I would like us to talk together about how we did in relation to the group goal we set for ourselves (insert your group goal). On a scale of one to five, five being perfect, how would you say we did? Why?” (Pause for discussion.)

“Now, would someone be willing to (volunteer) to share your personal self-assessment and reflection?”

**Post Seminar Content:**

 **Transition to Writing:**

Have students discuss the impact of Anna Julia Cooper’s ideas about education for the “least of these” today, and connect initial impressions from the Launch Activity to findings made during the seminar.

**Writing Task:**

Cooper was a visionary and had a broad ideal of what education should be for African American progress. Develop your own wide-ranging vision of education that could transform people’s lives. Write an essay describing how you would run a school to provide access to education for a group of children that might be described as “the least of these.” Essays should be three paragraphs and include sufficient supportive details. ,

 **Brainstorm:**

Ask students to write one or two ideas that they would like to pursue in their essay and then ask them to list as many details about it as possible Then have students write an outline of their essay,

Structure the Writing: Allow a few minutes for all to revisit their notes. Keep in the forefront that the prompt requires the writing to include a perspective of a group of people that might be described as “the least of these.”

**First Draft:**

Give students 30 minutes to write the first draft.

**Collaborative Revision:**

Divide the group up into pairs and have them read their work aloud to their partners while the partners listen and take notes. Have each partner then ask at least one question for clarification and make at least one suggestion for reflection. Switch roles so that each participant reads his or her work and receives feedback. Make revisions resulting in a second draft.

**Edit:**

Once the second draft is complete, have students work in groups of three-four and this time take turns reading each other’s second drafts slowly and silently, marking any spelling or grammar errors they find. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific grammar strategies you have identified as a need. If possible, give time for full revisions resulting in a third and final draft.

**Publish:**

Publish digitally or in print, and share accordingly.

Resources:

* The Life of Anna Julia Cooper”<https://www.c-span.org/video/?313125-1/life-anna-julia-cooper>
* Image of Anna Julia Cooper on USPS Commemorative Stamp - <https://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2009/pb22258/html/info1_007.htm>
* Background Reading on Cooper- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anna-Julia-Cooper>
* <https://www.paideia.org/our-approach/paideia-seminar/sample-paideia-seminar-plans>

