

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify features of the American criminal justice system and its treatment of black and minority ethnic offenders.

A. In pairs, watch the clip below, 'We need to talk about an injustice' and answer the questions that follow:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan\\_stevenson\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_talk\\_about\\_an\\_injustice](http://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice)

1. Who is Bryan Stevenson and who does he work with?
2. How does the story about Stevenson's grandmother illustrate the importance of identity and how we gain our identity?
3. How many people were in prison in America in 1972 and in 2012 (when the talk was given)?
4. According to Stevenson, what has been the impact of mass incarceration on minority ethnic groups?
5. What proportion of black men aged 18-30 are on probation or parole or in jail?
6. In addition to ethnicity, what else affects how people are treated by the US criminal justice system?
7. What proportion of the black male population of Alabama has lost the right to vote?
8. At what age can a person be given a life sentence in America?
9. What proportion of those on death row have been found to be innocent?
10. What is the problem in America of not having had an era of 'truth and reconciliation' following slavery?
11. Why have African Americans faced 'eras of terrorism'?
12. According to Stevenson, why does Germany not have the death penalty?
13. How much more likely is a person to be sentenced to death for murder if their victim is White than if their victim is Black?
14. According to Stevenson, in what way do the problems of race question the identity of Americans?
15. According to Stevenson, how do we become fully human?
16. According to Stevenson, what is the opposite of poverty?
17. According to Stevenson, what will society be judged by?

18. What does the story about 'magic power' tell us about the way the American criminal justice system treats minority ethnic groups?

B. What in your opinion are the main causes of the problems that Stevenson discusses?

What things could you suggest to improve the American criminal justice system?

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