# **Lesson: Close Study of a Song - *“I Can’t Breathe”***

**Learning Areas**: English Life Skills.

**Stage:**  Stages 4-5

**NOTE: the song lyrics contain some explicit language and themes which may be distressing for some audiences, use discretion when delivering this content.**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised the content contains images of people who have died.**

**Learning intention**

Students will gain a deeper understanding of institutionalised racism, contemporary Australian socio-political events and world issues. Students will explore how music can provide a voice to minority groups.

**Success criteria**

## Students can make connections between Australian and global issues around institutionalised racism and contemporary socio-political events.

## **Introduction**

These resources have been developed to support delivery to students accessing a Life Skills curriculum across stages 4-5.

### **Worksheets and teacher notes**

1. Activities 1-6 are supported by slides on the associated PowerPoint. See the notes section of individual slides for more information and discussion prompts that can be used with the class.
2. News articles on David Dungaye Jr, George Floyd and the BLM movement.
3. Worksheet: *News Article Summary Template* for Activity 02.
4. Worksheets: *Feelings and Emotions Cards* for Activity 04.
5. Lyrics: can be found at <https://genius.com/Dobby-i-cant-breathe-lyrics>

## **Suggested Activities**

Below are a range of suggested activities to explore the concept of racism in a stage 4-5 Life Skills educational setting.

### **Activity 01: *KWL Chart. S*lides 5-7**

To open the lesson, play the first 2minutes of audio/video of the song “I Can’t Breathe” by Australian Aboriginal musician Dobby. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB9xhr_wR0M>

After accessing the song, prompt students to share points about what they know and make connections between their own knowledge and the topics Dobby is rapping about. Copy into KNOW section of worksheet.

Now move to What students are curious about and do the same for the WANT TO KNOW section of the worksheet.

*Some possible responses:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *KNOW* | *WHAT TO KNOW* | *LEANRED* |
| * *Rap music*
* *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*
* *BLM movement*
* *Police actions*
* *NT*
* *Stolen generations*
* *David Dungay*
* *George Floyd*
* *USA and Australia*
 | * *What is the connection between David Dungay and George Floyd?*
* *What does BLM stand for?*
* *Why does Dobby mention Donald Trump?*
* *Why is the song called ‘I can’t Breathe’?*
 |  |

NOTE: The final column of the KWL chart will be filled in at the conclusion of the lesson.

**Activity 02: *Jigsaw Activity Cloze Passages.* Slides 8-9**

Divide the class into 3 groups and share relevant news articles on David Dungay, George Floyd and the BLM movement. Students can work collaboratively in their group to highlight relevant information for their summary.

Students then summarise the key points from their news article on the *News Article Summary Template.*

Bring the class together and have students share their summary with the class, ensuring all students gain an understanding of each topic.

**Discussion.** Teacher led discussion prompting students to consider the following:

* *When did these events happen?*
* *Can you think of any similarities between the experiences of David Dungay and George Floyd?*
* *What about differences?*
* *Who is affected by these events?*
* *How would you feel if this was happening in your community?*

**Activity 03: *Music Word Mat.* Slides 10-11**

In this activity, ask students to come to the board and select - by pointing or circling with a whiteboard marker- words that describe the impact of music. ​Select students to justify their answers.

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**Activity 04: *My Response to “I Can’t Breathe”.* Slides 12-13**

Distribute blank feelings and emotions cards and pencils to students and ask them to record their response to the song. Play the audio and prompt students to draw a face to show the emotions they feel while listening to the song, they can identify emotions in the adjacent box (e.g. sad, worried, angry, frustrated, anxious, empowered).

**Activity 05: *Close Study of the Lyrics.* Slides 15-22**

Present a copy of the lyrics to students, read sections and present the questions on the slides.

A copy of the lyrics can be found at <https://genius.com/Dobby-i-cant-breathe-lyrics> and other sites.

**Activity 06: *KWL Chart.* Slides 23-24**

Return to KWL Chart and prompt class to reflect on learning and share some points they have learned in this lesson. Record in LEARNED column on chart.

### **Related Resources**

The following websites may be helpful for further information about racism and racism in schools.:

1. [Racism. No Way!](https://racismnoway.com.au/) website
2. [Lets talk about racism](https://youtu.be/NyXVdit9cDc) from the Australian Human Rights Commission
3. [All Together Now](https://alltogethernow.org.au/racism/racism-in-schools/how-to-discuss-racism-with-children/) organisation
4. [Bullying and Racism](https://caring.childstory.nsw.gov.au/everyday-caring/culture-identity-and-life-story-work/bullying-and-racism/chapters/what-is-racism) from the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice
5. Exploring [systemic racism](https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/racism/632495) though the Kids Britannica

#### Relevant websites

#### <https://www.nme.com/news/music/dobby-barkaa-music-video-i-cant-breathe-2715492>

<https://genius.com/Dobby-i-cant-breathe-lyrics>