

explained

This enlightening docu-series from Vox digs into a wide range of topics that puts the spotlight on topical issues that impact people's lives. Each episode generally ranges from 15 to 20 minutes in length and aims to dig deeper into topics, questions, and ideas that aren't often part of the daily news cycle.

2018 | TV-MA



MUSIC

SEASON ONE | 19 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY JOE POSNER

When does sound become music? Why are humans so uniquely able to master musical? Researchers talk rhythm, octaves, and the magic of song and dance.



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit these guiding questions or quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

- What is music?
- Why is it universal?
- How does sound become something more?

The episode presents a lot of data distinguishing how humans perceive music from how various animals perceive it. In your own words, discuss your understanding of the difference.

- What do we have to learn from comparing human perceptions to animal perceptions?

Discuss Jennifer Lee's experience of losing her ability to "hear" music. What was her emotional response to that? What does her experience teach us about the science of how we hear music? What did it teach you about the importance of music in our lives?

NETFLIX

**FOR SCHOOLS**

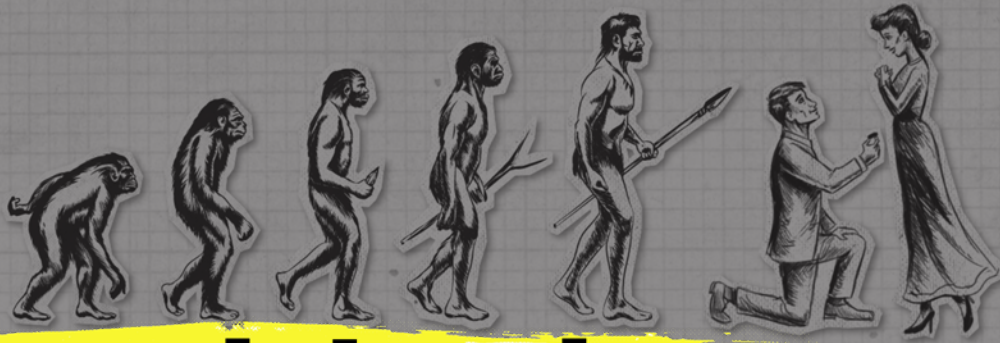
Use this episode and this context as the basis for a class activity or discussion

- Describe your understanding of each of the elements of music that are explained in the episode:
 - Rhythm
 - Pitch
 - Harmony
 - Timbre
 - Emotion
- The episode mentions many applications of music, including learning, healing, connection, pleasure, mood, and group cohesion. Choose one of those uses and conduct some online research about how music can be used in that way, and present the evidence about why it works.
- Write an argument about why you believe music is universal to human cultures. Remember to distinguish between the presence of music, and the differences in scales and the emotions associated with scales across cultures.

**IN THE HOME****ACTIVITY: DECONSTRUCT YOUR FAVORITE SONG**

Have each member of the family find a recording of their favorite song, or a song that has meaning to them. Spend some time breaking the song down by rhythm, pitch/harmony, emotion and memory. Describe to one another what the song means to you.





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THE WATER CRISIS

SEASON ONE | 19 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY FRANK MATT

The global water crisis is at an inflection point. How do we price our most valuable resource, while also ensuring access to it as a human right?



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit these guiding questions or quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

"It's easy to forget that the quest for clean water has been one of the defining struggles of human history. Civilizations that harnessed water thrived, the ones that failed, fell."

-Kyle MacLachlan, *The World's Water Crisis*

- After watching and learning about the current state and increasing scarcity of freshwater for human consumption, what are your recommendations for sustaining a thriving civilizations?

HERE ARE OTHER STATEMENTS MENTIONED IN THE WORLD'S WATER CRISIS TO DISCUSS:

"There is no substitute for water. . . How have we built a world where we don't have enough of its most valuable resource? What does a new world need to look like with a different relationship to water?" - Kyle MacLachlan, Narrator, *The World's Water Crisis*

"The benefit of valuing water as we should is that we wouldn't be growing crops in really arid places. . . How are you supposed to value an invaluable resource while ensuring everyone has it?" - Betsy Otto, Water Resources Analyst

"We have to defend our water. Because it is a vital liquid. It is the most important thing we have right now." - Laura Mena Garcia, Farmer

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RESEARCH AND MORE! This episode offers many opportunities for student research, as water affects many issues in politics, industry, agriculture, and human rights.

MEAT: “Nothing has more water embedded in it than meat. More people around the world are eating like Americans. But there is not enough water in the world to eat like Americans.” How is meat consumption linked to water scarcity?

CURRENT CITY POLICY & GROUND ZERO: Research one of the cities noted and what they are doing to address this growing crisis. Cities mentioned: Sao Paulo, Melbourne, Jakharta, London, Beijing, Istanbul, Tokyo, Bangalore, Barcelona and Mexico City.

FRESHWATER USE: Research what constitutes the percentages in this infographic from The World Bank. Focus on Agriculture and Industry. Recommend at least three realistic new ways for both areas to change practices and institute policies.

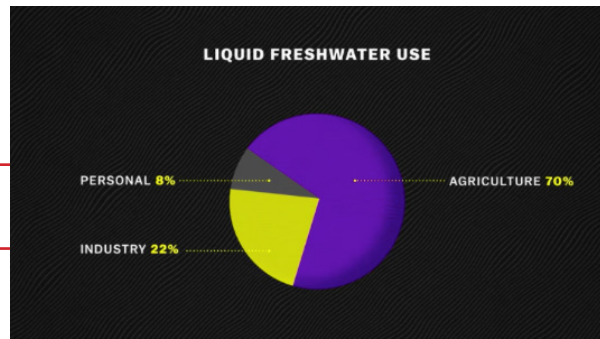
FARM SUBSIDIES AND AGRICULTURE: “Water does not abide by some of the basic rules of capitalism. Farmers hardly pay anything so the true cost of water does not end up in food costs.” You may also look to current desalination technology and work.

POLITICS OF THE COLORADO RIVER: We learn in the episode that the use of and damming of the Colorado River has enabled cities - Salt Lake, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Denver, Los Angeles, etc. - to thrive, but the overuse of this river also has major consequences. Research the history of the Colorado River and how it has impacted the cities it reaches.



IN THE HOME

In 2010 the United Nations recognized access to water and sanitation is a human right. Discuss at home, or individually explore, how water is a human right and the implications of this



ACTIVITY: TRACKING YOUR WATER FOOTPRINT

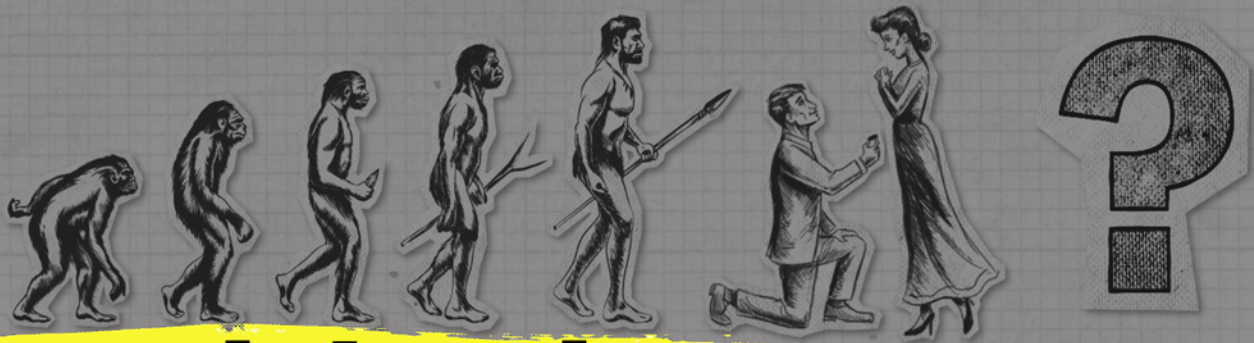
“The trick is recognizing how valuable water is before there is not enough of it.”
- Kyle MacLachlan, The World’s Water Crisis

STEP ONE: How to understand the scope of water use in our lives and how important it is to understand conservation.

- List all the ways that you personally use water on a daily basis
- List all the appliances in your home that you use on a daily basis that use water

STEP TWO: Conservation Efforts

- As a family or household, choose one or more strategies to cut down and conserve water in an area you have identified as possible to conserve water
- Track your conservation efforts over a week, or over a longer period of time and see how much water you have been able to conserve by looking at your water meter, your water bill, or establish other ways of tracking your use



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WHY WOMEN ARE PAID LESS

SEASON ONE | 18 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY JOHNNY HARRIS AND SARAH KLIFF

Hillary Clinton and Anne-Marie Slaughter discuss the cultural norms at the center of the worldwide gender pay gap, including the "motherhood penalty."



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit these guiding questions or quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

- Why are women all around the world paid so much less than men?
- What factors other than gender discrimination affect the gender pay gap?

In historical terms, what has changed, and what has stayed the same, with regard to the gender pay gap in the United States? How does the picture shift when you include racial disparities?

Discuss the stories of how Rwanda and Iceland reduced their pay gaps. What were the big "aha," moments or major influencers in each case?

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FOR SCHOOLS

Choose one of the following quotes from the episode, and use your own words to restate the point that the speaker(s) makes. Using independent research from credible sources, find other examples and evidence that supports the argument of your choice.

- *“We know that just freeing the potential of women, that is the fastest multiplier we have in terms of our growth. That is such an accelerator in eradicating poverty.”*
-Rwandan Ambassador to the UN Valentine Rugwaziba
- *“A pay gap based on choices is different than a pay gap that’s just because you’re a woman...”* -Greta Sustern, Journalist
- *“But often, women and men don’t get the same choices. In the U.S., there are three times as many single moms as single dads.”* - Episode Narration
- *“The wage gap is not just a woman’s issue, it’s a family issue.”*
- Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

The episode offers two examples of countries where the pay gap has been largely eliminated, Rwanda and Iceland. Create a graphic organizer* that illustrates your understanding of what sparked the change, the policy and social changes that had to occur, and the outcomes of each story.

**If you are unfamiliar with graphic organizers, do a Google image search for “graphic organizer template” to generate ideas.*

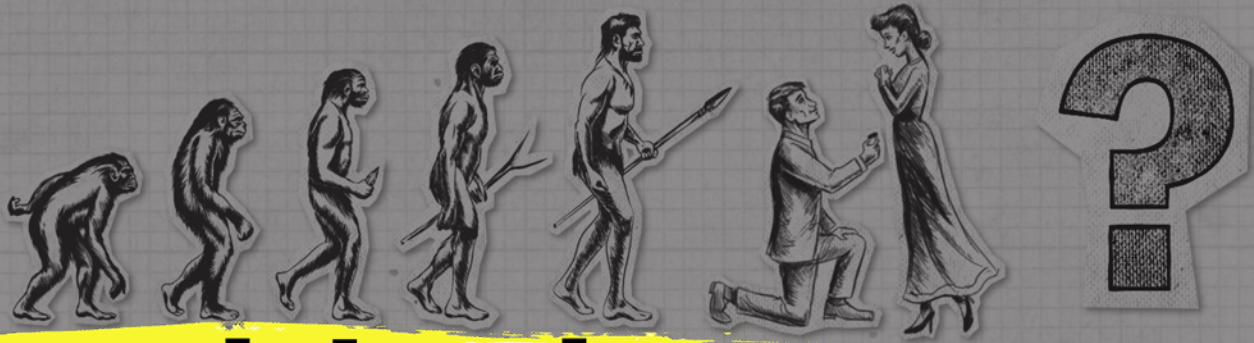
Write an op-ed for your local newspaper describing what you believe needs to happen in order to address the wage gap in the United States.



IN THE HOME

ACTIVITY: LEARNING FROM PERSONAL HISTORY

Identify someone you know, perhaps a grandmother or close family friend, who lived and worked through the changes for women that the episode describes between the 1950s, 1960s, and through the 1970s and beyond. Interview that person to learn about her experiences working, and if relevant parenting, during those times.



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THE STOCK MARKET

SEASON ONE | 17 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY ESTELLE CASWELL

Does the stock market accurately reflect the status of the economy? Finance specialists discuss market history, valuations and CEO incentives.



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit these guiding questions or quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

- What story does the stock market tell us on a daily basis about the health and well being of our economy and our country?
- If corporations built the American middle class in the mid-20th century, who or what is building the middle class today?
- What do you think are all the responsibilities of a corporate executive? Is it to their shareholders? Does it reach beyond their own corporation? Why or why not?
- How do stockholders influence how companies behave? Whose interests are they taking into account?

"Stock markets give people a change which company deserve to succeed. Which ideas are worth a gamble." - Narrator, *The Stock Market*

"There's something about giving people games to play. You look at successful countries and they all have stock markets, and countries that tried to shut them down are coming around and instituting them." - Robert Schiller, Nobel Prize Economist

"My concern is we have evolved to this much shorter term view of shareholders rights vs. a longer term view of stakeholder responsibilities." - Hank Newell, Former CEO, Wausau Paper

"This trend [of short term gain vs. long term responsibilities] is seriously threatening the ability of our corporations to pursue the kinds of projects that lead to long term corporate responsibility and economic growth." - Lynn Stout, Corporate Lawyer

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FOR SCHOOLS

Use this episode and this context as the basis for a class activity or discussion

STOCKMARKET 101

What more would you add to this definition and information on the stock market? What is missing?

Definition: The stock market is people buying and selling pieces of a company based on how much those pieces will be worth in the future. There are stock markets all over the world.

In the United States:

- NYSE (New York Stock Exchange) - est 1792
- Nasdaq - est 1971 and is for technology companies
- Need to know how both are doing in order to know how the stock market is performing
- Two big American Indexes: S & P 500 and Dow (more exclusive) - 30 most important

There were several men mentioned during this episode. Some familiar, some less familiar. Choose one name and do a Stock Market Profile Biography - a one page written overview of their role and influence in American corporations and/or the American stock market.

- Andrew Carnegie
- Cornelius Vanderbilt
- John D. Rockefeller
- Warren Buffet
- Milton Friedman

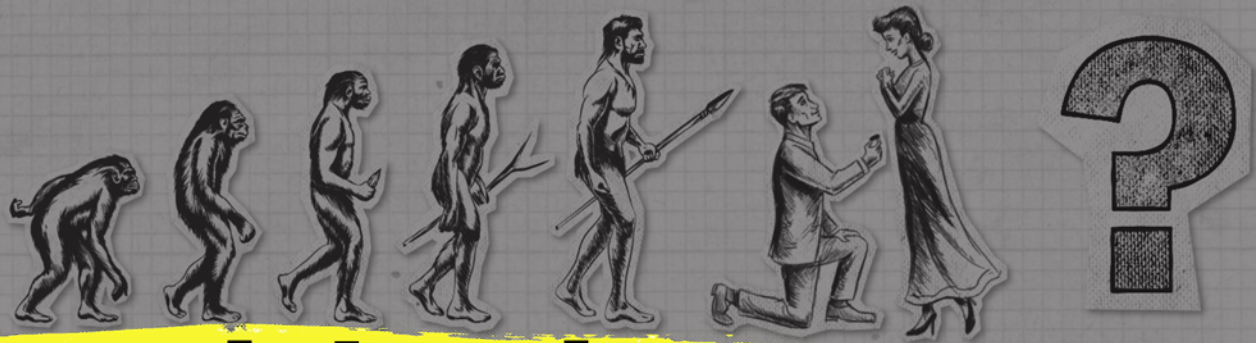
Read [“The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits”](#) by Milton Friedman and discuss his central argument that the sole responsibility of business is to increase its profits.



IN THE HOME

ACTIVITY: READING THE STOCK EXCHANGE DAILY REPORT

Choose a company and look at and track its performance on the stock market over a designated period of time.



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CRICKET

SEASON ONE | 16 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY MACK SCHNEIDER

Cricket experts look at how the confusing sport became so popular and discuss its evolution in becoming more accessible, entertaining and profitable.



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit these guiding questions or quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

- What are the rules of this complicated game?
- How has this game changed over time, to become one of the most popular sports on Earth?

Have you ever played cricket? Watched a game of cricket? Who did you watch it with, and where did they learn to play and/or watch it?

What influences changes how the game has been played over time?



FOR SCHOOLS

Use this episode and this context as the basis for a class activity or discussion

What meaning do professional sports hold in society?

- Using examples from the episode, and from your own experience and community, discuss your understanding of the purpose and meaning of professional sports.

Draw on your knowledge of, or your independent research into, the colonial history of England and India and write a brief description of the nature of the relationship between the two countries and how it has changed over time.

- How does that history deepen your understanding of how the importance of cricket has evolved over time in India?
- Read this quote from Mihr Rose, author of *A History of Indian Cricket*: “The power of cricket has shifted from England to India, there’s no question about it. Why Lords is seen as the home of cricket, that’s the symbolic home of cricket. It’s like seeing Rome as the great capital of the world - that was a long time ago.”
 - How do you see this perspective as related to the colonial history of the two nations?

Read these two quotes describing the tension between national/local pride in a sports team, and the monetary value of playing the game:

- *“People will develop an opinion that some players don’t like playing for their country, they’re just running the money down. But sport is about money - you have to make a living, you’re a sports person”*
- Brian Lara, Cricketer, West Indies, 1990-2007
- *“This is entertainment, and you can watch it every night, and there will be an unfolding narrative. That’s what sport at its best is. If cricket isn’t trying to entertain people, I’m not sure why we’re playing it.”*
- Jarrod Kimber, Journalist, ESPN

Write an opinion about:

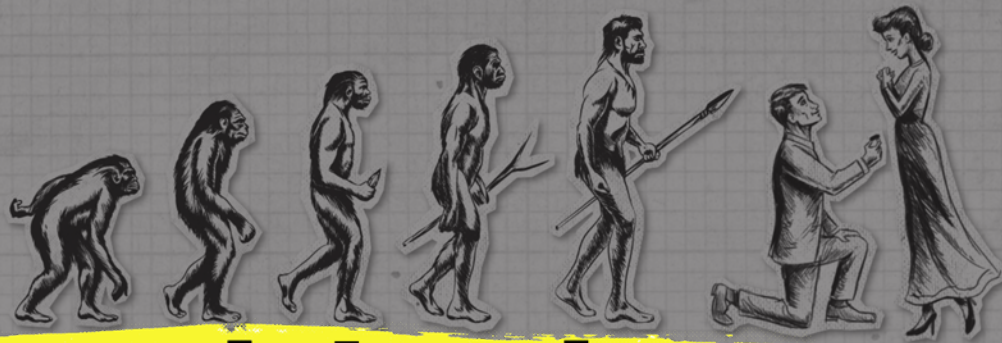
- Whether a professional player has a duty to their home community or country
- The role of money in professional sports
- The relationship between sports and entertainment



IN THE HOME

ACTIVITY: PLAY CRICKET

Based on the episode’s description of the game, make some wickets, choose a bat, and see if you can play the game.



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SEASON ONE | 15 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY CHRISTINE LASKOWSKI

Do we overuse exclamation points!? Linguists and copy editors look at how the punctuation has adapted across history, literature and internet speak.



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit the guiding questions and quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

- What is the correct way to use an exclamation point?
- Why do we have only three punctuation marks to end sentences?
- Why is the exclamation point so confusing? And is there something better?

When do you use exclamation points? Do you use them differently in different contexts, like at school, work, or online? How do you decide when to use them?

Does learning how the exclamation point has evolved over time change your thoughts about how it "should" be used now? How and when does what is 'correct' in language evolve?

**FOR SCHOOLS**

Use this episode and this context as the basis for a class activity or discussion

Using multiple examples from the episode, state your understanding of why exclamation point use might be perceived differently when used by men and women. For a deeper understanding, read the abstract of the original article cited by the episode, [“Gender and the Use of Exclamation Points in Computer-Mediated Communication: An Analysis of Exclamations Posted to Two Electronic Discussion Lists.”](#)¹

- After stating your understandings of the research findings, write about:
 - Whether they feel true to you given your interactions with others
 - What implications these findings have for the real world, like in work settings, and
 - Further research questions that might be useful to explore.

In the 1960s, Mark Speker invented the interrobang in the U.S., and Hervé Bazin proposed the acclamation point, the conviction point, and the authority point. Why do you think they were never widely adopted?

- If you were to invent one or more punctuation marks to augment the three options we currently have to end sentences, what would they be? Include images of what they would look like, as well as when you think they should be used.

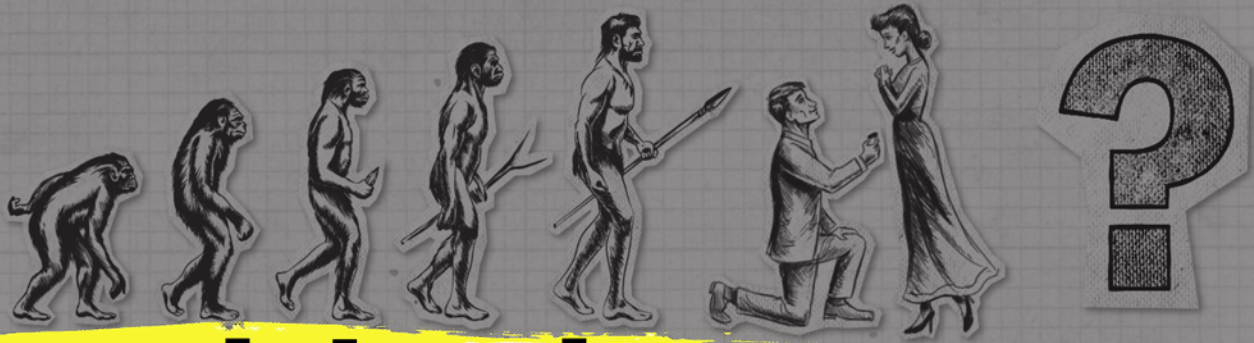
In the closing of the episode, Jason Parham, senior writer for Wired, states, “Language and writing is supposed to be fluid...the internet is new and young, sort of the Wild Wild West, anything kind of goes.”

- Do you agree with his statement? Why or why not?
- Write an opinion piece about whether or not it is important for language to have ‘rules,’ including your ideas about what the rules should be in different contexts, who should have the power to decide, and what are the implications of breaking the rules for people from different genders, races, or other social groups.

**IN THE HOME****ACTIVITY: FUN WITH PUNCTUATION**

Think back to the example from the episode from *Beowulf*, where the first passage would change significantly if the first word is, “Listen?” or “Listen!” As a family, find a few phrases, like a passage from a favorite book, a recent text exchange, or movie quotes. Take turns writing them down in ways that their meaning might be changed with different punctuation.

¹Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Volume 11, Issue 4, 1 July 2006, Pages 1012-1024, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00305.x>.



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THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP

SEASON ONE | 16 MINUTES | PRODUCED BY JOE POSNER

Cory Booker and others discuss how slavery, housing discrimination and centuries of inequality have compounded to create a racial wealth gap.



START THE CONVERSATION

After watching, revisit these guiding questions or quotes from the opening of the episode. They can also be used as writing or discussion prompts in a virtual class, or as a source for inspiration for students and families to discuss.

- *"Since 1865 America has slowly, and painfully, broken down racial barrier after racial barrier. Wealth is different."* - Narration from "The Racial Wealth Gap"
- *"This [the racial wealth gap] is something that started with slavery but its never diminished over time. That is because government policy keeps perpetuating the circumstances for the wealth gap"* - Mehrsa Baradaran, Author
- *"Whenever this issue of compensatory or preferential treatment for the Negro is raised, some of our friends recoil in horror. The Negro should be granted equality, they agree; but he should ask nothing more. On the surface, this appears reasonable, but it is not realistic. For it is obvious that if a man is entered at the starting line in a race three hundred years after another man, the first would have to perform some impossible feat in order to catch up with his fellow runner."* - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can't Wait
- *"This does have a generational cost. We just can't hope to thrive as a nation with some wounds that have not been addressed."* - Senator Cory Booker

NETFLIX



FOR SCHOOLS

Use this episode and this context as the basis for a class activity or discussion

President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968 on April 11, 1968 - one week after the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This Act expanded on previous acts prohibiting discriminatory practices concerning the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, sex (and as amended) handicap and family status. Title VIII of the Act is also known as the Fair Housing Act (of 1968.)

- Why didn't the passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act end housing discrimination?

Home ownership is the single most determining factor to perpetuating the racial wealth gap. Two-thirds of America's middle class wealth is in the form of home ownership. Because of enslavement, and the centuries of legal barriers for African Americans to own their own homes including red-lining, the racial wealth gap continues to increase.

- Why is the racial wealth gap continuing to grow and grow?



IN THE HOME

ACTIVITY: "EFFECTS OF RACISM BECAME A JUSTIFICATION FOR MORE RACISM."
-SAMIRA WILEY, NARRATOR, THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP

Revisit the history of redlining in the United States. Several historical maps of cities were displayed with redlining clearly shown- Los Angeles, Baltimore, Denver, Atlanta, Miami, Brooklyn, Detroit.

- Research your own city or town and see if you can find historical housing maps that show which neighborhoods were redlined.
- Interview someone in your community who may know the history of redlining in your community.
- Listen to the [1619 Podcast - Episode 2: The Economy That Slavery Built](#). You can also read this accompanying article, [here](#).

