

## **Baltimore Uprising Part I: Causes**

**Museum Connection:** Family and Community

**Purpose:** In this lesson students will identify, explore, and evaluate the immediate and underlying causes of the 2015 Baltimore Uprising.

**Course:** United States History, African American History, Government

**Time Frame:** This lesson will require one class period to complete.

**Correlation to Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards:**

**Indicator United States History High School:** Analyze modern economic, political and social influences on American society from 1981-present (5.6.2).

Objective: Evaluate how the government has addressed changing demographics, including immigration, the changing age structure and increasing minority populations in the United States (PS, PNW, G)

**Core Learning Goals: Government**

Goal 1 Political Systems: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the historical development and current status of principles, institutions, and processes of political systems.

Expectation: 1.1 The student will demonstrate understanding of the structure and functions of government and politics in the United States.

Indicators:

1.1.2 The student will evaluate how the principles of government assist or impede the functioning of government.

1.1.4 The student will explain roles and analyze strategies individuals or groups may use to initiate change in governmental policy and institutions.

Expectation: 1.2 The student will evaluate how the United States government has maintained a balance between protecting rights and maintaining order.

Indicator:

1.2.3 The student will evaluate the impact of governmental decisions and actions that have affected the rights of individuals and groups in American society and/or have affected maintaining order and/or safety.

**Objective(s):**

1. Students will explore the various underlying causes of the Baltimore uprising.
2. Students will examine the extent to which police brutality was a contributing factor to the Baltimore uprising.
3. Students will evaluate solutions to eliminate police brutality proposed by the Baltimore City Police Department and elected officials.

**Vocabulary and Concepts:**

Word or Concept	Definition
Civil disobedience	refusal to obey governmental demands or commands especially as a nonviolent and usually collective means of forcing concessions from the government.
Riot	public violence, tumult, or disorder a random or disorderly profusion.
Unrest	a disturbed or uneasy state : turmoil
Uprising	an act or instance of rising up ; especially : a usually localized act of popular violence in defiance usually of an established government

**Materials:**

***For the Teacher:***

## Teacher Resource Sheet 1: Historical Background

### ***For the Student:***

Student Resource Sheet 1: “What Caused Aisha’s Death?”

Student Resource Sheet 2: “Baltimore: The divided city where Freddie Gray lived and died”

Student Resource Sheet 3: “How Baltimore’s Young Black Men Are Boxed In

Student Resource Sheet 4: *The Root* “A Bloody History of Police Brutality in Baltimore”

Student Resource Sheet 5: *The Baltimore Sun* “Undue Force”

Student Resource Sheet 6: “Undue Force” article graphic organizer

Student Resource Sheet 7: “Undue Force” – Proposed Reforms graphic organizer

### **Resources:**

### ***Publications:***

### ***Web Sites:***

Access the 2012 report on police, security guards and vigilante killings of Black citizens at [www.operationghettostorm.org](http://www.operationghettostorm.org). This report provides excellent data on the deaths of Black citizens nationwide. The report also proposes solutions to address police brutality.

A Bloody History of Police Brutality in Baltimore (The Root)

[www.theroot.com/articles/history/2015/05/a\\_bloody\\_history\\_of\\_police\\_brutality\\_in\\_baltimore.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2015/05/a_bloody_history_of_police_brutality_in_baltimore.html) This article chronicles the long history of Black Baltimoreans being brutalized by police officers. It provides an historical context to the long standing feeling of mistrust many in the Black community feel towards the police.

Undue Force (The Sun)

<http://data.baltimoresun.com/news/police-settlements/> This article is very useful in telling the stories of people that have been victims of police brutality. Students can be assigned to read individual stories or the entire article to gain a full appreciation of how many residents feel about the police. The article concludes with proposed reforms that can be used to help students come up with their solutions.

**Historical Background:** On April 12, 2015, Freddie Gray a 25 year old African American Baltimorean ran from uniformed police officers in West Baltimore. Once apprehended he was placed under arrest for illegal possession of a knife. During the arrest he was in pain when he was placed in the transport vehicle. While being transported to he became unconscious and was taken to the hospital. Gray died on April 19<sup>th</sup> while still in the hospital from spinal cord injuries sustained during his arrest. In the days following the arrest and Gray's subsequent death, which was recorded by witnesses and shared across social and mainstream media, protests across the city, nation and around the world emerged. On April 25<sup>th</sup> a protest in downtown Baltimore turned violent with 34 arrests and 15 police officers injured. On the day of Gray's funeral, April 27, Baltimore city erupted into more violent protests, including the burning of cars and property and looting stores, dubbed as the Baltimore Uprising. Baltimore City police, police officers from jurisdictions throughout the state as well as other states, State Troopers and the National Guard were brought in to restore order after Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency. The Mayor enacted a curfew that effectively shut down the city at 10pm – 6am for the duration of the unrest. The City State's Attorney's Office conducted an investigation into Gray's death. The State Medical Examiner declared Gray's death a homicide and on May 1, 2015 the State's Attorney charged the six Baltimore City Police Officers in the death of Freddie Gray on various counts including depraved heart murder. On May 3<sup>rd</sup> the state of emergency was lifted and the curfew ended as the unrest subsided. On May 21, 2015 a grand jury indicted the officers on numerous charges ranging from reckless endangerment to depraved heart murder. In the ensuing months the homicide rate soared and the Police Commissioner was fired by the Mayor. The citizens of Baltimore have struggled to build a better city out of these tragic events.

## **Lesson Development:**

### ***Motivation:***

1. In order to help students understand the difference between immediate causes and underlying causes of historical events distribute copies of “What Caused Aisha’s Death?” (Student Resource Sheet 1) to the students.
2. Read the story and have students decide what they think caused Aisha’s death. List and discuss student responses.
3. Explain that all the answers are valid and that it depends on the perspective of the writer/viewer to choose what they consider to be the cause. A discussion of historical perspective and bias can be developed on this point as well.
4. Conclude this activity by distinguishing between the immediate/direct cause of Aisha’s death being hit by the truck and the other possible choices as underlying causes.

### ***Activities:***

5. Transition by identifying Freddie Gray’s arrest and eventual death as the immediate cause of the unrest in Baltimore. Generate a list of possible underlying causes with the students. List the answers (poverty, unemployment, poor education, poor housing, lack of opportunity, police brutality, etc.).
6. Have students rank the underlying causes in order of most to least important in leading to the unrest and prepare to share their rankings with the class.
7. Distribute selected Student Resource Sheets 2 – 8. Direct students to read the articles in the resource sheets and complete the accompanying graphic organizer, Student Resource Sheet 9. Instruct students that they

- will be drawing inferences and making conclusions from the information highlighting the underlying causes listed.
8. Provide students sufficient time to complete Student Resource Sheet 9 and review their answers. Based on the conclusions they drew from their analysis re-visit the rankings.
  9. Transition by re-emphasizing to the students that these are the underlying causes of the Baltimore uprising and the remainder of the lesson will focus on the most significant underlying factor leading to the Baltimore uprising.
  10. Distribute Student Resource Sheets 10 (“A Bloody History of Police Brutality in Baltimore”). Direct students to read the article and create a timeline from the events in the article.
  11. Distribute Student Resource Sheet 11 (“Undue Force”). Watch the excerpt from <http://data.baltimoresun.com/news/police-settlements/> about the two victims of police brutality as an introduction to the news article they will be reading. Organize students into groups to read the article. Each student should be assigned to read the story of one victim of police brutality. **All students are to read the section “Reforms in Progress.”** Direct students to collaborate on completing the “Undue Force” graphic organizers (Student Resource Sheets 12 and 13).
  12. Engage the class in a discussion of what happened to the victims. Identify and list the reforms and solutions proposed to address police brutality in the article. As part of the discussion have students include their own ideas on how to address police brutality.
  13. Rank the proposed solutions in order of what students believe will be the most to the least effective in addressing police brutality.

***Assessment:***

14. Assess individual understanding by having students complete the following prompt as an exit ticket:

15. The most effective way to address police brutality is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Cite supporting details from the resource sheets).
16. Have students share their responses to the prompt.

***Closure:***

17. Bring closure to the lesson by polling the class and creating a class ranking of the solutions to address police brutality.
18. Explain that they have completed the first step in a 3 step analysis of the Baltimore uprisings. Now that they have an understanding of how police brutality was a key underlying cause of the Baltimore uprising the next step is to examine what happened during the uprisings. Finally, in the third step they will determine the best solutions to addressing the issues that led to the Baltimore uprisings.
19. Introduce the goal of the mini-unit is for students to create a project that expresses how they think the problems that caused the Baltimore uprisings can be solved at the conclusion of the unit.

**Lesson Extensions:**

1. Have students conduct research on the underlying causes of the 1968 riots in Baltimore in order to draw conclusions about the recent unrest.
2. Conduct a field trip to the Reginald F. Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History & Culture to view the Devin Allen photograph exhibit, *Awakenings in a New Light*.
3. Have students interview community members about what they believe the underlying causes of the Baltimore uprisings were?
4. Have students conduct further research on the specific underlying causes of the Baltimore uprising (poverty, unemployment, poor education, etc.).
5. Use the Pratt Street Riot exhibit at the Reginald F. Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History & Culture to expand student's understanding of Baltimore's history of riotous behavior.

## **Teacher Resource Sheet 1**

### **Baltimore Uprising Historical Background**

On April 12, 2015, Freddie Gray a 25 year old African American Baltimorean ran from uniformed police officers in West Baltimore. Once apprehended he was placed under arrest for illegal possession of a knife. During the arrest he was in pain when he was placed in the transport vehicle. While being transported to he became unconscious and was taken to the hospital. Gray died on April 19<sup>th</sup> while still in the hospital from spinal cord injuries sustained during his arrest. In the days following the arrest and Gray's subsequent death, which was recorded by witnesses and shared across social and mainstream media, protests across the city, nation and around the world emerged. On April 25<sup>th</sup> a protest in downtown Baltimore turned violent with 34 arrests and 15 police officers injured. On the day of Gray's funeral, April 27, Baltimore city erupted into more violent protests, including the burning of cars and property and looting stores, dubbed as the Baltimore Uprising. Baltimore City police, police officers from jurisdictions throughout the state as well as other states, State Troopers and the National Guard were brought in to restore order after Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency. The Mayor enacted a curfew that effectively shut down the city at 10pm – 6am for the duration of the unrest. The City State's Attorney's Office conducted an investigation into Gray's death. The State Medical Examiner declared Gray's death a homicide and on May 1, 2015 the State's Attorney charged the six Baltimore City Police Officers in the death of Freddie Gray on various counts including depraved heart murder. On May 3<sup>rd</sup> the state of emergency was lifted and the curfew ended as the unrest subsided. On May 21, 2015 a grand jury indicted the officers on numerous charges ranging from reckless endangerment to depraved heart murder. In the ensuing months the homicide rate soared and the Police Commissioner was fired by the Mayor. The citizens of Baltimore have struggled to build a better city out of these tragic events.



## Student Resource Sheet 1

### What Caused Aisha's Death

On a cold winter day in January Jamal was at home waiting for his newlywed Aisha to come home from work. It was getting late and Aisha had not called. Jamal began to get a bit concerned but continued to watch television. As it got later and later and he still had not heard from Aisha he began to get upset that she had not called. When she finally got home Jamal confronted Aisha exclaiming that “the least you could have done was call me.” Aisha shot back “why didn’t you call me?” Jamal was angry that he had to wait for Aisha to get home so she could cook dinner. She told him he was lazy and should have made dinner for her since he was home first. They argued back and forth until Aisha could not take any more and left, slamming the door behind her. A pretty bad snowstorm was beginning to make its way through the city just as Aisha was getting home and was building pretty quickly when she left. She just got in her car and drove to the Starbuck’s several blocks from their home. After about an hour or so she collected herself and concluded that it was a pretty stupid argument and she decided to go home. When she went outside to her car the storm had gotten pretty bad and she wished she had changed her tires like she planned to last week. They were almost bald! In any case, she got into her car and began driving home. As she approached the intersection one block away from her house the light was just turning yellow. When she hit the brakes her car tires lost traction and she slid through the intersection. Just as she was going through the intersection the light changed and she was hit by a snow plow. She was gravely injured but still alive. Because of the snowstorm it took the ambulance an extra 20 minutes to get to the accident. Unfortunately, poor Aisha did not survive.

Using only the information provided in the story what do you think caused Aisha’s death?

- A. Jamal’s laziness
- B. The snow storm
- C. Her bald tires
- D. The snow plow
- E. The late ambulance

## Student Resource Sheet 2

*Al Jazeera* - “Baltimore: The divided city where Freddie Gray lived and died”

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/4/29/baltimore-protests-race-and-poverty-freddie-gray.html>

### Student Resource Sheet 3

*FightThirtyEight* – How Baltimore’s Young Black Men Are Boxed In

<http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/how-baltimores-young-black-men-are-boxed-in/>

## Student Resource Sheet 4

*Common Dreams* – “The "Shocking" Statistics of Racial Disparity in Baltimore “

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/04/28/shocking-statistics-racial-disparity-baltimore>

## Student Resource Sheet 5

*The Root* – “Baltimore’s Slow Burn of Poverty and Hopelessness”

[http://www.theroot.com/articles/politics/2015/04/the\\_numbers\\_behind\\_the\\_poverty\\_and\\_despair\\_in\\_baltimore.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/politics/2015/04/the_numbers_behind_the_poverty_and_despair_in_baltimore.html)

## Student Resource Sheet 6

*The Economic Policy Institute* – “From Ferguson to Baltimore: The Fruits of Government-Sponsored Segregation”

<http://www.epi.org/blog/from-ferguson-to-baltimore-the-fruits-of-government-sponsored-segregation/>

## Student Resource 7

*The New York Times* – “How Racism Doomed Baltimore”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/opinion/sunday/how-racism-doomed-baltimore.html>

## Student Resource Sheet 8

*Indypendent Reader* – “History: Housing Policy and Segregation in Baltimore”

<https://indyreader.org/content/history-housing-policy-and-segregation-baltimore>



## Student Resource Sheet 9

### Article Analysis Form

Directions: Using the assigned Student Resource Sheet complete the chart. Be sure to site specific examples from the article for your evidence. Using a scale of 1-10 rate the degree to which you think the cause was a contributing factor to the Baltimore uprising. Complete the sentence stem below with your conclusion(s) about the causes of the Baltimore uprising.

Article	Cause	Evidence	Rating

The cause(s) of the Baltimore uprising \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Student Resource Sheet 10

*The Root* - “A Bloody History of Police Brutality in Baltimore”

[http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2015/05/a\\_bloody\\_history\\_of\\_police\\_brutality\\_in\\_baltimore.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2015/05/a_bloody_history_of_police_brutality_in_baltimore.html)

## Student Resource Sheet 11

*The Baltimore Sun* - "Undue Force" <http://data.baltimoresun.com/news/police-settlements/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Resource Sheet 12 - "Undue Force"

Directions: Using *The Sun* article "Undue Force" complete each section of the table below.

Victim	Summary of what happened.	What was the outcome?	How did the victim feel?
Jerriell Lyles			
The Grandmother – Venus Green			
The Pregnant Woman – Starr Brown			
Barbara Floyd			

Salahudeen Abdul-Aziz			
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Resource Sheet 13 “Undue Force” – Proposed Solutions

Directions: Using *The Baltimore Sun* article “Undue Force” complete each section of the table below.

Reform\Stakeholder	Description	Intended Outcomes