

Lesson 9: Who Benefits From a System?

Turn outrage into analysis by following the incentives.

The Beginner's Investigation · Lesson 9 of 10

The Big Idea

The most useful question in any investigation is: **Who benefits from the way the system is organized?**

Not "Who is evil?" Not "Is everything a conspiracy?" Those questions make people stop investigating. Instead, ask:

- Who benefits?
- Who loses?
- What incentives exist?
- What rules produce the outcome?
- Who has the authority to change the rules?

Two Tracks That Connect

Track One: What People Are Taught	Track Two: How People Are Sorted
How we understand history, race, authority, success, and failure	Who receives credentials, scholarships, admission, and opportunity

WHAT PEOPLE ARE TAUGHT + HOW PEOPLE ARE SORTED = A POWERFUL INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

The Pipeline

Stage	What Happens
1. Defeat	The Confederacy loses the war.
2. Memory Battle	Its defenders shape how the war is remembered.
3. Classroom Capture	Those stories enter textbooks and schools.
4. Conditioning	Students absorb ideas about race, success, and social order.
5. Sorting	Tests, grades, and admissions assign opportunity.
6. Economic Outcomes	Credentials shape careers, income, and debt.
7. Social Division	Unequal results are explained as "some people deserve more."

And the cycle continues. This is the proposed model — and like every claim in this course, it's yours to test.

Try It

Choose a rule at your school, job, or in your city. Ask the five questions above about it.

Don't take our word for it. Investigate.

CAL BAY AISM