

# The Civil Rights Movement

## TEACHER GUIDE

### BACKGROUND

What do your students really know about the Civil Rights Movement? Many students' perceptions are limited to Martin Luther King Day or a MLK highway. Few students are grounded in a historical understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. The goal of this unit is for students to see, hear, and experience the struggles, outcomes, and remaining issues resulting from this tumultuous period in America's history.



The Civil Rights Movement from 1954-1968 mobilized hundreds of thousands of African-Americans who were considered second-class citizens by many in the white majority and other supporters in the cause of ending racial injustice and segregation. Those involved with this movement used an arsenal of civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance strategies such as sit-ins, marches, protests, boycotts, "freedom rides," and rallies to agitate for reform. Their actions drew the attention of the media and the nation to the issue of racial inequality. The national media attention made it impossible for the numerous injustices of segregation to be ignored. Eventually, through the *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision in 1954, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, civil rights leaders brought about the fall of legislation that legalized segregation and bound African-Americans to second-class citizenship.

The learning materials in this unit are designed to engage students in inquiry about the struggle for racial equality that was in the forefront of American psyche during the middle of the 20th century. The materials consist of teacher guides and student activity sheets containing detailed procedures, instructional strategies, content, pedagogical background, standards addressed, resources, and assessment approaches. During their investigation, students will access the civil rights videos from the *ABC News: Classroom Edition*. This teacher's guide uses the videos as resources throughout units of study.

### AT A GLANCE

The social studies standards state that students should understand how individuals, ideas, and decisions impact history. In this unit on the American Civil Rights Movement, students explore a problem about a moral dilemma to elicit prior knowledge and beliefs. Next, students apply these responses to in-depth case studies using a jigsaw cooperative learning method. Finally, students examine Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—the man, the scholar, the leader, the orator—as they investigate his most famous speech. In the post-unit assessment, students write a reaction paper that responds to one of two hypothetical situations that cause students to draw on their experiences from the unit to understanding and developing new imaginary civil rights events.

### THE BIG QUESTION

How did the struggle for equality in the middle of the 20th century lead to the extension of civil liberties for all Americans?

## **SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS ADDRESSED<sup>1</sup>**

### **United States History**

[Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties.](#)

Grades 5-6

- Understands the development of the civil rights movement.
- Understands the involvement of diverse groups in the civil rights movement.

Grades 7-8

- Understands individual and institutional influences of the civil rights movement.

Grades 9-12

- Understands how diverse groups united during the civil rights movement.

### **Historical Understanding**

[Understands the historical perspective.](#)

Grades 5-6

- Understands that specific individuals had a great impact on history.
- Understands that specific ideas had an impact on history.
- Understands that specific decisions and events had an impact on history.

Grades 7-8

- Understands that specific individuals and the values those individuals held had an impact on history.
- Analyzes the influence specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history.
- Analyzes the effects specific decisions had on history.
- Knows different types of primary and secondary sources and the motives, interests and bias expressed in them.

Grades 9-12

- Analyzes the values held by specific people who influenced history and the role their values played in influencing history.
- Analyzes the influences specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history and specifies how events might have been different in the absence of those ideas and beliefs.
- Analyzes the effects specific decisions had on history and studies how things might have been different in the absence of those decisions.
- Understands how the past affects our private lives and society in general.
- Knows how to perceive past events with historical empathy.

### **Civics**

[Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals.](#)

Grades 6-8

- Knows historical and contemporary examples of citizen movements seeking to promote individual rights and the common good.
- Understands what civil disobedience is, how it differs from other forms of protest, what its consequences might be, and circumstances under which it might be justified.

Grades 9-12

- Knows the many ways citizens can participate in the political process at local, state, and national levels, and understands the usefulness of other forms of political participation in influencing public policy.
- Knows historical and contemporary examples of citizen movements seeking to expand liberty, to insure the equal rights of all citizens, and/or to realize other values fundamental to American constitutional democracy.

<sup>1</sup>Kendall, J.S. & Marzano, R.J. (2000). *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*. (3rd ed.). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Reston, VA.

## MATERIALS

Videos:

- *ABC News: Classroom Edition* “The Civil Rights Movement” video programs
  - “Part 1: Separate but Equal”
  - “Part 2: Awakening a Nation”
  - “Part 3: America Arises”
  - “Part 4: The King Assassination”
  - “Part 5: Beyond Martin Luther King, Jr.”
- Student Activity, “[Sit-in Scenario](#)”
- Teacher Guides and Student Activity<sup>2</sup> sheets for each video
- Student Activity, “[Separate but Equal](#)”
- Student Activity, “[Awakening a Nation](#)”
- Student Activity, “[America Arises](#)”
- Student Activity, “[The King Assassination](#)”
- Student Activity, “[Beyond Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)”
- Student Activity, “[I Have a Dream: Analyzing the Message](#)”
- Full text of “I Have a Dream,” by Martin Luther King, Jr. (see resources below)
- Civil Rights [Rubric](#)
- Dictionary
- Color highlighters (optional)

<sup>2</sup> Graphic Organizers on video student activities adapted from: Billmeyer, R. & Barton, M.L. (1998). *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas, If Not Me, Then Who?* Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning. Aurora, CO.

## PROCEDURE

**Explore:** Students read a scenario to explore a problem of moral issues illuminated by the Civil Rights Movement. Students are asked to think about, from several different perspectives, what it was like to be present at a sit-in. For each perspective, students are asked about the choices they would make, how they would respond, and how others might react to them. By involving students in a scenario intended to create disequilibrium, and by asking them to mentally participate in the issue, the teacher is able to assess their prior knowledge and beliefs related to one aspect of the Civil Rights Movement. Following this, students watch the *Separate but Equal* video in order to learn about the state of affairs in America leading up to the Civil Rights Movement.

1. Explain to your students that they are about to embark on a historical investigation of the American Civil Rights Movement. Tell them that they will be exploring several perspectives of citizens as they grappled with some difficult issues in the middle of the 20th century. As you distribute the student activity sheet, “Sit-in Scenario,” explain that they will begin by reading some scenarios based on a real event, and then responding to each individually.
2. Walk around the room and respond to questions from individuals. The scenarios describe a lunch counter sit-in during the 1960s. The actions described in the stories might disturb some students. Encourage all students to write their personal reflections in the space provided. Explain to students

### Teacher Tip

The scenarios were not actual events. Rather, they were written based on several historical accounts of the lunch counter sit-ins of the 1960s.

### Alternate Strategy Tip

The scenarios were written so that the role of the reader is not explicit. You may either assign or allow students to choose roles including:

- Bystander
- Protestor
- White aggressor
- Police officer
- Counter wait staff
- Pharmacy owner
- Other

that there is no right or wrong answer here; rather students should include insights as to what thoughts or feelings come to mind.

3. After the students have had time to reflect on the scenarios, ask interested students to share their thoughts. Ask students to think about the perspectives of each of the characters in the scenario.
4. Provide time for the students to complete the following five questions. Below are the questions and some possible responses:
  - a) Why do you think the black students conducted the sit-ins? (Some students may suggest that the black students simply wanted to be served. Others may suggest that the students were tired of separate facilities and used this as a form of protest.)
  - b) Why do you think the black students passively took the physical and verbal abuse? (Students may suggest that they were trained in methods of non-violent protest. Others may suggest that the students were afraid to fight back or did not want to cause violence.)
  - c) Why did the store refuse to serve the black students? (Students may suggest that in the 1960s blacks were treated as second-class citizens and had separate facilities. Students may also suggest that the store clerks were racists or uncaring people. In one interview after the sit-ins, a girl stated that in the South, store owners should be able to decide who they wanted to serve and who they did not want to serve.)
  - d) What rationale could the white students have for reacting so violently to the black students participating in the sit-ins? (Some students may have trouble thinking of what could cause the white students to react in this way. Some may state that years of racism or hatred might cause people to do something like this.)
  - e) What questions do you still have about the lunch counter sit-ins? (Encourage students to include questions that would address The Big Question mentioned above. Students may wonder about some of the details of the sit-in movement—how it started, how long it lasted, and what the results were. Other students may be interested in other types of civil rights protests or about the philosophy of non-violent protest.)
5. Pose “The Big Question” to the class: “How did the struggle for equality in the middle of the 20th century lead to the extension of civil liberties for all Americans?” At this point, students will not be able to respond to this question except by explaining some of the struggles dealing with segregation. Explain to the students that in the next part of this unit they will be investigating in-depth case studies about the Civil Rights Movement and the impact this movement had on the United States.

#### **Teacher Tip**

Many students will be uncomfortable sharing their thoughts and reflections. Elicit these personal responses from students who wish to share.

#### **Alternate Strategy Tip**

You may want to extend this section to have the students complete library/Internet research to answer some of these questions.

The questions can also be used to assess student understanding and interest. You may use the questions to assist in assigning teams for the “apply” section.

#### **Alternate Strategy Tip**

You may want to set up a video-viewing schedule where one group watches the civil rights programs pertinent to their research, while the others begin their research. After the first group watches their video, the second group can view theirs, while the first group begins their investigation.

**Apply:** Students collect relevant information from primary and secondary sources on key developments of the Civil Rights Movement. Working in small groups, each student investigates an in-depth case study. Following the case study investigations, students share what they have learned in their small groups by sharing the answers to the case study questions. During this time, students in the small groups can question the students' interpretations and suggest further research.

1. Assemble the students into small groups of three or four students per group. Explain to the students that members of each group will be investigating different facets of the Civil Rights Movement. In each case study, students answer the following questions:

- How have Americans reacted to inequality and injustice?
- What key actions shaped the Civil Rights Movement and began a new era for minorities in the United States?
- How did the struggle for equality lead to protests and riots?
- How did the United States respond to the demands of minority groups in order to achieve equality and opportunities?
- How did the struggle for equality in the middle of the 20th century lead to the extension of civil liberties for all Americans?

**Teacher Tip**

Use the graphic organizers located at <http://abcnewsclassroom.com> to assist students in watching the video and taking notes.

2. Each group of students will have a different student activity sheet to guide their investigations. There are five possible investigations in this series, based on the five videos in the civil rights series. Distribute one student activity sheet to each student in each group. Students in the same group should have the same sheet.

**Teacher Tip**

Duplicate each type of student activity sheet on a different color of paper. This will help you and the students distinguish what group they are in and what investigation they are conducting.

3. Provide time, guidance, and resources for the students to conduct their investigation. You may want to reserve time in the library, media center, or computer lab to allow students to gather their information. Encourage students to conduct an in-depth study of the source material in order to find answers to their questions.

4. Once students have had sufficient time in-class and out-of-class to fully investigate their topics, explain to them that they will be using this information to address The Big Question, "How did the struggle for equality in the middle of the 20th century lead to the extension of civil liberties for all Americans?" At this point, you may want to have students report out information that they have learned to help address this question more fully. Ask them to think about the struggles that underprivileged people had in this country not very long ago. You may want to start this discussion by listing the various struggles that were encountered by people of color. Move the conversation to what certain groups tried to accomplish to reverse these struggles. Discuss how effective the various strategies were. Ask students about their perceptions of non-violent protests versus the use of force. Finally, ask them to think about how things are different in the present-day United States. Also ask students to think about what still needs to happen in order for more people to experience true freedom in the United States. What new challenges exist that weren't evident in the middle of the 20th century?

**Extend:** In this section, students will examine Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—the man, the scholar, the leader, the orator. The goal is to gain insight into Dr. King's vision for his people to be "free at last," and the steps that he took to share that vision with his "brothers and sisters." By understanding his

message, we can better understand his vision. Students will investigate the speaker (King), the audience (in Washington, D.C.), and the words in the “I Have a Dream” speech.

1. Ask students to share an example of a speech that they have heard. Was the occasion a graduation ceremony, a television event, or for a class? Distribute the Student Activity, “[I Have a Dream: Analyzing the Message](#),” to each student. Ask them to read the background information found on the first page before reading the full text of “I Have a Dream.” The full text for this speech is found at <http://web66.coled.umn.edu/new/MLK/MLK.html>.
2. For number 3 in “The Speaker” section of the activity, students are asked to assess the credibility of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. While there is a certain amount that can be gleaned from the program and the text, you should augment these sources by using some of the resources found below.
3. For number 1 in “The Audience” section of the activity, ask students to think about the significance of the Lincoln Memorial. What had Lincoln done for African-Americans? In what way does King refer to Lincoln in his speech? For number 2, have students recall the events mentioned in the *Separate but Equal* and *Awakening a Nation* programs. You may want to provide students with completed graphic organizers from those programs to refer to for this question.
4. For “The Words” section of the activity, students should have little trouble finding terms that are seldom used today. Once students have made note of these words, ask them to use the surrounding sentences to make meaning of them. Afterwards, ask them to look them up in the dictionary to see if their meaning was correct. For number 3, ask students what impact King made by using these contrasts. Instruct students to complete the rest of this section.
5. In the last part of the activity, ask students to write their own reaction to the “I Have a Dream” speech. In essence, the students extend what they have learned thus far in this unit into today’s context based on the time in which they are writing their reaction. In the last part of their reaction, students are asked a hypothetical question about how King would react if he could visit our society today. Obviously, there are no right or wrong answers here; rather students should back up their responses with evidence taken from a modern context.

**Alternate Strategy Tip**

Show students the clip of the “I Have a Dream” speech which appears in the *Awakening a Nation* program prior to having them read the text.

**Alternate Strategy Tip**

Provide a copy of the “I Have a Dream” speech, so students can use multi-colored highlighters for completing the activity.

**Teacher Tip**

Use the student expert group from *Awakening a Nation* in the “Apply” section of this unit to help students understand King as a man, and his values.

**Assess:** Students write a reaction paper that responds to one of two options:

- What if Martin Luther King, Jr. had survived the assassination attempt? Predict what sequence of events might have occurred in the ensuing weeks, months, and years?
- Based on what you have learned from studying the March on Washington in 1963, what would a cross-cultural march on Washington look like today? What would the sequence of events be

**Teacher Tip**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day contests abound. Research opportunities in your area for students to submit their reaction papers.



leading up to this march? Who would be some of the speakers? What would their messages be? Identify a minimum of three speakers, the issues on which they would be speaking, and the specific audience to whom they would be addressing. What would be their unifying message?

1. Prior to the assignment, provide students with a scoring rubric. Students are required to incorporate what they learned in the civil rights unit in the reaction paper. Review the scoring rubric, making sure that students have a clear understanding of the criteria and how they will be scored.
2. Provide students with the opportunity to make changes to the rubric prior to the writing process. Incorporate changes that the class can agree upon.
3. Once students have submitted their reaction papers, consider using a peer review process where students as well as the teacher score the papers using the rubric.

## RESOURCES

Ferriss, S. & Sandoval, R. (1997). *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez*. Harcourt Brace & Company. Orlando, FL.

Graetz, R. S. (1998). *A White Preacher's Memoir: The Montgomery Bus Boycott*. Black Belt Press. Montgomery, AL.

Kasher, S. (1996). *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-68*. Abbeville Press. New York.

King, Jr. M. L. (1986). *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Edited by James M. Washington. Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. New York.

Parks, R. (1994). *Quiet Strength: The Faith, the Hope, and the Heart of a Woman Who Changed a Nation*. Zondervan Publishing House. Grand Rapids, MI.

Posner, G. L. (1998). *Killing the Dream: James Earl Ray and the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Random House, Inc. New York.

## URLs

<http://bcric.bham.al.us/index.htm>

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

<http://campus.northpark.edu/history/WebChron/USA/MontBus.html>

Montgomery Bus Boycott, summary from North Park University

<http://cnet.ucr.edu/research/chavez/>

Cesar Chavez, UCLA Web site

<http://thekingcenter.com/>

Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/laws/majorlaw/civilr19.htm>

Civil Rights Act of 1964

<http://web66.coled.umn.edu/new/MLK/MLK.html>

Full Text of the Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" speech

[http://www.adl.org/special\\_reports/farrakhan\\_own\\_words/farrakhan\\_own\\_words.asp](http://www.adl.org/special_reports/farrakhan_own_words/farrakhan_own_words.asp)

Anti-Defamation League: Louis Farrakhan

<http://www.archervalerie.com/mlk3.ram>

Audio archives of excerpts from Martin Luther King, Jr. speeches

[http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/lessons/brown\\_v\\_board\\_documents/brown\\_v\\_board.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/brown_v_board_documents/brown_v_board.html)

National Archives and Records Administration lesson plan using *Brown vs. Board of Education* Documents

<http://www.brothermalcolm.net/>

Malcolm X

<http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/default.asp>

National Civil Rights Museum

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/civilrightstimeline1.html>

Timeline of the Civil Rights Movement

[http://www.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec3\\_sitins.shtml](http://www.jacksonsun.com/civilrights/sec3_sitins.shtml)

Lunch counter sit-in story from the *Jackson Sun*

<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/lbjforkids/civil.htm>

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Civil Rights page for kids includes timelines for civil rights and voting rights.

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/hum/mlk/srs218.html>

MLK Biographical sketch from Louisiana State University

<http://www.nativecalling.org/archives/topics/civilrights.html>

Native American Public Telecommunications Civil Rights Page

<http://www.noi.org/>

Nation of Islam

<http://www.rainbowpush.org/>

Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, Jesse Jackson Commentaries

<http://www.rosaparksinstitute.org/>

Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self Development

<http://www.sitins.com/>

Greensboro sit-ins



<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University (includes secondary sources)

<http://www.ufw.org/>

United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO

[http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro\\_b.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro_b.htm)

U.S. Department of Justice, Voting Rights Act, 1965