



**At the Table with Dr. King:  
Bringing the Civil Rights Movement to Life**

Teacher Resources & Lesson Plans



## **Acknowledgements**

The following curriculum materials were arranged by the Mizel Museum Education Department under the supervision of Georgina Kolber, Managing Director, and Penny Nisson, Director of Education.

This curriculum unit was developed by Joie Norby Lê in partnership with the University of Denver. Dr. Lê is a Ph.D. graduate of the Morgridge College of Education's Teaching and Learning Studies Department with an emphasis in Curriculum, Instruction, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

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## **At the Table with Dr. King Bringing the Civil Rights Movement to Life**

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### **Museum Introduction:**

The Mizel Museum, an educational, nonprofit organization, is Denver's only museum that addresses today's social justice issues through the lens of Jewish history and values. We encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate diversity and equality and to combat discrimination and hatred. Our programs, events, and exhibits address these and other social issues and encourage positive change in our communities. Our museum is dedicated to fostering cross-cultural understanding, combatting racism, and promoting social justice. We achieve our mission through educational programming, events, and exhibits that connect universal Jewish values to the larger world.

### **Unit Background:**

From 1951-1969, nearly two decades of critical events and strategic campaigns led by key figures and organizations, framed what is known as the American Civil Rights Movement. This critical time in history, based upon the principle of social justice, led to the creation and eradication of significant anti-discriminatory legislation, including Plessy vs. Ferguson, Brown vs. Board of Education, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights Act (Fair Housing Act) of 1968. This movement, while centered upon the advancement of African Americans in the United States in a post-Civil War era, set the tone for future social justice movements today. It inspired a legacy of social change characterized by the dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance of those who saw civil rights as a fundamental American value.

The struggle to establish civil rights for African Americans took two decades. Centuries of inequality made overturning current government legislation a near-impossible task. Likewise, many people within the majority, privileged population, found it hard to change their views of African Americans, which were based upon bigotry and centuries-long segregation. People such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. knew this all too well, yet he was firm in his commitment to see equality given to *all* people—not just to those based upon the color of their skin. In his pursuit of this equality, he made a choice to protest through non-violence. His rhetoric made him a pillar of human rights advocacy, and he continues to be revered as one of the most influential figures in American history. His work, alongside many historical icons such as Rosa Parks or The Freedom Riders, is celebrated within education to illustrate that individually and collectively we can make a difference. While important figures within the Civil Rights Movement did not always agree on the methods or means to establish civil rights for African Americans, in the end, firm commitment to the cause completely changed the social fabric of the United States and ushered in a heightened awareness of the important work of social justice advocacy.



***At the Table with Dr. King*** is delivered in a performance experience that teaches students about the American Civil Rights Movement and valuable lessons of equality and respect. Students become active participants in a live show, which shares key moments of Dr. King’s commitment to civil rights from the moment he feels called to action up through his assassination in 1968. Through music, poetry, historical video footage, and Dr. King’s own words, *At the Table with Dr. King* challenges students to engage in acts of service and leadership in their communities.

The program is brought to life through a unique partnership with More Than Music, a non-profit organization led by executive director, Dave LeMieux. Their music ensemble challenges audience to listen for the call to serve others and actively respond through community engagement and service. Through their performances, More than Music encourages meaningful cultural exchange through “Sound Diplomacy”, an act of representing critical issues in creative ways.

## **Implications for Unit Study:**

The Mizel Museum’s goal is to provide you with a cohesive, educational experience that puts the Civil Rights Movement into context and empowers students to confront hatred and bigotry through the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. It demonstrates how social change is the result of continual advocacy for social justice and helps to promote understanding and empathy for others, in particular those who are disenfranchised or the object of discrimination and oppression. It further recognizes African Americans’ impact in shaping American life and culture. It depicts the individual and collective struggle to make progressive changes to civil rights and justice reform through dedication and personal sacrifice. The aim is to spark a motivation for students to act, and, ultimately, to help mold a responsible participant in civil society who will continue to support civil rights for all people.

## **Key Terms:**

Social Justice	<i>All people share a common humanity and therefore have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights, and a fair allocation of community resources.</i>
Social Movement	<i>Sustained campaign of a social goal that serves to implement or prevent a change in society’s structure or values. Social movements are characterized by the coming together of people who share a common outlook on society.</i>
Social Change	<i>The alteration of social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behavior, social organizations, or value systems.</i>
Bigotry	<i>Intolerant devotion to one’s own opinions and prejudices.</i>
Disenfranchised	<i>To deprive of a legal right, privilege, or immunity, especially regarding the right to vote.</i>
Oppression	<i>Unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.</i>

Segregation	<i>The separation or isolation of a race, class, gender, or ethnic group.</i>
Discrimination	<i>To make a difference in treatment or favor on a basis other than individuality.</i>
Civil disobedience	<i>A symbolic, non-violent violation of the law, to protest against some form of perceived injustice.</i>
Civil rights	<i>The rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality.</i>
Ally	<i>To join with another person, group, etc. to give support.</i>
Militant	<i>Combative or aggressive support of a political or social cause, characterized by extreme, violent, or confrontational methods.</i>
Repression	<i>The act of subduing someone or something by force.</i>
Suffrage	<i>The right to vote in political elections.</i>
Privilege	<i>A special right, advantage, or immunity available only to a particular person or group of people.</i>
Advocacy	<i>Public support for a specific cause or policy.</i>
Protest	<i>A statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something.</i>
Orator	<i>A skilled or eloquent public speaker.</i>
Rhetoric	<i>The art of speaking or writing effectively.</i>

## Colorado Academic Unit Standards

Content Area	Grade Level	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and interpret historical sources to ask and research historical questions</li> <li>• The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes in regions of the Western Hemisphere and their relationships with one another</li> </ul>		SS09-GR.6-S.1-GLE.1 SS09-GR.6-S.1-GLE.2
Language Arts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Successful group discussions require planning and participation by all</li> <li>2. Monitoring the thinking of self and others is a disciplined way to maintain awareness</li> <li>3. Assumptions can be concealed, and require identification and evaluation</li> </ol>		RWC10-GR.6-S.1-GLE.1 RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.3 RWC10-GR.6-S.4-GLE.2
Drama & Theater	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Articulate the value of each practitioner’s role in a drama and/or theatrical performance</li> </ol>		DT09-Gr.6-S.3-GLE.3
Music	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Description of music’s role in the human experience and ways music is used and enjoyed in society</li> </ol>		MU09-Gr.6-S.4-GLE.2

Content Area	Grade Level	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes within regions of the Eastern Hemisphere and their relationships with one another</li> <li>• Regions have different issues and perspectives</li> <li>• Different forms of government and international organizations and their influence in the world community</li> </ul>		SS09-GR.7-S.1-GLE.2 SS09-GR.7-S.2-GLE.2 SS09-GR.7-S.4-GLE.2
Language Arts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Small and large group discussions rely on active listening and the effective contributions of all participants</li> <li>7. Purpose, tone, and meaning in word choices influence literary, persuasive, and informational texts</li> </ol>		RWC10-GR.7-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.7-S.2-GLE.3
Drama & Theater	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Discern and demonstrate appropriate theatre etiquette and content for the audience, self, venue, technician, and performer individual and collaborative contributions</li> </ol>		DT09-Gr.7-S.3-GLE.3

Content Area	Grade Level	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)		GLE Code
Social Studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Formulate appropriate hypotheses about United States history based on a variety of historical sources and perspectives</li> <li>10. Analyze elements of continuity and change in the United States government and the role of citizens over time</li> <li>11. The place of law in a constitutional system</li> </ol>		SS09-GR.8-S.1-GLE.1 SS09-GR.8-S.4-GLE.1 SS09-GR.8-S.4-GLE.2



Language Arts	12. A variety of response strategies clarifies meaning or messages 13. Quality reasoning relies on supporting evidence in media	RWC10-GR.8-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.8-S.4-GLE.3
Drama & Theater	14. Respect for theatre, its practitioners, and conventions	DT09-Gr.8-S.3-GLE.3

Content Area	Grade Level	High School
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (GLE)	GLE Code
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the historical method of inquiry to ask questions, evaluate primary and secondary sources, critically analyze and interpret data, and develop interpretations defended by evidence</li> <li>The key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity over time</li> <li>The significance of ideas as powerful forces throughout history</li> <li>Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state, and national issues or policies</li> <li>Purposes of and limitations on the foundations, structures, and functions of government</li> </ul>	SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.1 SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.2 SS09-GR.HS-S.1-GLE.3 SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.1 SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.2 SS09-GR.HS-S.4-GLE.3
Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective collaborative groups accomplish goals</li> <li>Validity of a message is determined by its accuracy and relevance</li> <li>Effectively operating in small and large groups to accomplish a goal requires active listening</li> <li>Listening critically to comprehend a speaker's message requires mental and physical strategies to direct and maintain attention</li> <li>Evaluating quality reasoning includes the value of intellectual character such as humility, empathy, and confidence</li> <li>Logical arguments distinguish facts from opinions; and evidence defines reasoned judgment</li> <li>Complex situations require critical thinking across multiple disciplines</li> </ul>	RWC10-GR.12-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.11-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.10-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.9-S.1-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.11-S.4-GLE.3 RWC10-GR.12-S.4-GLE.2 RWC10-GR.11-S.4-GLE.2
Drama & Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect for theatre, its practitioners, and conventions</li> </ul>	DT09-Gr.HS-S.3-GLE.3
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of musical performances</li> </ul>	MU09-Gr.HS-S.4-GLE.2
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication through advanced visual methods is a necessary skill in everyday life</li> </ul>	VA09-Gr.HS-S.4-GLE.2

# **PRE OR POST LESSONS**

**Grades: 6-12**

## Vocabulary Study

### Overview

As a preface to the At the Table with Dr. King presentation or throughout your unit study, use the key terms to introduce new vocabulary to the students through a crossword puzzle handout. See Supplement for handout.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Use language appropriate for purpose and audience
2. Interpret how the structure of written English contributes to the pronunciation and meaning of complex vocabulary
3. Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone, and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes

### Notes

## Social Justice & Advocacy

### Overview

The Civil Rights Movement was built upon the foundation of social justice. The field of Social Work outlines several of the principles that center on social justice which at the base level includes challenging discrimination, recognizing diversity, distributing resources equitably, and challenging unjust policies and practices (Source: [University of New England School of Social Work](#)) Students may or may not be familiar with how these principles impacted Dr. King's call to action or how they might be able to carry forward key social justice tenets today as social justice advocates themselves. Use the following resources to introduce students to Social Justice Principles.

- [Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles](#)
- [Safeguarding Student Learning Engagement: Social Justice Principles](#)

Likewise, social justice advocacy is largely dependent upon students developing empathy for others. To act for or on behalf of another, students must recognize the need to be called to action. Use the following resources to introduce social justice empathy activities in the unit of study:

- [Social Justice Toolbox Activities](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance](#)
- [Social Justice Projects in the Classroom](#)

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
2. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
3. Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic

### Notes

## Primary & Secondary Sources

### Overview

Throughout students' education, they are called upon to research various topics in nearly every subject area. Cultivating the skills students need to make informed choices about the sources they should use for their research is an integral aspect of successful investigation. In this activity, use the worksheet provided to have students research significant events during the Civil Rights Movement which resulted in peoples' call to action and find primary and secondary sources that accompany that event. This exercise could be paired with additional activities to extend the activity such as the Civil Rights Movement Mapping. Additionally, a lesson in using credible sources can be embedded in the activity. The following resource provides a concise overview: [Evaluating Internet Resources](#). See the Word document file download for the Primary & Secondary Sources Worksheet or the Supplement for a print version.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic
3. Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate the quality and relevance of the source; and use it to answer complex questions
4. Use primary, secondary, and tertiary written sources to generate and answer research questions
5. Demonstrate the use of a range of strategies, research techniques, and persistence when engaging with difficult texts or examining complex problems or issues
6. Exercise ethical conduct when writing, researching, and documenting sources

### Notes

Additional Resource: [Civil Rights Digital Library](#)

- This worksheet is downloadable for students to cut and paste their sources directly into the document. It is also included for printed use.

## Civil Rights Seating Chart

### Overview

Seating charts are often the cornerstone of classroom management. A well-devised seating chart and room design can often dictate student behavior, enhance lesson understanding, and promote student engagement. How desks and tables are arranged in a classroom is one aspect of establishing a classroom dynamic while filling those seats with or without the use of a seating chart is another. A simple way to introduce civil rights implications to students is to re-create or create intentional seating charts at the beginning of the unit of study. Is a gender-segregated classroom effective? How do students feel when separated from their peers? What happens when you take away a student's "right to choose" their own seat? Consider how you can shape students' attitudes about their freedom using seating charts. Rearrange the seating at the beginning of a class according to a civil rights learning objective. Afterwards, have students discuss how they feel about the change or loss of freedom.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
2. Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens
3. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
4. Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening

### Notes

## Close Reading: Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience"

### Overview

Close Reading is a strategy used to work with complex texts. The exercise is characterized by breaking down the text for students to develop better understanding of vocabulary, syntax, or text structure. A close reading of a text can assist students with comprehension and develop independent reading and critical thinking skills. This involves working with the text more than once, often returning to it multiple times to address the text meaning. According to Scholastic, "The first reading will focus on what the text says, the second reading will emphasize how the text works, and the third will engage students in evaluating the text, comparing it with other texts, or thinking about its implications in their lives." (Source: [Common Core: Close Reading](#)) Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" is a text that can be used for close reading to introduce students to the concept of civil protest, a major theme that Dr. King addressed in his work. Use the close reading strategies to work through "Civil Disobedience" in whole or in part. See Supplement for the Close Reading and "Civil Disobedience" handouts.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Interpret how the structure of written English contributes to the pronunciation and meaning of complex vocabulary
2. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
3. Evaluate how an author uses words to create mental imagery, suggest mood, and set tone
4. Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience
5. Seek feedback, self-assess, and reflect on personal learning while engaging with increasingly more difficult texts
6. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks

### Notes

## Lessons in Rhetoric: “Letters from Birmingham Jail”

### Overview

Analysis of Dr. King’s rhetoric is a powerful exercise in recognizing the full effect of his words and speech. While most famously known for his “I Have a Dream” speech, “Letters from Birmingham Jail” is equally noteworthy and can be utilized with an annotation exercise using the three components of rhetoric: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Annotating a text is a useful strategy for students to develop summary mechanisms in addition to highlighting text evidence. In this exercise, students will employ a learning strategy that helps students break down challenging concepts and language but with the additional objective of analyzing for key rhetorical devices, a true testament to a successful orator’s influence. In this activity, use “Letters from Birmingham Jail” in part or in whole, to highlight and annotate for ethos, pathos, and logos. In a follow-up activity, have students write a rhetorical analysis of the text and how it successfully employs these devices to create power and substance within Dr. King’s work. For more information on annotation as a meaning-making strategy, please visit the following resource:

- [Teaching Student Annotation: Constructing Meaning Through Connections](#)

For an overview of the Art of Rhetoric, see the accompanying presentation slides.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
2. Evaluate how an author uses words to create mental imagery, suggest mood, and set tone
3. Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience
4. Engage in a wide range of nonfiction and real-life reading experiences to solve problems, judge the quality of ideas, or complete daily tasks
5. Discriminate and justify a position using traditional lines of rhetorical argument and reasoning

### Notes



## Key Figures Infographic

### Overview

Some of the most prominent figures in American history were a part of the Civil Rights Movement. Have students select a key figure from the era and create a biography infographic. Similarly, use this activity to develop an infographic for a significant event or Civil Rights legislation. Use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to develop the infographic, such as [Canva](#) or [Venngage](#). See the “Selma March Infographic” in the Supplement for an example. See Supplement for a list of key figures.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
3. Recognize, articulate, and implement critical thinking in the visual arts by synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing visual information
4. Recognize, interpret, and validate that the creative process builds on the development of ideas through a process of inquiry, discovery, and research
5. Create works of art that articulate more sophisticated ideas, feelings, emotions, and points of view about art and design through an expanded use of media and technologies
6. Transfer the value of visual arts to lifelong learning and the human experience

### Notes

## Past Laws in Present Action

### Overview

The legislation that was passed during and because of the American Civil Rights Movement has profound impact on our governance today. Using the worksheet provided, have students describe prominent legislative actions that were instituted throughout the Civil Rights Movement and describe its present-day impact. Consider following the worksheet activity with an analysis activity (writing, poster creation, digital presentation project) to demonstrate student understanding and to present the significance of the legislation in contributing to social justice in a modern context. See Supplement for handout.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
4. Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens

### Notes

## Mapping the Civil Rights Movement

### Overview

The Civil Rights Movement occurred over the span of nearly two decades. In that time, significant events and figures are noted throughout American history, including Dr. King's "I Have a Dream Speech" or Rosa Park's refusal to give up her seat on the bus. According to your students, which events do they consider to be the most influential during the Civil Rights Movement and why? Have students develop a Civil Rights Movement Mapping with 21<sup>st</sup> learning technologies such as [Timeline](#) or [Sutori](#) or [Timetoast](#). You can have students research events or key figures using resources such as the [Civil Rights Digital Library](#) or provide them with a set of events and figures. For a less technological approach, poster presentations, handwritten journals, or [Thinking Maps](#) can be created.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
3. Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens
4. Use language appropriate for purpose and audience
5. Recognize, articulate, and implement critical thinking in the visual arts by synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing visual information
6. Recognize, interpret, and validate that the creative process builds on the development of ideas through a process of inquiry, discovery, and research
7. Create works of art that articulate more sophisticated ideas, feelings, emotions, and points of view about art and design through an expanded use of media and technologies
8. Transfer the value of visual arts to lifelong learning and the human experience

### Notes

## The American Dream Poetry Analysis

### Overview

Dr. King's "I Have a Dream Speech" is one of the most prominent texts read and analyzed throughout elementary and secondary education. His speech reflected the hope that freedom and equality would be on the horizon for the Negro, establishing what should be considered the "American Dream" for all people in a Post-Civil War era. The American Dream, rooted in the Declaration of Independence, established that "all men are created equal," with the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." (Source: [The Declaration of Independence](#)) Despite this declaration and the profound progress the Civil Rights Movement garnered for this principle, is the American Dream truly realized for everyone today? Is everyone truly equal? Using the poetry of Langston Hughes, Simon Ortiz, and Emma Lazarus, have students decipher the American Dream as stated in the Declaration of Independence and analyze it through these poems. What does it truly mean to be equal? To have liberty? To pursue happiness? As an extension, use the "[American Dream](#)" YouTube video featuring the work of Clint Smith, G. Yamazawa, Pages Matam, & Roscoe Burnems from the 2014 Beltway Poetry Slam. Have students analyze in a written reflection or poetry annotation. See Supplement for poetry handouts.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens
4. Demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary, and persuasive texts
5. Evaluate how an author uses words to create mental imagery, suggest mood, and set tone
6. Read a wide range of literature to understand important universal themes and the human experience

### Notes

## More Than Music: Jazz and the Civil Rights Movement

### Overview

Jazz music is attributed to African-American music developed in New Orleans at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a genre, it is characterized by the expression of capturing the human experience through unique blues and swing rhythms, improvisational solos and call and response sounds and vocals. While many of the first jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong or Dizzy Gillespie laid down their tracks in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, jazz established itself as a powerful creative medium that would carry forward to the Civil Rights Movement with artists such as Max Roach, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, and Nina Simone using their voice and talent to respond to the injustices prior to and during this era. In our partnership with [More Than Music](#), jazz is infused with *At the Table with Dr. King* as an analogy for the call and response Dr. King felt, which propelled him into action. In your unit study, consider using the following resources to build a lesson around jazz and the Civil Rights Movement, paying attention to how jazz was used to convey the struggle of establishing social justice (through lyric or sound) and how the method of call and response was implemented.

- [Jazz and the African American Literary Tradition](#)
- [Let Freedom Swing](#)

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures
3. Make informed, critical evaluations of the effectiveness of musical works and performances on the basis of aesthetic qualities, technical excellence, musicality, or convincing expression of feelings and ideas related to cultural and ideological associations
4. Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of aesthetics in music, appropriate to the particular features of given styles and genres, as it relates to the human experience in music

### Notes

Additional Resource: [The Music of the Civil Rights Movement](#)

## Music & Social Justice

### Overview

Music has long been a method of introducing a social justice agenda into the art, either through the musical rhythm and interpretation such as emphasized in blues or jazz or through the lyrics themselves. Music has become a method utilized by artists to protest, to incite a call to action, or to describe the current conditions in a society which need reform. Likewise, music has been used to denounce political leaders and government agendas. Music gives artists a platform to speak about the issues they feel need correction, especially through government or community-based intervention and action. If powerful enough, a musician's song become an ardent battle cry for those who wish to become social justice advocates. In this activity, use the lyrics and music of several artists to illustrate how and why music can inspire others to act or to describe societal issues in need of reform. Analyze the lyrics or the music itself in a written analysis or student presentation or have students follow-up this lesson by finding their own artist who addresses issues of social justice. Have them present their selection in a written analysis or student presentation. See Supplement for examples of lyrics that can be used for this activity.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Make informed, critical evaluations of the effectiveness of musical works and performances on the basis of aesthetic qualities, technical excellence, musicality, or convincing expression of feelings and ideas related to cultural and ideological associations
3. Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of aesthetics in music, appropriate to the particular features of given styles and genres, as it relates to the human experience in music

### Notes

Additional Resource: [Music and Social Justice](#)

## Campaign for Change

### Overview

While study of the Civil Rights Movement can assist students with understanding how the past informs our present and future, what current civil rights issues still need to be addressed? How can students become social justice advocates surrounding modern-day topics and social contexts? In this activity, have students create a Campaign for Change. These campaigns should be developed in small or large groups (depending upon student interest) and should address issues of inequality such as gender pay, LGBTQ rights, poverty, or racial injustice. As a campaign, the students should consider how they would address the issue, what they can do to promote it, and what call to action needs to be created to get others on board for their campaign for change. What social media mechanisms can be developed to showcase and promote their campaign? Is this a viable promotional tool? Alongside this activity, valuable lessons in social media responsibility and Internet safety can be implemented into the experience. Please see the following resource for a list of inequality issues in America: [Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality](#). See Supplement for handout.

### Colorado Prepared Graduate Competencies

1. Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy
2. Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
3. Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective
4. Deliver organized and effective oral presentations for diverse audiences and varied purposes
5. Use language appropriate for purpose and audience
6. Articulate the position of self and others using experiential and material logic
7. Demonstrate the use of a range of strategies, research techniques, and persistence when engaging with difficult texts or examining complex problems or issues

### Notes

## Resources

- "All Activities." *Social Justice Toolbox*. n.d. Web. <<http://www.socialjusticetoolbox.com/all-activities/>>.
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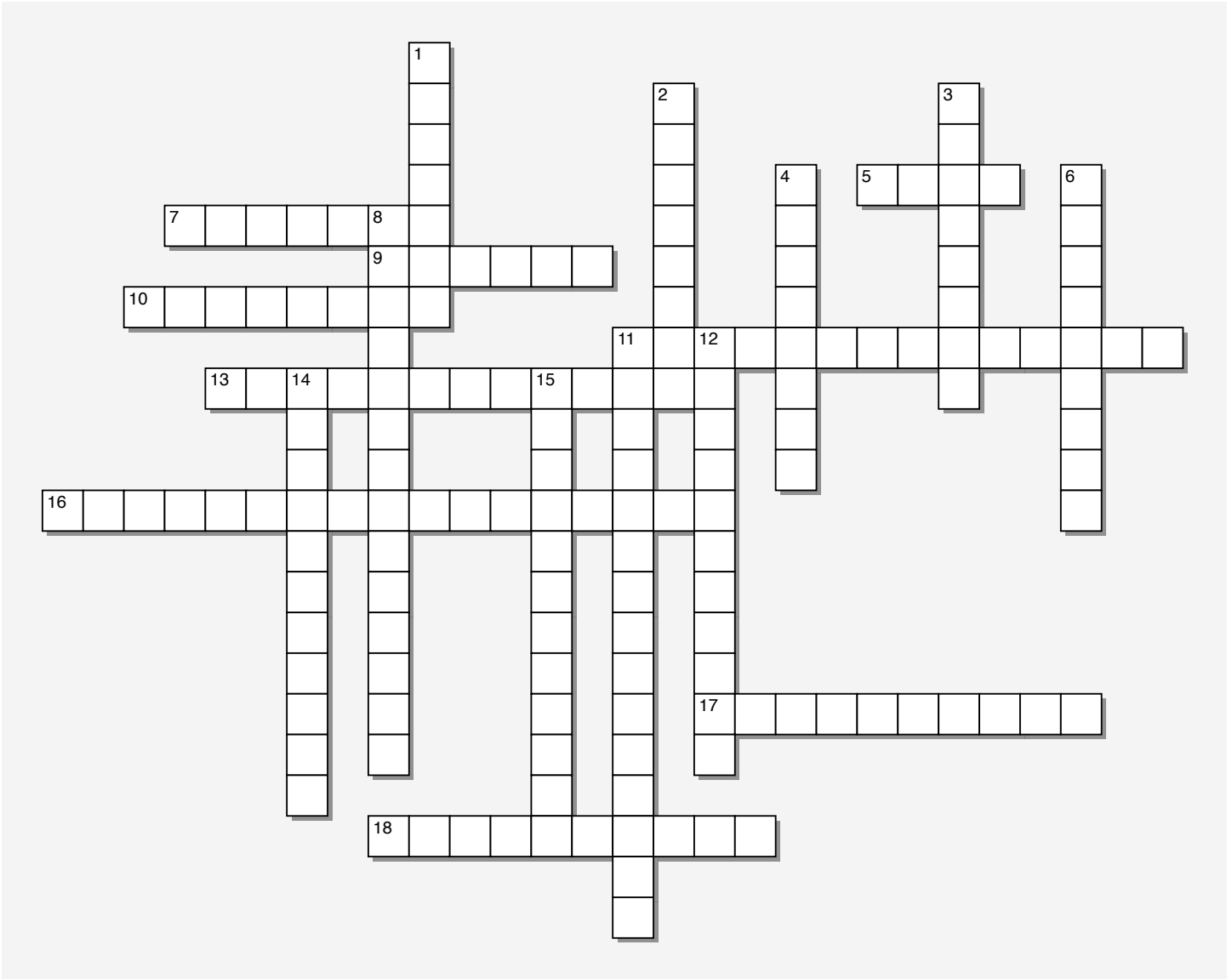
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# **SUPPLEMENT**

## **Lesson Plan Materials**

## At the Table with Dr. King Bringing the Civil Rights Movement to Life



### Across

- 5. To join with another person, group, etc. to give support.
- 7. A statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something.
- 9. A skilled or eloquent public speaker.
- 10. Public support for a specific cause or policy.
- 11. To make a difference in treatment or favor on a basis other than individuality.
- 13. All people share a common humanity and therefore have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights, and a fair allocation of community resources.

### Down

- 1. Intolerant devotion to one's own opinions and prejudices.
- 2. The art of speaking or writing effectively.
- 3. Combative or aggressive support of a political or social cause, characterized by extreme, violent, or confrontational methods.
- 4. The right to vote in political elections.
- 6. A special right, advantage, or immunity available only to a particular person or group of people.

## Across

16. A symbolic, non-violent violation of the law, to protest against some form of perceived injustice.  
17. Unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.  
18. The act of subduing someone or something by force.

## Down

8. Sustained campaign of a social goal that serves to implement or prevent a change in society's structure or values. Social movements are characterized by the coming together of people who share a common outlook on society.  
11. To deprive of a legal right, privilege, or immunity, especially regarding the right to vote.  
12. The separation or isolation of a race, class, gender, or ethnic group.  
14. The rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality.  
15. The alteration of social structure, characterized by changes in cultural symbols, rules of behavior, social organizations, or value systems.

advocacy	ally	bigotry
civil disobedience	civilrights	discrimination
disenfranchised	militant	oppression
orator	privilege	protest
repression	rhetoric	segregation
social change	social justice	social movement
suffrage		

## Civil Rights Movement: Peoples' Call to Action

Dr. King's role in the Civil Rights Movement was based upon a call to action, *a stimulus to do something to achieve an aim or deal with a problem*. In this exercise, research key events during the Civil Rights Movement which influenced peoples' call to action. In the table below, write down the event, summarize its significance, and provide primary or secondary evidence to support your claim.

- A **Primary Source** provides direct or firsthand evidence. Examples include historical documents or photos, audio or video recordings, works of art and literature, or relics and artifacts.
- A **Secondary Source** interprets or analyzes a primary source after the fact such as textbooks, newspaper or magazine articles, or websites with primary sources embedded within them.

Key Event	Significance	Primary or Secondary	<b>Evidence:</b> Your evidence could be a picture, a video (or a link to it), the URL of a website, a source citation or any other evidence that demonstrates your research.
Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on the bus and was arrested.	After she was arrested, the African American community organized the <b>Montgomery Bus Boycott</b> which lasted 381 days. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as a leader of the peaceful protest.	<b>Primary (Document)</b>	Rosa Parks' Arrest Police Report: <a href="https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/rosa-parks/images/police-report.pdf">https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/rosa-parks/images/police-report.pdf</a>
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HENRY DAVID THOREAU

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

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Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) grew up in Concord, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard in 1837, the year in which his mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered his famous address “The American Scholar” there. Like Emerson, Thoreau was a “transcendentalist,” who saw nature as man’s greatest teacher. His classic *Walden* offers his meditations on two years spent living alone in a cabin on the banks of Walden Pond. Despite his preference for the solitude of the Concord woods, he was a sharp social critic and political activist and a strong supporter of the abolition of slavery. “Civil Disobedience,” an essay that influenced Mahatma Gandhi and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., was inspired by his opposition to the Mexican War. In 1845 the James K. Polk administration bullied Mexico into a war, and forced it to sell the U.S. about a third of its territory in exchange for peace. Like many Northerners, Thoreau was appalled both at the slenderness of the pretext upon which Polk declared war and at the fact that the conflict would clearly result in a great expansion of territory into which slavery would spread. When the fighting broke out he personally seceded from the union, as it were, refusing to pay his taxes to carry on what he regarded as an unjust war. Thoreau spent a night in the Concord jail before an unidentified person—possibly his aunt—bailed him out, and four years later he published this striking statement of his beliefs.

Thoreau carried the doctrine that “that government is best which governs least” to its extreme, and perhaps logical, conclusion: if less is better, the government that is truly best is one “which governs not at all.” Respect for the law for him was less important than “respect for the right.” The essay is a stirring call to the individual to stand up against Tocqueville’s “tyranny of the majority.”

It is also, though, an arrogant assertion that the author belongs to the “wise minority,” walking in the footsteps of Christ, Copernicus, and Luther. But once one not only opposes but refuses to abide by majority political decisions one thinks misguided, the only way to settle disputes is by force—a stance hardly compatible with the spirit of compromise that is so necessary to the smooth running of a democratic government.

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I heartily accept the motto,—“That government is best which governs least;” and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe,—“That government is best which governs not at all;” and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing govern-

ment. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. . . .

Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly



enough said, that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. . . .

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailors, constables, posse comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others—as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders—serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the Devil, without *intending* it, as God. A very few, as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men*, serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. . . .

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also. . . .

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to



Henry David Thoreau in 1856, two years after the publication of his most famous work, *Walden*.

obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy *is* worse than the evil. *It* makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and *do* better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels? . . .

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already. . . .

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. . . .

Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recogniz-

ing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

## Letter From Birmingham City Jail (Excerpts)

***Martin Luther King, Jr.***

**April 16, 1963**

My Dear Fellow Clergymen,

While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities “unwise and untimely.” Seldom, if ever, do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas ... But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should give the reason for my being in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the argument of “outsiders coming in.” I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every Southern state with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some 85 affiliate organizations all across the South ... Several months ago our local affiliate here in Birmingham invited us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: 1) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive; 2) negotiation; 3) self-purification; and 4) direct action. We have gone through all of these steps in Birmingham ... Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of police brutality is known in every section of the country. Its unjust treatment of Negroes in the courts is a notorious reality. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any city in this nation. These are the hard, brutal, and unbelievable facts. On the basis of these conditions Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the political leaders consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then came the opportunity last September to talk with some of the leaders of the economic community. In these negotiating sessions certain promises were made by the merchants—such as the promise to remove the humiliating racial signs from the stores. On the basis of these promises Reverend Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to call a moratorium on any type of demonstrations. As the weeks and months unfolded we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. The signs remained. As in so many experiences in the past, we were confronted with blasted hopes, and the dark shadow of a deep disappointment settled upon us. So we had no alternative except that of preparing for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and national community. We were not unmindful of the difficulties involved. So we decided to go through the process of self-purification. We started having workshops on nonviolence and repeatedly asked ourselves the questions, “are you able to accept the blows without retaliating?” “Are you able to endure the ordeals of jail?”

You may well ask, “Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.

My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without legal and nonviolent pressure. History is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and give up their unjust posture; but as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups are more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was “well timed,” according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It

rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "wait" has almost always meant "never." It has been a tranquilizing Thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration. We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that "justice too long delayed is justice denied." We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter.

I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize, and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your 20 million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see the tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking in agonizing pathos: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?" when you take a cross country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" men and "colored" when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title of "Mrs." when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens' Council or the Ku Klux Klan, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action" who paternistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

You spoke of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I started thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency made up of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, have been so completely drained of self-respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation, and a few Negroes in the middle class who, because of a degree of academic and economic security, and at points they profit from segregation, have unconsciously become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred and comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up over the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. This movement is nourished by the contemporary frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination. It is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incurable "devil."

The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations. He has to get them out. So let him march sometime; let him have his prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; understand why he must have sit-ins and freedom rides. If his repressed emotions do not come out in these nonviolent ways, they will come out in ominous expressions of violence. This is not a threat; it is a fact of history. So I have not said to my people, "Get rid of your discontent." But I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled through the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action.

In spite of my shattered dreams of the past, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership in the community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, serve as the channel through which our just grievances could get to the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed. I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshippers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers say follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say,

“Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern,” and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely other-worldly religion which made a strange distinction between body and soul, the sacred and the secular.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil rights leader, but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all of their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

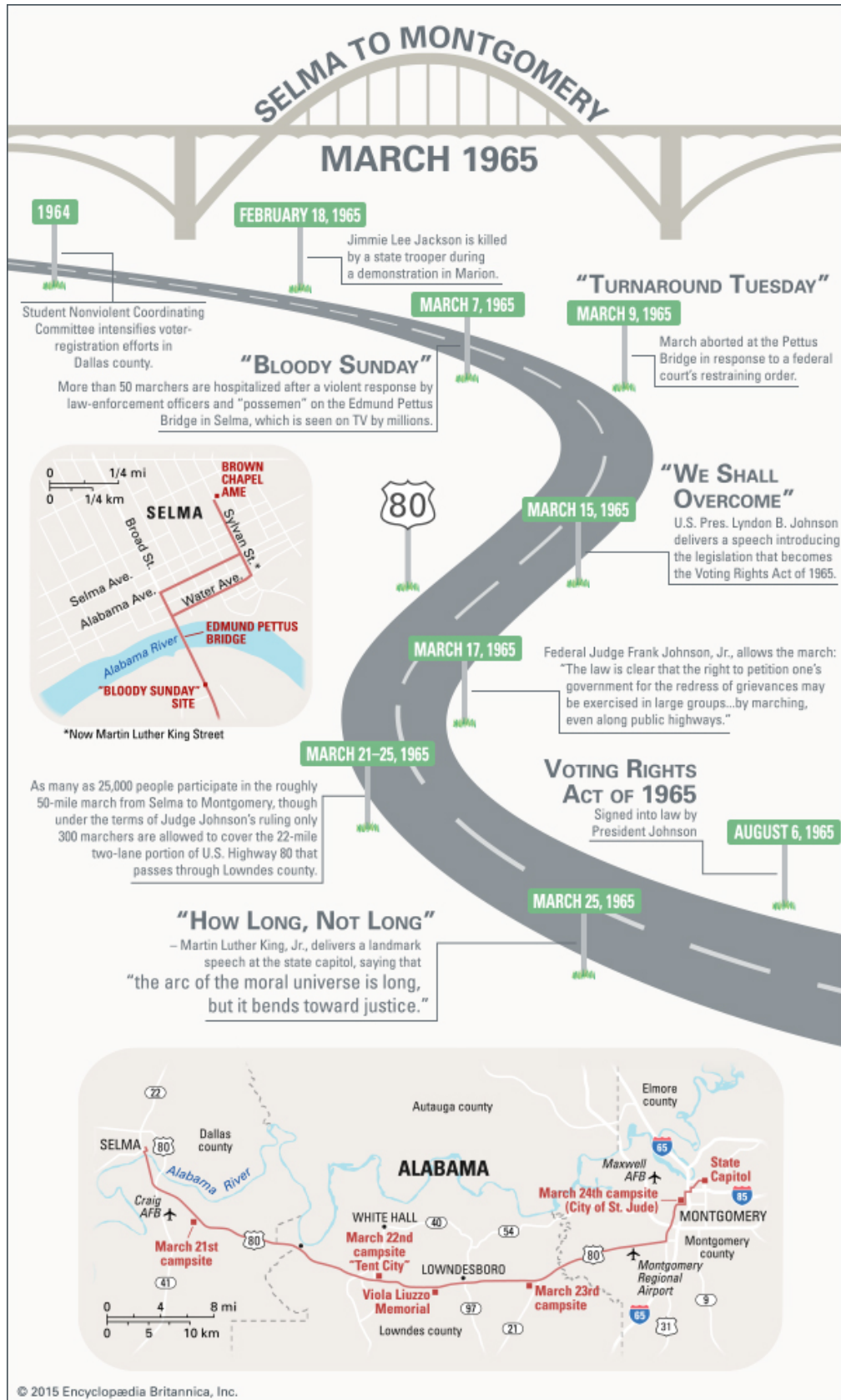
M. L. King, Jr.

### **TeachingAmericanHistory.org**

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/letter-from-birmingham-city-jail-excerpts/>

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401 College Avenue | Ashland, Ohio 44805 (419) 289-5411 | (877) 289-5411 (Toll Free)  
info@TeachingAmericanHistory.org*

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## Key Figures of the Civil Rights Movement

While there were many people and organizations that contributed to significant events during the Civil Rights Movement, this list provides a starting point for students to create a biographical infographic. As students develop their biographies, they should include pertinent information about the individual's or group's role in the Civil Rights Movement. Additional figures are listed in the [Civil Rights Digital Library](#).

Individuals	Groups
Martin Luther King Jr.	NAACP
Rosa Parks	Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
Emmett Till	Universal Negro Improvement Association
Malcom X	Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
John. F. Kennedy	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
Lyndon B. Johnson	Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
Richard Nixon	Black Panthers
Marcus Garvey	Freedom Riders
Thurgood Marshall	
Roy Innis	
Hank Aaron	
Claudette Colvin	
Dorothy Height	
John Lewis	
Bob Moses	
James Chaney	
Fannie Lou Hamer	
George C. Wallace	
Viola Liuzzo	
Stokely Carmichael	
James Meredith	
Huey P. Newton	
Bobby Seale	
Elaine Brown	
Kathleen Cleaver	
Bobby Hutton	
Ralph Abernathy	
Maynard Jackson	
W.E.B. Du Bois	
Booker T. Washington	
Elijah Muhammad	

**“Busted Boy”**

He couldn't have been more than sixteen years old,  
likely even fifteen. Skinny black teenager, loose sweater.  
When I got on Bus #6 at Prince and 1st Avenue,  
he got on too and took a seat across from me.  
A kid I didn't notice too much because two older guys,  
street pros reeking with wine, started talking to me.  
They were going to California, get their welfare checks,  
then come back to Arizona in time for food stamps.

When the bus pulled into Ronstadt Transit Center,  
the kid was the last to get off the bus right behind me.  
I started to cross the street to wait for Bus #8  
when two burly men, one in a neat leather jacket  
and the other in a sweat shirt, both cool yet stern,  
smoothly grabbed the kid and backed him against  
a streetlight pole and quickly cuffed him to the pole.

Plastic handcuffs. Practiced manner. Efficiently done.  
Along with another Indian, I watch what's happening.  
Nobody seems to notice or they don't really want to see.  
Everything is quiet and normal, nothing's disturbed.  
The other Indian and I exchange glances, nod, turn away.  
Busted boy. Busted Indians. Busted lives. Busted again.

I look around for the street guys going to California.  
But they're already gone, headed for the railroad tracks.  
I'm new in Tucson but I'm not a stranger to this scene.  
Waiting for the bus, I don't look around for plainclothes.  
I know they're there, in this America, waiting. There; here  
Waiting for busted boys, busted Indians, busted lives.

Simon Ortiz is an Acoma Pueblo Indian who grew up speaking the Acoma language. He was born and raised near Albuquerque, NM and received an MFA from the University of Iowa. He served in the Army during the 1960s where he experienced profound discrimination. He currently teaches at Arizona State University.

Source: Ortiz, Simon J. "Busted Boy." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d.  
<<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/53441>>.



**“Let America Be America Again”**

Let America be America again.  
Let it be the dream it used to be.  
Let it be the pioneer on the plain  
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—  
Let it be that great strong land of love  
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme  
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty  
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,  
But opportunity is real, and life is free,  
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,  
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?  
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,  
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.  
I am the red man driven from the land,  
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—  
And finding only the same old stupid plan  
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,  
Tangled in that ancient endless chain  
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!  
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!  
Of work the men! Of take the pay!  
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.  
I am the worker sold to the machine.  
I am the Negro, servant to you all.  
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—

Hungry yet today despite the dream.  
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!  
I am the man who never got ahead,  
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream  
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,  
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,  
That even yet its mighty daring sings  
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned  
That's made America the land it has become.  
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas  
In search of what I meant to be my home—  
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,  
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,  
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came  
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?  
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?  
The millions shot down when we strike?  
The millions who have nothing for our pay?  
For all the dreams we've dreamed  
And all the songs we've sung  
And all the hopes we've held  
And all the flags we've hung,  
The millions who have nothing for our pay—  
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—  
The land that never has been yet—  
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.  
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—  
Who made America,  
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,  
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,  
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—  
The steel of freedom does not stain.  
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,  
We must take back our land again,  
America!

O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath—  
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,  
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,  
We, the people, must redeem  
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.  
The mountains and the endless plain—  
All, all the stretch of these great green states—  
And make America again!

Langston Hughes was a literary figure during the Harlem Renaissance. He was known for sharing experiences of black life and the frustration of living in a segregated society. While poets in the same era tried to separate themselves between the black experience and personal experience, Hughes made a point to illustrate that *his* experience was the black experience. He wrote novels, plays, short stories, and poetry. Additionally, he was heavily engaged in the jazz movement.

Source: Hughes, Langston. "Let America Be America Again." *Poets.org*. Academy of American Poets, 25 Oct. 2016.  
<<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/let-america-be-america-again>>.

**“The New Colossus”**

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Emma Lazarus was a descendant of Sephardic Jews who immigrated from Portugal during the American Revolution. She was born in New York City and her first collection of poetry explored the Jewish-American identity. She was asked to provide a poem for the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, an offer she initially declined. However, she decided to use the opportunity to describe the plight of refugees and immigrants in the sonnet, “The New Colossus”, which has since become symbolic of freedom and the American Dream.

Source: Lazarus, Emma. "The New Colossus." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d.  
<<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/46550>>.

**“A Change is Gonna Come”**  
**Sam Cooke (1964)**

I was born by the river in a little tent  
Oh, and just like the river I've been running ever since

It's been a long, a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

It's been too hard living, but I'm afraid to die  
'Cause I don't know what's up there beyond the sky

It's been a long, a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

I go to the movie and I go down town  
Somebody keep telling me don't hang around

It's been a long, a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

Then I go to my brother  
And I say, "Brother, help me please."  
But he winds up knockin' me  
Back down on my knees

There been times that I thought I couldn't last for long  
But now I think I'm able to carry on

It's been a long, a long time coming  
But I know a change gon' come, oh yes it will

**“On the Turning Away”  
Pink Floyd (1987)**

On the turning away  
From the pale and downtrodden  
And the words they say  
Which we won't understand  
"Don't accept that what's happening  
Is just a case of others' suffering  
Or you'll find that you're joining in  
The turning away"  
It's a sin that somehow  
Light is changing to shadow  
And casting it's shroud  
Over all we have known  
Unaware how the ranks have grown  
Driven on by a heart of stone  
We could find that we're all alone  
In the dream of the proud  
On the wings of the night  
As the daytime is stirring  
Where the speechless unite  
In a silent accord  
Using words you will find are strange  
And mesmerized as they light the flame  
Feel the new wind of change  
On the wings of the night  
No more turning away  
From the weak and the weary  
No more turning away  
From the coldness inside  
Just a world that we all must share  
It's not enough just to stand and stare  
Is it only a dream that there'll be  
No more turning away?

**“A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall”  
Bob Dylan (1963)**

Oh, where have you been, my blue-eyed son  
And where have you been, my darling young one  
I've stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains  
I've walked and I've crawled on six crooked highways  
I've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests  
I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans  
I've been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard  
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, and it's a hard  
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Oh, what did you see, my blue-eyed son  
And what did you see, my darling young one  
I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it  
I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it  
I saw a black branch with blood that kept drippin'  
I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin'  
I saw a white ladder all covered with water  
I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken  
I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children  
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard  
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

And what did you hear, my blue-eyed son?  
And what did you hear, my darling young one?  
I heard the sound of a thunder that roared out a warnin'  
Heard the roar of a wave that could drown the whole world  
Heard one hundred drummers whose hands were a-blazin'  
Heard ten thousand whisperin' and nobody listenin'  
Heard one person starve, I heard many people laughin'  
Heard the song of a poet who died in the gutter  
Heard the sound of a clown who cried in the alley  
And it's a hard, and it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard  
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Oh, what did you meet, my blue-eyed son?  
Who did you meet, my darling young one?  
I met a young child beside a dead pony  
I met a white man who walked a black dog  
I met a young woman whose body was burning  
I met a young girl, she gave me a rainbow  
I met one man who was wounded in love  
I met another man who was wounded with hatred

And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard  
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall

And what'll you do now, my blue-eyed son?  
And what'll you do now, my darling young one?  
I'm a-goin' back out 'fore the rain starts a-fallin'  
I'll walk to the depths of the deepest black forest  
Where the people are many and their hands are all empty  
Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters  
Where the home in the valley meets the damp dirty prison  
And the executioner's face is always well hidden  
Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten  
Where black is the color, where none is the number  
And I'll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it  
And reflect it from the mountain so all souls can see it  
Then I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinkin'  
But I'll know my song well before I start singin'  
And it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard, it's a hard  
It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall



**“Fortunate Son”**  
**Credence Clearwater Revival (1969)**

Some folks are born made to wave the flag  
Ooh, they're red, white and blue  
And when the band plays "Hail to the chief"  
Ooh, they point the cannon at you, Lord

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no senator's son, son  
It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, no

Some folks are born silver spoon in hand  
Lord, don't they help themselves, oh  
But when the taxman comes to the door  
Lord, the house looks like a rummage sale, yes

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no millionaire's son, no  
It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, no  
Yeah, yeah

Some folks inherit star spangled eyes  
Ooh, they send you down to war, Lord  
And when you ask them, "How much should we give?"  
Ooh, they only answer More! more! more! y'all

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no military son, son  
It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, one  
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no no no  
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate son, no no no

# Campaign for Change



PRODUCT PATH  
TIME: 1-2 WEEKS

Group discussion to clarify social justice or civil rights issues that deserve a call to action.

Choose 2-5 issues students would like to focus on and divide up the class into groups.

Students self-select based upon interest. Groups start to brainstorm potential ideas for social media or campaign sharing. The purpose is to draw attention to the issue and allow others to be called to action.

Integrate discussions on the value of social media as a medium for awareness. Does it help? Does it hurt?

Have students develop campaign strategies, including research, individual or team tasks, and sharing mechanisms.

Take the time to have students collaborate on the products that they will produce for the campaign. For example, this poster was developed in *Canva*, which allows students to collaborate and become co-authors or editors of the same document.

Launch the campaign through dedicated outlets. For example, if a group wants to set up a Facebook page or Google Site, it should be created under the premise that it is for a school project. Integrate discussions on digital media responsibility throughout the project.

Chart the call-to-action. How many people visited a site? How many followers did they get? How many signatures did they obtain? Set up tracking systems for students to see their progress. Follow up the project with small and whole group discussions on campaign challenges and successes.