

# **The Students' Civil Rights Movement: Perspectives and Influence from Elementary to College Students**

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## **Introduction**

This unit is intended for middle school students studying the meaning of political freedom in the United States. At this level, students are expected to learn that civil rights secure political freedom and are essential protections for United States citizens. It is also important for students to understand that the rights of minorities cannot be ignored by the majority. To focus on how political freedom is secured within the American political system, students will study specific events from the height of the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s.

Civil rights are supposed to be guaranteed to all American citizens through different documents, including but not limited to the amendments to the United States Constitution. However, even a superficial glance at the history of the treatment of minorities in this country shows this to be obviously untrue. In a unit called Political Freedom, my seventh grade students learn how important civil rights are to the overall freedom of an individual. They discover that Americans and people of other countries have had to work hard to gain political freedom over time, and the end result in many cases is the passage of a major document or multiple policies guaranteeing rights to the citizens. For example, the students learn about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees thirty basic freedoms to everyone everywhere. Following this, students examine which rights Americans have been guaranteed in the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. These documents introduce students to the general meaning and significance of rights.

At the school in which I teach, students have a very strict dress code. Consequently, learning about the first amendment in the Bill of Rights inevitably leads students to ask questions, such as “If we have freedom of expression, why can’t we wear whatever we want to school?” From here, we dive into a study to answer questions similar to this as well as more important ones, i.e. “If all Americans were guaranteed the same rights, why were some still fighting for these exact freedoms after the documents were created?”

This is a perfect segue into my Civil Rights Movement unit, which is a smaller part of a larger unit called Expansion of Freedom. I wanted to include the Civil Rights Movement in my lessons to demonstrate how a minority group has expanded its freedom over time. I decided to make the fight for equal treatment for African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement the focal point of this unit because it has so many aspects to which people from all backgrounds can relate. Therefore, this topic lends more personal content to the students and engages their emotional side as well as their intellectual side.

## **Demographics**

The school at which I teach, Conrad Schools of Science (CSS), is a magnet secondary school that serves grades 6 through 12 with a focus on science disciplines. Some of the specialties that the school offers to its high school students include biotechnology, veterinary science, physical therapy/athletic healthcare, and nursing. Because students apply to this school specifically for its science courses, social studies is often not a favorite for the type of students this school attracts. There are approximately twelve hundred students, as the school maintains nearly one hundred seventy students in each grade level and averages twenty-seven students in a classroom. The school is located in the Red Clay Consolidated School District of New Castle County just south of the city limits of Wilmington, the most densely populated and demographically diverse city in Delaware. Students attending Conrad commute from different parts of the city, the surrounding towns in New Castle County, as well as parts of Kent County to the south. The student population is socio-economically diverse, with approximately thirty-five percent of students identifying themselves as part of an ethnic/racial minority and over thirty percent living in low income homes.

Enrollment at Conrad is entirely through the choice system, and students must apply and conduct themselves accordingly through an interview process before gaining admission to the school. Students are accepted for the sixth grade and then must re-apply for ninth grade if they are not granted early admission from Conrad. Students may also apply from other middle schools for high school. At the high school level, students declare a pathway, a science track in which they will focus for the remainder of their time at Conrad. Social studies is mandatory in all middle schools grades (sixth through eighth grade), and three credits of social studies are required at the high school level. Students attend a ninety-minute social studies class every other day according to the block scheduling utilized by the school. There are additional social studies electives and Advanced Placement courses offered in the high school besides the required history classes that demand a strong background in geography, history, economics and civics.

## **Rationale**

Although my students are high-performing, they are still seventh graders who know little about events that occurred before their time or outside their small state. Furthermore, there is a major deficit when it comes to basic social studies content knowledge at the elementary level. Elementary teachers do not focus on or teach social studies as much as other subjects due to the emphasis on reading and math for standardized tests. This causes students to enter middle school with a lack of background knowledge necessary to completely comprehend these topics. Furthermore, many of my students live sheltered lives in which an abstract idea like racism has never become tangible for them. Also, the concept that the world is an unfair place with many injustices is still a foreign concept to them. These are perceptions that are beyond most twelve or thirteen year olds, yet they are essential for understanding how and why societies function as they do.

I quickly learned that these students need the curriculum to be pertinent to their lives in order for it to be perceived as both interesting and important. I was immediately faced with the challenge to make the Civil Rights Movement – a historical phenomenon that, to them, ended nearly fifty years before they ever set foot in my classroom – more personal to my young and naïve students. I decided that if I could demonstrate the importance of the actions and perspectives of school-age children during this movement, I might stir a movement in my current students as well. Additionally, young students today have been trained to believe what is given or said to them by adults as the absolute truth. Students no longer question why things happened in the past and have little motivation to change things for the future.

By showing the perspective and actions of young students who worked to become more informed and socially active, I hope my students will begin to be more socially and politically active to induce change for their future as well. I hope my students will see the similarities between what my current students understand as their own rights and what minority students believed to be their rights at the time. Additionally, by using the ideas and actions of students during the Civil Rights Movement as a basis for explaining how rights of minorities have been expanded over time for various minority groups provides a connection that my current students can discover on their own. It can be difficult for seventh graders to imagine many of the troubling discrimination adults encountered during the Civil Rights Movement. They know little about prejudice in the work place or being denied the right to vote for elected government officials because they have not begun working nor had the opportunity to vote yet. However, by bringing to light the perspectives of students and the influences those students had during this era of change, my students will be better able to relate to the curriculum and envision how discrimination and racism could have affected them if they were alive and attending school at that time.

### **Essential Understanding and Questions**

Essential Understanding:

- Civil rights secure political freedom and are essential protections for American citizens.
- The concept of majority rule does not mean that the rights of minorities may be disregarded.

Essential Questions:

- Why is it necessary to secure civil rights for all individuals?
- Should civil rights be limited?
- How are civil rights secured in America?
- How can people expand their civil rights?

### **Narrative: Perspectives and Influence from Elementary to College Students during the Civil Rights Movement**

The Civil Rights Movement brought about a time when controversy and many forms of protesting ruled the political and social scenes; the movement consumed the thoughts of

Americans and brought to the forefront questions about who were actually guaranteed civil rights. Many young African Americans who held their feelings inside throughout the beginning of their childhood reached a point where they had to release all of the built-up anger and frustration from their oppressed lives. The young people, both blacks and some whites, rebelled against the traditions that had been instilled in the culture of the South decades before, trying to make a new lifestyle that would suit their desires for better treatment. They also sought to change the way that politics were being operated in America through peaceful protests and other demonstrations. However, not everyone was ready to accept this mutiny to American culture.

To many, this time period in history was an era of upheaval involving speaking out and protesting against the injustices of the world. These people who publicly objected to such wrongs were some of the same who participated in peaceful marches to support the Civil Rights Movement, demonstrations to promote equal jobs and pay for women, and protests to make the environment cleaner for everyone. They used their freedom of speech to bring to light certain social issues that had been swept under the carpet for nearly one hundred years in the white man's attempt to avoid equality for his black counterpart. The protestors wanted to be heard and to have a chance to change the status quo.

During this time, the minority youth created a voice for themselves that was virtually unseen before the early 1950s. Many African American, as well as Caucasian, teenagers of the decade found themselves fighting for freedoms and liberties that were utterly unexpected when compared to the youth of the previous decade. Young people became more opinionated and curious as opposed to simply accepting perspectives and widely-accepted norms. They were able to get involved in political and social concerns instead of letting governmental organizations deal with the problems. The teenage generation of the sixties became a subculture of America, a force to be reckoned with, and a voice for the alternatives to the standard.

African Americans gained most of their liberties through their struggles in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Before the movement, blacks were denied basic rights and freedoms that their white counterparts enjoyed, although all citizens were supposed to be treated equally according to the Fourteenth Amendment. The Fourteenth Amendment called for equal treatment of all Americans under the law.<sup>1</sup> This meant that regardless of race, all people should have the same rights as a white man had prior to the passing of the amendment. Although African Americans gained their freedom following the end of the Civil War in 1865, blacks remained socially, economically, and politically enslaved by white America. Blacks were deprived of equal public facilities, educational opportunities, job and career opportunities, and status. Through the many peaceful demonstrations led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and carried out by other groups and college students, African Americans were able to rise above the oppression and create a new life for the black minority in this country. Congressional legislation, along with presidential support, helped boost African Americans' attempts at equality. Blacks were slowly able to use the same diners and bathrooms as whites, attend school with whites, and compete for jobs, promotions, and political offices with whites. The Civil Rights Movement allowed African Americans to finally gain the equality that they were supposedly granted a century earlier.

Although it is easy to teach this time period with a focus on Dr. King and his ability to lead the black population through his rhetoric, it would be an injustice to the Civil Rights Movement

to downplay the roles of young people and students during this time of upheaval. Although African Americans were supposed to be freed after the American Civil War and granted equal treatment under the Fourteenth Amendment, many of the rights blacks were supposed to have were squashed under Jim Crow Laws in the South. Furthermore, much of this sentiment existed in the northern states as well but was publicized less because of the more obvious abuses of blacks in Dixie. It took many more people than just Dr. King to bring awareness and solutions to the problems of inequality. It was not until a series of cases involving segregation in schools were brought before the Supreme Court in the 1950s that the issue of equality began to reach another climax in American history and lead the way to the changes that were instituted in the 1960s.

### Brown v Board of Education of Topeka Kansas

In a lecture given at the University of Delaware, Dr. Leland Ware spoke about the five different cases that were consolidated in the Supreme Court to challenge the injustices suffered by blacks in the education system. Previously in 1896, the Plessy v Ferguson case gave us the “separate but equal” clause which meant that blacks and whites could be kept separate as long as they both received the same amenities. When these cases reached the courtroom, it was obvious that separate was not at all equal. By a lucky happenstance caused by a political debt President Dwight D. Eisenhower owed, Earl Warren was appointed to the Supreme Court after the death of Justice Fred M. Vinson. Warren was a more liberal individual, and he believed the time had to come to end racial segregation. In 1954, a unanimous Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was “inherently unequal.”<sup>2</sup> Referencing the Fourteenth Amendment, segregated schools were said to be unconstitutional. The following year, the Court ordered southern school districts to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.”<sup>3</sup>

This decision should have created immediate change in classrooms across America, but it went virtually ignored by many states. Ten years after the Brown v Board decision was rendered, less than two percent of African American students attended school with white students.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, black schools and students continued to receive significantly less funding in the South.<sup>5</sup> It would take much more than words in a courtroom to make equality come alive in the classroom.

### Little Rock Nine

History shows that the participation of school-age children was a major factor in the success of the Civil Rights Movement. Not only did adults see the usefulness of utilizing their younger counterparts, but students began to understand that they could make a significant difference in their future as well. In the 1950s, only two percent of blacks in Mississippi graduated from high school; that statistic was a fact that many black citizens across the South, including the students, desired to change.

Change would soon be found in a small town. Little Rock, Arkansas was a community of only about 170,000 people, and a quarter of them were black. The town was not entirely segregated; in fact, many public institutions were desegregated, including libraries, buses, the police force, and juries.<sup>6</sup> In 1957, a select group of high-achieving black students were chosen to

integrate Central High School. They became known as the Little Rock Nine. On September 4, the first day of integration, eight of the nine students traveled together, but Elizabeth Eckford, the ninth student, missed the message and walked to school alone. She was forced away by an angry mob of whites calling for her to be lynched, among other inappropriate and degrading epithets.<sup>7</sup> As it turned out, the governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, had intentionally blocked the Little Rock Nine from safely entering Central High School. He even employed his police force to keep out the black students. President Eisenhower, against his own beliefs but in order to uphold Constitutional law, was forced to send in troops to protect the students.<sup>8</sup>

The Little Rock Nine were finally granted entrance to Central High School on September 25 of that same year.<sup>9</sup> One of the nine, Minnijean Brown, said that she finally felt like an American citizen when Eisenhower's troops protected her while she integrated the school. Of course, the students were not protected in all areas of campus, such as locker rooms, but it was a huge step for the integration of public schools in America. News reporters came from all over the country to record and describe the violence the students encountered, making the movement well-known to other areas. Eventually, Ernest Green became the first black graduate of Central High School, and all of the original Little Rock Nine graduated and went on to college. More importantly, Eisenhower's use of troops symbolized the now obvious fact that segregation could not be sustained in the South.<sup>10</sup> The perseverance and courageous acts of students became a catalyst for positive change in the Civil Rights Movement.

Sit-ins

### *College Students Step Up*

Many black adults began offering support to the African American youths who chose to participate in the fight for equality. Some even began to view the younger generation as their new leaders in the movement. Because these adolescent leaders were more impatient than their older counterparts, they worked to make progress move at a quicker pace. They also shifted the movement from one of a legal issue to one of a moral issue as the white majority became more aware of the violence being inflicted upon black children.<sup>11</sup> Although the above-mentioned demonstrations were successful in facilitating the movement, no protests were as influential as the sit-ins.

Sit-ins brought out new and more activists to participate in the battle for equal rights among all races. The sit-ins were student organized protests that occurred at public facilities throughout the South and even in some places in the North. When students were arrested for their roles in the sit-ins, they did not want to be bailed immediately because they hoped to crush segregation by inundating the prison system with massive numbers of protestors. Students chanted phrases such as "Jail, no bail" to show their determination to change the political and social climate of their country. As students were apprehended by police, more replaced them in what seemed to be never-ending numbers.<sup>12</sup>

Colleges saw student organizations spring up to support the youth movement for change. The Nashville Student Movement was the largest and best-organized student group that carried out nonviolent sit-ins in the 1960s, but they weren't the only ones. Other student-run organizations

included the National Student Association, Students for a Democratic Society, and the Young People's Socialist League.<sup>13</sup> As the students' movement picked up momentum, more groups formed to join in on the action.

### *The Greensboro Four and the Creation of SNCC*

In a book entitled, *The Civil Rights Movement*, Bruce Dierenfield argues that the Greensboro Four launched the student phase of this period of societal disruption. At 4:30pm on February 1, 1960, four students – who would come to be known as the Greensboro Four – tried to get service at a F. W. Woolworth's five-and-dime lunch-counter in downtown Greensboro. The students were young men named Ezell Blair, David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Joseph McNeil. They were all freshmen at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (A&T).<sup>14</sup> They remained at the counter the rest of the day but were declined service; however, that was not the end of their efforts to integrate public facilities. This first sit-in eventually led to hundreds of black students from local educational institutions and some whites peacefully protesting the segregated lunch-counters.

By day six of this demonstration, news of the sit-in had spread to nearby high schools, colleges, and universities. Hundreds of well-dressed and polite students traveled from A&T, Bennett College, and even Dudley High School as well as white students from three local colleges to participate in the sit-ins.<sup>15</sup> The sit-in movement also expanded to other department stores along Elm Street in Greensboro.<sup>16</sup> White students who heard about the events in the South took up the cause in the North. Students at Michigan University, Swarthmore College, Berkeley College, and Harvard University picketed Woolworth lunch-counters also. Meanwhile, students down in Greensboro suffered beatings and were dragged through the streets. As the realization of the students' efforts and the violence against them grew, more sit-ins were performed.<sup>17</sup>

By Saturday of that week, multiple department stores were forced to close due to the threat of bombings. After a tense two weeks, negotiations ensued and the demonstrations were put on hold. They picked up again in April when it was obvious that the managers of the stores were not willing to integrate. After more sit-ins, boycotts of the stores that resulted in a loss of thirty percent profit, and forty-five protestors being arrested, some managers gave in and segregation of the lunch-counters ended in many stores.<sup>18</sup> John Lewis, a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), later recalled in a newspaper article written by Lindsey Gruson for the Greensboro Daily News in 1980 that watching the sit-ins on television at night gave the African American community a sense of "kinship" that rallied them.<sup>19</sup>

SNCC was formed at a meeting for student protestors at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. The meeting was led by Ella Baker who was a graduate from Shaw. In the meeting, Baker challenged the students to confront major issues facing the black race in America. Some of the concerns Baker brought up to the students included prejudice actions surrounding voting, housing, jobs, and healthcare. SNCC was intended to generate a community-based movement in the Deep South and welcomed white allies but did not want to rely on white leaders. In fact, the group did not want to follow a single leader at all but instead relied on the power of its members to step up and make a difference collectively. SNCC endeavored to reach some of the most dangerous places of the South, led by fearless and sometimes reckless students. The members of

this particular organization were impatient, short on money, and looking for change to happen quickly. Through the work of the students, SNCC was able to pressure approximately two hundred cities in twenty different states to integrate places like lunch-counters and movie theatres.<sup>20</sup>

### *SNCC After the Sit-ins: The Freedom Summer*

Because of the positive growth of SNCC and other college organizations, students were able to make a huge difference. The sit-ins prompted students to be more politically active. This led SNCC members to join forces with other organizations, like the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in what became known as the Freedom Summer. In the summer of 1964, SNCC and CORE college students worked to recruit northern college students to help register blacks to vote in Mississippi. Flyers circulated around northern college campuses calling for “A Domestic Freedom Corp.” Students flocked from many colleges and university to have their part in the movement to improve the political lives of African Americans in the South.<sup>21</sup>

These students, having experienced the importance of a quality education, also volunteered to organize and hold freedom schools in Mississippi. The SNCC and CORE volunteers converted church basements and abandoned buildings into functioning schools for the summer students. At these schools, the northern college student volunteers taught the black youth of the south basic educational subjects found in most white schools. During this Freedom Summer, three thousand black children were educated in subjects such as foreign languages, fine arts, arithmetic, typing, and journalism.<sup>22</sup> These African American students were afforded an opportunity not offered in most black schools in the Deep South during this time.

### Children’s Crusade

Although black adults were involved in many demonstrations to improve the status of African Americans, the violence inflicted on children had a newfound and more intense impact on the population watching these events unfold. A major incident that culminated the involvement of youths in the Civil Rights Movement occurred in Alabama in 1963. When many blacks reached a point when they felt they had too much to lose by participating in demonstrations, James Bevel, a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), suggested that children could contribute to the cause. He argued that, compared to black adults, children had less to lose by joining the protests against inequality.<sup>23</sup>

On May 2, hundreds of children participated in a peaceful demonstration. They gathered at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Both adults and children knew how important it was for black students to attend school. However, these schoolchildren and their parents decided it was worth it to skip school in order to march for equality, knowing this would bring about a better school experience for them in the end.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, these students left the church together and marched, sang, and prayed for justice to be served.<sup>25</sup>

The demonstration persisted through May 10 when an agreement was reached to desegregate many public facilities in Birmingham. Ultimately, approximately nine hundred school-age



children were arrested for their participation in the march.<sup>26</sup> So many children were taken into custody by the police that there were not enough paddy wagons to haul them all; school buses were also utilized to take many children to jail.<sup>27</sup> Even the jails were not big enough to hold all the throngs of students who skipped school to march for equality. The police had to use a stadium as a temporary holding cell for the children they took into custody.<sup>28</sup>

School-age children as young as six years old participated in this Children's Crusade.<sup>29</sup> Both boys and girls took part in the movement and were arrested. Boys were held in places like Jefferson County Jail and Bessemer Jail, and girls – who outnumbered the boys by nearly two to one – were taken to establishments such as the 4-H Club building at the State Fairgrounds. One girl, Anita Woods, spoke to a reporter about her experience in the crusade. She was only twelve years old when she marched from Sixteenth Street Church. Woods was arrested and held at Jefferson County Detention Home in a room with twenty other girls. The charge against her was parading without a permit.<sup>30</sup> As the movement gathered momentum, parents were eventually discouraged from posting bail in order to flood the prisons. While Woods was awaiting someone to post her bail, she spoke with Philip Benjamin, a guest reporter for the New York Times, about her perspective on the situation. She stated that all the girls in the jail wanted to go home, but they all also agreed that they would do it all over again if needed. Moreover, she mentioned that she wanted freedom, which she saw as equal rights, and the ability to venture into any public facility, including schools, regardless of her race.<sup>31</sup> While Woods and her fellow classmates were imprisoned, principals threatened to suspend and even expel students, but she and the others continued their demonstration anyway.<sup>32</sup> This Children's Crusade proved that not only adults or famous people could have an intense impact on the movement, but schoolchildren could band together and significantly influence and cause change as well.

### Using Students' Involvement in the Civil Rights Movement as a Way to Teach about the Expansion of Freedom

The sit-ins, along with other forms of protest used by school-age children, were some of the most influential and powerful demonstrations of the Civil Rights Movement. Young African Americans, as well as their white allies, were incited to take actions against the injustice of blacks. Middle school students struggle with finding the significance of events that have occurred in the past. However, by displaying the perspectives and actions of the youth of America during the late fifties and sixties, my students will be able to better relate to the material in the curriculum. Students will not only see how important it was for young students of this era to use their civil rights, but they will also see the relevance of the unit in terms of how people their own age can apply the freedoms that are guaranteed to them in government documents. Finally, by including the ideas and student-led actions of the Civil Rights Movement, my students will be more engaged both emotionally and intellectually.

### Strategies

When students enter middle schools, most have not developed strong note-taking skills. This is something that many students struggle with throughout their educational careers, so learning good note-taking strategies has become a focus of my curriculum. Also, because this unit is intended for middle school students, there is a lot of value in having the students work in

collaborative pairs. This builds social skills, provides more perspectives and knowledge, and gives students an opportunity to move around and be active in the classroom.

### Cornell Notes

I have my student use the Cornell notes method because it provides a mainstreamed visual representation of information, and my students have consistently given my positive feedback about them. In this strategy, students can take notes on a variety of informational pieces, such as PowerPoints, lectures, videos, and textual pieces. Student split the note paper into three sections: Vocabulary, General Notes, and Summarizing the Main Idea. See Figure 1 for an example of the Cornell Notes I use. Students can take this a step further and also color-code their notes, highlighting or writing the Vocabulary in one color, the General Notes in a second color, and the Main Idea in a third color. This not only organizes the note-taking process, but the titles guide students in finding the important pieces of information to write (ex. Vocabulary) and makes it easier to find information when reviewing the notes later.

### Collaborative Pairs/Think-Pair-Share

Using collaborative pairs is a great way to ensure that all students are engaged in the activity and learning from the experience. It challenges students to collaborate with their peers instead of keeping information to themselves. By keeping it to pairs, you eliminate the option for students to be overruled by a majority, which might happen in a group of three or more students. Additionally, students have the opportunity to discuss their knowledge and opinions on the content without the pressures of answering in front of the entire class. During a Think-Pair-Share activity, students are asked to think about a prompt provided by the teacher. Then the students pair up with other students to discuss their thoughts on the prompt. In the end, one or both of the students share their ideas with the class.

### Jigsaw

Employing the Jigsaw strategy provides a way to teach a lot of information in a short amount of time. In this method, each student or group of students is a single piece in a bigger puzzle. The student or group of students must become the master of a piece of information to share with the rest of the class as all students move about the room trying to get all the pieces of the puzzle. Once each student has all the pieces of the overall puzzle, the bigger picture is revealed.

## **Classroom Activities**

### Civil Rights Secure Political Freedom

*Why is it necessary to secure civil rights for all individuals? Why are civil rights limited? How is political freedom secured in America?*

This lesson is intended to introduce the concept of freedom and demonstrate how freedom must be guaranteed but also limited in some ways in order for all citizens to have the most amount of freedom.

Anticipatory Set: Have students brainstorm what it means to be free. First, students write down their thoughts on the meaning of the word free. Then students meet in pairs to discuss their ideas about the term. Students can revise and edit their explanations of freedom based on discussions between partners. Finally, students share their ideas with the class.

Directed Instruction: Introduce quotes from historical figures about the concept of freedom. Introduce quotes about freedom from historical characters like Patrick Henry. Explain that freedom is interpreted differently by individuals so it has to be limited in some ways. Students will take interpreting the quotes for further understanding of the term *freedom*.

Activity: Split the class into ten groups and assign an amendment to each group. Provide students with a copy of the Bill of Rights. Each group they will look at its amendment to see how freedoms are both guaranteed to individual citizens and limited in the United States Constitution. Students must then create a song, skit, or poem demonstrating the freedom guaranteed and limited in their given amendment.

Assessment: Students will present their findings in a two-minute presentation to the class. Student not presenting will complete a graphic organizer about the ten amendments, explaining the freedom guaranteed and limited in each amendment.

## History of Political Freedom in America

*Why have some Americans had more political freedom than others? How can we guarantee political freedom for all Americans?*

This lesson is intended to introduce students to the idea that some Americans did not have all the freedom the government guaranteed through the study of the Brown v Board of Education Supreme Court case.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students to think of a time when they felt they were denied one of their rights previously learned. Students should list the right they were denied, how it was denied, and what they would like to happen so that it is not denied in the future.

Directed Instruction: Explain to students that although documents were created to give equal rights to citizens, many Americans have not been treated equally over the years. Their civil rights have been denied to them. Through the use of PowerPoint, explain the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Plessy v Ferguson court case, segregation, and desegregation to students. Student should take Cornell notes to record the information from the PowerPoint.

Activity: Introduce students to the Brown v Board of Education through the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*. Students will take notes on the information leading up to the court case that is portrayed in the video.

Assessment: Using RARE (Restate, Answer, give Reasons, provide Examples, Explanations, and an Ending) format, students will answer the question *Why did some Americans have more*

*political freedom than others, and how can we guarantee political freedom to all Americans in the future?*

## Expansion of Freedom

*How can people expand their civil rights?*

This lesson is intended to make students think critically about how to guarantee civil rights so that political freedom is secured to all Americans. It is also created to have student become engaged in civil issues.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students to think about their favorite restaurant. Then have students respond to the question *How would you feel if you were told you could not go to your favorite restaurant, and what would you do to change the situation?*

Directed Instruction: Explain the use of different forms of protest and push-back used by black and white Americans during the Civil Rights Movement. Be sure to include the marches, speeches, written letters, court cases, picketing, boycotts, and sit-ins. Students should record the information using Cornell notes.

Activity: Divide the classroom into seven groups. Provide each group with information on a single incident involving one of the forms of protest: marches (ex. Children's Crusade), speeches (ex. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream"), written letters (Dr. King's Letter from Birmingham Jail), court cases (Brown v Board of Education), picketing (picketing in North Carolina), boycotts (Montgomery Bus Boycott), and sit-ins (Greensboro Four). Each group will become experts on that specific form of protest. Each group will be responsible for completely understanding the provided information about that form of protest. Students will complete a graphic organizer about the form of protest about which they are readings. The graphic organizer will include the type of protest, location of the protest, the reason for the protest, number of people involved, the dates and length of the protest, and the ultimate result of the protest. This bit of information will serve as a single piece in a larger puzzle. Using the Jigsaw Puzzle method, each group will have to meet with other groups in order to get the other pieces of the puzzle (the other bits of information about forms of protest during the Civil Rights Movement).

Assessment: Once all groups have met, students will answer the following question using RARE format: *How can people expand their civil rights?*

## **Bibliography**

Anderson, Terry H. *The sixties*. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.

This book helped provide overall insight into the various movements and perspectives of different people during the 1960s.

Benjamin, Philip. "Negro Girls Define 'Freedom' From Cell in Birmingham." *New York Times (New York City)*, May 9, 1963.

This is a news article that gave the perspective of a girl who was arrested during the Children's Crusade. She, and other girls, are interviewed about their participation in the event and feelings about being in jail.

Cook, E., and L. Racine. "The Children's Crusade And The Role Of Youth In The African American Freedom Struggle." *OAH Magazine of History* 19, no. 1 (2005): 31-36.

This book provided information about children's participation in various activities during the Civil Rights Movement.

Dierenfield, Bruce J. *The civil rights movement*. Rev. ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008.

This book was useful in gaining strong background knowledge about the different major topics of the Civil Rights Movement.

*Eyes on the prize*. Film. Directed by Inc Blackside. Alexandria, VA: PBS Video, 1987.  
Gruson, Lindsey. "Greensboro Blacks Supported Sit-ins." *Greensboro Daily News*, January 1, 1980.

This documentary has multiple parts, but this episode specifically shows footage of the sit-ins in Greensboro. It provides more in-depth content of the participants, goals, and actions taken in the sit-ins.

Kowal, Rebekah J. "Staging The Greensboro Sit-Ins." *TDR/The Drama Review* 48, no. 4 (2004): 135-154.

This article provided more information on the Greensboro sit-ins, detailing the circumstances leading up to the sit-ins, the actual protest, and the aftermath.

Ware, Dr. Leland. "Brown v Board of Education: Desegregation to Resegregation." Class lecture, DTI Seminar: The Civil Rights Movement from University of Delaware, Newark, DE, October 8, 2013.

In this lecture, Dr. Leland Ware gave very detailed information about Brown v Board of Education. It also included the relevance of the court case to Delaware residents.

## **Appendix A: Common Core Standards**

Because this is a social studies unit in which student will be engaged in analyzing informational text, the following anchor standards are used.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

## **Appendix B: Cornell Notes**



**4 EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

- Restates the question as a part of their first sentence; sentence does not start with a pronoun
- Gives a clear answer to the question as a part of the first sentence
- Their reason uses specific information from the textbook such as a quote or paraphrases a statement as a part of the support for their answer
- Their support is appropriate, relevant to their answer
- Have a conclusion sentence tying information together
- Good use of transitions and organization

**3 GOOD ACHIEVEMENT**

- Restates the question as a part of their first sentence; does not start with a pronoun
- Gives an answer to the question
- Reasons given paraphrase information from the text
- Support is appropriate but not thoroughly explained or unclear
- Attempts to use transitions and but answer is still organized
- No conclusion present or answer just ends

**2 LIMITED ACHIEVEMENT**

- Does not restate question; sentence starts with a pronoun
- Gives an answer to the question
- Gives a reason but does not have evidence from the text to support their answer
- Doesn't use transitions and answer is not organized (doesn't flow properly)
- No conclusion present or answer just ends

**1 MINIMAL ACHIEVEMENT**

- Does not restate the question; sentence begins with a pronoun
- Support is irrelevant, not appropriate or not present as a part in addressing the question
- No conclusion present or answer just ends
- No attempt at organization or use of transitions



Curriculum Unit  
Title

*The Students' Civil Rights Movement: Perspectives and Influence from Elementary to College Students*

Author

Katelyn Chiolan

**KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.**

Civil rights secure political freedom and are essential protections for American citizens.  
The concept of majority rule does not mean that the rights of minorities may be disregarded.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT**

Why is it necessary to secure civil rights for all individuals?  
Should civil rights be limited?  
How are civil rights secured in America?  
How can people expand their civil rights?

**CONCEPT A**

Civil Rights Secure Political Freedom

**CONCEPT B**

History of Political Freedom in America

**CONCEPT C**

Expansion of Freedom

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A**

**QUESTIONS C**

Why is it necessary to secure civil rights for all individuals?  
Why are civil rights limited?  
How is political freedom secured in America?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B**

Why have some Americans had more political freedom than others?  
How can we guarantee political freedom for all Americans?

**ESSENTIAL**

How can people expand their civil rights?

**VOCABULARY A**

Bill of Rights      Minority  
Civil Rights      Political Freedom  
Majority      U.S. Constitution

**VOCABULARY B**

Civil Rights Movement      Separate but Equal  
Desegregation      Verdict  
Segregation      14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

**VOCABULARY C**

Boycott  
Protest  
Sit-ins

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES**

- Brown v Board of Education
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years* – PBS
- Georgia Teens Fed Up With Segregated Prom – ABC News
- United States Constitution

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Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Eyes on the Prize*, Directed by Inc Blackside (1986; PBS Video) Documentary.
- <sup>2</sup> Dr. Leland Ware, "Brown v Board of Education: Desegregation to Resegregation" (lecture, DTI Seminar: The Civil Rights Movement, University of Delaware, Gore Hall, Newark, DE, October 8, 2013).
- <sup>3</sup> *Eyes on the Prize*, Directed by Inc Blackside.
- <sup>4</sup> Ware, "Brown v Board of Education."
- <sup>5</sup> Terry H. Anderson, *The sixties*, 3rd ed (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007): 13.
- <sup>6</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 32.
- <sup>7</sup> Cook and Racine, "The Children's Crusade," 34.
- <sup>8</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 33-7.
- <sup>9</sup> Cook and Racine, "The Children's Crusade," 34.
- <sup>10</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 38-40.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 57-61.
- <sup>12</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 57-61.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 56-60.
- <sup>14</sup> Rebekah J. Kowal, "Staging The Greensboro Sit-Ins," *TDR/The Drama Review* 48.4 (2004): 135.
- <sup>15</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 57-61
- <sup>16</sup> Kowal, "Staging The Greensboro Sit-Ins," 135.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 136.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 136.
- <sup>19</sup> Lindsey, Gruson, "Greensboro Blacks Supported Sit-ins." *Greensboro Daily News*, 1980.
- <sup>20</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 60-1.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 105-106.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 109.
- <sup>23</sup> E. Cook and L. Racine, "The Children's Crusade And The Role Of Youth In The African American Freedom Struggle," *OAH Magazine of History* 19.1 (2005): 31.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 32.
- <sup>25</sup> Bruce J. Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, rev. ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008, 82.
- <sup>26</sup> Cook and Racine, "The Children's Crusade," 32.
- <sup>27</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 82.
- <sup>28</sup> Cook and Racine, "The Children's Crusade," 32.
- <sup>29</sup> Dierenfield, *The civil rights movement*, 82.
- <sup>30</sup> Philip Benjamin, "Negro Girls Define 'Freedom' From Cell in Birmingham," *New York Times* (New York City, 9 May 1963): 17.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 17.
- <sup>32</sup> Cook and Racine, "The Children's Crusade," 32.

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**VOCABULARY C**

Boycott  
Protest  
Sit-ins

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