

Teaching American History Grant: Learning Experience 2006-2007

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Topic Title: Civil Rights Movement

DATE: July 2006

Grade Level: 11th Grade American History & Government

I. Overview of the Learning Experience:

A. Throughout the American History course, the themes of race relations and civil rights plays a constant role. As we approach the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights movement gains momentum and plays a larger role in shaping the lives of African Americans (then as well as now). This lesson plan, which fits into the larger context of the Civil Rights Unit, will provide the student with the opportunity to learn and understand, through examining numerous primary sources, more about the Civil Rights Movement.

B. Goals and Objectives: At the conclusion of this Unit, students will be able to recognize patterns of discrimination in American history and the discrepancies of what the “American Creed” is and whether it has been realized for all. Through the use of primary sources and student-based research, students will be able to analyze the situations of various players in history and then be able to write a reflective essay on the necessity and success of the Civil Rights Movement.

C. New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies:

Standard 1.2. The state and federal governments established by the Constitutions of the United States and the State of New York embody basic civic values (such as justice, honesty, self-discipline, due process, equality, majority rule with respect for minority rights, and respect for self, others, and property), principles, and practices and establish a system of shared and limited government. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government*, 1994)

Standard 1.3. Central to civics and citizenship is an understanding of the roles of the citizen within American constitutional democracy and the scope of a citizen’s rights and responsibilities.

Standard 5.3. Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Standard 5.4. The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.

II. Essential Questions:

- A. What were the major reasons for the start of the Civil Rights Movement?
- B. What were some of the actions (and responses) that the Civil Rights activists faced by those who opposed the changes that the activists desired?
- C. Was the Civil Rights Movement necessary? Was this movement inevitable or did it need a push?
- D. What actions occurred during the Civil Rights Movement? Were they successful in achieving their goals? What determines the success of a social movement? What characteristics and circumstances determine who becomes an activist?
- E. Was the Civil Rights Movement a success? How have conditions improved/regressed for African Americans? What about other minority groups?
- F. Who were five key figures involved in the Civil Rights Movement? What role did each play?
- G. How did segregation affect different aspects of American society?

III. Time Allotment:

The plan for this unit is to cover it in approximately five to seven class periods. Each teacher will amend this plan to fit their time frame. A rough outline for this unit appears in the teaching procedure section.

IV. Vocabulary and key terms:

Civil rights	Jim Crow	segregation	American Creed
American dilemma	de facto	de jure	civil disobedience
CORE	SNCC	NAACP	SCLC
Sit-in	boycott	integration	black power
<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (I & II)		<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>	antebellum
Black Panthers	Freedom Summer	Freedom rides	Reconstruction
Civil Rights Act of 1965		quota	Affirmative Action

V. Materials/Sources:

- A. Power point presentation → various pictures and captions that illustrate the race issues of this era.
- B. Student questionnaire based on what the students already know/think they know regarding civil rights.
- C. Various Civil Rights Videos to accommodate lower level learners. Some examples include, but are not limited to: *Eyes on the Prize* (PBS), *Freedom on My Mind* (California Newsreel), *Making Sense of the Sixties* (PBS), *The Century 1960-1964* (ABC), *Voices of Civil Rights* (History Channel).

VI. Procedure:

A. Anticipatory Set:

1. The students will be assigned an excerpt from Gunnar Myrdal's essay, "An American Dilemma" (pages 3-5), and given guiding and analytical questions pertaining to the reading.
2. Students will also be assigned a homework regarding modern day (past 18 years) examples of discrimination.
 - ✓ Lower level students will be presented info on the Myrdal essay and class discussion will ensue based upon guide questions used by advanced students.
 - ✓ Possible excerpt of video to give students a taste of the unit.

B. Day 1: Introduction to the Civil Rights Movement

Q. Was the Civil Rights Movement necessary? Was this movement inevitable or did it need a push?

1. Brainstorm as to what civil rights are and then discuss student responses
2. Provide a working definition for the students
3. Activity on "American Creed". What it is and evaluation of creed.
4. Homework assignment → Students will be given 1/5 Primary Source documents accompanied by guiding questions.
 - ✓ Lower level students will write a summary of class discussion on civil rights and the American Creed.

C. Day 2: Discuss homework assignment through pair and share.

Q. How did segregation affect different parts of American society? What were the major reasons for the start of the Civil Rights Movement?

1. Students will discuss their responses with one another, first based on the article that they read.
2. Students will share their information and thoughts with the rest of the class. The teacher will record their responses on the board.
3. Students will record the various responses onto a hand-out that focuses on the social/political/economic effects of segregation and racism.
4. Homework: Students will be handed a list of various people, events, and organizations that played a prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement. Each student will be required to produce a one to two paragraph summary of the specific topic, and cite their sources.
 - ✓ Lower Level students will have class time to research the list of various people, events, and organizations that played a prominent role in the Civil Rights Movement. Either Library or computer lab time for this list. Students will be divided into small groups and assigned a small portion of the list to research OR students can watch a variety of videos with the list and fill in as much as possible.

D. Day 3: Student and Teacher Facilitated Lesson:

Q. What actions occurred during the Civil Rights Movement? Who were some of the key figures who had an effect on the movement?

- 1 Students will take the Alabama Literacy Test.
- 2 Teacher will distribute outline notes on the Civil Rights Movement.
- 3 Students will share their specific information pertaining to the topic that they researched the following evening with the rest of the class. Students will transcribe information from each other on to their outline notes sheet. Teacher will fill in any holes that emerge.

✓ Lower level students will present their research findings. Teacher will distribute outline notes on the Civil Rights Movement.

Students will share their specific information pertaining to the topic that they researched the following evening with the rest of the class. Students will transcribe information from each other on to their outline notes sheet. Teacher will fill in any holes that emerge. Additional info can be gleaned from videos.

E. Day 4: Power Point Presentation

Q. What were some of the actions (and responses) that the Civil Rights activists faced by those who opposed the changes that the activists sought? Describe some of the reactions of those opposed to the strategies of Civil Rights activists. After observing the images, what were your initial feelings and responses? If you had been alive during this time period, would you have joined in the Civil Rights movement?

1. Students will view the power point presentation illustrating the various aspects of the Civil Rights Movement. They will be asked to write a brief reaction paper (3-4 paragraphs) on the images that they see.
2. Students will then be given a copy of the Birmingham Commitment Form and then discuss whether they would have signed it or not.
- ✓ Lower level students will write a paragraph or give an oral summary in place of the reaction paper. If extra time, additional info can be gleaned from videos.

F. Day 5: Modern Discrimination

Q. Was the Civil Rights Movement a success? How have conditions improved/regressed for African Americans? What about other minority groups?

1. From their homework assigned on Day 1, students will share the various events from the past 18 years regarding acts of discrimination.
2. The teacher will hand out an outline note sheet for the students to fill in regarding these examples of discrimination. Any events missing will be filled in by teacher.
3. This exercise will lead into a discussion based on the above mentioned questions.
4. Essay will be tomorrow.

G. Day 6: Essay written in class!

✓ Lower level students may use note sheet and or list from research.

VII. Assessment:

A. Students will be required to complete an essay on the following question:

Was the Civil Rights Movement necessary? Were African Americans going to receive equality eventually or did it need a push? Was it successful?