

**September 15, 1963**  
**Lesson Plan**  
Samantha Elliott Briggs, Ph.D.

**Overview**

Sunday, September 15, 1963 brought the world together as they mourned the loss of six young lives as a result of senseless murders. No matter your race or religion; no matter your politics or social status – everyone paused upon hearing that the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was bombed, killing four little girls and providing a whole new perspective on how deeply one can hate. Killed by the blasts that morning were Addie Mae Collins, 14; Denise McNair, 11; Carole Robertson, 14; and Cynthia (Morris) Wesley, 14. While this event received a great deal of attention, as it rightly deserved, there were two young men who were also killed that day, and are oftentimes left out of the tale.

16-year old Johnny Robinson was shot in the back and killed by a police officer during the chaos which ensued after the church explosion. 13-year old Virgil Ware was the sixth and final child to be killed that day; shot in the chest and the cheek while riding on the handle bars of his brother's bicycle.

This lesson will encourage students to analyze the data found in an image of the bombing.

**New Words**

Ensue, mourn, senseless, chaos, analyze, analysis, unearth

**Grade Level**

Middle to Upper

**Primary Learning Objectives**

The Students Will:

- Analyze primary documents to unearth data.
- Summarize their findings in small groups.

**Approximate Duration of Lesson**

One class period.

**Materials and Equipment Needed**

Computer with Internet access, copies of NYT article, copies of bombing image, copies of photo analysis worksheet (students can also create their own), writing supplies

## Background/Preparation

The teacher should identify a short video clip to introduce students to the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church bombing; one suggested video from the History Channel can be found in the resource section. The teacher should also familiarize themselves with the New York Times article and the articles about Virgil Ware and Johnny Robinson posted at the end of this lesson. By following the link for the article found in the reference section, teachers can identify the actual text from the article. The teacher should also make copies of the enlarged image from the NYT article for each student. The image can also be found at the end of this lesson. Finally, teachers should reproduce the Photo Analysis Worksheet for students or be prepared to guide students in recreating their own on blank sheets of paper.

## Procedures/Activities

- The teacher should ask students what they know about September 15, 1963. There is a good chance that most students will not know the significance, unless the teacher has somehow prompted the lesson prior to the start of this discussion.
- If they are unaware, explain to students that this was the day that the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church was bombed. Assuming this may have triggered a response in students, ask them to now share anything they may know about this event.
- If it has not already come up in conversation, ask students if they knew that children died that day. Ask them how many died and if they can name the individuals. If necessary, share the names and ages of each: Addie Mae Collins, 14; Denise McNair, 11; Carole Robertson, 14; and Cynthia (Morris) Wesley, 14.
- Next, ask them if those were the only people who died. Tell them that in fact, two young men died that day as well: 16-year old Johnny Robinson and 13-year old Virgil Ware. *You can share the information discussed in the introduction to this lesson or additional information that you may have gained from reading the articles listed in the reference section of this lesson.*
- Ask students how outsiders may have learned about the events of that day. You should expect answers like, from the newspapers, magazines, television, radio, etc.
- Tell students that they will analyze a newspaper article and photograph published on the front page of the New York Times. They will look for critical clues about the incident.
- Distribute the copies you made for students: newspaper article, photograph, analysis worksheet.
- Have students fold the image of the bombing into four sections by folding the paper in half length wise, and then folding it in half again. Once they have creased the paper in quadrants, have them open it up and write a number: 1, 2, 3, or 4 in each of the quadrants on both the front and back of the picture, taking care not to cover up any important images.
- Next, have students answer the questions and go through the exercise as instructed on the Photo Analysis Worksheet. To save paper, the teacher can instruct the students to turn the photograph over and write their answers to Part One: Observation, in each of the quadrants as shown in the diagram.

- After students have completed their analysis independently, allow them to work in small groups to compare their observations. To wrap up, have students discuss out loud their findings with the whole class.

### **Assessment Strategies**

The answers provided on the Photo Analysis Worksheet should serve as the method of assessment for this lesson. The students should not be critiqued on what they may or may not have seen, per se, but should be graded for their level of analysis.

### **Extension**

Students can create their own newspaper article reporting their findings and conclusions about the events that unfolded on September 15, 1963. Students may even choose to focus their articles on Virgil Ware and Johnny Robinson since they are oftentimes an afterthought of this bloody day.

### **Remediation**

Students can read or listen to, *Birmingham Sunday*, by Larry Dane Brimmer, and respond with a journal entry, illustration or essay.

### **Additional Resources**

VIDEO: History Channel's "Bombingham"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-MuWDsv5pg>

*Birmingham Sunday*, by Larry Dane Brimmer

<http://www.amazon.com/Birmingham-Sunday-Outstanding-Nonfiction-Children/dp/1590786130>

### **References**

Johnny's Death: The Untold Story in Birmingham

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129856740>

The Legacy of Virgil Ware

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1005718,00.html>

New York Times article on Bombing

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0915.html>

## PHOTO ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

### STEP ONE: OBSERVATION

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual details. Next, divide the photo into quadrants (fourths) and study each section to see what new details become visible. Document your observations for each quadrant.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUADRANT ONE</b></p> <p><b>People:</b></p>    <p><b>Objects:</b></p>    <p><b>Activities:</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUADRANT TWO</b></p> <p><b>People:</b></p>    <p><b>Objects:</b></p>    <p><b>Activities:</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUADRANT THREE</b></p> <p><b>People:</b></p>    <p><b>Objects:</b></p>    <p><b>Activities:</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>QUADRANT FOUR</b></p> <p><b>People:</b></p>    <p><b>Objects:</b></p>    <p><b>Activities:</b></p>

## **STEP TWO: INFERENCE**

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph:

1.

2.

3.

## **STEP THREE: QUESTIONS**

A. What questions does this photography raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find answers to your questions?

Adapted from:

[http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo\\_analysis\\_worksheet.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo_analysis_worksheet.pdf)

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

LATE CITY EDITION

VOL. CXXI, No. 10,000

NEW YORK, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1956

10 CENTS

## GROMYKO ARRIVES FOR U.N. SESSION AND OTHER TALKS

Soviet Minister Will Also Meet With and Name an Outstanding Issue

### POSITIVE ATTITUDE SEEN

He Is Expected to Show Restraint on Subject of Negroes' Pact

Talk of proposed pact for the U.N. still is

Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, who arrived in New York yesterday to attend the 17th session of the United Nations General Assembly, is expected to show a positive attitude toward the subject of the pact.

Mr. Gromyko, who arrived at the United Nations Hotel at 10:30 A.M. today, is expected to meet with Secretary of State Eisenhower and other officials of the United States government.

Mr. Gromyko is expected to show a positive attitude toward the subject of the pact, which is expected to be discussed at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

### Repulsion to Castro

By HERBERT WANGSBERG  
The American people are repulsed by the actions of the Cuban Government, which is expected to be discussed at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

### Algeria to Seize Settlers' Lands

Algiers, Sept. 23.—Algeria will seize the lands of the French settlers in the country, according to a statement issued by the Algerian Government.

### Ben Bella, New President, Will Speed Socialist

Algiers, Sept. 23.—Algeria will speed the process of socialist reform, according to a statement issued by the Algerian Government.

### 20 in Haiti Receive Safe-Exit Permits

Port-au-Prince, Sept. 23.—Twenty Haitians have received safe-exit permits from the United States government.

## Anti-Castro Crowds Disrupt Times Sq.; Police Escort 1,400 to Safety



ON ALLEYS: Mounted police work to control the demonstration heading down 4th Street.

### Malaysia's Birth Marked in 4 Lands

Four new nations were born today in the Malay Peninsula, marking the end of British rule in the region.

### Early Move to Denounce Group Praising Bay of Pigs

Washington, Sept. 23.—The State Department is expected to announce a plan to denounce a group of people who are praising the Bay of Pigs invasion.

### Rockefeller Plans '64 Decision Soon

New York, Sept. 23.—John D. Rockefeller is expected to announce his decision on the proposed merger of the American International Group and the American International Group.

### May Announce Intentions in November — He Prefers Gullwater to Kennedy

Washington, Sept. 23.—Senator Barry Goldwater is expected to announce his intentions for the November election, stating that he prefers Gullwater to Kennedy.

### Signals Related by Wires in Orbit

Washington, Sept. 23.—The Federal Communications Commission is expected to announce a plan to use signals related by wires in orbit.

### Successful Test Finds No Evidence of Interference With Radio Astronomy

Washington, Sept. 23.—A successful test has found no evidence of interference with radio astronomy.

### Dakota Quintuplets Doing Fine; Respond Well to First Feedings

Sioux Falls, Sept. 23.—The Dakota quintuplets are doing fine and responding well to their first feedings.

## AMERICA CANCELS SAILING IN DISPUTE ON RACIAL CHARGE

2 Unions and the Design of an Engineer Accused of Being a Segregationist

By ROBERT C. BOWEN  
The Navy Engineer's design of a ship was canceled because of a charge of racial discrimination.

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## BIRMINGHAM BOMB KILLS 4 NEGRO GIRLS IN CHURCH; RIOTS FLARE; 2 BOYS SLAIN



AFTER BOMB: Several workers examine debris outside Negro church in Birmingham.

### Full-Scale F. B. I. Hunt On In Birmingham Bombing

Washington, Sept. 23.—The Federal Bureau of Investigation is conducting a full-scale hunt for the bombers of the Birmingham church.

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## GUARD SUMMONED Wallace Acts on City Pleas for Help as 20 Are Injured

By CLAUDE MOYER  
BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Sept. 23.—A guard was summoned to the scene of a bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, which injured 20 people.

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Enlarged photo used in the previous New York Times article. The teacher may choose to copy and paste the image on a blank document and turn the page orientation to landscape to make the image larger.



The “Four Little Girls”



Virgil Ware



Johnny Robinson

# **September 15, 1963 Lesson Plan - Standards**

Lesson Plan developed by Samantha Elliott Briggs, Ph.D.

Grade Level – Middle to Upper

## **Social Studies Course of Study Standards**

### **SIXTH GRADE**

**Standard 13.** Describe the role of major civil rights leaders and significant events occurring during the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Examples: civil rights leaders—Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King, Jr.; events—Brown versus Board of Education; Montgomery bus boycott; student sit-ins; march on Washington, D.C.; Freedom Rides; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Malcolm X; voter registration efforts; Selma-to-Montgomery march.

### **SEVENTH GRADE – Citizenship**

**Standard 11.** Describe examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence of groups, societies, and nations, using past and current events.

- Tracing the political and social impact of the modern Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to the present, including Alabama’s role. *Extension to consider the impact.*

### **ELEVENTH GRADE**

**Standard 14.** Trace events of the modern Civil Rights Movement from post-World War II to 1970 that resulted in social and economic changes, including the Montgomery bus boycott, the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School, the march on Washington, and the Freedom Rides.

- Tracing the federal government’s involvement in the modern Civil Rights Movement, including the abolition of the poll tax, the desegregation of the armed forces, the nationalization of state militias, Brown versus Board of Education, the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Explaining contributions of individuals and groups to the modern Civil Rights Movement, including Martin Luther King, Jr., James Meredith, Medgar Evers, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
- Identifying people and events in Alabama that influenced the modern Civil Rights Movement, including Rosa Parks, Autherine Lucy, John Patterson, George C. Wallace, Vivian Malone, Fred Shuttlesworth, *the Children’s March*, the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing, and the Selma-to-Montgomery march
- Describing the development of a Black Power movement, including the change in focus of the SNCC, the rise of Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael and the Black Panther Movement
- Describing the impact of African-American entrepreneurs on the modern Civil Rights Movement Examples: S. B. Fuller, A. G. Gaston

# English Language Arts Course of Study - Appendix D:

## Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

### Key Ideas and Details

#### Standard 1.

**Grades 6-8.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**Grades 9-10.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

**Grades 11-12.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

#### Standard 7.

**Grades 6-8.** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

**Grades 9-10.** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts).

**Grades 11-12.** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem. *With extensions to lesson plan to include additional sources of information in diverse formats and media.*

## Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

#### Standard 9.

**Grades 6-12.** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

# English Language Arts Course of Study

## Speaking and Listening Standards

### Comprehension and Collaboration

**[SL.6-12.1]** Engage [initiate and participate – grades 9-12] effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade-level topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**[SL.6.2]** Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

**[SL.7.2]** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study. *With extensions to lesson plan.*

**[SL.8.2.]** Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. *With extensions to lesson plan.*

[SL.9-12.2] Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally), [in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, - grades 11-12] evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source [and noting any discrepancies among the data – grades 11-12]. *With extensions to lesson plan.*

## **Language Standards**

### **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

[L.6-8.6]. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.