

Martyrs of the Movement: Setting the Foundation

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Overview

Few events simply “occur” without a prior event first taking place. We may consider this a basic lesson of cause and effect. Likewise, there are people that have come before us to make many of our experiences even possible. Poet Maya Angelou once stated, “Someone was hurt before you; wronged before you; beaten before you; humiliated before you; raped before you; yet, someone SURVIVED.” There’s no better example of this than the martyrs that sacrificed unselfishly to set in motion a path to freedom – freedoms that we now enjoy, far too often with reckless abandon.

This lesson pays homage to the martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement who seldom appear on the pages of the history books.

Key Words

Reckless abandon, homage, martyr

Grade Level

Middle to Upper

Primary Learning Objective(s)

The students will:

- define the term “martyr.”
- research martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement.
- create a scrapbook to display the faces and contributions of activists.

Approximate Duration of Lesson

At least one week.

Materials and Equipment Needed

Computer with Internet access (or printed copies of biographies); writing materials; notebooks or binders that can be used for scrapbooks; clear paper/sheet protectors (optional); art supplies (optional)

Background/Preparation

The teacher should make a decision to create this project as homework or in class. Likewise, it should be pre-determined whether this project will be done individually or in groups. The teacher should gather all the supplies necessary for the students to create scrap books. The teacher could collect supplies from colleagues, including the art teacher. If there are not a reasonable variety of supplies for all of the students to share, the teacher should simply require type-written entries with an image of the subject being discussed. If this assignment will be done during school, the teacher should either secure enough computers for students to use or print out copies of biographies for the students. The teacher should establish a set of guidelines based on preferences selected from this set of options.

Procedures/Activities

- The teacher should introduce the project by asking students to name all individuals they associate with the Civil Rights Movement and to give a brief overview of that individual's contribution to the movement.
- The teacher should then ask students to define the word, "martyr" (a person who either dies or makes a significant sacrifice and suffers on behalf of a belief, principle or cause). Next, ask the students if they can name any martyrs (it's okay if students repeat names from the previous question, however they should be pushed to add new names to the list).
- Tell students that over the next few days they will work on creating a scrap book featuring several martyrs that are often ignored in mainstream history books. Explain that the contributions made by these individuals preceded the Civil Rights Movement that typically highlights the efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King and the like. Without the work of these individuals, progress would have been significantly delayed.
- The teacher should distribute project instructions/guidelines to the students, along with a list of the martyrs. The teacher should withhold the links to biographies provided below in this lesson, allowing the students the opportunity to work independently. If students are struggling to find information on the subjects, the teacher can assist and share the websites provided.
- Once the students have collected their data about the subjects, they should write their own biography about each individual. If art supplies are provided, the students should create a scrap book page for each subject; if there are no art supplies available, the students should simply write the biography (be sure to warn against plagiarism) and insert an image of the person into a word processing document.
- Students should be encouraged to find martyrs not suggested by the teacher, to add to their scrapbooks.

Assessment Strategies

The students work should be judged on neatness, organization, clarity, grammar, etc. Extra credit should be given to students who are able to identify martyrs that were not previously assigned by the teacher.

Extension

As an extension exercise or perhaps as another option for extra credit, students should create a slideshow about the individuals featured in their scrapbook. The slide presentation should include significant text, images related to the individual and their contribution to the Civil Rights Movement, as well as important dates in the person's life and career.

Remediation

Students can be assigned one individual to focus on and create a time line about their life and contribution to the Civil Rights Movement.

Additional Resources

Septima Clark, Educator, Known as "The Queen Mother of the Civil Rights Movement"
http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/septima-p-clark-south-carolina-educator-and-civil-rights-activist

Howard Thurman, Theologian (Pastor)

http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/howard_thurman.html

Modjeska Monteith Simkins, Educator

<http://www.usca.edu/aasc/simkins.htm>

Asa Philip Randolph, Labor Organizer

<http://www.apri.org/ht/d/sp/i/225>

W.E.B. DuBois, Scholar

<http://www.biography.com/people/web-du-bois-9279924>

Elizabeth Harden Gilmore, Funeral Home Owner

<http://www.democraticunderground.com/1187426>

Whitney M. Young, Jr., Social Worker

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=43988>

Oscar Stanton De Priest, First African American Congressman

<http://www.biography.com/people/oscar-stanton-de-priest-7328>

Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, Journalist

<http://www.biography.com/people/ida-b-wells-9527635>

Mary Church Terrell, Suffragist

<http://www.marychurchterrellhouse.org/history/namesakes.html>

Social Studies Course of Study Standards

FOURTH GRADE

Standard 14. Describe the social, political, and economic impact of the modern Civil Rights Movement on Alabama.

- Identifying important people and events of the modern Civil Rights Movement

Examples: people—Martin Luther King, Jr., George C. Wallace, Rosa Parks; events—Montgomery bus boycott, Birmingham church bombing, Selma-to-Montgomery march

- Identifying benefits of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act

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 12. 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

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 7. *Integration of information from Walking Tour, sculptures, and original photographs.*

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.

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

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Standard 7.

Grades 6-8. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Grades 9-10. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Grades 11-12. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

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.

Information from Walking Tour, sculptures, and original photographs.

[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.