

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Samantha Elliott Briggs, Ph.D.

Overview

Think back to the first time you recall seeing the image of a tortured Emmett Till laying in his coffin in 1955 after being murdered for supposedly whistling at a white woman. Does the thought still cause you to shiver just a bit? Many sources credit that iconic picture for laying the foundation for so many more meaningful images to come. Firsthand accounts and ghastly images sent shockwaves crawling up the spine of America's back, forcing the federal government to interfere with the hateful acts that were showing no mercy to the Foot Soldiers who silently demanded equal rights and protections for Blacks in the South.

When most people look at a photograph, they cannot help but to wonder what the people in the image were thinking in that moment in time. For this lesson, students will research historic pictures of the Civil Rights Movement and consider what each individual would say in that moment about what they were experiencing.

New Words

Mercy, photograph, historic, shockwave, ghastly, firsthand

Grade Level

All grade levels

Primary Learning Objectives

The Students Will:

- Analyze historical photographs.
- Consider what emotions subjects in a photograph are experiencing.
- To empathize with those involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

Approximate Duration of Lesson

One class period

Materials and Equipment Needed

Computer with Internet access, printed copies of photographs, writing supplies

Background/Preparation

The teacher should create a Power Point presentation of images from the Civil Rights Movement or choose one from the Internet (see additional resource section for links). Be sure to print off all necessary copies in advance.

Procedures/Activities

Day One

- The teacher should show the class a images from the Civil Rights Movement.
- Engage students in a discussion about what emotions they may have felt viewing the images. Ask students why they believe pictures are so important – both in the moment and in the future.

- Solicit answers from the group about how pictures helped bring attention to the CRM. Be sure they understand that for people living outside of Birmingham (or any other city engaging in their own demonstrations), pictures were their only insight into what people were experiencing.
- Allow students to locate an image on the Internet that depicts a scene from the Civil Rights Movement, or utilize the ones at the end of this lesson. Have them copy the image and paste it into a word publishing document, like Microsoft Word.
- Next, have students write a description of the picture, including any direct reference about the date, location, persons or places in the image, what the occasion was, etc.
- In the next paragraph, have students write their personal opinion about what was going on in the picture – the back story, if you will. In other words, have students describe the emotions the image evokes.
- Finally, have students use the “shape” tool to create thought bubbles above or on the picture that they’re analyzing. Tell them that they should write a brief statement that the individual(s) in the picture may have been thinking, or perhaps a dialogue between multiple people in the image. There is an example that can be found at the end of this lesson.
- *NOTE* the teacher should remind students of the significance of this images and insist that their commentary be respectful.

Assessment Strategies

Students should be assessed based on their ability to properly analyze the images selected by the teacher and by their reflection on the second image that they chose on their own.

Extension

The students could create their own scrap book or slide presentation using the various images collected.

Additional Resources

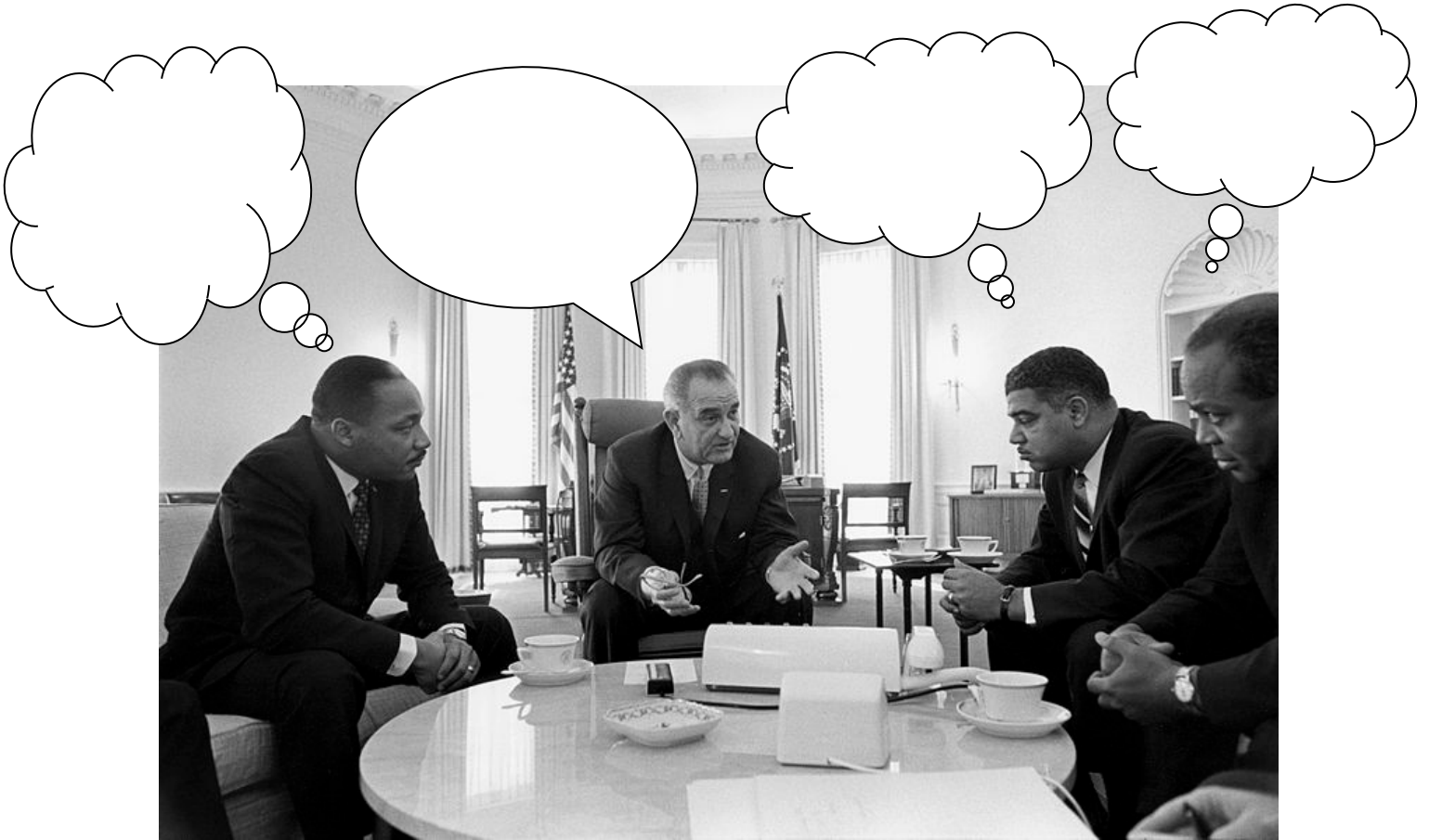
U.S. Civil Rights Movement Photo Essay (Graphic content)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bgpe842gBoo>

A Change is Gonna Come: Sam Cooke
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObYoxS4zzIY>

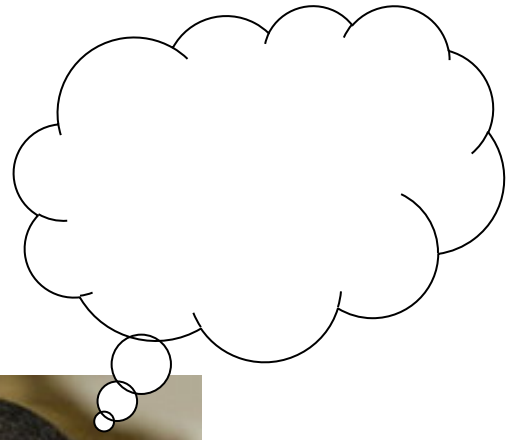
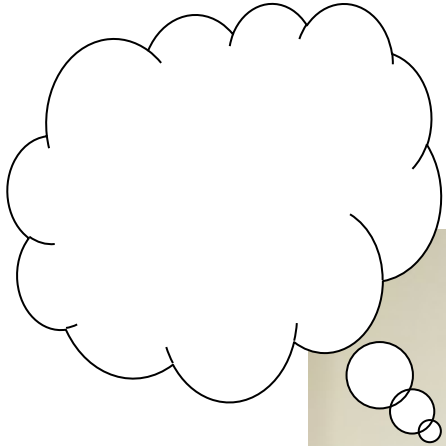
References

Photographers of the American Civil Rights Movement
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photographers_of_the_American_civil_rights_movement

PHOTO ANALYSIS PROJECT



President Lyndon B. Johnson meets with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Whitney Young and James Farmer. January 18, 1964. Photographer: Yoichi R. Okamoto



President Barack Obama presents the 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom to Rev. Joseph Lowery, co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. August 12, 2009 in the East Room of the White House in Washington, D.C. AP File Photo



Then 15-year old Elizabeth Eckford walking into Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas on September 4, 1957.



Martin Luther King Jr. leads civil rights marchers in prayer after they are arrested on February 1, 1965, in Selma, Alabama.

Social Studies Course of Study Standards

THIRD GRADE

Standard 11. . Identify significant historical sites in Alabama, including locations of Civil Rights activities.

- Birmingham—Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Kelly Ingram Park, etc.

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.