

The Civil Rights 'A Dream Deferred?'

An Internet WebQuest on Civil Rights

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Introduction

Imagine that you and a team of learners are presented with the task of describing an elephant. You are each blindfolded and guided to an elephant. Each of you touches a different part of the animal. Based upon what each of you explored, each will have a different point of view about elephants. Which is the truth? When we study complex topics, there is usually a lot more to a topic than we learn after a quick exploration. In the following WebQuest, you will use the power of teamwork to learn about the Civil Rights Movement. Each person on your team will become an expert on some aspect of the Civil Rights Movement and then you will come together at the end to share and get a better understanding of the topic as a whole.

The following [National Council for History in the Schools standards](#) were used to guide the development of this lesson plan

- Understand the struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties.
- Understand economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States.

The following [Washington State Grade Level Expectations for 11th Grade students](#) were used to guide the development of this lesson plan.

HISTORY 4.1.2, Part 5 Understand how the following themes and developments help to define eras in U.S. history:

- Movements and domestic Issues (1945—1991).
- Explains how the Civil Rights Movement helped to define U.S. history after World War II as a time of social movements.

HISTORY 4.2.2 Analyze how cultures and cultural groups have shaped the United States (1890 – present).

- Examines the way that African Americans used the court system to influence civil rights legislation.
- Examine how the use of boycotts and demonstrations of African Americans resulted in social change in the United States.

HISTORY 4.3.1 Analyze differing interpretations of events in U.S. history (1890—present).

Social Studies Skills

- Understand evidence supporting a position on an issue or event.
- Create and use research questions to guide inquiry on an issue or event.
- Analyze and respond to multiple viewpoints on public issues brought forth in the context of a discussion

Task

You have been recruited by the Library of Congress to create a digital essay on the Civil Rights Movement. With the popularity of homemade videos, YouTube style movies, and the growth of personal handheld communication devices the Library is eager to create a collection of student made digital essays that may be downloaded or watched on-line. An integral part of the collection is to engage the general public in a discussion that asks two questions:

'How has the United States dealt with issues of equality and the extension of civil liberties?'

and

'Have the goals and ideals of the Civil Rights movement been realized?'

By completing this WebQuest, you should achieve the following goals: 1) develop an interest in the study of the Civil Rights; 2) use the power of the Internet for advanced exploration; 3) learn information about key aspects of the Civil Rights; 4) realize that complex topics can be looked at from various perspectives; 5) formulate and support an opinion based on your roles; and 6) work with teammates to determine a combined action plan.

Process

You will be working together as a group exploring web sites that your teacher has selected. You should start with the pages that are labeled 'Background Information' before dividing into groups. Each group has their own Task to complete and a separate set of web sites to use. There is a task organizer and an evaluation rubric in Background Information to guide your work.

Phase 1 - Background Information

These sites are important because they will provide basic information about the topic as a whole. Everyone should explore these sites before starting your Task. Your group can use resources from any of sections; I have tried to group them as best as possible. Regardless of the topic you are exploring ALL of the groups should start with the sites in this section

This [scoring guide](#) will be used to evaluate your work, please be sure you know it!

[Library of Congress](#)

[Best History Sites](#)

[Introductory Essay on Civil Rights](#)

[Free historical photos](#)

[Stanford University site for MLK](#)

[University of Virginia- Civil Rights 1960s](#)

[Eyes on the Prize- primary sources of the Civil Rights movement](#)

Veterans of Civil Rights- All groups should use this site!!
Map of Hate Groups in the USA today
Eyes on the Prize- profiles of significant people and events
Digital Essay/Storytelling Scoring Guide
Understanding Black Power 40 years later

Phase 2 - Roles

These roles were chosen because they each define the most important elements of the Civil Rights. Each of you has been assigned a particular role with links and instructions below. Here are the general instructions for all of you. Please see your specific instructions and questions below.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Two members from each WebQuest team will explore one of the roles below.
2. Read through the files designated for your group. You can print out pages and underline the parts that you feel are important or cut and paste from the webpage into a word processor.
3. Remember to include the URL of the page you take information from so you can return to it and use it as a citation. You will need to have an annotated bibliography for all the sources you employ in your digital essay
4. Focus what you've learned into one main opinion that answers the Big Quest(ions) or Task.

Here are the various sections, one group per topic

Topic #1 Court Cases:

'The 'separate but equal' doctrine adopted in Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, has no place in the field of public education.' From Brown vs Board of Education case decision

Use the links below to address the following:

How has the court system been used by Civil Rights Activist?

2. Discuss the success and failures Civil Rights Activists have had vis-a- vis the US Supreme Court
3. Analyze the Emmett Till murder case, how might it be argued that it was the spark that started the Civil Rights movement?
4. Explain how the Civil Rights act of 1964 was significant in regard to federal involvement in what had been state jurisdiction

Links for Court Cases:

Important Civil Rights Cases

Important Civil Rights Cases

Supreme Court cases on sit-ins and demonstrations

Seattle School Court Case 2007

Brown vs Board of Education case

Gore vs Bush- from 2000 election

Civil Right case of 1883

Mississippi Burning Case

Clearing House of Civil Rights Cases

Links to important Civil Rights cases

Topic #2 Demonstrations:

'At our first stop in Virginia . . . I [was] confronted with what the Southern white has called 'separate but equal.' A modern rest station with gleaming counters and picture windows was labelled 'White,' and a small wooden shack beside it was tagged 'Colored.'

-- Freedom Rider William Mahoney [26]

Use the links below to address the following:

1. Discuss how the principles/tactics of the following: Direct Action, Non-Violence, Bi-racial actions, Black Power were employed during the Civil Rights Movement
2. How were students and young people active in the demonstrations of the movement?
3. Outline the various efforts by: The Little Rock Nine, Rosa Parks, Mamie Till, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and others to gain public support for their actions

Links for Demonstrations

Library of Congress: Sit ins, Freedom Rides, and Demonstrations

Supreme Court cases on sit-ins and demonstrations

Recollection from a Freedom Rider

Photos from Demonstrations

Sit-ins information

March on Washington

Topic #3 Personal Voices:

-- Mamie Bradley, mother of Emmett Till

'Have you ever sent a loved son on vacation and had him returned to you in a pine box, so horribly battered and water-logged that someone needs to tell you this sickening sight is your son -- lynched?

Use links below to address the following

1. Discuss the affect the Civil Rights movement had on African-Americans.
2. How did those who opposed the Civil Rights movement defend their perspective?
How do contemporary groups defend their opposition to Civil Rights for minority groups?
3. In addition to African Americans, how have other groups struggled with exercising Civil Rights?

Links for Personal Voices

- [Student help with Oral Histories](#)
- [History Matters: Oral History page](#)
- [Step by Step Guide to Oral Histories](#)
- [Oral Histories of the Mississippi Civil Rights Era](#)
- [Eyes on the Prize: interviews](#)
- [Veterans of the Civil Rights- narratives](#)
- [Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer's Speech](#)

Topic #4 Southern and rural:

I Have a Dream- Speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.

“I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.”

Use links below to address the following:

1. What role did religion play in the Civil Rights movement in the South
2. What were the unique traits, issues and efforts of the Southern Civil Rights Movements
3. Examine the Democratic Convention of 1964, what insight does that incident provide into the power of the Southern Civil Rights Efforts
4. Explain how the social, political and economic systems of the south (ex: Jim Crow, Slavery and Sharecropping, White Privilege) worked against, or for, the efforts of those seeking to exercise or restrict Civil Rights

Links for Southern and Rural

- [Delta State University Center for Culture and Learning](#)
- [The Delta-: the place, the mindset](#)
- [Civil Rights in Mississippi](#)
- [University of Southern Mississippi- oral histories](#)
- [Ferris University: Jim Crow](#)
- [Public Broadcast site: on Jim Crow](#)
- ['Educational Film' on plantation life in the 1950s](#)
- [American Experience site on Emmett Till](#)
- [Mississippi Narratives](#)
- [Documenting the South](#)
- [Civil Rights and Hurricane Katrina](#)
- [Interviews with Civil Rights activists](#)

Topic #5 Northern and urban:

***From Malcolm X speech---* The Ballot or the Bullet**

It's either a ballot or a bullet.

In the North, they do it a different way. They have a system that's known as gerrymandering, whatever that means. It means when Negroes become too heavily concentrated in a certain area, and begin to gain too much political power, the white man comes along and changes the district lines. You may say, 'Why do you keep saying white man?' Because it's the white man who does it. I haven't ever seen any Negro changing any lines. They don't let him get near the line. It's the white man who does this. And usually, it's the white man who grins at you the most, and pats you on the back, and is supposed to be your friend. He may be friendly, but he's not your friend.'

Use links below to address the following:

1. What were the main aims, goals, concerns and tactic of the Northern Civil Rights Movement?
2. What role did The Great Migration/Diaspora play in the Northern Civil Rights Movement?
3. Discuss the impact each of these Northern cities had on the Civil Rights Movement as a whole: Boston, Chicago, Detroit, New Jersey, New York City

Links for Northern and urban

- [Civil Rights movement moves North](#)
- [Lecture on the Great Migration](#)
- [Black Panther Party site](#)
- [Malcolm X research](#)
- [Columbia University: Malcolm X project](#)
- [Malcolm Reference Archive- audio clips of speeches](#)
- [Rutgers University: Riots in Detroit and New Jersey](#)
- [Part 1 of New York School video on Racial Unity](#)
- [Part 2 of New York School video on Racial Unity](#)
- [Integration Report 1960](#)
- [The Civil Rights Movement in Postwar Washington, D.C.](#)
- [Blues in the Pacific Northwest](#)
- [Blues in Schools- audio and video section](#)
- [Blues in the Pacific Northwest](#)
- [Blues in Schools- audio and video section](#)
- [Civil Rights in Seattle](#)
- [Busing in Boston in the 1970s](#)
- [Great article on Busing in Boston](#)
- [Los Angeles Watts Riot](#)

Topic #6 Music, culture, poetry :

STRANGE FRUIT

*Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black body swinging in the southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees
Pastoral scene of the gallant south
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!
Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop.*
-- Music and lyrics by Lewis Allan, copyright 1940

Excerpts from Mississippi Goddamn by Nina Simone

*'Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddamn*

*This is a show tune
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet*

*Hound dogs on my trail
School children sitting in jail
Black cat cross my path
I think every day's gonna be my last*

*Lord have mercy on this land of mine
We all gonna get it in due time
I don't belong here
I don't belong there
I've even stopped believing in prayer'*

Use links below to address the following:

1. How was music used as a tool by Civil Rights activists to bring attention to inequality and hardship?
2. Specifically explore the connections between the following types of music and the experience of African-Americans and others who have worked for Civil Rights: Delta Blues, Soul, Rap, and Gospel
3. Explore various organizations, businesses or enterprises that used or were a vehicles for music and culture in connection with the Civil Rights Movement

Links for Music, Culture and Poetry

[Folkstream.ent](#)

[Experience Music Project](#)

[Mississippi Blues Trail](#)

[Songs of the Civil Rights Movement](#)

[National Public Radio- Songs of the Civil Rights Movement](#)

[Music Makers- information and free music downloads](#)

[University of Virginia site- Robert Johnson](#)

[Mississippi Music](#)

[Music and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s](#)

[List of Songs with themes from the Civil Rights era](#)

Phase 3 - Reaching Consensus

You have all learned about different parts of The Civil Rights Movement. Now group members come back to the larger WebQuest team with expertise gained by searching from one perspective. You must all now complete the Task as a group. Each of you will bring a certain viewpoint to the answer: some of you will agree and others disagree. Use information, pictures, movies, facts, opinions, etc. from the web sites you explored to convince your teammates that your viewpoint is important and should be

part of your team's response. Your WebQuest team should write out an answer that everyone on the team can live with. See the scoring guide for what you need in your final product

Conclusion

So is an elephant smooth, rough, soft, or hard? Well, when you're blindfolded and only *looking* at one part, it's easy to come up with an answer that may not be completely right. It's the same for understanding a topic as broad or complex as The Civil Rights Movement: when you only know part of the picture, you only know part of the picture. Now you all know a lot more. Nice work. You should be proud of yourselves! How can you use what you've learned to see beyond the black and white of a topic and into the grayer areas? What other parts of The Civil Rights Movement could still be explored? Remember, learning never stops.

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