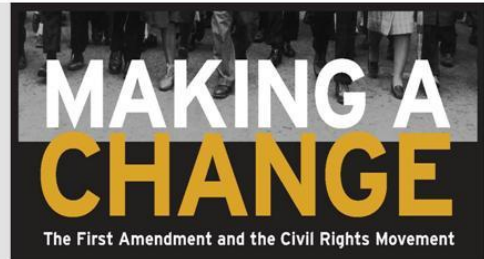


The First Amendment as a Tool for Change



Rationale/Main Concept:

Inspired by the civil rights movement and civil rights issues today, students prepare to take the First Amendment from theory to action. After building a firm understanding of the five freedoms and how social movements past and present have used them to achieve change, students develop a plan to address a civil rights issue currently affecting their community. Next, they create multimedia presentations on their goals and step-by-step procedures. Students work together to select the strongest steps and final goal, and create a roadmap for a class service learning project.

Essential Questions:

- How have social movements in the past used the First Amendment as a tool for change?
- How could I use the First Amendment to positively impact my community?

Objectives — Through this lesson, students will be able to:

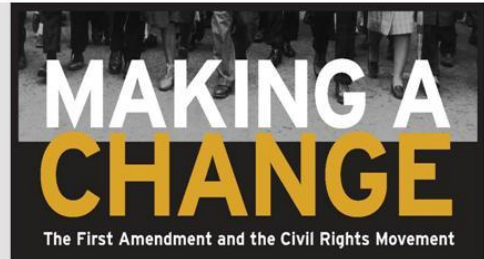
- List and define the five freedoms of the First Amendment.
- Describe how First Amendment freedoms have supported actions to address civil rights issues in the past and present.
- Discuss the pros, cons and potential roadblocks involved in enacting a plan for change.
- Choose a realistic goal for change in their community and lay out a plan to achieve that goal.
- Create a multimedia representation of their goal and the plan to achieve it.

Time: 30 minutes for class discussion, additional time to complete multimedia projects, 50 minutes to create a class plan of action

Materials:

- Lesson plan
- Access to the Internet for research, viewing the interactives and creating multimedia projects
- “The First Amendment as a Tool for Change” worksheet
- Note-taking materials

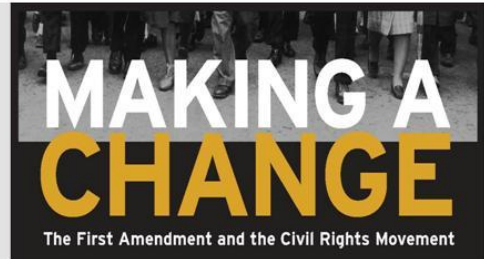
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Procedure:

1. Write or project the text of the First Amendment so that all students can see it:
 - a. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
2. As a class, define the five freedoms of the First Amendment and what they mean.
 - a. **Religion:** You are free to believe what you please, belong to any religion or no religion at all.
 - b. **Speech:** You are free to voice your opinions through words, symbols or actions.
 - c. **Press:** The media and individuals are free to publish information without censorship by the government.
 - d. **Assembly:** You are free to gather together with other people.
 - e. **Petition:** You are free to criticize the government and to ask for change.
3. Look at events on the civil rights timeline to see how activists in the civil rights movement applied these freedoms while advocating for change.
4. Explore the Newseum's "Paths to Progress" panels on three current civil rights issues. As a class, go through and determine which freedoms were — and are — being used for various steps in the process.
5. Divide students into small groups. Each group will create a plan to address the civil rights issue chosen in Lesson 1. Their initial plan should explore how they can use all five freedoms of the First Amendment to achieve their goal. Use the "First Amendment as a Tool for Change" worksheet to guide their process.
 - a. Note: If you chose to use a civil rights issue from recent history not specific to your community, students may choose to research how each of the freedoms was used by activists who addressed that cause. Or they may create their own plan for how they would hypothetically address the issue.
6. Have your students translate their worksheets into multimedia panels using the Digital Classroom's Glogster EDU tool.

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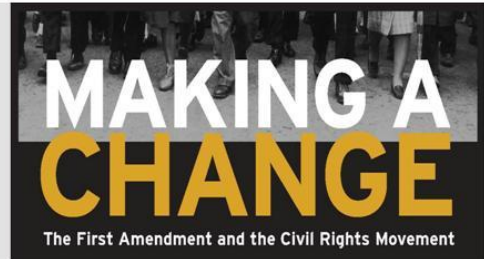
7. Have students present their panels about their plans and end goals to the class. Discuss their work with the goal of analyzing all of their ideas and deciding on a single achievable goal and the best steps to reach that goal. Possible discussion prompts:

- a. Which of these goals seems most worthy and why? Which seems most attainable and why? Is there any overlap or compromise between worthy and attainable goals?
- b. Which steps seem most likely to lead to these goals? In what order do the steps need to be executed?
- c. Where will this plan likely encounter obstacles? What might the obstacles be, and how will you overcome them?
- d. Which of the five freedoms is most important to addressing this issue? Do you think these freedoms will always be the most important, or will their ranking vary depending on the issues and goals at hand?

8. As a class, use the Digital Classroom’s Glogster tool to make a multimedia “Paths to Progress” panel about the goal you’d like to achieve in your community and the plan you will use to reach that goal. Keep in mind:

- a. Even if you do not plan to execute your plan, be realistic according to your specific school and class context. Try to choose a goal and steps that you could actually implement, even if you are unable or choose not to do so. (Alternatively, if you will not be able to carry out a class service learning project, you may choose to research an already-executed plan to address a civil rights issue from recent history. If you choose this approach, you will document the outcome of this effort in Lesson 3.)
- b. If you do execute your plan, be prepared to document your work as you implement this plan. Your photographs, videos, audio recordings, sketches, journal entries, etc., from this process will form the foundation for Lesson 3.
- c. For more information on effectively creating and executing a class service learning project, consult the following resources:
 - i. National Service Knowledge Network
<https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/service-activities/service-learning>
 - ii. National Youth Leadership Council
<http://www.nylc.org/resources>
 - iii. Youth Service America
<http://www.ysa.org/resources>

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iv. National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

<http://www.servicelearning.org/>

v. Campus Compact

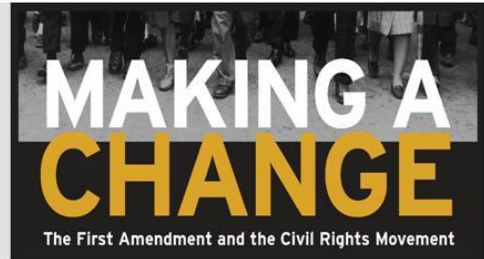
<http://www.compact.org/resources-for-faculty/>

Extension Activities:

Coming Up Short: Find a news story about a project or protest that did not fully achieve its intended goal, such as a fundraising campaign that fell short of its goal, a protest from the “Occupy Wall Street” movement that disbanded before achieving all of its goals, etc. You can also choose an event or events from the timeline that did not achieve its intended goal. Where did the project go wrong? Was it able to achieve any part of its goal? Have your students create a hypothesis for why the project they selected only partially achieved its goal, and use evidence from the article, timeline entries and/or additional research to support their theory. What lessons can be learned from these examples?

At the Newseum: Visit the exhibit called “Make Some Noise: Students and the Civil Rights Movement.” Have your students select one of the events portrayed and then work backward to create a plan for the event. They should identify the goal of the protest, and use the exhibit content, their own prior knowledge and educated guesses to write out each step of the process required to achieve that goal. After your visit, have students conduct additional research to determine the plans that were actually implemented. Compare/contrast student plans with actual plans and theorize reasons for the differences.

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Name:

Your Civil Rights Issue:

Your Goal: (What change would you like to make in your community that would address your civil rights issue? Be specific and realistic. Think of this as a goal you will actually work to achieve.)

How could you use each of the five freedoms to achieve this goal?

Religion:

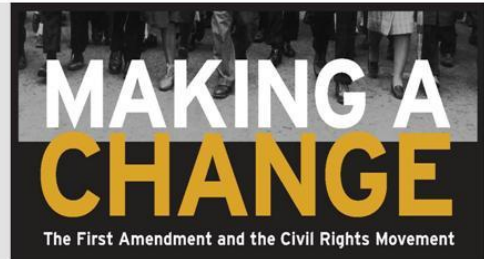
Speech:

Press:

Assembly:

Petition:

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Create a detailed step-by-step plan for achieving your goal. Keep in mind how you might use any or all of the First Amendment freedoms, but your step-by-step plan does not have to include all five. It should be specific and realistic, incorporating as many steps as you feel are necessary. Think of this as a plan you will actually work to implement.

End Goal:

Step 1.

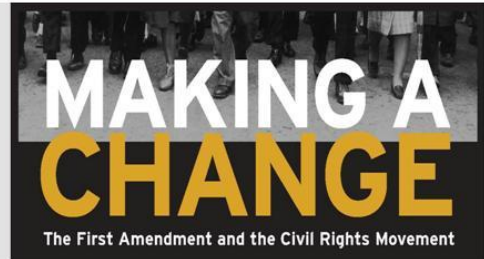
Step 2.

Step 3.

Add as many more steps as you need.

Result:

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Example: The First Amendment as a Tool for Change

Your Civil Rights Issue: Equal access to digital technology

Your Goal (What change would you like to make in your community that would address your civil rights issue? Be specific and realistic. Think of this as a goal you will actually work to achieve.):

We want to give old computers that the school isn't using anymore to students at our school who do not have computers at home.

How could you use each of the five freedoms to achieve this goal?

Religion: Ask local religious groups that support community charities to spread the word about this problem and raise money to help get computers for the students who need them.

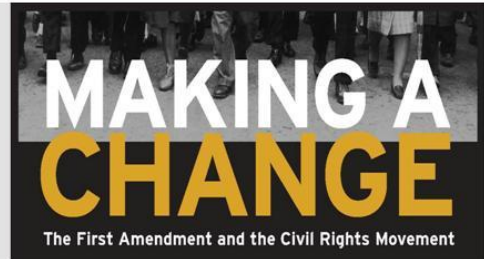
Speech: Put up posters around the community that tell people about this problem and ask them to get involved in finding a solution.

Press: Get the local TV news to air a story about how difficult it is to complete your homework if you don't have a computer at home. Have them interview some of the kids at our school who are smart but have a hard time getting their work done because they don't have the tools they need. The story might encourage more people to donate money or find other ways to help.

Assembly: Host a meeting where people who are concerned about this problem can work together on a solution.

Petition: Write letters to the city council asking them to help find computers for these students by funding a program to buy new computers or donating old computers that the city isn't using anymore.

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Create a detailed step-by-step plan for achieving your goal. Keep in mind how you might use any or all of the First Amendment freedoms, but your step-by-step plan does not have to include all five. It should be specific and realistic, incorporating as many steps as you feel are necessary. Think of this as a plan you will actually work to implement.

End Goal: Donate 20 unused computers to students who don't have computers at home.

Step 1. Talk to the principal about our plan. Find out who we need to identify computers that aren't being used and get permission to fix them up and give them away. Also ask if the school or school board has any money to support this program.

Step 2. Get permission from the necessary people or organizations to go forward with this project.

Step 3. Talk to the technology teacher to find out which computers aren't being used or are being replaced. Find out what we need to do to them to get them ready to give away. Our goal is to find 20 available computers.

Step 4. Ask parents and local businesses for donations for a raffle to raise money needed to buy parts to fix up computers.

Step 5. Publicize the raffle with posters and on Twitter and Facebook. Sell tickets and hold a drawing for a computer.

Step 6. Buy the parts needed to fix up the computers.

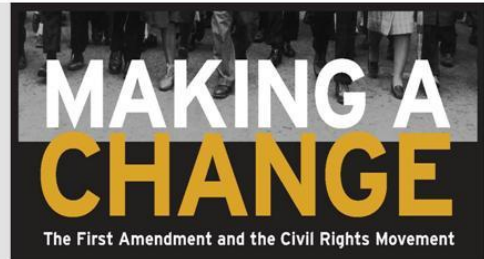
Step 7. Fix up the computers. Get help from the technology teacher. (We might need to talk with an expert at a local tech shop for extra help with this.)

Step 8. Work with the school administration to identify 20 recipients for the computers.

Step 9. Plan training sessions that will give computer recipients all the information they need to use their new machines.

Step 10. Hold training sessions for the students who are receiving computers and their families. After training, they will take their computers home.

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Step 11. Visit the students who received computers to make sure they were able to set them up at home and that they are working properly.

Result: Twenty students and their families have computers for doing their homework and using the Internet, and they know how to use them.