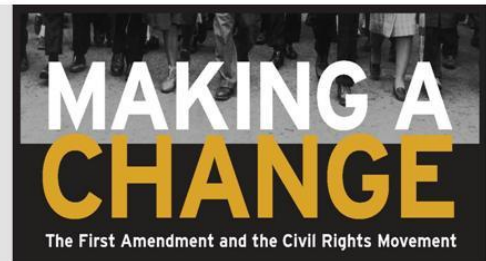


Civil Rights: Reporting Out



Rationale/Main Concept:

This lesson plan supports students as they transition from being news consumers to active news reporters. In Lessons 1 and 2, students learned to analyze the civil rights movement using historical news sources, as well as how to make them accessible to a modern audience. But in today's media-rich world, youth need to know how process information critically to identify and understand multiple perspectives on a current event, and then effectively communicate the salient points. By identifying, analyzing and reporting about a contemporary civil rights issue, students practice communicating in public venues and taking informed action, preparation for a lifelong practice of civic engagement.

Essential Questions:

- What current civil rights issue(s) do I care about?
- What is the essential information about this issue?
- Why should others be informed about this issue?
- How can I use freedom of the press to inform them?
- What results or changes would I like to see my actions generate?

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

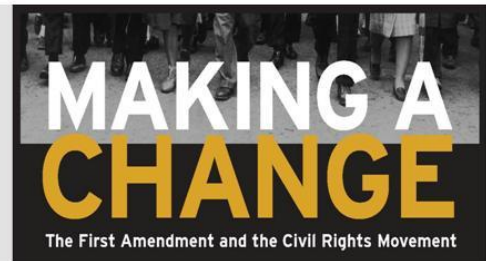
- Identify and explain historic precedents for contemporary civil rights issues.
- Distinguish and analyze multiple perspectives on a contemporary civil rights issue.
- Develop a plan of action to inform a specific audience about a contemporary civil rights issue.
- Select appropriate communication tools to implement the plan of action.
- Execute the plan of action.
- Evaluate the results of taking action.

Time: Two class periods of 20 minutes of class discussion and 30 minutes of small group work each, additional time for project implementation and class presentations

Materials:

- Internet access for looking at the media map and conducting research
- “Reporter’s Questions” and “Consumer’s Questions” handouts
- “Analyzing an Issue” worksheet
- “Information Campaign” worksheet
- “References for Civil Rights Issues” guide

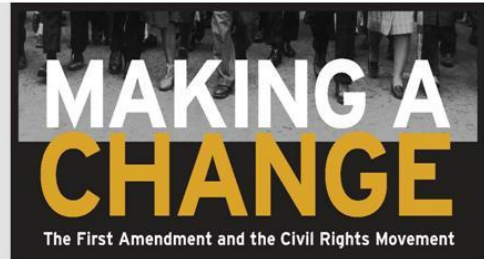
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Procedure:

1. Begin by asking students to define civil rights, based on previous class discussions. Younger students in particular may wish to look again at the media map or the timeline for ideas and historical examples. *In short, civil rights allow individuals to be full and equal participants in society. In this module, we define civil rights as social, economic, legal and political liberties, many of which are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The ability to exercise these rights gives people access to social goods and services, such as the pursuit of employment and access to the legal process, and a voice in our democracy.*
2. Once a common definition has been established, invite the class to brainstorm examples of contemporary local, regional or national civil rights issues. Encourage students to justify their answers. How do they know their examples are civil rights issues? How do the contemporary issues stem from or connect to historical issues the class studied earlier? *Some examples might include: federal benefits for married homosexual couples (see *Loving v. Virginia* [1967] for precedents on marriage rights), access to public amenities for the physically disabled (connection with *Morgan v. Virginia* [1946] for access to public transportation), access to quality schools (see *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* [1954]).*
3. As a class, choose one issue to analyze. Find a recent article in print or online about your issue and use the “Analyzing an Issue” worksheet to deconstruct the facts and opinions about the issue. You may wish to use the “Reporter’s Questions” and “Consumer’s Questions” handouts to guide your discussion. *(See attached sample).*
4. Next, have students find a partner and brainstorm contemporary civil rights issues about which they would like to inform others. Students may wish to refer to the “Civil Rights Issues” guide for inspiration. After they choose an issue, pairs research their topic, as they practiced as a class. Then, using the “Information Campaign” worksheet and their class list of journalism best practices for reference, students develop a plan of action to exercise their freedom of the press to inform others about their issue. *(See attached sample).*
5. Once students have developed a plan of action, ask them to present their information campaign to the class for feedback. Guide students to examine the strengths and potential weaknesses of the plan and offer suggestions for improvement. Give students time to revise their plans, either in class or at home, and then implement them.

Civil Rights: Reporting Out

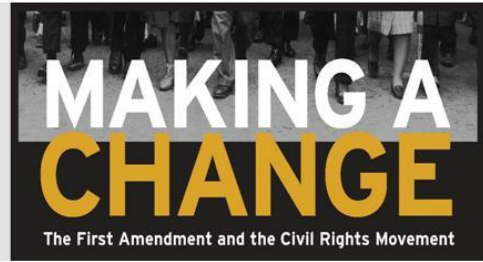


6. Finally, have students present the outcomes of their work to the class. Guide a discussion that allows students to reflect on what they learned, and what, if anything, they would do differently to reach their goals.

Extension Activities:

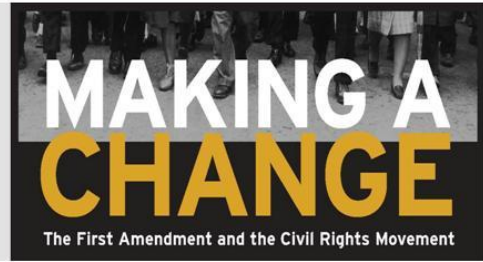
Civil Rights Expo: Get the community involved! Have students plan and host a “civil rights expo” to share their projects with others at school, in their neighborhoods and beyond. Make sure students ask for reactions and feedback from their guests, which they can use to revise their projects. Students may want to invite their school paper, local media outlets and historical societies to the expo as well.

At the Newseum: Visit the exhibit called “Make Some Noise: Students and the Civil Rights Movement.” Ask your students to evaluate the ways in which young people got involved in the movement. Which methods or approaches worked? Which did not? Why? Students should then review and revise their “Information Campaigns” to reflect lessons learned from their predecessors’ campaign results.

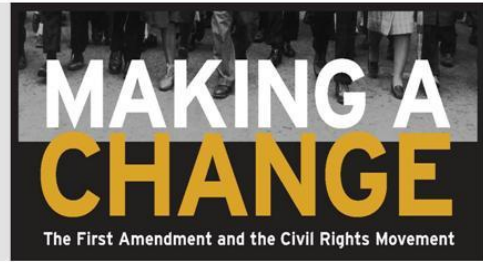


Analyzing an Issue

Issue	
Why did you choose this issue?	
Why is this a civil rights issue? How does it affect individuals' ability to be full and equal members of society?	
Connections to the civil rights movement (events, laws, court cases, etc.)	
Key People or Groups	
Goal(s) of Group 1	
Goal(s) of Group 2	
Goal(s) of Group 3	



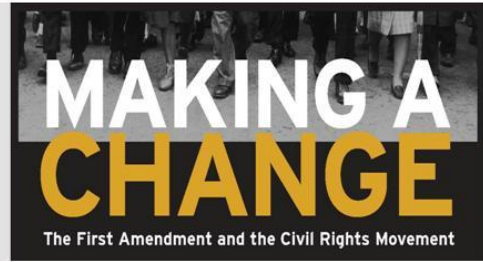
Group 1's Justification for Goal	
Group 2's Justification for Goal	
Group 3's Justification for Goal	
Source 1	
Source 2	
Source 3	



Information Campaign

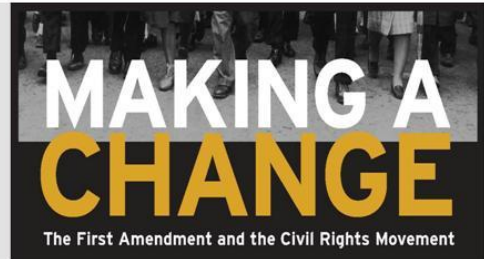
Civil Rights Issue	
Why did you choose this issue?	
Current Status of Issue Are there protests? Online campaigns? Court cases under consideration? New legislation before a city council or state government?	
Final Product — Goal What do you hope to achieve? Why did you choose that goal?	
Final Product — Description What are you going to create to achieve your goal? A petition? A song? A blog post? Why?	
Press Tool(s) To Be Used School newspaper? Local newspaper? WordPress? Twitter? Radio? YouTube? Why did you choose this tool?	

Civil Rights: Reporting Out



Target Audience Your school? Your town? A specific group?	
Method to Measure Outcome Number of "likes"? Site visits? Reader responses?	
Plan of Action/Team Roles Researcher, writer, photographer, videographer, web developer, editor?	
Key Project Dates Research complete Rough draft/script Final draft/script Execution Editing Presentation Other?	

Civil Rights: Reporting Out



Additional Online Resources on Civil Rights

- ABC News Topic Page:
<http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/issues/civil-rights.htm>
- Annenberg Classroom:
<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/speakouts.aspx?name=what-are-the-civil-rights-issues-of-today&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
- Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division:
<http://www.justice.gov/otj/civilrights.htm>
- Equal Rights Center:
http://www.equalrightscenter.org/site/PageServer?pagename=issues_main
- The Leadership Conference:
<http://www.civilrights.org/issues/>