

Social Activism in the United States: Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum Focus: U.S. History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Discover how ordinary citizens fought against segregation and how freedom finally overcame bigotry. Follow the United State's involvement in the Vietnam War and the subsequent backlash. And explore how events of the 1960s and '70s shaped American lives.

- The Fight for Civil Rights (5 min.)
 - Stories of the Civil Rights Movement (5 min.)
 - America and the Vietnam War (5 min.)
 - American Stories: Tears, Rage and Change (31 min.)
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Onscreen Questions

- What were the goals of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s?
 - How did the Ku Klux Klan attempt to silence civil rights activists in America?
 - Why did America enter the Vietnam War?
 - What events caused changes to take place in America during the 1970s and '80s?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Review some of the turbulent events that affected the United States during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s.
- Read a newspaper article that reported a significant event during this era.
- Write a summary of the event.

Materials

- *Social Activism in America* program

- Internet access
- Printer

Procedures

1. After watching *Social Activism in America*, ask students to recall some of the turbulent events that affected the nation during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Discuss each event and list it on the chalkboard. In your discussion, make sure that students are familiar with events surrounding the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal.
2. Next, hand out copies of the bulleted timeline below, which includes a link to *The New York Times* article that reported each event.
 - 1954: Supreme Court rules racially segregated schools illegal in *Brown v. Board of Education*
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0517.html>
 - 1956: After yearlong bus boycott, the Supreme Court rules segregation on buses illegal
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/1113.html>
 - 1957: Federal troops escort nine black students to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0925.html>
 - 1963: Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 200,000 civil rights activists in the March on Washington, D.C.
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0828.html>
 - 1963: At a black church in Birmingham, Alabama, four children are killed from bomb planted by the Ku Klux Klan
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0915.html>
 - 1964: Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1964, banning discrimination in all public facilities and in employment
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0619.html>
 - 1964: In Mississippi, three civil rights volunteers working to register African Americans disappear
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0621.html>
 - 1964: After North Vietnam attacks American navy ship, Congress passes the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0807.html>
 - 1965: Martin Luther King, Jr. leads a civil rights march in Selma, Alabama, where protesters are beaten by police
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0307.html>
 - 1968: Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0404.html>

- 1969: People from across the country gather in Washington, D.C. to protest the Vietnam War
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/1115.html>
 - 1970: National Guard opens fire on antiwar demonstrators at Kent State University in Ohio, killing four students
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0504.html>
 - 1972: A cease-fire agreement is reached and the U.S. stops bombing of North Vietnam
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/1230.html>
 - 1973: The last American troops withdraw from Vietnam
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0329.html>
 - 1974: President Nixon announces his resignation after the Watergate scandal
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0808.html>
3. Working individually or in pairs, have students select one of the events in the timeline. (You may want to assign events to make sure all are covered.) Explain that their assignment is to read the newspaper report of the event and answer the following questions in a written summary.
- WHAT happened?
 - WHEN did this happen?
 - WHERE did it happen?
 - WHO are the important people involved?
 - WHY was this an important, newsworthy event?
 - HOW did this event shape the nation?
4. During the next class period, give students an opportunity to share their summaries. Then discuss what students learned about U.S. history during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Ask: What do you think were the most significant events of the period? What do you imagine it was like to be a young person living in the U.S. during this time? Why were the generations often so divided?
5. Conclude by examining the use of primary resources to study a past event. Ask students: What information did the newspaper article include that you might not get from a book or textbook published today? What information is inherently missing in a newspaper article written at the time of the event?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students recalled several events from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s; wrote an informative, complete summary of their newspaper article, answering all of the questions; were active in class discussions.

- 2 points: Students recalled some events from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s; wrote a satisfactory summary of their newspaper article, answering most of the questions; participated in class discussions.
- 1 point: Students could not recall any events from the 1950s, '60s, and '70s; wrote an incomplete or vague summary of their newspaper article, answering few of the questions; did not participate in class discussions.

Vocabulary

civil rights

Definition: The nonpolitical rights of a citizen, especially the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the Constitution and acts of Congress

Context: President John F. Kennedy delivered a speech on the importance of the civil rights movement.

communist

Definition: A person or government that practices or supports communism, the political and economic system in which goods and means of production are owned by the state

Context: By an international agreement, the country was divided into two areas – the north, ruled by communists, and the south, ruled by non-communists.

demonstration

Definition: A public display of group opinion about an issue, cause, or person

Context: In 1969, one million protestors from all across the country converged in Washington, D.C. It was the largest demonstration in American history.

Ku Klux Klan

Definition: A white supremacist organization founded in the South that used violence to promote its beliefs

Context: The Ku Klux Klan and other organizations emerged and, using violence, they tried hard to suppress the voices of the civil rights movement.

NAACP

Definition: An organization that promotes the rights and welfare of black people; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded in 1909.

Context: In the early 1900s W.E.B. DuBois and others created the NAACP to challenge racist laws in court.

segregation

Definition: The policy of separating people on the basis of race

Context: As activists worked to end segregation, many whites in the South and elsewhere resisted.



Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- U.S. History: Era 9 – Understands how the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics; Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties
- U.S. History: Era 10 – Understands developments in foreign policy and domestic politics between the Nixon and Clinton presidencies

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to

<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Civic Ideals and Practices

Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.



How to Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into four segments (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. The Fight for Civil Rights (5 min.)

Learn about the U.S. civil rights movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights activists, as well as steps taken toward racial equality in the 1950s and '60s.

II. Stories of the Civil Rights Movement (5 min.)

Thanks to civil rights leaders, those who lost their lives during the struggle for equality are remembered as heroes. Listen to the stories of several such heroes.

III. America and the Vietnam War (5 min.)

Explore the social, economic, and political upheaval caused by American involvement in the Vietnam War.

IV. American Stories: Tears, Rage, and Change (31 min.)

Listen to firsthand accounts of turmoil, angst, and changes encountered by several American families from the 1950s through the '80s.

Curriculum Units

1. Desegregating Schools

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do any issues divide the students in your school?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What is the NAACP?

A: The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) was created in 1910 by W.E.B. DuBois and others to challenge racist laws in court. It has brought many important cases to the Supreme Court, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, which eventually served to desegregate U.S. schools.

2. Civil Rights Movement

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are some successful boycott movements?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What do you think Martin Luther King, Jr., would say about race relations in the United States today?

A: Answers will vary.

3. Fallen Heroes

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever experienced discrimination or bigotry?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think the civil rights movement could have taken place without a violent backlash?

A: Answers will vary.

4. Casualties of War

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about the Vietnam War?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think the United States should have entered the Vietnam War?

A: Answers will vary.



5. An Age of Abundance

Pre-viewing question

Q: How does your generation differ from your parents' generation?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Have you ever been disappointed by a goal you achieved?

A: Answers will vary.

6. From Buckeye Road to Vietnam

Pre-viewing question

Q: For what reasons do countries go to war?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What were the experiences of American soldiers in the Vietnam War?

A: Answers will vary.

7. The Vietnam Moratorium

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever participated in a protest?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Why was the Vietnam Moratorium successful?

A: Answers will vary.

8. A Divisive War

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever taken part in anything against your beliefs?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Do you think a conflict like the Vietnam War could happen again?

A: Answers will vary.

9. The Watergate Betrayal

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever felt betrayed by somebody you once admired?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Can you relate to anything about Gregg Manoff's experience as a young adult?

A: Answers will vary.



10. Jimmy Carter Arrives

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What effects did the Vietnam War and Watergate have on young adults?

A: Answers will vary.

11. The Old New Frontier

Pre-viewing question

Q: What are some success stories about immigrants?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What does the American West symbolize to you?

A: Answers will vary.

12. The Reagan Years

Pre-viewing question

Q: What were some highlights of the 1980s?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Compare and contrast the United States in the 1980s and today.

A: Answers will vary.