

The Civil Rights Movement

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-56004-349-2

Product Code: ZP397

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How To Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called “enduring understandings.” The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

- 1.** Start with the “essential questions” listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won’t know which one.
- 2.** Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.
- 3.** Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide’s topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. You don’t need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it’s broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the “enduring understandings.” Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.
- 4.** Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
Chief Education Officer
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The Civil Rights Movement



When slavery ended in the U.S. following the Civil War, three constitutional amendments extended to African Americans the same rights enjoyed by white citizens. However, lax enforcement and culturally entrenched racism—especially in the South—resulted in far fewer rights for blacks than the Constitution intended, including strict segregation along racial lines. Some African Americans began to realize that in order to achieve legal and social equality, they had to take matters into their own hands and work together to bring attention to their struggle for civil rights. Various legislation and court rulings sometimes impeded their progress, but it mostly helped further the movement’s goals of desegregation, voting rights, and equality of opportunity in education, housing, and employment. Many leaders of the movement—as well as “regular folks” pushed into the spotlight simply for wanting to attend the same school or sit at the same lunch counter as whites—became widely known and respected figures even to those outside the movement. Decades of effort have brought about many positive changes in blacks’ civil rights, although even today complete equality has yet to be achieved.

Essential Questions

- What impact did the *Dred Scott* case and the Emancipation Proclamation have on the early struggle for civil rights?
- Why did the Supreme Court interpret early civil rights laws and the 14th Amendment narrowly in the late 19th century?
- What gains did the movement make in desegregating schools and public places in the mid-20th century?
- What other goals did the civil rights movement strive for in the middle and late 1960s?
- In what ways did the civil rights movement evolve in the late 1960s and early 1970s?
- What overall impact did the civil rights movement have?

The *Dred Scott* Case: Origins

- Slave whose master had moved him to free territory for several years
- Sued for his freedom
- Lost in state and federal courts
- Case appealed to U.S. Supreme Court in 1857



Dred Scott

Dred Scott was a slave who lived in Missouri. When his first master died, an army surgeon named Dr. John Emerson took Scott first to Illinois, and later to the Wisconsin Territory. Neither Illinois or Wisconsin allowed slavery under the terms of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

After Emerson's death, his widow farmed out Scott and his wife to another army captain who returned them to a slave state. Scott offered Mrs. Emerson \$300 for his freedom, but she refused. Scott filed a lawsuit stating that since he had lived for several years where slavery wasn't permitted, he should be granted his freedom. Historians are uncertain as to why Scott waited until he had again moved to slave territory to file his lawsuit, though some think he simply hadn't known his rights at the time. Others suppose that Scott had been satisfied working for Dr. Emerson and did not consider suing for his freedom.

In a lower court, Scott originally lost his case on a technicality: he couldn't prove that he was legally owned by Dr. Emerson's widow. However, he re-filed the lawsuit, and won. The Missouri Supreme Court subsequently overturned the verdict. Scott filed his suit in federal court, but the Missouri Supreme Court decision was upheld. Finally, Scott and his lawyers appealed to the United States Supreme Court.

The *Dred Scott* Case: Decision



Chief Justice Roger B. Taney

- Majority opinion written by Chief Justice Taney
- Ruled that a slave wasn't a citizen and couldn't sue in court
- Also ruled the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional

The resulting Supreme Court decision in the case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* became one of the Court's most controversial rulings. Many historians and political scientists believe that the decision made the Civil War inevitable.

In the 6–3 decision, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney delivered the majority opinion: As a slave, Dred Scott did not have U.S. citizenship. Since he was not a citizen, Dred Scott had no right to sue in U.S. courts. Therefore, his lawsuit was invalid. If Taney had stopped there, the case would most likely have been forgotten. However, Taney, a strong supporter of slavery, added that under no circumstances could Congress prohibit slavery in a territory because to do so would violate the Fifth Amendment's property clause. Therefore, all congressional attempts to limit slavery—including the Missouri Compromise—were unconstitutional. The dissenting justices believed that the Constitution gave Congress the power to make rules to govern U.S. territories. As such, Congress did have the right to limit slavery.

The 13th Amendment to the Constitution outlawed slavery in 1865, while the 14th Amendment guaranteed citizenship to all persons born in the United States—including former slaves—in 1868. Scott enjoyed neither protection, but shortly after the Supreme Court's decision, his original masters bought his freedom, as well as that of his wife and children. Dred Scott died a few months later.

The Emancipation Proclamation

- Announced by Lincoln in 1862 after the Battle of Antietam
- Freed slaves only in “territories in rebellion,” not border states
- Signed on January 1, 1863
- Essentially unenforceable



President Abraham Lincoln reads the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet

The Civil War began badly for Union forces. While President Abraham Lincoln had consistently stated that the war was being fought to preserve the Union and not to end slavery, he became increasingly aware that keeping up Northern morale would require an even higher purpose to rally around. He decided to change his position and issue an edict emancipating the slaves. Lincoln felt that doing this after several defeats on the battlefield would make it seem like the last gasp of a defeated government. Announcing it after a victory, however, would be perceived as a humanitarian act by a strong nation.

The Battle of Antietam (September, 1862) did not bring the North a decisive victory, but it carried enough weight for Lincoln to make his proclamation: the slaves of any states still in the Confederacy as of January 1, 1863 would be freed. However, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free all slaves. Lincoln never intended for it to apply to the border states that remained in the Union yet continued to allow slavery, or to Confederate territory under Union control. Moreover, any Confederate state returning to the Union would be allowed to keep its slaves.

No Confederate states returned to the Union during the war; at any rate, the proclamation remained more or less unenforceable, except when Union forces freed slaves as they moved through an area. Therefore, the Emancipation Proclamation did in no sense abolish slavery. However, it did represent an important step towards ending involuntary servitude in the United States.

Civil Rights Movement: Backwards Planning Activities

Enduring understandings:

- The civil rights movement fulfilled the promises of equality as stated in the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution
- The civil rights movement caused dynamic changes in American culture, politics, and jurisprudence
- The civil rights movement won many of its early victories in the area of school desegregation
- The civil rights movement thrust many ordinary Americans into positions of leadership on both sides of the issue of equal rights for African Americans
- Great advancements occurred in the areas of voting rights, equal housing, and desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s
- The civil rights movement changed over time, with certain groups becoming more militant and sometimes violent
- Some saw the civil rights movement as discriminatory against whites
- Most agree that while the civil rights movement made great strides, true racial equality has yet to be achieved

Essential questions:

- What impact did the *Dred Scott* case and the Emancipation Proclamation have on the early struggle for civil rights?
- Why did the Supreme Court interpret early civil rights laws and the 14th Amendment narrowly in the late 19th century?
- What gains did the movement make in desegregating schools and public places in the mid-20th century?
- What other goals did the civil rights movement strive for in the middle and late 1960s?
- In what ways did the civil rights movement evolve in the late 1960s and early 1970s?
- What overall impact did the civil rights movement have?

Learning experiences and instruction:

| Students will need to know... | Students will need to be able to... |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre- and post-Civil War court cases and legislation concerning civil rights 2. Leaders and advancements in civil rights in the late 19th and early 20th centuries 3. The NAACP's struggle to integrate both higher education and public schools in the U.S. 4. Martin Luther King's rise to national prominence and his struggle to end discrimination 5. How the civil rights movement sought to gain political equality for African Americans 6. How the Vietnam War affected the civil rights movement 7. How aspects of the movement became more militant in the late 1960s and the 1970s 8. What issues led the movement into decline in the late 1960s and early 1970s | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and interpret primary source documents from the civil rights era 2. Make conclusions about various approaches activists took within the movement, as well as key legislation and events 3. Identify important figures and political and social leaders in the civil rights movement 4. Recognize trends in American society that evolved during the civil rights movement 5. Determine how the movement brought about equal rights and solidified the guarantees established in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights 6. Understand the impact of the civil rights movement on U.S. society and politics during the movement and after |

Teaching and learning activities that will equip students to demonstrate targeted understandings:

- Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
- Questions for class discussion of subject matter in the PowerPoint presentation
- Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
- Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit
- Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects
- Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
- Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
- Students will create and present their unit projects
- Posttest made up of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, and one or more essential questions as essay questions

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Project #1: The Civil Rights Movement Through the Eyes of a Teenager

Overview:

In this lesson, students write fictitious diary entries based on various events of the civil rights era, as if they were teenagers living at that time.

Objective:

After completing this lesson, students will:

- research pivotal events of the civil rights movement
- be able to understand the importance and impact of those events
- be able to describe those events and interpret them in their own words

Time required:

One to three class periods

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, paper, and writing utensils

Methodology:

Begin the lesson by asking the class to brainstorm a list of some of the civil rights movement's major figures. Students will reply with names such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and possibly Thurgood Marshall. Explain to the class that frequently, the civil rights movement sometimes pushed ordinary persons into the spotlight and quickly made them well known.

Next, ask students if they've ever kept a diary or a journal of their own life experiences. Some students may mention having been required to do so for a language arts class; others may simply note having done this on their own. You may also wish to discuss the importance of diaries and journals in the study of history, along with a short discussion of important historical diaries such as Anne Frank's (from World War II) or Mary Chestnut's (the American Civil War).

Introduce the lesson to the students, using either the script provided or your own explanation.

Allow students sufficient time for research and for writing their journal entries.

Evaluation:

Once students have completed their journal entries, evaluate them using the included rubric or one of your own designs.

Suggested Web resources:

Note: Since the presentation touches on many events of the civil rights era, you may advise students to conduct their own research for suitable Web-based resources. Sample resources are provided here for significant events and figures in the presentation.

Dred Scott decision (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2932.html>)

Emancipation Proclamation (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/almintr.html>)

Jim Crow laws (<http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/>)

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas
(<http://www.lib.umich.edu/exhibits/brownarchive/>)

Little Rock Nine (http://www.centralhigh57.org/The_Little_Rock_Nine.html#index.html)

Montgomery Bus Boycott (<http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/>)

Freedom Rides
(http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/freedom_rides.htm)

Integration of the University of Alabama
(http://www.ua.edu/openingdoors/history_openingdoors.html)

James Meredith and Ole Miss (<http://www.jfklibrary.org/meredith/>)

March on Washington
(http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/march_washington.html)

Civil Rights Act of 1964
(http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/about_king/encyclopedia/enc_civil_rights_bill.htm)

16th Street Baptist Church Bombing
(http://www.bplonline.org/resources/Digital_Project/SixteenthStBaptistBomb.asp)

Freedom Summer (<http://www.newseum.org/mississippi/>)

Civil rights workers (Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman) murder
(<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/frials/price&bowers/price&bowers.htm>)

Selma to Montgomery Marches (<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/lbjforkids/selma-mont.shtm>)