



CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS AND THE FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Middle School Social Studies

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LESSON 1:

Introduction to the Concept of Assembly

OBJECTIVES

- » Students will access their own prior understanding and knowledge of the freedom of assembly.
- » Students will begin exploring the key essential questions surrounding the freedom of assembly.

CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chart paper, white board, and/or smart board
- Access to projection for video about freedom of assembly:
<http://www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights/videos/right-to-public-assembly.html>
- Chart paper with questions pre-written:
 - 1) Why do people hold assembly?
 - 2) What makes an assembly effective?
 - 3) Is there a difference between a protest and an assembly?
 - 4) Is the freedom of assembly important? Why?
- Index cards (optional)

INTRODUCTION/ANTICIPATORY SET

- 1) Play the following video for students to give them a visual of freedom of assembly: <http://www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights/videos/right-to-public-assembly.html>
- 2) Ask the class: *Based on the video, what do you think the freedom of assembly is?*
- 3) Using chart paper or whiteboard, create a class definition of assembly. You may also provide students with the following definition and information: Assembly is “the *intentional* and *temporary presence* of a number of *individuals* in a *public place* for a *common expressive purpose*.”
- 4) During class discussion, encourage students to consider various modes of assembly: rallies, marches, sit-ins, walk-outs, strikes, vigils, occupations.

ACTIVITIES

- 1) Silent Conversation: Students are broken into groups of 4. Each group is assigned a question from the list below and given a piece of chart paper and markers (one marker/pen per student). Students respond by writing/drawing their reactions silently.
 - a) Why do people hold assembly?
 - b) What makes an assembly effective?
 - c) Is there a difference between a protest and an assembly?
 - d) Is the freedom of assembly important? Why?
- 2) After 3–5 minutes (exact time limit determined based on size of group, length of period, and level of engagement), each group moves on to a new question. Students may continue to engage in the conversation by writing/drawing, but without talking. They can use arrows and other imagery to show connections and respond to other students’ ideas.
- 3) This process is repeated until students have had a chance to respond to all of the questions.
- 4) Students walk around independently with a journal or sheet of loose-leaf paper to write down any ideas that particularly strike them. This process can take 5–7 minutes.
- 5) Open up the discussion. Each student can share one idea they wrote down before allowing further commentary, responses, and discussion. Address all four questions during class discussion.

CLOSURE/ASSESSMENT

Have each student write an important or interesting fact about freedom of assembly on a half sheet of paper or index card and submit these “exit tickets” as they exit the classroom. Review these “exit tickets” for understanding of general concepts. You can use for grading if desirable.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

Have students write down and submit one powerful idea they took away from the discussion. The idea can be either something they wrote down from class discussion, or one of the ideas they wrote down while they were looking at the chart papers from the Silent Conversation. These comments can be put together into a “list poem” about the freedom of assembly to be shared during a future class period.

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LESSON 2

The March on Washington

OBJECTIVES

- » Students will consider topics that they would be willing to engage in assembly.
- » Students will identify challenges of practicing peaceful assembly.
- » Students will evaluate how participants in the March on Washington effectively practiced peaceful assembly.

CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Access to a networked computer to play 2 short videos of the March on Washington:
 - 1) Film 1: *King Leads the March on Washington*
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement/videos/king-leads-the-march-on-washington>
(length: 4 min.)
 - 2) Film 2: *The March on Washington: The Spirit of the Day*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Q_I_2m5TbA
(length: 6 min. 5 sec.)
- Handout (included)

INTRODUCTION/ANTICIPATORY SET

- 1) Ask students to take several minutes to write down one topic or current social issue that they would be willing to take a stand for as part of a peaceful assembly. Ask them to respond in writing to the following questions: Which topic are you passionate about? Why would you be willing to take a stand on this particular topic?
- 2) After several minutes, ask students to turn and share their responses with a partner.
- 3) After partner sharing, pose these questions to the whole class: To practice freedom of assembly peacefully, what might be some of the challenges or risks that people can face? What makes practicing freedom of assembly worth the risks?
- 4) Transition: Today we are going to watch two short films about a large group of people who engaged in one of the most significant assemblies in American history.

ACTIVITIES

- 1) Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the introduction on the handout.
- 2) Play Film 1:
King Leads the March on Washington
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement/videos/king-leads-the-march-on-washington>
- 3) After Film 1, allow 2–3 minutes for students to write a few notes before showing the next film.
- 4) Play Film 2:
The March on Washington: The Spirit of the Day
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Q_I_2m5TbA
- 5) Allow 2–3 minutes for students to write a few notes on the second film.
- 6) Instruct students to work in pairs to respond to the questions on the Worksheet.

CLOSURE/ASSESSMENT

Ask a representative from each pair to share out their response to one or more of the questions. Collect their handouts for assessment.

DIFFERENTIATION IDEAS

Students wishing to complete the handout individually can either exchange papers with another student working individually after they each finish, or they can join a partner pair to exchange ideas after they each finish.

HANDOUT

NAME _____ DATE _____

THE 1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON

An assembly is an intentional and temporary presence of a number of individuals in a public place, for a common expressive purpose. Freedom of assembly conducted peacefully is one of the rights guaranteed to Americans in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

One of the largest and most significant peaceful assemblies in American history was the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Over 200,000 people assembled to demand an end to discrimination, particularly against African-Americans. The March on Washington prompted the government to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, protecting civil rights for all.

Imagine you have been chosen as the director for a new movie about the March on Washington. In order to begin your research, you will watch 2 short films about this historical event. Focus on the people who participated in the march. Observe specific details that will help you make the best decisions about how to direct the crowd for your movie.

FILM 1 NOTES

FILM 2 NOTES

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HANDOUT

Now that you have begun your research on the March on Washington, answer the following questions below. Include specific details that will help you to recreate the feeling for your film.

1) How would you describe the tone or mood of the crowd as a whole?	
2) What challenges or risks did the participants face in practicing peaceful assembly?	
3) What are the participants doing; what are some of their actions?	
4) How are they dressed?	

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HANDOUT

NAME _____ DATE _____

(continues)

5) How are they interacting with each other?	
6) What would you hope to convey in your movie about the people who participated in this march?	
7) What would you want people to see or learn about peaceful assembly?	

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LESSON 3

Selma to Montgomery

OBJECTIVES

- » Students will access their own prior understanding of the power to vote.
- » Students will evaluate how peaceful assembly was used in the Selma marches to secure the right to vote.
- » Students will create a plan for practicing peaceful assembly in response to a given scenario at their school.

CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Map of Alabama in the context of the United States, denoting the miles between Selma and Montgomery [for example: <https://goo.gl/images/JiFm3H>]
- Access to a networked computer to play a clip from *American Freedom Stories: Sunday Bloody Sunday* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZql8SwgvPA>
- Handouts (included)

INTRODUCTION/ANTICIPATORY SET

Present students with a circumstance in which they have to vote on 1 of 3 choices. For example, write down 3 places you would like to go on a class field trip at the end of the year.

- 1) After students have finished writing, let them know that everyone will share out their top choice, and then a vote will be held.
- 2) Take a vote, and announce the winner.
- 3) Inform students that regardless of the vote, you will make the final decision about where they will go on the field trip.

After the scenario has been presented, solicit responses to the following questions:

- 1) How does the teacher's decision affect you?
- 2) Does it seem fair? Why/why not?
- 3) How does it feel when your voice is not heard?

Share with students that this scenario is fictional, and transition to the film by showing Selma on the map; "Although our vote was about something imaginary, we are going to watch a real-life situation that happened in United States history when voting rights were denied to African-Americans throughout Alabama in 1965."

Distribute handout, and ask for volunteers to read each question aloud on Handout A to consider while they watch the video.

ACTIVITIES

- 1) Play the following video for students to give them a visual of the march from Selma to Montgomery.
American Freedom Stories: Sunday Bloody Sunday:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZql8SwgvPA>.
- 2) Show the map again, pointing out Montgomery and the distance between them.
- 3) Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the follow up on Handout A of the worksheet.
- 4) Divide students into pairs or groups of 3 to respond to the questions on the worksheet.

Turn to Handout B of the Worksheet. In response to whichever scenario was presented in the Introduction, ask small groups to devise ways they could practice peaceful assembly to convince the teacher to have their vote upheld.

After small groups have wrapped up, begin a class discussion about their responses to the questions.

CLOSURE/ASSESSMENT

Turn to Handout B of the handout. In response to whichever scenario was presented in the Anticipatory Set, ask small groups to devise ways they could practice peaceful assembly to convince the teacher to have their vote upheld.

Ask a spokesperson from each group to share out their plan for an assembly—what they will do and how they will do it.

DIFFERENTIATION IDEAS

Have students research and make a visual timeline of the marches in Selma, noting the key events and challenges of each one.

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HANDOUT A

NAME _____ DATE _____

PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY IN SELMA

The people who began a march in Selma, Alabama, did not reach the state capital of Montgomery on Bloody Sunday because they were forcibly stopped by the police. However, they did not give up their fight for the vote. They marched twice more, and the third time, they reached Montgomery on March 25, 1965. Their perseverance and achievement led President Lyndon B. Johnson to sign the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law.

1) What caused the people of Selma march?	
2) Describe how they practiced peaceful assembly; what did they do?	
3) What obstacles did they face?	
4) Why do you think they were willing to march again despite the continued threats of violence against them?	

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HANDOUT B

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY IN YOUR CLASSROOM

At the beginning of class, you took a vote that was overturned. If you were to organize a peaceful assembly to protest this decision, what would you do?

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LESSON 4

Contemporary Civil Rights Movements

OBJECTIVES

- » Students will identify ways to use social media as a tool for practicing freedom of assembly in response to relevant social issues.
- » Students will examine how the use of social media galvanized the Black Lives Matter movement.
- » Students will analyze how the use of social media during the March on Washington may have impacted the event.

CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Access to YouTube to play 2 short films:
 - 1) Film 1: Black Lives Matter Movement
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1llopsKY0dY&list=LL4i-HAncn8Fz9jVvtrAYV7Q&index=2> (length: 3 min. 3 sec.)
 - 2) Film 2: How Social Media Galvanized the Community in Ferguson
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-social-media-galvanized-the-community-in-ferguson/> (length: 2 min. 6 sec.)

- ❑ Handouts (included)

INTRODUCTION/ANTICIPATORY SET

- 1) Ask students which social media sites and apps they use most often and the main purpose of each one. Make a list on the board.
- 2) Ask students to determine which ones may be the most effective for conveying a message about an event. Demarcate these on the board.
- 3) Divide students into pairs or small groups, and distribute the Worksheet.
- 4) Read aloud the questions on Handout A of the Worksheet, and allow students time to complete the questions before moving to the Activities below.
- 5) If time allows, ask students to share their topics of concern and write their hashtags on the board.

ACTIVITIES

- 1) Ask for a volunteer to read aloud the introduction and questions on Handout B of the Worksheet.
- 2) Play the following videos for students to give them a visual of how social media was used to launch the Black Lives Matter movement.
 - a) Film 1:
Black Lives Matter Movement
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1lopsKY0dY&list=LL4i-HAncCn8Fz9jVvtrAYV7Q&index=2>
 - b) Film 2:
How Social Media Galvanized the Community in Ferguson <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-social-media-galvanized-the-community-in-ferguson/>
- 3) Allow students to work individually or in pairs to respond to the questions on Handout B of the Worksheet.

CLOSURE/ASSESSMENT

Ask individuals or a representative from each pair to share out their response to one or more of the questions. Collect their Worksheets for assessment.

DIFFERENTIATION IDEAS

Allow students to research online which social media platforms Black Lives Matter is using to communicate information about assemblies.

HANDOUT A

NAME _____ DATE _____

1) What is one current event that is of concern to you?	
2) If you were to organize a peaceful assembly to bring attention to this issue, what are some creative ways you could use social media to promote your event?	
3) Which sites and apps would be most effective for bringing attention to this issue?	
4) Create a hashtag for your event.	

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HANDOUT B

NAME _____ DATE _____

BLACK LIVES MATTER

While the Civil Rights Movement has been successful in achieving equal rights under the law, there are many circumstances today in which people are still not treated equally under the law. On August 9, 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri, an unarmed black teenager named Michael Brown was shot and killed by a white police officer who was later judged as not guilty. This incident was just one of many in which police officers have been judged as not guilty for using deadly force against unarmed black people.

A movement formed online to bring attention to this injustice: Black Lives Matter. The day after Michael Brown was killed, and again when the police officer was acquitted, Black Lives Matter used social media to mobilize a massive protest. People came to Ferguson from all over the United States to demand justice.

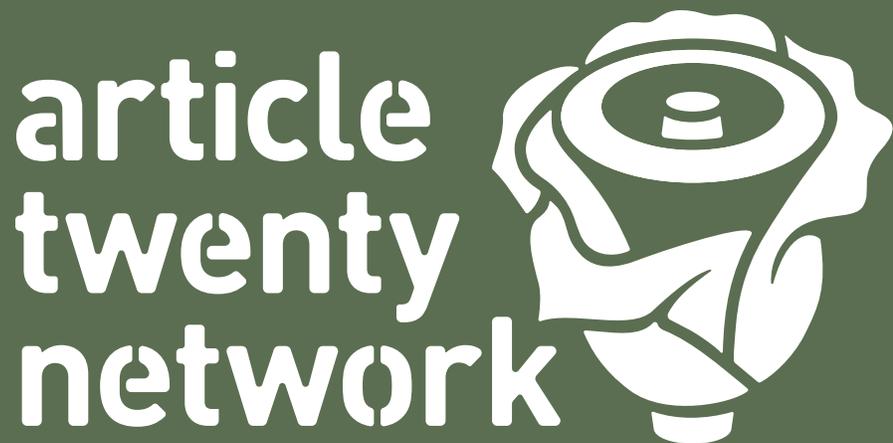
1) What are some reasons the Black Lives Matter movement began?	
2) How does social media impact freedom of assembly?	
3) If social media had existed during the March on Washington, how might the event have been different? What might have been gained and what might have been lost?	

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NOTES

NOTES





The Article 20 Network defends and advances the human right to freedom of peaceful assembly worldwide.

Through education, advocacy, research and legal services, the Article 20 Network encourages the proliferation of public demonstrations and fights back against obstacles and threats to our human right to peacefully assemble.

Learn more about peaceful assembly and our work at:

a20n.org