



Sixteenth Street: Civil Rights at the Crossroads

Unit Summary

Students learn about the history of segregated America by studying events of the civil rights movement. They construct a working definition of discrimination, prejudice, and racism, and work in groups to present the personal stories of ordinary men and women who became instrumental in the American civil rights movement. Using *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, by Christopher Paul Curtis, as a launching pad, students study varied accounts of the 1963 Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama; create a newspaper; and conduct a mock trial of Thomas Blanton Jr., one of the men accused in the bombing.

Curriculum-Framing Questions

- **Essential Question**
What are your basic human rights?
- **Unit Questions**
How have African-Americans in the United States struggled for social justice?
What can the civil rights movement teach us about addressing current social justice issues?
- **Content Questions**
What are racism, prejudice, and discrimination?
What factors helped set the stage for the civil rights movement?

Assessment Processes

View how a variety of student-centered [assessments](#) are used in the Sixteenth Street Unit Plan. These assessments help students and teachers set goals; monitor student progress; provide feedback; assess thinking, processes, performances, and products; and reflect on learning throughout the learning cycle.

Instructional Procedures

Introduction

Introduce the topic by providing students with a firsthand experience of injustice. Invite everyone who is left-handed to the front of the class and give each left-handed person a piece of candy.

Afterward, have all students write for five minutes about what just occurred. Invite students to read their papers aloud, and record key words that arise from their own writing. Their own language anchors the students' ideas to the topic and helps set the stage for learning.

Discuss the issues that come up. Ask probing questions about the experience for students who are left-handed and those who are right-handed.

Discuss human rights and what this means to students. Ask them what they consider to be their basic human rights. Ask for examples, both historic and recent, when basic human rights have been denied to certain groups of people.

Build a Framework

Develop the concepts around the following terms:

- Discrimination
- Racism
- Prejudice
- Stereotype
- Intolerance

At a Glance

Grade Level: 6-8

Subject: American History

Topics: Civil Rights Movement

Higher-Order Thinking

Skills: Inferring, Reasoning, Evaluation

Key Learnings: Racism, Discrimination, Points of View

Time Needed: 3 weeks, 50-minute lessons, daily

Background: [From the Classroom](#) in Washington, United States

Things You Need

[Assessment](#)

[Standards](#)

[Resources](#)

Provide some real-life examples, and as reinforcement, frame each word in a question and ask students to respond in their journals. For example, couch the word *prejudice* in a question such as, *How do blonde jokes encourage prejudice?* and have students reflect in writing.

Select excerpts from the recommended readings and Web sites that describe events and examples of social injustice and discrimination. Ask students to write a brief summary of each. Ensure that the students have adequate time to complete their summaries; make sure they capture the spirit of each event, not just the details. Afterward, divide the class into small groups and have each group discuss their summaries. As groups discuss their summaries, circulate through the room using the [observation checklist](#) to record thinking skills students are using. Have a spokesperson from each group present their conclusions and record prevailing themes on chart paper. Review the common elements of discrimination the class agreed upon. Ask students to write non-examples of discrimination. In other words, write how events would be different if prejudice, discrimination, or intolerance were taken out of the equation.

The Civil Rights Movement

Set the stage for a study of the civil rights movement with the video, *The Fateful Decade: From Little Rock to the Civil Rights Bill*. Prior to showing the film, access the students' knowledge with a K-W-L group discussion. During the film have students record major events, dates, locations, and key individuals. After viewing the film, discuss the events portrayed in the film, and together create a civil rights timeline to hang in the room for future reference.

Use a variety of resources and methods to teach about seminal topics, such as [Jim Crow laws*](#), the Montgomery bus boycott, the march on Washington, Little Rock, and the Freedom Riders.

Introduce the idea that history happens to ordinary people (sons, daughters, brothers, and grandparents). People did not get involved in the civil rights movement because it was glamorous or because they wanted to be heroes; they did it because they were tired of discrimination and prejudice and, in some instances, were initially just innocent bystanders. Have student groups study these individuals with the purpose of relating an individual's story to the rest of the class through the [personal stories project](#). In this assignment, each group selects one person and researches the person's life, the challenges that the person faced, and the person's involvement in the civil rights movement. Then, with this information, the group presents their findings to the class using one of the following methods:

- Short skit that illustrates a crucial moment in the work and life of the individual
- Speech by the individual that focuses on what they wanted to accomplish and why
- Interview with questions and answers from the audience
- News report that includes interviews with different members of the community in which this person was trying to make changes
- Panel discussion in which panel members discuss and debate the individual's significance and how successful the individual was in improving the lives of people in the community

Have students complete the [group and self-assessment](#) form.

History Doesn't Happen to Strangers

In this next part, students learn more about the history of racism in the United States and gain empathy by reading *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, by Christopher Paul Curtis. Ask the students to read the front and back cover, the dedication, the information about the author, and the title of chapter one. Ask them to predict what the themes will be in the book and through whose eyes they will witness the events of the early 1960s.

Read the first chapter aloud and compare students' predictions about themes with the events in the beginning of the book.

Set the students to reading *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* in literature circles. (To learn more about implementing literature circles, purchase [Literature Circles*](#), by Harvey Daniels or visit Seattle University's [Literature Circles Resource Center*](#).)

Teaching ideas that correspond to this book can be found at Random House's [Teacher's Guide*](#).

After reading the book, help students integrate their earlier studies with their reading by making a multimedia slideshow, [newspaper](#), or book titled *What America Was Like When the Watsons Went to Birmingham in 1963*. This can be done in small groups. Provide the [newspaper rubric](#) to groups and review to help ensure students understand the assessment criteria. Newspapers should include articles that address the following:

- Reactions to the book, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*
- How African-Americans have struggled for social justice
- The factors that set the stage for the civil rights movement
- What the civil rights movement can teach us about addressing current social justice issues

As students work on this project, schedule conferences to assess their understanding and the writing process, and to allow for giving feedback, clarifying misunderstandings, or providing additional lessons if necessary.

Birmingham—The Past Meets the Present

Stage a mock trial of the last living defendant accused in the Baptist Church bombing, Thomas Blanton Jr. (Note that this

case was recently concluded; therefore, you can share the real outcome with students following the mock trial.)

Select mock trial methods that work best for you from the following Web resources: [American Bar Association Mock Trial Resources*](#), [Titanic Model Trial Site*](#), and [Illinois 19th Circuit Court mock trial tutorial*](#).

Have students take on roles that reflect different points of view, such as witnesses, prosecution and defense attorneys, families of the girls, reporters, and different citizens of the town (old, young, white, black, and so on).

Have students research their roles and write interpretations of the events from the points of view of their characters.

Get help from the local trial lawyer association in staging the mock trial in a real courtroom or practice courtroom at a local law school.

When finished, have students complete the [mock trial reflection](#) sheet.

Prerequisite Skills

- Multimedia skills
- Experience in open-ended project learning activities

Differentiated Instruction

Resource Student

- Make modifications as dictated in the student's IEP
- Shorten assignments to core features
- Deliver instruction in a variety of ways, using models of acceptable work when possible
- Provide extra time for completing assignments
- Provide intermediary checkpoints throughout the duration of the unit.

Gifted Student

- Support deeper and more extensive study and outcomes
- Allow the student to pursue related topics such as affirmative action and quota-based hiring

English Language Learner

- Encourage support from common language speakers with greater English proficiency
- Consider having students research civil rights campaigns from their culture of origin
- Provide extra time for completing assignments
- Enlist support from parent helpers or teacher's aide

Credits

Anne Shroeder participated in the Intel® Teach Program, which resulted in this idea for a classroom project. A team of teachers expanded the plan into the example you see here.

Designing Effective Projects: Sixteenth Street From the Classroom

A Diverse Community of Learners

Annie Schroeder has been a faculty member at St. George Catholic School in Seattle for 15 years, teaching practically everything, from kindergarten to fifth grade to middle school science. For the past few years, she's taught fifth grade half-time while acting as the school's development director, and is now teaching fifth grade as she serves as the school's vice principal. St. George is a small, culturally diverse school, with a current enrollment of 150 students in prekindergarten through grade eight. "We have immigrant families from the Philippines (more than 50 percent of our students), Vietnam, Mexico, other Central American countries, Samoa, and China," Annie says. "About 15 percent of our students are African American. Caucasian kids are the minority here."

"Teaching and learning in such a diverse community is an absolute joy. Our children don't need classes in diversity, it's just part of who we are," Annie says. She takes this diversity into account as she plans lessons for her fifth-graders, and it was a challenge to plan American history lessons for students who have little personal connection to the subject. "We honor civil rights all over the world," she says, "so looking at a period of great change in the social order in the U.S. made sense." The pivotal period of the early 1960s civil rights struggle became the focus of Annie's Intel® Teach Program unit plan. "Civil rights are very important to our school community. Another great reason for focusing on civil rights in the 1960s was so we could read a wonderful book together that portrays the era: *The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963*."

Technology: Scaffolding for New Learning

Technologies old and new were instrumental as Annie prepared her class to read the novel that supports their study of civil rights in America: *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* (by Christopher Paul Curtis, Delacorte, 1995). She wanted her students to become familiar with life in the times of the Watsons so they could appreciate the gravity of what befalls the family. As Annie elaborates, "This period in American history means a lot to me because I was alive when the events happened. I couldn't assume a common experience or history for the kids—they're too young, and they can't even draw on their parents' experiences; most of their parents come from other countries." From studying the Jim Crow laws to listening to "Yakety Yak" (protagonist Kenny's favorite song), students used the Internet as a powerful resource for getting ready to read.

An old technology found new purpose in Annie's class, too. In *The Watsons*, the family's belongings are stuffed into the car for their trek from Flint, Michigan, to Birmingham, Alabama, and their record player gets a place of honor. Annie recalls, "I realized kids wouldn't know what a record player was! It figures prominently in the story, so I went rooting around in a back closet and found one under a lot of junk. I borrowed some records from another teacher, and the class listened to them. Kids were interested in the weird old technology, and they could appreciate the record player's significance in the story."

For anyone who considers teaching about the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, Annie recommends another resource as well, the film *4 Little Girls* (Spike Lee, director; available on DVD from HBO Home Video). "It's a little above the fifth-grade level, but I showed it in bits and pieces. Kids really remembered the images in the documentary, such as Sheriff 'Bull' Connor turning water hoses on little kids—it really brought it home to them."

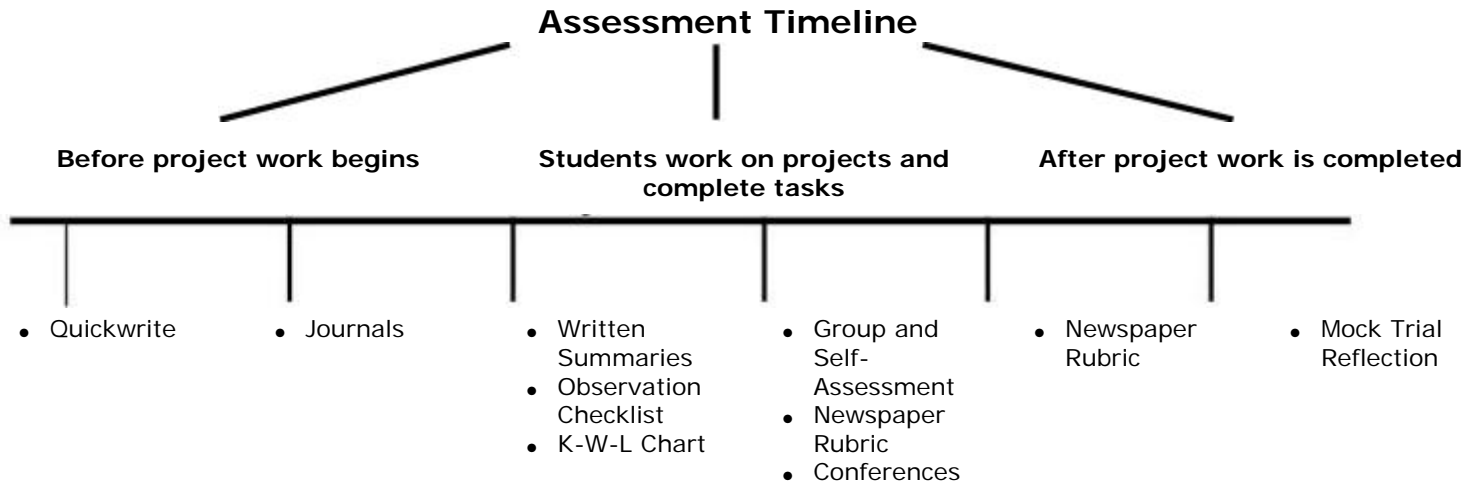
Getting up to Speed with Technology

Due to a considerable grass-roots effort, St. George is up to speed with technology. Annie notes, "Our community has focused on raising funds for technology over the last few years. Our parent group has had a concession at Safeco Field [where the Seattle Mariners play], and the parents did all of the wiring for the school computer network. We have a jog-a-thon every year, and for several years the proceeds from that funded the purchase of computers." Annie is a resourceful person, and as the school's development director she sought and was awarded a Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) grant as well as a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant. The school now has a networked lab and five or six networked computers in each classroom.

Annie's technology interests used to be one step ahead of the school's resources, but happily, she says, technology resources are now in place. "As the technology improves I can do more with this teaching unit," Annie says. "I've embellished it already since we've gotten Internet access—kids can do more research online, and take online quizzes." Annie credits the success of her teaching plan to the structured planning time the Intel® Teach Program course afforded her. "It was a real benefit to me, to have a dedicated period of time to develop a teaching unit I valued. The Intel course gave me an opportunity to think about how technology could add quality to these lessons. It was at heart a curriculum course, not just an applications course. I gained a lot from the class, and from the teachers who participated with me."

Designing Effective Projects: Sixteenth Street Assessment Plan

Assessment Plan



To determine readiness for the unit, review discussions, quickwrites, and journal entries and adjust instruction as necessary. Use an [observation checklist](#) to observe thinking skills as students discuss social injustice and discrimination issues.

Ask students to self-assess and peer-assess their personal stories assignment using the [group and self-assessment](#) form. Assess the newspaper project with the [newspaper rubric](#). Have students self-assess their preparation for and participation in the mock trial using the [mock trial reflection](#) sheet. Use this same sheet to assess these skills as well.

As a final assessment of learning to see what students now know that they did not know before, read excerpts from the [Civil Rights Act of 1964*](#), and ask students to respond to the following:

- *Are the rights guaranteed in the Civil Rights Act upheld today? If so, in what ways?*
- *What problems remain?*
- *What additional statements can you add to the Civil Rights Act to address problems that persist today?*

Compare these responses to the initial writings in students' journals to document growth.

Designing Effective Projects: Sixteenth Street Content Standards and Objectives

Targeted Content Standards and Benchmarks

Washington Essential Academic Learning Requirements:

Social Studies: History Essential Academic Learning Requirements

- Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping United States, world, and Washington State history
- Understand and analyze historical time and chronology
- Using evidence for support, identify, analyze, and explain possible causal factors contributing to given historical events

Social Studies Skills: Essential Academic Learning Requirements

Inquiry and Information Skills

- Create a product that uses social studies content to support findings; present the product in an appropriate manner to a meaningful audience

Critical Thinking Skills

- Analyze and evaluate the impact of ideas, events, and/or people on groups, environments, economic systems, and/or subsequent events

Student Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Understand events within a historical context
- Become aware of the complexity of social problems in the United States
- Identify with individuals from a past era by writing and speaking from their points of view
- Understand the civil rights era of the 1960s by reading from a variety of historical fiction and expository texts

Designing Effective Projects: Sixteenth Street Resources

Materials and Resources

Printed Materials

- Curtis, C. (1995). *The Watsons go to Birmingham—1963*. New York: Delacorte.
- Kasher, S. (1996) *The Civil Rights Movement: A photographic history, 1954-68*. New York: Abbeville Press.
- McKnight, G. (1998) *The last crusade: Martin Luther King Jr., the FBI, and the poor people's campaign*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Internet Resources

For the Teacher:

- The American Bar Association Mock Trial Resources
www.abanet.org/publiced/volunteer/youthmock.html*
An online guide for putting together a mock trial
- American Memory Project, Library of Congress
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>*
Find documents related to the civil rights movement by doing a search using "civil rights movement"
- Illinois 19th Circuit Court Mock Trial Resources
www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/bkshelf/resource/mt_conduct.htm*
A guide to conducting mock trials
- Titanic Trial Simulation
www.andersonkill.com/titanic/home.htm*
A model for conducting a mock trial
- Literature Circles
www.stenhouse.com/productcart/pc/viewPrd.asp?idcategory=0&idproduct=333*
Information about the book by Harvey Daniels
- Literature Circles Resource Center
www.litcircles.org/*
Seattle University's online resource for setting up and conducting literature circles
- Random House Teacher's Guide
www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=044022800X&view=tg*
Ideas for teaching *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*

For the Student:

- In Memory of Four Little Girls
www.useekufind.com/peace/timeline2.htm*
A timeline of the investigation of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing
- See the Girls at Spartacus
www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAC16.htm*
Information about the girls killed at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing
- Birmingham Church Bombing Timeline
www.cnn.com/2000/LAW/05/17/bomb.timeline/index.html*
A timeline of the Birmingham bombing
- We Shall Overcome
www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights*
Historic places of the civil rights movement
- Jim Crow Laws
www.nps.gov/malu/documents/jim_crow_laws.htm*
Examples of Jim Crow laws
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act/*
Excerpts from the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Video

- *The Fateful Decade: From Little Rock to the Civil Rights Bill* (video)
www.films.com/id/3636/The_Fateful_Decade_From_Little_Rock_to_the_Civil_Rights_Bill.htm*
A 27-minute overview video that can be ordered online

Technology—Hardware

- Computers for Internet research and creating multimedia presentations
- Internet connection for conducting Internet research on the civil rights movement
- Television for viewing civil rights video(s)
- VCR or DVD player for viewing civil rights video(s)

Technology—Software

- Desktop publishing for developing civil rights newspaper
- Multimedia software for developing Web site or slideshow presentation about the civil rights movement

Observation Checklist for Thinking Skills

Observed Thinking Skills	Notes
<p>Interpretation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Describing Describes important concepts and relationships accurately</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Showing Meaning Shows how information has special meaning by connecting it to experiences, knowledge, and beliefs</p> <p>Shows purpose and theme related to information</p>	
<p>Making Inferences</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Making Connections Uses knowledge and experiences to make connections and draw inferences</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring Uses knowledge, experiences, and sound reasoning to make connections and draw inferences</p> <p>Modifies inferences and makes new ones continuously</p>	
<p>Evaluation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing Persuasive Arguments Differentiates between sound reasoning and faulty reasoning strategies in persuasive arguments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Forming Opinions Bases opinion on good evidence synthesized from multiple, credible sources</p> <p>Shows understanding of complexity of issue by investigating and synthesizing information from different viewpoints</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Communicating States opinion clearly and supports it with several good reasons from reliable sources</p> <p>Communicates deep understanding of complexity of issue</p>	
<p>Commitment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Effort Puts forth effort to find out about an issue before forming an opinion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Persistence Waits to form an opinion until finding enough information</p> <p>Changes mind when confronted with new evidence</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accuracy Takes pride in accuracy of work</p>	

<p>Reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Predicting Makes reasonable predictions based on thorough understanding of the subject area Revises predictions if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing Conclusions Uses personal experiences, knowledge, and thorough understanding of information to make inferences and draw meaningful conclusions <input type="checkbox"/> Determining Cause and Effect Identifies multiple causes and effects Prioritizes causes by their impact Differentiates between correlation and causation Creates visual representations that show the relationships among causes and effects in complex systems <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating Explains reasoning processes and conclusions clearly and thoroughly 	
<p>Argumentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Making a Claim Clearly states claim <input type="checkbox"/> Finding and Evaluating Evidence Applies standards of quality to evidence used to support claim <input type="checkbox"/> Audience Awareness Considers audience when forming an argument and includes appropriate information Addresses counterarguments <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating Describes claim and evidence clearly and thoroughly Cites sources Organizes argument so it has the greatest impact 	
<p>Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creating Options Uses a variety of reasoning strategies to weigh options and choose the best one <input type="checkbox"/> Predicting Consequences Predicts consequences of options Evaluates impact on self and others <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating Explains reasons for decision carefully and in detail 	

Personal Stories Project Group and Self-Assessment

Name:

Historical Person:

4 = Outstanding

3 = Good

2 = OK

1 = Poor

0 = Not Done

Group Presentation

- Presentation clearly explains the selected individual's life, challenges, and involvement in the civil rights movement.
- Students are experts on the group's topic.
- Information presented is accurate.
- Presentation flows well and is engaging.

How would you rate your group's presentation? Explain your rating.

Rating: ____ Why:

Group Work

- Everyone was on task throughout the project.
- The group worked cooperatively.

How would you rate your group? Explain your rating.

Rating: ____ Why:

Your Contributions

- I contributed ____% to the research. I contributed to the group's research in the following ways:

- I contributed ____% to the presentation. I contributed to the group's presentation in the following ways:

- I was on task and followed my role throughout ____% of this project.

Overall, I would rate myself a ____.

Group Members Contributions

Write the name of each group member below and explain exactly what each person did for the research and the presentation portions of this project.

- _____ contributed ___% to the overall project. I rate this group member a _____. This group member contributed in the following ways:

- _____ contributed ___% to the overall project. I rate this group member a _____. This group member contributed in the following ways:

- _____ contributed ___% to the overall project. I rate this group member a _____. This group member contributed in the following ways:

What did you like about this project?

What do you wish had been different about this project?

Newspaper Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Content	<p>Newspaper includes articles that have accurate historical information, show interpretation and analysis of the topic, and clearly address all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactions to the book <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham</i> • How African-Americans struggled for social justice • Factors that set the stage for the civil rights movement • What the civil rights movement can teach us about addressing current social issues 	<p>Newspaper includes articles that have accurate historical information, show some interpretation and analysis of the topic, and adequately address three of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactions to the book <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham</i> • How African-Americans struggled for social justice • Factors that set the stage for the civil rights movement • What the civil rights movement can teach us about addressing current social issues 	<p>Newspaper includes some articles that have accurate historical information, show minimal interpretation or analysis of the topic, and adequately address only two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactions to the book <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham</i> • How African-Americans struggled for social justice • Factors that set the stage for the civil rights movement • What the civil rights movement can teach us about addressing current social issues 	<p>Newspaper includes articles that have some inaccuracies, do not show interpretation or analysis of the topic, and address only one of the following or more but are incomplete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactions to the book <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham</i> • How African-Americans struggled for social justice • Factors that set the stage for the civil rights movement • What the civil rights movement can teach us about addressing current social issues
Writing	<p>The headlines of all the articles are catchy and relate well to the topic.</p> <p>The lead of all the articles captures the attention of the reader and sums up the focus of the story.</p> <p>Details and elaboration are evident in the body of all of the stories and flow smoothly from the lead.</p>	<p>The headlines of most of the articles are catchy and relate well to the topic.</p> <p>The lead of most of the articles captures the attention of the reader and sums up the focus of the story.</p> <p>Details and elaboration are evident in the body of most of the stories and flow smoothly from the lead.</p>	<p>The headlines of some of the articles are catchy and relate well to the topic.</p> <p>The lead of some of the articles captures the attention of the reader and sums up the focus of the story.</p> <p>Details and elaboration are evident in the body of some of the stories and flow smoothly from the lead.</p>	<p>The headlines (if present) are not catchy and do not relate well to the topic.</p> <p>Article leads (if present) do not capture the attention of the reader and do not sum up the focus of the story.</p> <p>Articles (if present) are lacking details and elaboration.</p>
Layout	<p>Columns are neatly formatted using the "justified" alignment style.</p> <p>There are adequate and consistent "gutters" between all columns and articles.</p> <p>A glance at the newspaper makes a reader think "professional."</p>	<p>Most columns are neatly typed.</p> <p>There are adequate and consistent "gutters" between most columns and articles.</p> <p>A glance at the newspaper makes a reader think "fairly professional."</p>	<p>Some columns are neatly typed.</p> <p>There are adequate "gutters" between some columns and articles.</p> <p>The newspaper is easy to read, but it looks somewhat unprofessional.</p>	<p>Columns are not neatly typed.</p> <p>The "gutters" are not adequate.</p> <p>The newspaper is somewhat difficult to read.</p>

Graphics	Graphics are exceptional, well cropped, and clearly related to the articles they accompany.	Graphics are interesting and clearly related to the articles they accompany.	Graphics are somewhat related to the articles they accompany.	Graphics are not included or do not clearly relate to the articles.
Spelling and Proofreading	No spelling errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the typist) read and correct the newspaper.	No more than one spelling error remains after one or more people (in addition to the typist) read and correct the newspaper.	No more than three spelling errors remain after one or more people (in addition to the typist) read and correct the newspaper.	Several spelling errors remain in the final copy of the newspaper.

Mock Trial Reflection

1. What did you like about the mock trial?
2. What do you think was fair or unfair about the trial?
3. If you were to summarize for someone what happened at the mock trial, what would you tell them?
4. Explain your role in the trial. How did you prepare for your role? How did you participate in the trial?
5. Do you feel that you were well prepared for the trial? If not, how could you have been better prepared?

4 = Outstanding
3 = Good
2 = OK
1 = Poor
0 = Not Done

Give yourself an overall rating based on the following:

- Participation in trial
- Strength of argument
- Use of time during preparation

Student Rating: _____

Teacher Rating: _____

Researching Personal Stories of Liberation From the Civil Rights Movement

You will research men and women, both famous and relatively unknown, who joined a movement with the goal of changing their lives and the lives of people in their community. Through their actions and words, they are examples of ordinary people becoming part of our nation's history.

Step 1: Choose an individual from the following list. Use the name and the connected events and organizations as starting places for your research.

Individual	Starting Places for Research
A. Philip Randolph	<p>Keywords and dates—Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (union); march on Washington, 1963</p> <p>Web site A. Phillip Randolph Museum www.aphiliprandolphmuseum.com</p>
Melba Patillo Beals	<p>Keywords and dates—Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957</p> <p>Web site Interview with Melba Patillo Beals (1994) www.booknotes.org/Transcript/?ProgramID=1227</p>
Diane Nash	<p>Keywords and dates—Student sit-ins, 1961</p> <p>Web site Interview with Diane Nash http://word.cs.earlham.edu/issues/XII/012398/comm731173a.html</p>
John Lewis	<p>Keywords and dates—Student sit-ins, 1961; march on Washington, 1963; Selma, Alabama, 1965; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)</p> <p>Web site SNCC, 1960-1966 www.ibiblio.org/sncc/lewis.html</p>
James Farmer	<p>Keywords and dates—Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); student sit-ins, 1961</p> <p>Web site James Farmer www.cets.sfasu.edu/Harrison/Farmer/farmhome.htm</p>
Fred Shuttlesworth	<p>Keywords and dates—Birmingham, Alabama, 1963; Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR)</p> <p>Web site Fred Shuttlesworth www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAshutterworth.htm</p>
Bayard Rustin	<p>Keywords and dates—March on Washington, 1963</p> <p>Web site Bayard Rustin www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USArustin.htm</p>
Fannie Lou Hamer	<p>Keywords and dates—Voting rights; Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, 1964; SNCC</p> <p>Web site An Oral History with Fannie Lou Hamer www.lib.usm.edu/%7Eespcol/crda/oh/hamer.htm</p>
Robert Moses	<p>Keywords and dates—Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964; SNCC</p> <p>Web site Robert Moses www.ibiblio.org/sncc/moses.html</p>

Bob Zellner	<p>Keywords and dates—Freedom Riders; SNCC, Web site Interview with Bob Zellner www.americanradioworks.org/features/oh_freedom/interview_zellner.html</p>
Ella Baker	<p>Keywords and dates—SCLC; SNCC Web site Ella J. Baker—Biography www.ncsu.edu/chass/mds/ellabio.html</p>

Step 2: Research the individual your group selected and provide the following information:

- Brief biography
- Description about how the individual was involved in the civil rights movement—places, times, organizations, and actions
- Depiction of how the individual might have answered the question, What changes would you like to make in your life and in the lives of people in your community? (use the information gathered by the group to support this response)
- Description of the challenges the individual faced and how the individual worked to overcome the challenges—what actions did the individual take and why?

Use both primary and secondary sources in your research. Include at least two Internet sites and at least two books or magazines in your research.

- *Primary source*—Evidence (quotes from speeches, articles, images, and so forth) that you can use to learn more about the individual your group is researching.
- *Secondary source*—Information provided by historians and journalists about a specific individual or event.

Step 3: Record your research findings and use the MLA format to cite the resources. Include Web sites, books, magazines, and so on. Briefly state what information was provided by each source. Use the research chart to help you.

Step 4: Use your research to develop a thought-provoking, historically accurate, and engaging presentation for the class. Use the following guidelines as you plan your presentation:

- The presentation must be 3–5 minutes in length.
- You must turn in a written script that addresses the research components listed in Step 2 before the presentation.
- Your presentation may take the form of any one of the following:
 - Short skit that illustrates a crucial moment in the work and life of the individual you are researching.
 - Speech by the individual that focuses on what the individual wanted to accomplish and why.
 - Interview with questions and answers from the audience.
 - News report that includes interviews with different members of the community in which the individual was trying to make changes.
 - Panel discussion in which panel members discuss and debate the individual's significance and how successful the individual was in improving the lives of people in the community. Panel members might themselves play the roles of people who joined the particular movement in the relevant place and time, or play the roles of historians looking back at and evaluating the success of the movement.

Adapted with permission from *There Was a Certain Type of Fire That No Water Could Put Out...* Personal Stories of Liberation from the civil rights movement developed by Maliika Herd-Chambers and Stan Pesick.

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Meet the Watsons

Meet the Watsons of Flint, Michigan. There's Momma, who always covers her mouth when she laughs to hide the gap in her front teeth. Dad is a cut-up and always goofing around and teasing Momma. Byron ("By") is 13 and an "official juvenile delinquent." Joetta is the baby of the family and the only girl. She's the family's favorite child. Kenny is the main character of the story. Kenny is 10 and everyone at school thinks that there is something wrong with him. He's extra smart.

In the story, the Watsons must take a trip from Flint, Michigan, to Birmingham, Alabama, to drop By off at Grandma Sand's house. She is going to work the delinquent right out of him. Little do they know that

they will drive into the center of a major event in American history.

Continued on pg. 2



<http://encarta.msn.com>

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

It would be great if the Watsons (especially By) could have spent time with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King was arrested and held right in the Birmingham jail. He was criticized by the local clergy for coming from the outside and stirring up trouble. He wrote a letter in response that has become very famous.

In it he said, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

"Before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched across the pages of history the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence, we were here. For more than two centuries, our fore parents labored in this country without wages; they made cotton "king," and they built the homes of their masters in the midst of brutal injustice and shameful humiliation—and yet out of a bottomless vitality, they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Address
Birmingham, Alabama
December 3, 1963

In Our Inaugural Issue

- Learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his part in the civil rights struggle
- Learn the true events of the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church
- Learn about the great book, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*, by Christopher Paul Curtis
- Read how the author learned to write
- What were things like in the 1960s in Alabama? Read the *Jim Crow laws that oppressed people*.

Jim Crow Laws: Wouldn't You Fight, Too?

These laws were on the books in Alabama in 1963. Other unwritten laws were in effect, too. For instance, no one would *ever* imagine black and white people marrying each other—they didn't need to put it in writing.

Nurses No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which Negro men are placed.

Buses All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races.

Meet the Watsons, cont.

The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 ends in shock and tragedy. The scariest part is that the tragedy really happened. In the book, Joetta goes to Sunday school at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. At the time, she and her family, the Watsons, are in Birmingham visiting Grandma Sands. The church is down the street from Grandma's house, and Joetta goes by herself. The rest of the family stays home because it is too hot to put on their Sunday best.

On Sunday morning, September 15, 1963, at 10:19, a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Four girls were killed. One girl was 11 years old and the other three were 14.

In the story, Joetta witnesses it all, and through her eyes, the reader almost experiences the tragedy, too.

Meet the Author: Christopher Paul Curtis

Born in Flint, Michigan, Christopher Paul Curtis spent his first 13 years after high school on the assembly line of Flint's historic Fisher Body Flint Plant 1. It was during this time that he began work on early drafts of *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*. His job entailed hanging doors, and it left him with an aversion to getting into and out of large automobiles—particularly big Buicks.

Random House Publishers: www.randomhouse.com/teachers/authors/curt.html

"I tell them if I can do it, they can do it, too."

Mr. Curtis Talks About Writing

I was always a very good reader and a good writer, but when I was in school there was a different emphasis placed on writing. It wasn't creative writing; it was mostly diagramming sentences, correct grammar, all the structural stuff.

When I was in the factory, I was keeping a journal. Writing took my mind off the line. I hated being in the factory. When I was writing, I forgot I was there.

I'd tried fiction, but I knew it was terrible. When kids say they don't like what they've written, that's what I tell them: "Be patient. Fiction takes a long time."

I didn't really feel comfortable with fiction until my late thirties, early forties. I'd tried it, but I wasn't happy with the results.

I do a lot of school visits. On this tour, I meet with groups of kids, and I tell them about my writing process, how I got started. I do a little reading. I tell them if I can do it, they can do it, too.

Powell's Bookstore Interview, April 15, 2000
www.powells.com/authors/curtis.html

<http://www.msn.encarta.com>



Cleaning up after the bombing.



If I Could Meet the Author...

If I could meet Christopher Paul Curtis, I would ask him how he did research on this book. It is written like he witnessed these events himself! He makes me feel like I was right on hand, and at times I was as scared, worried, and amused as anyone in the book. —Maryella

If I met Mr. Curtis I would want to know how he knew he could be a writer. He never had any training that way, and he was working in an automobile plant all the time. He must have really wanted to write because he taught himself AND wrote while he was still working all day every day. I want to be a writer, too, so I'd like to know how he went about it. —Josh

I just read *Bud, Not Buddy*, and recommend it to everyone. I wonder if the author is writing another good book right now. I bet he is, and I'd like to know when it will be available. —Amy

Jim Crow Laws, cont.

Railroads The conductor of each passenger train is authorized and required to assign each passenger to the car or the division of the car, when it is divided by a partition, designated for the race to which such passenger belongs.

Toilet Facilities, Male Every employer of white or Negro males shall provide for such white or Negro males reasonably accessible and separate toilet facilities.

Restaurants It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectively separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment.

Pool and Billiard Rooms It shall be unlawful for a Negro and a white person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards.

The Struggle for Social Justice

African-Americans have overcome many struggles as well as obstacles. African-Americans have fought for freedom from enslavement and the rights to earn a living, have land and a job, have equal justice, get quality education, escape from oppression, maintain self pride, and end stereotyping.

Blacks everywhere got fed up with being treated as if they were inferior and slaves, so they banded together to form a movement. Not just any kind of movement, but a movement that would see victories as well as violence and death. That movement was the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement had a major goal, and that goal was to end discrimination and to put an end to segregation.

Though it is most often attributed to the 1960s, the civil rights movement found its start in the decade before that, the “peaceful 50s.” The civil rights movement actually started with legal battles before moving into the streets of American cities. The Supreme Court ordered the desegregation of schools and overturned its former “separate but equal” policy that had for so long been the law of the land. This led to the realization that there wouldn’t be equal rights gained through the courts alone; they had to take their struggle to the streets.

The NAACP and other organizations continued their struggle with the judicial system, but new organizations formed to help the people in a different way. It was at this time that the SLCC and SNCC were formed to fight for equality. Nonviolence was the core of movement, and it was their main weapon.

From the bus boycotts of Montgomery to the lunch counter sit-ins across the nation not a black fist was raised in anger. They were beaten, spat upon, and cursed and still did not fight back physically. This was a brilliant public relations strategy in action, for every time the protestors were shown on the news, it was them acting peacefully and a white mob attacking them. These images alone helped to win over many supporters and force the national government to step in to help the cause of civil rights.

One of the main goals of the passive resisters was to gain public support and force the government to uphold the Supreme Court’s controversial rulings, such as what happened with Central High School when President Kennedy nationalized the Arkansas National Guard and the Interstate Commerce Commission forced the desegregation of the interstate bus lines. Without lifting a finger, they changed the way the nation was run.

As the years went on, African-Americans became even more willing to stand up for their rights, to the point where MLK led a march on Washington, D.C. Slowly but surely the small pocket of “dissidents” turned into a nationwide movement that reshaped the way the constitution was interpreted and tried to help make sure that all men and women really were created equal.

Even the killings of important persons like MLK, Medgar Evers, and Malcolm X couldn’t stop the momentum once it had started. The men became martyrs to the cause and more powerful than they ever were when they were alive. Ultimately, the goals of the civil rights movement were quite simple. They wanted to end discrimination, to become accepted as American citizens with all the rights, duties, and privileges that entails. They wanted the power to become whatever they wanted in life, to not be held back by their skin color, but instead to be accepted everywhere by everyone as a fellow human being, regardless of race.



Images of American Political History



Images of American Political History

Is the Struggle for Civil Rights Over?

The civil rights movement is dead. Slavery is abolished. African-Americans have the right to vote, as do women. Legal segregation is over. There is nothing left to fight over. Right? Wrong!

The civil rights movement is far from dead. In fact, it has hardly begun. Now that all Americans legally have equal rights, the bar should be raised even higher, above simple legal standards. Our toughest challenge is before us. We must set aside centuries of prejudice. We must begin anew.

Today, federal laws provide civil rights for all. The major challenge we face now is changing the way individuals think. Schools should do more to foster tolerance of all groups. Today, just as long ago, the main reason there are problems with civil rights is ignorance and hate. It is important to teach tolerance while people are still young and open-minded. Given the truth, people will learn to allow all groups to be the best that they can be, and we will all benefit from the peace and love it will bring.



Images of American Political History



Where Do We Go From Here?

Throughout history, there have been marches, sit-ins, and violent outbursts to end oppression. There have been many wrongs made so that we could hopefully make it right. So what have we really accomplished through our years of strife? Have we ended segregation, discrimination, and racism? Have we found the secret to killing hate?

The simple answer to each of these questions is no. We have not ended the very things that infringe upon our civil rights. Although we talk about the civil rights struggle as if it were just a thing of the past. Nothing has changed so much that our struggle has really ended. We are still witnesses to the people that are discriminated against everyday. Those that cannot find a job because of their gender or because of the color of their skin. They are still here, everyday, fighting for their rights guaranteed by our laws, but our laws cannot stop personal discrimination.

If anything, our laws are completely useless when it comes to everyday discrimination. Now I am not saying that the situation is completely hopeless. What do we do now? Where do we go from here?

We still have those who are striving. We still have those that dream and those that are listening to the dream. Our future will not be changed overnight, but it seems so far that we are on the right path. The only thing we can possibly do at this point in time would be to keep our hopes high. We may not have met our goal yet, but I believe we are getting closer. The challenge today is to change the minds of those who do not even realize their bigotry. It falls to today's youth to take up this crusade for true equality. Are we up to this monumental task? For everyone's sake, I pray that we are.

Let's Not Forget

Sarah, Addie Mae's sister, remembers Denise asking Addie to tie her belt on her dress just as the bomb exploded.



Denise McNair, 11

Addie Mae's sister, Junie, was slightly injured in the bombing. She was asked to identify her sister's body. "I looked at the face, and I couldn't tell who it was," she says of the crumpled form she viewed. "Then I saw this little brown shoe—you know, like a loafer—and I recognized it right away."



Cynthia Wesley, 14

Four girls, getting ready for church



Carole Robertson, 14

The Carole Robertson Center is a daycare for school-aged kids, named in honor of Carole, who was particularly fond of small children.



Addie Mae Collins, 14

A Mystery: In 1994, the cemetery where Addie Mae was laid to rest had fallen into terrible condition, with crumbling gravestones, grass growing waist-high, and even bones from graves poking out of the ground. Addie's sisters decided to have her body moved to another cemetery. When the crew dug up the marked grave, they had terrible news: There was nothing there. Where are Addie's remains? It's still a mystery, and adds more pain to hearts already overflowing with pain. Addie's family remembers her burial, and believes her body is in that cemetery, in an unmarked, or mismarked, grave.

Convicted: On May 22, 2002, Bobby Frank Cherry was convicted of murder in the case of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing.