

Putting the *Movement* Back into Civil Rights Teaching

A Resource Guide for K–12 Classrooms

Edited by

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To view more of the photographers’ and artists’ work and for contact information, visit www.civilrightsteaching.org.

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Putting the *Movement* Back into Civil Rights Teaching

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FOREWORD

By Congressman John Lewis

You are about to embark on a wonderful journey, a journey into our collective identity as an American people. That is why I have always loved history, because it is through the study of our past that we discover who we are today as a nation. And the more you explore the American experience, the more you realize that the cry for freedom has inspired some of the greatest events of our history.

The Civil Rights Movement is just that kind of American story. We were a congregation of “ordinary” men and women who had an extraordinary vision. Some of us had examined our nation’s philosophy simply and eloquently described in the Constitution, but most of us just answered a whisper deep in our souls that something was amiss in America. We faced the truth that generations of racial prejudice, segregation, and discrimination were not fair; they were not right, they were not just. And it was that deep urging for liberation that ignited our courage to act.

We determined to make this nation live up to its creed of “freedom and justice for all.” And we found a way to get in the way. We found a way, through nonviolent protest, to dramatize our issues. We held up a mirror to America so it could see the true face of its democracy. That revelation brought change. It transformed the landscape of this nation. It also shook the spirits of people around the globe who modeled their own freedom movements on the achievements of these “ordinary,” inspired Americans of the Civil Rights Movement.

History expresses who we are, but it also reveals who we must become. The ideals of this nation are noble and great.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” —Declaration of Independence, 1776

But they are yet to be fully realized. Our past calls us to awaken to our future, to answer the soul’s eternal quest for liberation. Call it the spirit of the Civil Rights Movement or the spirit of history. We must recapture this spirit. As a nation and as a people, we must make this spirit part of our thoughts, our actions, and our lives.

All of us—Black, White, Latino, Asian, and Native American—must pull together for the common good. This is our American mission. This is our charge, to build what I call the Beloved Community, a nation at peace with itself, one nation, one people, one house, and one family. This is, above all, the greatest lesson of the Civil Rights Movement, that our work is not done until our collective dreams of freedom, equality, and justice are made real for every life in this country. Let the stories of these “ordinary” Americans inspire your own dreams. Let the history of this Movement help lead you to your passion. Let it help you find your voice, your way. And then go out and do something great for humanity.



© Nashville Public Library, The Nashville Room

After lunch counters were integrated in 1960, students focused on segregated restaurants, hotels, and movie theaters. John Lewis stands outside Nashville’s Hermitage Hotel in conversation with the police on May 13, 1963.

John Lewis was born the son of sharecroppers on February 21, 1940, outside of Troy, Alabama. From 1963 to 1966, Lewis was the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which he helped form. Lewis, at the age of 23, was one of the planners and a keynote speaker at the historic “March on Washington.” After leaving SNCC in 1966, he remained active in the Civil Rights Movement through his work as associate director of the Field Foundation and his participation in the Southern Regional Council’s voter registration programs. John Lewis’ first electoral success came in 1981 when he was elected to the Atlanta City Council. Elected to Congress in November 1986, Lewis represents Georgia’s Fifth Congressional District. He is currently serving his ninth term in office. His autobiography, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (1998, authored with Michael D’Orso), provides a powerful history of the Movement.

NATIONAL STANDARDS MET BY THIS PUBLICATION

The lessons and readings in Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching are aligned with national standards in many subject areas. Below are just a few examples. See www.civilrightsteaching.org for more detailed information about the standards aligned with this book and for articles on how to prepare standards-based lessons and on the politics of standards.

Civics Grades K-4 (CCE)

- How can people work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy?
- What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?

Civics Grades 5-12 (CCE)

- How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?
- How can citizens take part in civic life?

Language Arts Grades K-12 (NCTE)

- Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Music Grades K-12 (CNAE)

- Students identify and describe roles of musicians (e.g., orchestra conductor, folksinger, church organist) in various music settings and cultures.

Theatre Grades K-12 (CNAE)

- Researching by using cultural and historical information to support improvised and scripted scenes.

U.S. History Grades K-4 (NCHS)

- Identify historical figures in the local community and explain their contributions and significance.
- Identify ordinary people who have believed in the fundamental democratic values such as justice, truth, equality, the rights of the individual, and responsibility for the common good, and explain their significance.
- Analyze in their historical context the accomplishments of ordinary people in the local community now and long ago who have done something beyond the ordinary that displays particular courage or a sense of responsibility in helping the common good.
- Describe how historical figures in the United States and other parts of the world have advanced the rights of individuals and promoted the common good, and identify character traits such as persistence, problem solving, moral responsibility, and respect for others that made them successful.

- Understands how democratic values came to be and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols.

U.S. History Grades 3-4 (NCHS)

- Compare the dreams and ideals that people from various groups have sought, some of the problems they encountered in realizing their dreams, and the sources of strength and determination that families drew upon and shared. [Compare and contrast]
- Analyze songs, symbols, and slogans that demonstrate freedom of expression and the role of protest in a democracy. [Consider multiple perspectives]

U.S. History Grades 5-12 (NCHS)

- Understands Federal Indian policy and United States foreign policy after the Civil War.
- Understands how the Cold War and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam influenced domestic and international politics.
- Understands domestic policies after World War II.
- Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties.
- Understands recent developments in foreign and domestic politics.
- Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States.

Visual Arts Grades K-4 (CNAE)

- Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories.
- Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

Visual Arts Grades 5-8 (CNAE)

- Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks.
- Students integrate visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning in their artworks.

World History, Grades 5-12 (NCHS)

- Students understand major global trends since World War II

*NATIONAL STANDARDS SOURCES: Standards for the English Language Arts: Grades K–12, *The National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA)*; Standards for U.S. History and World History, *National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS)*; Curriculum Standards for the Social Studies, *National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)*; Music and Theatre Standards, *The National Standards for Arts Education, developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (CNAE)*.*