

Teachers' Guide for Cobblestone

February 2015

Road to Civil Rights

By Debbie Vilardi *Debbie Vilardi is an author of poetry, lesson plans and works of fiction.*

Goal: To learn about important events of the modern civil rights movement

*Always have a parent or trusted adult help with web research.

Before Beginning:

- On the cover, the Colonel is holding a sign. What is the purpose of the sign? What are equal rights?
- Complete the "Match 'Em Up" on page 9.

"Looking Back" by Eric Arnesen (Pages 2-5)

Vocabulary: lynching

Comprehension:

1. How were African Americans treated in the South in the 1950s?
2. Who were some of the earliest promoters of civil rights?
3. What prompted returning soldiers to push for change?
4. Why do you think so many came out to support voting rights and to protest violence in 1955?
5. What was Charles Hamilton Houston's background?
6. What were some of Houston's cases about?
7. Why does the article suggest Houston deserves some credit for the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*?
8. What was A. Philip Randolph's background?
9. What did Randolph accomplish in the 1930s?
10. How did presidents respond to Randolph's activities?
11. What does Randolph mean when he says his generation "stood on the shoulders of" those who protested before it?

Math Activities:

1. How old was Randolph when he moved to New York?
2. How many more people were expected to march on Washington than protested at Mound Bayou in 1955?

Research: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, NAACP, Simeon Booker, Charles Hamilton Houston, *Brown v. Board of Education*, A. Philip Randolph, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, March on Washington Movement, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fair Employment Practice Committee

"1954: A Landmark Decision" by Jacqueline B. Walker (Pages 6-7)

Vocabulary: higher education, class action

Comprehension:

1. What led to the widespread segregation of schools?
2. Why might the separate schools have been viewed as unequal?

3. How did Thurgood Marshall plan to prove the schools didn't meet the legal requirements for "equal protection"?
4. Why did the Browns and other families bring the class action suit against the Board of Education of Topeka?
5. Why did the NAACP take the case to the Supreme Court?
6. How long did it take for the appeal to be heard?
7. What was the final decision?
8. What impact did this decision have?

Writing Activity: The author begins the article by comparing war and court battles as means of creating change. Do you agree with this comparison? Why or why not?

Research: *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Thurgood Marshall, Chief Justice Earl Warren, Spottswood W. Robinson III

"1955: Mrs. Parks Gets Arrested" by Leslie Anderson Morales (Pages 10-11)

Vocabulary: boycott

Comprehension:

1. When were the earliest protests against segregated public transportation?
2. How did these protests continue in Montgomery, Alabama in the 1950s?
3. How were these protesters punished?
4. Why was Rosa Parks arrested?
5. Why did black leaders reach out to churches for support?
6. What did the Montgomery Improvement Association do?
7. How long did the protest last?
8. Why might it have lasted so long?
9. Why do you think other white businesses also suffered?
10. What was the result of *Browder v. Gayle*?

Discussion Activity: Rosa Parks gets the credit for being the catalyst for the boycott, but those who were arrested before her are often left out of the history books. Is this fair? Are you aware of other people who played an almost forgotten role in important events?

Research: Rev. Vernon Johns, Claudette Colvin, Mary Louise Smith, Rosa Parks, E.D. Nixon, Citizens' Steering Committee, Women's Political Council, Jo Ann Robinson, Montgomery Improvement Association, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Browder v. Gayle*

"1957: Shaking Up Central High" by Kathiann M. Kowalski (Pages 12-13)

Comprehension:

1. Why were soldiers outside of Central High School?
2. How did the crowd treat the students?
3. What steps did President Eisenhower take to enforce the law?
4. How did other students treat the nine black students?

Writing Activity: Imagine you are one of the Little Rock Nine. Write a journal entry about a day you tried to get into school or a day after integration. How do you feel about school? How do you feel about your fellow students of each race? How do you feel about the government leaders who had a role in keeping you out or letting you in?

Research: Virgil Blossom, the Little Rock Nine, Daisy Bates, President Dwight D. Eisenhower,

"1960: Breaking Barriers" by Gloria Harris (Pages 14-15)

Comprehension:

1. Why didn't the waitress serve the four young men?
2. How did they react?
3. What happened when they returned the next day?
4. How did white patrons treat the protesters?
5. What was the response to broadcasts of the "sit-ins"?
6. How did the nonviolent protest movement spread?

Discussion Activity: What might have happened in Woolworth's if one of the black students had gotten angry or laughed? What might have been the effect on the civil rights movement?

Video Activity: Watch "Join the Greensboro Student Sit-Ins at the American History Museum" on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inyNuo6qD5s>. This video produced by the Smithsonian presents a museum educational program that reenacted the first steps in nonviolent training based on a manual from the 1960s. An actor portraying Samuel P. Leonard gives background information to provide historical context while training the audience for a Greensboro style sit-in.

Research: Joseph McNeil, David Richmond, Ezell Blair Jr., Franklin McCain, Congress of Racial Equality, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Ella Baker, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

"1961: The Freedom Riders" by Marcia Amidon Lusted (Pages 16-18)

Vocabulary: surveillance

Comprehension:

1. Why were many southern states considered to be violating the law when they refused to desegregate their bus and train terminals?
2. What did the Freedom Riders hope to accomplish?
3. Why did members of the Congress for Racial Equality carefully choose and train those who would participate in the rides?
4. What happened when the first bus arrived at Anniston, Alabama?
5. What happened aboard the second bus?
6. How did CORE leaders respond?
7. Why did the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee continue the rides?
8. What happened to the riders who continued?
9. Why were the riders arrested in Jackson, Mississippi?
10. Why did the riders choose to remain in jail?
11. What was the effect of so many being arrested?

Writing Activity: Do you think the CORE was right to call off the rides? Was the SNCC right to continue? Support your opinion with details from the article.

Research: Freedom Riders, Journey of Reconciliation, Ku Klux Klan, Interstate Commerce Commission

"1963: Project C" by Leslie Anderson Morales (Pages 20-21)

Comprehension:

1. How did Birmingham earn the nickname "Bombingham"?
2. What does the "C" in Project C stand for?
3. What was the first step in the plan?
4. How did the plan proceed?
5. How did the commissioner of public safety respond?

6. What effect did this have?
7. What happened on May 3 at Kelly Ingram Park?
8. What compromise was eventually reached?

Research: Governor George Wallace, Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, T. Eugene "Bull" Connor

"1963: For Jobs and Freedom" by Eric Arnesen (Pages 22-23)

Comprehension:

1. What made the demonstration on August 18, 1963 unique?
2. What did the leaders hope the march would accomplish?
3. What is the march's legacy?

Art Activity: Read the protest signs in the pictures. Think of a new slogan that could have been on a sign then or a slogan for something that you feel would be worthy of marching for today and create your own sign.

Research: March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Bayard Rustin, President John F. Kennedy

"Did You Know" by Chris Ware (Page 24)

Research: Virginia Durr, Ralph McGill, James Zwerg, Andrew Goodman, Michael Henry Schwerner, James Earl Chaney, James Reeb

"1964: Mississippi's Freedom Summer" by Eric Arnesen (Pages 26-27)

Comprehension:

1. What was the situation in Mississippi as Freedom Summer approached?
2. Why are voting rights an important civil right?
3. What did the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party hope to accomplish at the Democratic National Convention?
4. Why was President Johnson concerned?
5. What compromise was offered to the delegates?
6. How did they react and why?
7. What was the effect on the larger movement?

Writing Activity: Fannie Lou Hamer asked, "Is this America...?" Have you experienced or seen prejudice in America? If so, write about your experience. If not, or if your experience is too emotional to write about, write about your vision for a future America. What is the America you want to live in like?

Research: President Lyndon B. Johnson, Mississippi Freedom Summer, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Fannie Lou Hamer, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Jackie Robinson

"1965: A Bridge in Selma" by Duane Damon (Pages 28-29)

Comprehension:

1. Why was Selma, Alabama selected for the voter registration campaign?
2. What was the first strategy that civil rights leaders used?
3. What were the results?
4. What was the next strategy they proposed?
5. Who warned against it?
6. What happened on the Edmund Pettus Bridge?

7. How did the civil rights activists respond?
8. What led President Johnson to intervene?

Math Activities:

1. What is the percentage of increase in the number of marchers from the time they left on March 21 until their arrival in Montgomery?
2. What percentage of the people were soldiers?

Research: Civil Rights Act of 1964, Hosea Williams, John Lewis, Edmund Pettus Bridge

"1965: New Laws of the Land" by Andrew Matthews (Pages 30-31)

Comprehension:

1. What legislation supported civil rights in the years following the Civil War?
2. What legislation passed in 1964?
3. What did this law promise?
4. What did it accomplish?
5. Why was the Voting Rights Act passed?

Research: Civil Rights Act of 1865, Voting Rights Act

"1968: Strike" by Eric Arnesen (Pages 32-33)

Comprehension:

1. What were conditions like for sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee?
2. What event prompted the strike?
3. Why did Dr. King support the strike?
4. What happened to King in Memphis?
5. How did the black community in some cities respond?
6. How was the strike resolved?
7. What impact did this have on poverty?

Research: Poor People's Campaign; American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees

"Marching to Montgomery and Beyond" by Christy Mihaly (Pages 34-37)

Comprehension:

1. Why was Shirley Jefferson interviewed by *Cobblestone*?
2. What was Ms. Jefferson's experience with segregation?
3. How many years did it take for Selma to desegregate its schools?
4. What was her experience with "Bloody Sunday"?
5. Why did she join the march that followed?
6. What methods did white employers use to convince their employees not to join protests?
7. What was the march like?
8. What was her experience in Vermont like?
9. What is her message for her students today?

"Going Global" by Marcia Amidon Lusted (Pages 40-41)

Vocabulary: dissidents

Research: General Confederation of Labour, Week of the People's Martyrs, Night of Tlatelolco, Mexican Dirty War, 1968 Summer Olympics, Charles de Gaulle, "Mai 68"

Activities for the Entire Issue:

- Create a detailed timeline of the events in this issue and show them on a map of the United States.
- Look at all of the photographs in the issue. Which image do you feel is most powerful? Study the angle and lighting for that image. Consider who is included and how close up it is? Compare it to the images you felt were less powerful? What led you to choose this image? Share this information with your classmates.