LESSON PLAN

MAKING THE NATION WHOLE: CIVIL RIGHTS AND LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

Social Studies, Grades 9–12

OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the details and impact of the civil rights legislation passed during the presidency of Lyndon Baines Johnson. Students will analyze the legislation and relate it to current events in the United States. Students will create presentations using primary source media to demonstrate their understanding of the legislation, its socio-political context, and its relevance to the present day United States.

PROCESS

Prior Knowledge

The following activity assumes that students have some background knowledge of the concept of civil rights and citizenship.

Students should understand the usage of the word “negro” in the context of the films used in the lesson plan.

Students are assumed to understand the concept of racism and its presence throughout U.S. History.

Students should be aware of the rights allowed to citizens under U.S. Law.

Hook

As a group, view the beginning of Dallas at the Crossroads, https://texasarchive.org/2010_01599.

Pause the film at 5:00 for a group discussion of the film’s motivation. Potential questions: What is the subject of this film? Why do you think it was made? Who was the audience? What change do you feel is being discussed?

Skip forward to 11:25 and start the film.

Stop the film at 13:17 and review the original questions. How does the first part of the film relate to the second? What is the subject of this film? Why do you think it was made? Who was the audience? What change do you feel is being discussed?

Discuss the film’s details and context as well as its relevance to today’s lesson: This film was created in 1961 by the Dallas Citizens Council to encourage the peaceful integration of the Dallas School System. Although Dallas was beginning the integration process, many Texas schools were still segregated at the time and several key pieces of civil rights legislation had yet
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to be passed. As a group, have students create a list of other rights that may have been denied to American citizens at the time because of race, nationality, religion or sex. If background information on civil rights is needed to set the stage, have students share summaries of Civil Rights Acts through 1964 from their textbook. At the end of the activity, the class should have a list of potential discriminatory behaviors that would lead to the need for further civil rights legislation in the early 1960s.

Lesson

For this lesson, students will be investigating the content of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its impact on American society. Before looking at the bill, watch President Johnson’s Remarks Upon the Signing of the Civil Rights Bill, July 2, 1964, https://texasarchive.org/2010_00044 from 1:00 to 12:00 as a group. Explain that this footage is the live television feed from the signing and would have aired across the nation. You may also want to share the description of the film from the TAMI video library.

Discuss the footage as a group. Questions for discussion: How does this footage compare to Dallas at the Crossroads? What do you expect to find in the legislation? How does this compare to other speeches or national events you have seen on television?

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has 11 parts/titles. Divide students into groups and give them 10-15 minutes to read an assigned section and summarize it. The text of the act can be found on Our Documents (https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97&page=transcript).

Although the act is written using legal jargon, students should be able to distill the main points using problem-solving skills. Titles two and seven are significantly longer than the others. Students can focus on the titles and not the exemptions in these cases (the first sections). Students should prepare to give a summary of their section with an example of an injustice this title might be targeting. The class can combine their description to create a summary of the civil rights act for use in further research.

Using the summary as a guide, students should write an analysis of civil rights in America today with a prompt from current events. Students search for an article using a reputable news source (The New York Times, the Dallas Morning News, etc.) dealing with a civil rights topic. Students should analyze the topic or event’s relationship to the 1964 legislation. Articles could address discrimination, voting rights, segregation, race, gender, nationality, religion, or other relevant topics.

Extended Learning

Two other pieces of civil rights legislation were passed during the Johnson administration: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act, Title VIII). Have students choose one of the two pieces of legislation to create a presentation using archival
video footage of the respective bill signing from the TAMI Video Library: President Jonson Signs Voting Rights Act of 1965 or Remarks upon Signing the Civil Rights Act, April 11, 1968. Students can use the time function below the video player to select a clip for their presentation.

For the presentation, students should create a news segment for a television retrospective on civil rights. Presentations should be organized like news stories and include a summary of the act, the reason for its creation or need it addresses, and a relevant 1-2 minute clip from the film. The presentation should also include an analysis of the relevance of the act in today’s society.

Videos

Dallas at the Crossroads
https://texasarchive.org/2010_01599

Remarks Upon Signing the Civil Rights Bill, July 2, 1964
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00044

Remarks Upon Signing the Civil Rights Act, April 11, 1968
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00049

President Johnson Signs Voting Rights Act of 1965
https://texasarchive.org/2010_00046

RESOURCES

The American Presidency Project, index to President Johnson’s Public Papers and Speeches
https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/

Our Documents, transcript of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Our Documents, transcript of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
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U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Fair Housing Act
https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-1
LBJ Library and Museum, includes various resources relating to President Johnson
http://www.lbjlibrary.org/
https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act
“Civil Rights” from the TSHA Handbook of Texas
https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pkcfl

TEKS
United States History Studies Since 1877
9A - Trace the historical development of the civil rights movement in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, including the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th amendments
9C - Identify the roles of significant leaders who supported various rights movements, including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Rosa Parks, Hector P. Garcia, and Betty Friedan
9F - Describe presidential actions and congressional votes to address minority rights in the United States, including desegregation of the armed forces, the Civil Rights acts of 1957 and 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965
9H - Evaluate changes and events in the United States that have resulted from the civil rights movement, including increased participation of minorities in the political process
29A - Use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions
29B - Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions
29C - Understand how historians interpret the past (historiography) and how their interpretations of history may change over time
29D - Use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence
29E - Evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author, including points of view, frames of reference, and historical context
29F - Identify bias in written, oral, and visual material
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29G - Identify and support with historical evidence a point of view on a social studies issue or event

30A - Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information

32A - Use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

32B - Use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision

United States Government

14A - Explain the difference between personal and civic responsibilities

14B - Evaluate whether and/or when the obligation of citizenship requires that personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good

14C - Understand the responsibilities, duties, and obligations of citizenship such as being well informed about civic affairs, serving in the military, voting, serving on a jury, observing the laws, paying taxes, and serving the public good

17A - Evaluate a U.S. government policy or court decision that has affected a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the U.S. Supreme Court cases of Hernandez v. Texas and Grutter v. Bollinger

18A - Understand how U.S. constitutional protections such as patents have fostered competition and entrepreneurship

18B - Identify examples of government-assisted research that, when shared with the private sector, have resulted in improved consumer products such as computer and communication technologies

21A - Use social studies terminology correctly

21C - Transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate

21D - Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information

U.S. History

2D - Explain the significance of the following years as turning points: 1898 (Spanish-American War), 1914–1918 (World War I), 1929 (the Great Depression begins), 1939–1945 (World War II), 1957 (Sputnik launch ignites U.S.–Soviet space race), 1968–1969 (Martin Luther King Jr. assassination and U.S. lands on the moon), 1991 (Cold War ends), 2001 (terrorist attacks on
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World Trade Center and the Pentagon), and 2008 (election of first black president, Barack Obama)

9A - Trace the historical development of the civil rights movement in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, including the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th amendments

9B - Describe the roles of political organizations that promoted civil rights, including ones from African American, Chicano, American Indian, women’s, and other civil rights movements

9C - Identify the roles of significant leaders who supported various rights movements, including Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Rosa Parks, Hector P. Garcia, and Betty Friedan

9F - Describe presidential actions and congressional votes to address minority rights in the United States, including desegregation of the armed forces, the Civil Rights acts of 1957 and 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965

9G - describe the role of individuals such as governors George Wallace, Orval Faubus, and Lester Maddox and groups, including the Congressional bloc of southern Democrats, that sought to maintain the status quo

9I - Describe how litigation such as the landmark cases of Brown v. Board of Education, Mendez v. Westminster, Hernandez v. Texas, Delgado v. Bastrop I.S.D., Edgewood I.S.D. v. Kirby, and Sweatt v. Painter played a role in protecting the rights of the minority during the civil rights movement

29A - Use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions

29B - Analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions