

## **African American Legacy: From Suffering to Suffrage to Civil Rights**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of my unit is to teach children how the Civil Rights Movement played a vital role in American history. It is my goal to help students to understand how African Americans have struggled through racial injustice. The unit will have a central theme relating to the definition of racial inequality, and will analyze the question: "How has the Civil Rights Movement helped shape the unique fabric of America?" This unit will stress the contention that although African Americans struggled tremendously during this era, some of them were able to survive with dignity and resiliency. This will be unveiled throughout the unit.

An integral part of this unit will be to immerse my students with a variety of different children's literature in multiple genres, such as poetry, art, jazz music, dramatic photographs, novels, and short stories. These lessons will be integrated in literacy during Book Club and interactive read aloud and discussion sessions. (Interactive read-aloud and literature discussions are parts of our literacy program). It is shared talk, in which students examine ideas and think about narrative, expository, or poetic texts in meaningful and thoughtful ways. This gives the students a chance to think within, beyond and about literature. The unit will also be integrated throughout social studies units. The resources that will be incorporated will help to unveil the history from the 1930s throughout the 1960s, and emphasize how the Civil Rights Movement helped shape America. Instead of providing a time line for the students, I would like the students to create one as we move through the important events and from their research.

### **Introduction**

My goal for this unit is to immerse my students in an understanding of how and why African Americans experienced tremendous hardships economically, politically, and personally, and how they've triumphed over these obstacles. This unit will be centered around themes reflecting human problems and reveal social issues such as war, hardship, poverty, racism, and environment. Many of these complex themes will be from different perspectives. I will also discuss freedom and happiness and what that means to students throughout this unit. We will discuss how freedom and happiness relate to African Americans as we continue to grow as a nation. Currently, the Common Core North Carolina Standards are designed to expand the students' concept of (1) leadership in relationship to their communities, and (2) read and comprehend literature, including

stories, dramas, and poetry. Fourth Grade is the first formal introduction to North Carolina, its ethnic diversity, its rich culture, the economic energy of its people, and its geographic regions. Fourth Grade students will explore the social disciplines of its history, geography, civics and government, culture and economics through the context of North Carolina and global views of history. I plan on building early social studies knowledge, while guiding students in drawing parallels between early and contemporary civil rights issues.

For the economic aspect of the unit, I would like my students to research the types of employment available to unskilled and skilled blacks in the 1940s through the early 1960s. Then allow students to compare the types of jobs that were available then compared to what is open for blacks today. They will also compare the income of blacks today to blacks of the past. It is my intention to allow my students to write a short summary of their opinion on how much, or how little, economic conditions for blacks have changed. My students need to ascertain how blacks experienced racial exclusion at the workplace, even though they were often better skilled and more qualified than the average whites. Black workers often scored marginally higher than whites in certain classifications as well.

This will be my fourth year teaching third grade at Davidson Elementary. I am ecstatic about having the opportunity to loop my same third grade students up to fourth grade. This will give me a change to develop a deeper focus on the important issues and events that took place during this significant time period. My goal is to try to go beyond the traditional heroes who have been pinned to this documented movement and make it relevant to my students. I would introduce a variety of key vocabulary words that are essential and directly related to the modern day Civil Rights Movement. Such words include, but not limited to, discrimination, equality, justice, injustice, boycott, integrated, segregation, protest, second-class citizens, and racism. We will delve deeply into these words using a variety of word maps, to extend their learning. My students will also encounter multiple exposures to these words. This will be done through a variety of role playing activities, and illustrations through comic strips as well as creating scripts to act out some of the meanings of the words. This type of exposure will allow the students to fully become immersed with a rich understanding of complex vocabulary words.

In this unit, I would like every student to keep a journal and write an entry after every segment of the required readings and describe their feelings through the eyes of the characters point of view. I would like to see how their responses change from the beginning of the unit to the end. This would be a great way of assessing their level of knowledge and understanding throughout the unit.

According to the new Common Core standards, my students need to be prepared to conduct a viable argument. An example argument or activity would consist of my

students imagining that they are attorneys representing an African American family during the 1940s. Their intention would be to sue the local school system for not providing the black children of a particular family an education equal to that of the surrounding white schools and a group against the black children.

In playing this role, the students would need to provide an argument, with proven evidence supporting their positions. I would like for my students to work with a group, write the court scene showing how this drama would be played out. Henceforth, I would like for my students to take what they have learned throughout this unit and take a stance on other controversial issues. They would do this by having a variety of evidence and research to support their reasoning. I would like for my students to have the most comprehensive guide to one of the most defining movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is my desire to have my students exposed to the history of Black-and-white photos from newspapers, magazines, and the National Archives in order to enhance their understanding.

My goal is to help students gain a deeper understanding of the Civil Rights Movement by incorporating a variety of primary and secondary sources. One source that I would use is technology. Discovery Education.com is a valuable resource to help expand students' knowledge and understanding of a particular era or event in history. Discovery Education is a program that will display video transcripts about a variety of topics. The video transcripts I would upload would deal directly with segregation, voting rights, and predominate leaders during this Civil Rights era. Most of the transcripts are very authentic using black and white video images. Students will analyze and discuss the transcripts as the teacher act as a facilitator while provoking high level thinking.

In using primary sources, I would encourage students to work in groups and compare primary and secondary sources and speculate about each source, its creator, and its context. Some of the discussion questions would be as follows;

1. What was happening during this time period?
2. What was the purpose of the creator making this primary source?
3. What does the creator do to get his/her point across?
4. Who was the primary sources audience?
5. What biases or stereotypes do you see?

After having this discussion in their groups, the students will summarize what they've learned and give specific evidence to support their conclusions.

Allowing my students to examine primary and secondary sources will give them a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. It will also be a vehicle to help guide them towards higher-level and critical thinking skills.

### **Beginning the lesson Day 1**

**Essential Question-** What is Freedom? What does Freedom mean to you?

Teacher will write the word *freedom* on the chalkboard and ask students to brainstorm what Freedom means to them. Write their explanations on the board using a word map. Then write *freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, etc.*, and discuss how the Bill of Rights protects citizens of the United States. Invite students to give examples of these freedoms found in television, music, newspapers, and religious organizations, etc.

### **Objective:**

Students will compare the rights of U.S. citizens to persons living under persecution such as Cuba. Students will then compare the rights of the U.S. citizens to the rights of blacks before the Jim Crow Laws. Teacher will provide students with comprehensive information dealing with these aforementioned issues.

### **Activity:**

Students may brainstorm a list of Rights for their own classrooms and create a “Bill of Rights”. They will create a scroll as a culminating activity and post it on the “Civil Rights” bulletin board.

Teacher will discuss the role and functions of government or laws. The teacher will explain that a democratic government is the means by which people make sure that every person has equal rights. Furthermore, explain that these rights, given by God or nature cannot be taken away by man. Ask students to list the ways citizens enjoy these rights today. The teacher will also will allow the students to discuss how these rights are protected.

They will share this information with class members or other classes. You may want to have students’ role play various scenes where individual’s rights are being denied and discuss the issue of how blacks were denied their rights.

### **Opening Lesson plan:**

Students will describe what freedom is to them. The teacher will find out what students already know about this inquiry using a KWL chart (what you know, what you want to know and what you learned). The teacher would get the students interested in the topic of freedom and to think about it in terms of their daily lives.

In Language Arts, poetry such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, figurative language, etc. are embedded in the Common Core Standards for fourth grade. Therefore, the essential question that will guide this inquiry is: What does freedom mean? At the end of this lesson, you want students to be able interpret different types of poetry that represents freedom. Students should also be familiar with the different aspects and style of poetry. Using technology, the teacher will allow the students to listen to Harriet Tubman, read by Maya Angelou, and discuss how it was read with emotion/rhythm, expression and meaning. You can find this poetic presentation using [www.freedomarchives.org](http://www.freedomarchives.org).

Students will receive a copy of “Still I Rise”, by Maya Angelou. Students will be placed in groups four. Each group will interpret each stanza while using “freedom” as a central theme. Teacher will walk around to each group and as a facilitator as he/she asks thought provoking questions about the poem. Teacher will encourage lots of discussion as the students write their ideas on paper or in a journal.

**Activity:** Students will practice reading “Still I Rise” using tone and expression.

Have students read their papers aloud to the class. In whole group discuss and elaborate on the meanings of each stanza and different points of view of how this poem relates to freedom. This activity will be done as a Socratic Discussion or seminar.

Socratic discussion is when students discuss ideas in a non-traditional way using open ended discussions. In this critical thinking lesson, students discover the work of Socrates and define what a Socratic discussion means. They will create a discussion using open ended questions while giving feedback on their classmates’ questions and answers. Students will make judgments either by agreeing or disagreeing. The students will become facilitators of their own learning through active engagement and “Accountable Talk”.

## **Day 2**

### **Objective:**

Students will discuss equality and fairness after reading a Maya Angelo poem called “I Know “Why Caged Birds Sing”.

### **Activity:**

In this Civil Rights unit, students will read the poem *I Know Why Caged Birds Sing*, and discuss how the Civil Rights era affected the words of this poem. Students will identify the framework of poetry and categorize each line using the themes equality and fairness.

## **Day 3**

### **Objective:**

Students will read and analyze the stanzas of the poem EGOTRIPPING, by Nikki Giovanni.

**Activity:**

The teacher will reinforce students what a metaphor is by explaining that a metaphor is a word or phrase used to compare two unlike objects, ideas, thoughts or feelings to provide a clearer description. Explain to student that writers enjoy the use metaphors because it helps the readers create mind movies and visualize what's actually happening. The teacher may say a metaphor is comparing a dependable father, to a rock.

The students will create their own poems using the same theme of being proud and convinced in who they are as a person. Students will take their previous knowledge about the use of metaphors and describe themselves using as many as possible.

After creating the poems, the students will break into groups and read their poems to each other. Everyone will listen to the use of metaphors and interpret the meaning.

**Day 4**

**Objective:** Students will appreciate African American poetry through speaking, listening, and writing.

**Background:**

Eloise Greenfield is poet who many children admire because of her playful expressive language. She believed there were far too few books that told the truth about African American people. She wanted to change that. Her writings reflected every activity within the African American community. She believed if we knew more about our ancestors, and about their experiences they had when they were children, we would know much more about what has shaped us and our world. Eloise Greenfield was disheartened by the images of blacks and black communities in the media. Therefore, much of her work was based on realistic but positive portrayals of African American communities, families, and friendships.

**Activity:**

Teacher will read Honey, I Love and other love poems by Eloise Greenfield. Students are introduced to elements of African American poetry as a class; they will read different types of poems to discover there are different styles of poems and practice rhyming words and patterns. The students will also read the poem, "Time to Play" by Nikki Grimes.

Teacher will discuss the theme of love and the simple joys of everyday life seen through the eyes of black children: playing with friends, jumping rope, hopscotching and riding on a train or enjoying time with momma or daddy. They will share information on their family values and traditions and choose a theme to create their own poems representing their U.S family traditions.

## **Day 5**

**Objective:** Students will make personal connections to text.

### **Activity:**

Students will write in their daily journal and tell how they can make a connection to the events that took place as the children were playing. Students will observe the illustrations throughout the pages of the text. The teacher will point out the Afrocentric style of the children's hair. The teacher will also discuss the origin of braids and afros worn by African Americans.

The teacher will explain the history of braids and afros to the students. Then explain that braids are a traditional way of styling hair across the African continent; depictions of women with cornrows have been dated as far back as 3000 B.C. This tradition of female styling in cornrows has remained popular throughout the continent, particularly in Western and Eastern Africa. Historically, male styling with cornrows can be traced as far back as the early nineteenth century to Ethiopia, where warriors and great kings were depicted wearing cornrows.

Amazingly, cornrows survived for centuries in the United States and other parts of the New World as a traditional style of hair preparation. In the United States the cornrow style regained popularity in the late 1960s and 1970s as part of the Black culture. The teacher will show students other images of African Americans in the 1960s and 70s with similar depictions as the text.

The teacher will further explain that there was a Nationalist Movement, which encouraged African Americans to embrace hairstyles that highlighted their natural hair texture and rejected straightening with lye-based relaxers. Further, in the wake of the "Black Pride" Movement, many shops and salons sprang up across the United States delivering services exclusively, or as part of a range of options, to African Americans who preferred natural unstraightened hairstyles.

Conversely, the teacher will explain to students that over the years, cornrows, along with dreadlocks have been the subject of several disputes in the American workplace. Some employers have deemed them unsuitable for the office and have banned them altogether –

sometimes even terminating employees who have worn them. African American employees and civil rights groups have countered that such attitudes shows evidence of racial and cultural bias. Some such disputes have resulted in court cases. The teacher will discuss how this notion of cultural bias is a contradiction to having freedom.

Teacher will ask students to reflect back to the definition of what freedom is. Then, pose the question, of “Do you think this position represents freedom to African Americans (their freedom to wear their cultural styles with confidence) or not? Students would have to support and defend their reasons and opinions with evidence and research. They will write down their responses using notecards while gathering their defense.

## **Day 6**

### **Objective:**

Students will read and analyze African American poetry.

### **Activity:**

Teacher will read “Dream Variation”, “The Dream Keeper” and “Dream Deferred.” By Langston Hughes. Students will prepare an argumentative essay to defend their stance on the issue of freedom and cultural biases. Teacher will pass out a graphic organizer for students to prepare their thoughts.

Teacher will discuss the dreams of African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement and read “Dream Variation” and “Dream Deferred”. Students will work in groups of four and write down some of their dreams they may have and create their own poems. They will incorporate some of the poetic styles that were already introduced to them.

## **Day 7**

### **Objective:**

Students will be introduced to various time periods during the Civil Rights Movement through the use of poetry and music. Students will explore popular music in its historical context.

In this music activity, students examine the lyrics, musical arrangement, and video imagery of selected songs to interpret the messages and themes of the songs.

### **Activity:**

Teacher will explain that a lot of African Americans wrote songs and poetry to cope with society. In groups, students will travel between different stations to listen or read

additional poems and music from the Civil Rights period. For each poem or piece of music, the students will illustrate a picture of what they are feeling and visualizing. Then determine what could be happening during that particular time period. The students will share their responses with the class as the teacher encourages discussion. After the discussion and sharing, they will answer higher level questions and create their own poem that reflects that time period.

Some of the songs will include, “We Shall Overcome”, “We Shall not be Moved,” by Navis Staples. This song was popular during the Civil Rights rallies. “This Little Light of Mine,” by Sam Cook is an Old spiritual which was reintroduced during the Civil Rights era as a song of personal empowerment. It also represented unity in the face of adversity for African Americans. The next song I would include is, “When Will We Get Paid for Our Work we’ve Done?” by the Staples Singers. This particular song addresses the demands on payments and reparations for working class African Americans. I would also incorporate James Browns’, “Say it Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud”.

### **Day 8:**

**Objective:** Students will appreciate African American culture and physical differences among humans.

### **Activity:**

**Teacher will read, Love My Hair! by Natasha Tarpley**

The author talks about how she fell in love with her hair when she was a little girl. Every night before she went to bed she used to sit between her mother’s knees as she rubbed sweet smelling oils on her scalp. Sometimes her mother would tell her stories to distract her from the stubborn tangles. The times spent between her knees while getting her hair braided were also times of bonding and sharing as they talked about the day’s events. I’m sure many African American students can make a personal connection to this story.

### **Activity:**

Students will create a comic strip depicting black images from the text, *Love My Hair*. For example, students will vividly illustrate African American children with afros and beautifully braided hair with beads. They will use dialogue using speech bubbles as they recreate one of their favorite scenes from the text.

### **Day 9:**

**Objective:** Students will understand the importance of Marches during the Civil Rights Movement.

**Build Background:**

The teacher will explain to students that on August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. as part of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The March sought to address the conditions under which most black Americans were living at the time and to facilitate "meaningful civil rights laws, a massive federal works program, full and fair employment, decent housing, the right to vote, and adequate integrated education.

**Activity:**

Students will brainstorm different types of marches they have seen. Teacher will write their responses on chart paper. After discussing all of their ideas, teacher will explain to students that people march for many different reasons and show students different images of ways people march using the DiscoverEducation.com on the Promethean Board.

Students view various images to examine different types of protest Americans have used throughout history, and explore ways in which protest can produce change for better or worse.

**Activity:**

Students will brainstorm different reasons why they would conduct a protest pertaining to various issues at school. Some of the examples may be; they dislike the school lunches and would prefer a salad bar for healthier choices, or they would like to have more afterschool programs to enhance their learning.

The Teacher will challenge the students to develop a campaign that shows their own commitment to a worthy cause while increasing awareness about it, too. Students should select a cause to promote, such as civil rights, racial or gender equality, child welfare, improved schools, animal rights, or environmental protection. Students will work in small groups to complete each task. They should create a poster, a demonstration sign, and a flyer. These materials should be informative, professional, and creative. They should include a student-created logo of some sort, as well as a slogan, and should be developed with the intention to attract attention, inform the public, and gain supporters. Each campaign should be based on facts, so research time will be necessary. Once the campaigns are complete, students should prepare to present them to the class and possibly even participate in a march to draw attention to their chosen cause.

**Activity:**

The teacher will discuss with the students some of the accomplishments of having protests and Marches during the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher will further discuss how the nonviolent protests led by Martin Luther King Jr. in Birmingham in 1963 had a variety of effects on civil rights activists and black Americans.

The students will research and find examples of the accomplishments and achievements that resulted from the nonviolent protests. They will discover the sacrifices that were made for the good of the cause. Each student will write in the journals at least two paragraphs with this information. They will present their information to the class.

**Day 10****Objective:**

The students will understand the importance of various marches during the Black Civil Rights Era. Students examine the Irish “Bloody Sunday” to the Civil Rights’ “Bloody Sunday”.

The students will also appreciate the accomplishments of Civil Rights marches and rallies.

**Build Background:****The MARCH of 1965**

The teacher will explain to the students that on March 7, 1965, Civil Rights supporters marched from Selma to Montgomery (Alabama’s capital city). Their only request: the **right to vote** in a state where they paid taxes, raised families, and worked. That day has been marked “Bloody Sunday,” as over 600 peaceful citizens were attacked by state and local police with clubs and tear gas.

A few days later, 2,500 marchers organized, but were forcefully stopped as they tried to cross the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge. They made it only six blocks.

A few days after, on March 16 (with the help of 2,000 federal soldiers 1,900 Alabama guardsmen under federal command, numerous FBI agents, and all available federal marshals) over 3,200 people left Selma one more time. Walking 10 miles a day under

armed escort, the peaceful protesters finally arrived in at the capital in Montgomery, Alabama on March 25.

**Activity:**

In this lesson on civil rights, students will compare 'Bloody Sunday' to other similar events in the world. They will describe the dangers of discrimination and intolerance, then discuss how learning from the past, makes for a better future for America.

The Teacher will read, Martin Luther King Jr., by Kenneth C. Davis. This book describes “Bloody Sunday” in great details while exploring the questions, “Where Do We Go from Here?” and “How can we get our people back on track?”

The students will write an essay describing the dangers of “Bloody Sunday” and include how we can learn from our past to make a better future for all Americans.

**Day 11**

**Objectives:**

Students will identify different viewpoints in society as it pertains to the Civil Rights Movement.

**Activity:**

The students describe the characteristics of some of the individuals involved in the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. They will listen to a historical narrative taken from [DiscoveryEducation.com](http://DiscoveryEducation.com) and identify issues of inequality. They will jot down the issues they have identified in their writing journals.

**Activity:**

The teacher will show a video clip ([Discoveryeducation.com](http://Discoveryeducation.com)) showing masses of people on the mall in Washington DC and ask the students what reason could make these people all come together? Students will list their reasons and conduct a seminar or Socratic Discussion within their groups to discuss their findings.

**WRAP-UP**

3 essay questions will be administered to the students the last 15 minutes of class. Questions are as follows:

1. What do you think was the most important march/rally?
2. What did this march/rally accomplish?
3. What do you think would be a good reason to have a march/rally at this school?

**Final literature Piece:**

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham-* 1963, by Christopher Paul Curtis

*The Watsons go to Birmingham* would be a great way to learn about the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s. The students can research and answer questions such as Why did it happen? How did people respond? Who were the leaders? How did the movement change society? Apart from research, students can also try some of the following activities.

**Day 12**

**Objective:** The students will understand important terms related to the Civil Rights Era and create an art project based on certain themes.

**Activity:**

The students will create a collage or posters demonstrating themes like tolerance, equality, family, and choices.

**Day 13**

**Objective:** Students will defend their position as to why they have marked true or false for each question they have answered.

**Activity:**

I would start out by using a question guide for the students before reading the text. After reading their responses and discussing their answers, we would discuss the background information about Christopher Paul Curtis and the general condition of the United States during the early 1960s.

Engaging the students in the question guide will peak the interests of the students and engage them in future readings. The question guide will consist of true and false questions to ascertain their understanding of the 1960s in Birmingham. The following questions will be asked.

1. Birmingham was a peaceful place in 1963.

2. People from the south have thinner blood than people from the north, which is why they have a harder time when the weather turns warm.
3. People who look different than the majority are always less intelligent.
4. It is okay to bully another person as long they are young and small.
5. People who hurt others are always punished for their actions.
6. True heroes are those that see something is wrong and are not afraid to stand up and ask, "Why can't we change this?"
7. The world is a fair and just place.
8. Innocent people never suffer due to problems in society.

After students have completed the anticipation chart, small groups will be organized for students to discuss their answers. The entire class will discuss after everyone comes back together.

## **Day 14**

### **Objective:**

Teacher will introduce the book and read about the author, Christopher Paul Curtis. The teacher would then, build background information and activate prior knowledge about the Civil Rights Movement). Students will make predictions based on book cover and the title. Teacher will introduce vocabulary words for chapters 1-8.

### **Vocabulary Activity:**

Students will use the vocabulary words introduced and create a word chain out of four words. One word in the chain would be the vocabulary word, two words are synonyms for the word, and one word does not belong with the others. Students must underline the word that does not belong to the others and explain why it doesn't belong.

### **Analysis Activity:**

At this point, students will begin a story map to use as they read the story. While reading, they will begin to add new information about the characters, problems, and story events.

### **Activity:**

In chapter six, Byron was embarrassed to be on welfare. The students will research information about the following topics: welfare, food stamps, and public assistance.

**Discussion:** Why would anyone be ashamed to be on welfare? Students will write in their journals their responses.

## **Day 15**

**Objective:**

The teacher will provide background about the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Bombing. The students will research the church bombing that took place in the 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama and write a mini report.

Teacher will explain to the students that for 14 years the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church went unsolved. Then, share that in 1977, Klu Klux Klan member Robert Chambliss was convicted of the crime as well as others.

**Activity:**

The students will work in small groups of 3-4 students. They will write a mini report about the Sixteenth Street Bombing and present the information to the class. Students will incorporate PowerPoint slides of actual photographs taken during that era. The students will watch the documentary "Four Little Girls" by Spike Lee. This is a powerful documentary that displays events leading up to the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church Sunday School in Birmingham, Alabama.

Students will read chapters 9-11

**Activity:**

Students will create a multimedia presentation (PowerPoint slide show, poster, or song) to share the information with the class.

**Day16**

The students will track the Watson's journey from Flint Michigan to Birmingham on a map. Calculate the number of miles they traveled (nearly 1,000 miles) and, if possible the speed they traveled for the eighteen hours they were on the road. Use the clues from the story to plot their route. Use [googlelittrips.org](http://googlelittrips.org) to follow their trip.

Ask students "what did Momma think about Dad's plan to drive straight through?"

"What are "Crackers" and "Rednecks?" " The teacher will discuss these names with the students and explain why they were used throughout the novel. Students will continue to read up to chapter 14.

After reading chapter 14, the teacher will continue to explain and discuss the bombing at the 16<sup>th</sup> street Baptist Church in Birmingham that took place on September 15, 1963. The teacher will explain that four children were killed, some blinded, and other people to the hospital.

**Activity:**

In this chapter, Byron had a hard time explaining the bombing. The teacher will ask the students, “Have you ever encountered something so bad that you had a hard time explaining it?” The students will write in their journals while making a personal connection. Byron’s attitude towards unfairness was-“keep on steppin” Teacher will ask, “What do you think he meant when he said that?” “Can you change unfair things?” If so, how?

**Activity:**

Students will prepare a news broadcast from the scene of the church bombing in Birmingham. Write a script and be prepared to act it out. Interview both African American and white bystanders for their reactions.

**Epilogue:****Vocabulary**

Discrimination

Pervasive

Interracial

Segregation

Nonviolence resistance

Confrontations

What are the qualities that make a person a hero? Write about a real person you that you consider a hero and support your reasons for thinking of them this way.

No explanation is offered for Byron’s change in behavior when the Watson’s went to see Grandma. Why did he change? Was it a permanent change? What evidence can you find in the book to support your position?

**Debriefing:** Does this story leave you with loose ends? (Grandma’s future with Mr. Robert,) What Kenny actually saw when he was drowning? etc.

Comment on the author’s purpose in writing this story in the first person from Kenny’s point of view. Choose an episode in the story and write it from the point of another character.

Find a song with a similar theme to one of the ones we identified in The Watsons. Write out the lyrics and discuss the similarities and differences between the song and the book.

Talk to your parents or an adult who took family vacations during this time period. Write the story of one of their vacations. Where did they start? Where did they go? What differences and similarities do you see between your parent's trip and the Watson's?

What would be different now? (Hint: what things have changed since then that would make a vacation easier?)

Write and illustrate two-three page diary entry that Rufus might have written after his first week in the new school.

**Closing Discussion questions:**

1. What was life like for African Americans in the south in the 1950s and 1960s?
2. What strategies did the Civil Rights leaders use to work against discrimination and segregation?
3. Students will review all of the artifacts on the Civil Rights bulletin board and summarize the significance of each one.

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### **Implementing District Common Core Standards**

North Carolina Standard Course of Study for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts

Standard (RI.4.9)- Integrate information from text on the same topic to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Standard (W.4.1)- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

Standard (SL.3.3)- Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

Standard (SL.3.5) – Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.

Standard (SL.3.6) – Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Standard (SL.3.1c) – Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

Standard (W.3.7) – Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

Standard (W.3.8) – Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes or sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

Standard (W.3.3b) – Use dialogue and descriptions of action, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters situations.

Standard (RI.4.7) – Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

Davis, Kenneth. Martin Luther King Jr. New York: Scholastic Books 2006. Readers will gain information on prominent leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. This book includes dramatic photographs and black and white illustrations.

Greenfield, Eloise. Honey, I Love and other love poems HarperCollins publishers,1978.Includes sixteen African American poems which tell of love, friendship, and everyday life experiences.

Osborne, Linda. Women of the Civil Rights Movement: Library of Congress 2006.Emphasis how countless women demonstrated, marched, and went to jail for their beliefs.

Curtis, Paul Christopher. The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963: A Yearling Book 1995. A great way for readers to learn about African Americans in the south during the 1950's and 1960's.

Giovanni, Nikki. Spin a Soft Black Song: Scholastic Books inc.1971. These poems share the life experiences of young black children.

Giovanni, Nikki. Ego Tripping and Other Poems for Young People : Lawrence Hill & Company 1974. This book is a very eloquent way to introduce self-esteem and pride to your readers.

Angelo, Maya. "I Know Why Caged Birds Sing." Ballantine Books.2009. Readers will understand the pain and hardships experienced by African Americans living in a small town in the south.

Angelo, Maya. "Still I Rise". Random House: 2001.Readers will be inspired and celebrate the courage of the human spirit despite the obstacles and hardships they may encounter.

## **Newspapers and Magazines**

*The Horn Book Magazine*, July/August 2000 issue, pp. 386-396.

*The Alan Review*, Winter1999, Volume 26, Number 2.

### **Teacher Resources**

Saul, Scott. Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Harvard University Press, 2005. Jazz and the Making of the sixties. 1968.

Bridges, Ruby. Through My Eyes. New York: Scholastic, 1999. Ruby Bridges recounts her experience as the first grader who needed federal escorts to integrate an all-white school in New Orleans in 1961.

Clements, Andrew. The Jacket: Scholastic ,2002. A white kid sees a black kid wearing his brother's jacket; he assumes the jacket was stolen. The boy was wrong, and has to ask himself the questions: Would he have made the same assumption if the boy wearing the jacket hadn't been African American?

Bains, Rae. Thurgood Marshall, Fight for Justice: Troll Associates, 1993. A bibliography of Thurgood Marshall's life and how he fought hard for equality and fairness.

Harvey, Walker Jeanne. My Hands Sing the Blues: Marshall Cavendish Children, 2011. A young boy, he listened to his great-grandmother's Cherokee stories and the whistles of the trains through towns. His family faced Jim Crow laws and decided to head north. This youngster shares his experiences through his paintings.

Seminar," Journey to excellence. <http://journeytoexcellence.org/> (Date November 5, 2011)

### **Technology Resources**

Students will watch "Four Little Girls" by Spike Lee (HBO Home Video, 2000) This 102 minute film provides the events that took place during the bombing of the Sixteenth street Baptists Church.

[www.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.discoveryeducation.com)

[www.criticalthinking.com](http://www.criticalthinking.com)

Langston Hughes (video recording 1999): *The Dream Keeper*. South Carolina Educational Television Network, a New York Center for visual History production. Santa Barbara: Intellimation, 1988. Video cassette PS305. V65 x 1999 no. 6

## End Notes

- (1) [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) North Carolina Standard Course of Study for language arts and social studies. (Accessed November 2012)
- (2) *The Horn Magazine*, July/August 2000 issue, pp.386-396.
- (3) *The Alan Review*, winter 1999, Volume 26, Number 2.
- (4) Linda Osborn, "Introduction", *Women of the Civil Rights Movement, Library of Congress 2006*.
- (5) [www.scholastic.com/teacher/lesson/books-teaching](http://www.scholastic.com/teacher/lesson/books-teaching) civil rights (accessed October 2012)
- (6) [www.googlelittrips.org](http://www.googlelittrips.org) (Accessed October 2012)
- (7) Emily, Bernard. "Introduction" Remember me to Harlem: The Letters of Langston Hughes NY: Vintage Books, 2001.
- (8) [www.freedomarchives.org/audio](http://www.freedomarchives.org/audio) (Accessed October 2012)
- (9) Juan, Williams. "Chapter 8", *Eyes on the Prize America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965*. Black side, Inc. 1987