

> > > LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

LESSON SUMMARY:

Working in groups, students explore past instances of oppression and through published works gain understanding of the collaboration between African American and Jewish communities in the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States during the mid-1900s. Students write individual essay reflecting on their learning and summarize with a discussion on the relevance of this history on “the American Dream.”

STANDARDS:

- Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights. (*California Content Standards, Grade 11, United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the Twentieth Century Standard 11.10*)
- Examine and analyze the key events, policies, and court cases in the evolution of civil rights, including Dred Scott v. Sandford, Plessy v. Ferguson, Brown v. Board of Education, Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, and California Proposition 209. (*California Content Standards, Grade 11, Standard 11.10.2*)
- Describe the collaboration on legal strategy between African American and white civil rights lawyers to end racial segregation in higher education. (*California Content Standards, Grade 11, Standard 11.10.3*)
- Examine the roles of civil rights advocates (e.g., A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcom X, Thurgood Marshall, James Farmer, Rosa Parks), including the significance of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and “I Have a Dream” speech. (*California Content Standards, Grade 11, Standard 11.10.4*)
- Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act of 1965) and the Twenty-fourth Amendment, with an emphasis on equality of access to education and to the political process. (*California Content Standards, Grade 11, Standard 11.10.6*)

ASSESSMENT:

Students will write a personal testimony discussing an experience from their own lives or describe another person’s experience in which they identified as a target of oppression (either individually/personally or as a member of a target group). They will describe the reason(s) for being targeted, the response, and outcome(s). Finally, students will create an action plan for responding to oppression that does not violate others’ Constitutional rights, yet allows target groups to feel both empowered and accomplished.

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Two or more examples of oppression are clearly described and compared with details that support the reasons for the target, the responses, and the outcomes. The action plan is clearly described with supporting details, does not violate others’ Constitutional rights, yet allows target groups to feel both empowered and accomplished.	Example of oppression is clearly described with details that support the reason for the target, the response, and the outcome(s). The action plan is clearly described with supporting details, does not violate others’ Constitutional rights, yet allows target groups to feel both empowered and accomplished.	Example of oppression is vague with few details that support the reason for the target, the response, and the outcome(s). The action plan is not clearly described and may lack supporting details. The plan may not violate others’ Constitutional rights, yet allows target groups to feel both empowered and accomplished.	Example of oppression is extremely vague with few or no details that support the reason for the target, the response, and the outcome(s). The action plan is not clearly described and lacks supporting details. The plan may or may not violate others’ Constitutional rights, and may not allow target groups to feel both empowered and accomplished.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES:

PART 1

1. Introduce lesson by sharing the following quote by Martin Luther King, Jr.:
"The history of Americans of African descent and Jewish descent is a story of two groups of people who have suffered uncommon persecution but who have persevered with uncommon faith. This is our common ground. We share the dream of a beloved community where one can live without the threat of racism, poverty, or violence. We share the dream of a beloved community where the worst of the human spirit is defeated by our best."
 (from "Shared Dreams: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Jewish Community")
2. Teacher introduces useful vocabulary for discussions of oppression:

KEY VOCABULARY:

- *target-* member of a social identity group that is disenfranchised, exploited, and victimized by an oppressive system/institutions
 - *agent-* member of a dominant social group, privileged by birth/acquisition, who knowingly or unknowingly exploits or reaps unfair benefits over members of a target group
3. Students brainstorm various examples of oppression throughout history and how victim/target groups/individuals responded. The teacher may help to facilitate this activity by creating a class chart with the columns: target group/agent group/reason for oppression/ methods of oppression/response by targets/response by agents.

Examples of Oppression	Target Group	Agent Group	Reason for Oppression	Methods of Oppression	Response by Targets	Response by Agents
Example						
Example						
Example						
Anti-Semitism in 1900's leading to the Holocaust						
Oppression of African-Americans leading up to Civil Rights Movement in 1960's						

This activity will be used to introduce a general theme and then narrowed to discuss two specific examples. First, students will discuss anti-Semitism in the 1900s leading up to the Holocaust and the varied responses of the Jewish people. Secondly, students will discuss the historic oppression of African-American people (slavery, Jim Crow laws, etc.) leading up to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

PART 1 HOMEWORK: Students will write a personal reflection/journal regarding a specific experience they have had in which they felt they were targets of oppression (either individually or as a member of a target group or describe an act of oppression that targeted other individuals or groups. These reflections will attempt to answer the questions: Why was I/he/she/they a target? How did it make me/him/her/them feel? How did I/he/she/they respond? Who (if anyone) helped/supported me/him/her/them in this struggle?

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PART 2

4. Students have an opportunity to share thoughts/reflections from the night's homework.
5. Teacher again shares the following quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. describing the collaboration of African Americans and Jews during the Civil Rights Movement: "The history of Americans of African descent and Jewish descent is a story of two groups of people who have suffered uncommon persecution but who have persevered with uncommon faith. This is our common ground. We share the dream of a beloved community where one can live without the threat of racism, poverty, or violence. We share the dream of a beloved community where the worst of the human spirit is defeated by our best." - Martin Luther King Jr. (from "Shared Dreams: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Jewish Community")
6. Students will then be introduced to key historical figures involved in the civil rights struggles of the mid-1900s through brief biographical discussions/readings. (Suggested figures include: Louis Brandeis, Thurgood Marshall, Jack Greenberg, & Paul Parks. An ideal way of conducting this activity may be through a jigsaw of various biographical readings, personal testimonies, etc. Consider readings from Kaufman and other biographical sources.)
7. Students will begin to develop an understanding of the collaboration that took place between these individuals; moreover, they will discuss (small group discussions may work best) how this collaboration represents a greater partnership between the African-American and Jewish-American communities to further the civil rights of both groups.
8. The entire class will come together to (briefly) share reflections and go over homework activity (transition to HW).

PART 2 HOMEWORK: (A pre-reading class activity will prepare students with some questions to consider while reading this assignment-- see below.) Students will read and respond (journal/free response method) to a reading summarizing the rationale/motivating factors behind the Jewish activism in the Civil Rights Movement. (from Kaufman, pg. 98-101)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- a) How did Jewish individuals and organizations respond to the civil rights struggles of African Americans? (Note: there were many different responses)
- b) Did these responses relate to their Jewish traditions? Explain.
- c) What historical experiences did Jews draw on in their responses to civil rights struggles in America?
- d) How did the idea of America or the "American dream" contribute to the Jewish response?
- e) How was Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement self-serving?
- f) How was Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement a result of concern for others?
- g) Which individuals, events, or issues do you think were most significant in this history?
- h) Overall, what do you think is the most important thing to understand about this history?
- i) What other historical examples can you think of where an alliance was formed between targets and agents of oppression?
- j) Is this history relevant today? Explain.

PART 3

9. Students will have an opportunity to share reflections/thoughts from last night's homework.
10. Students will review key information from yesterday's lesson and readings on the collaboration between (Northern) whites and (Southern) African-Americans to end segregation in the 1960s.
11. Students (in a large-class discussion format) will aid the teacher in developing a timeline (or other graphic organizer of your choice) of key figures/events/issues that helped to create the alliance between the African-American and Jewish communities.

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12. In a large-group discussion, the class will reflect on the various methods of responding to the oppression of others. (transition to HW)

PART 3 HOMEWORK: Students will write a personal reflection/journal regarding a specific experience they have had in which they observed someone else being the target of oppression (either individually or as a member of a target group). These reflections will attempt to answer the questions: Why was he/she/they targeted? How do you think it made him/her/them feel? How did it make me feel? How did I respond? Who (if anyone) helped/supported her/him/them in this struggle?

PART 4

13. Students will share their responses to the night's reading assignment.
14. Subsequently, they will discuss reflections on the pre-reading "questions to consider."
15. Finally, the group will close by considering the application of the knowledge we have gained (both in terms of content and overarching themes developed) by reading/reflecting on the relevance of this history in the scope of overarching course themes, such as "the American Dream." (Suggested reading to consider: Kaufman, pg. 12)

PART 4 HOMEWORK: Students will re-visit their earlier writing assignments and reflect/write on additional questions: "How could I have responded? How could my response help me to feel more empowered/accomplished? How could I respond in a way that helps to prevent others from being the targets of oppression?" Most importantly, they will address the issue: Having studied the lessons/successes of the Civil Rights Movement, how might I respond to oppression in the future (either as a target or an agent) in an empowering way? What type of change can I hope to affect in my society by doing this?

EXTENSIONS:

Consider why the alliance that had developed between African-Americans and Jewish Americans during the Civil Rights Movement broke-down. What lessons can be learned from this? (Suggested Reading: Takaki, pg. 406-409.)

TIME ELEMENT: 5-6 days

MATERIALS/RESOURCES: Jonathan Kaufman, *BROKEN ALLIANCE: THE TURBULENT TIMES BETWEEN BLACKS AND JEWS IN AMERICA*. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York (1988) pgs. 12, 70-71, 95-101.

Rabbi Marc Shneier, *SHARED DREAMS: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. & THE JEWISH COMMUNITY*. Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vt. (1999) pg. xii

Ronald Takaki, *A DIFFERENT MIRROR: A HISTORY OF MULTICULTURAL AMERICA*. Little, Brown, and Company: New York (1993) pgs. 406-409

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