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## > > > LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

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### LESSON SUMMARY:

Students explore the meaning of social justice through historical documents and then recreate a courtroom scene related to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "A Letter From Birmingham Jail."

### STANDARDS:

- Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to mid-1800s and the challenges they faced. (*California Content Standards, History/Social Science, Grade 8, Standard 8.8*)
- Students describe the purpose, challenges, and economic incentives associated with westward expansion, including the concept of Manifests Destiny (e.g., the Lewis and Clark expedition, accounts of the removal of Indians, the Cherokees "Trail of Tears," settlement of the Great Plains) and the territorial acquisitions that spanned numerous decades. (*California Content Standards, History/Social Science, Grade 8, Standard 8.8.2*)
- Students analyze the multiple causes, key events and complex consequences of the Civil War. (*California Content Standards, History/Social Science, Grade 8, Standard 8.10*)
- Students discuss Abraham Lincoln's presidency and his significant writings and speeches and their relationship to the Declaration of Independence, such as his "House Divided" speech (1858), Gettysburg Address (1863), Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and inaugural addresses (1861 and 1865). (*California Content Standards, History/Social Science, Grade 8, Standard 8.10.4*)
- Students write persuasive compositions which a) include a well-defined thesis (i.e. one that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment), and b) present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning to support arguments, differentiating between facts and opinion. (*California Content Standards, English/Language Arts, Grade 8, Writing Applications, Standard 2.4*)
- Students relate a clear, coherent incident, event or situation by using well-chosen details. (*California Content Standards, English/Language Arts, Grade 8, Speaking Applications, Standard 2.1*)
- Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and scriptwriting to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them. (*California Content Standards, Visual and Performing Arts: Theatre, Grade 8, Creative Expression, Standard 2*)

**ASSESSMENT:**

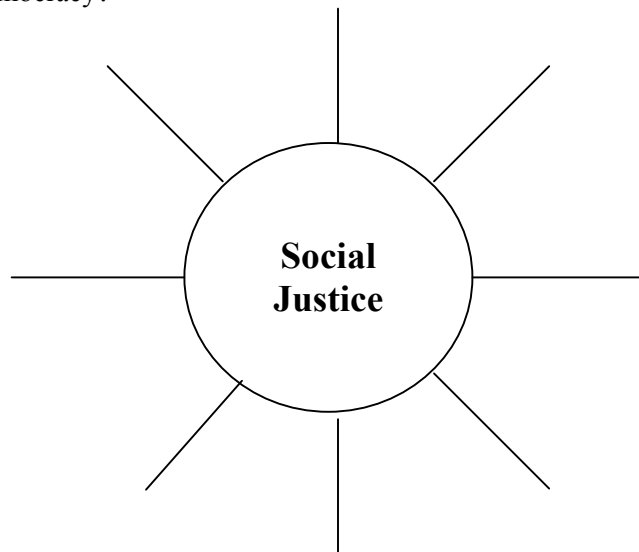
1. Demonstrate the ability to thoroughly exam, analyze, argue, contradict or support the view of the documents, compare and contrast historical documents and accounts, through speaking and writing applications.
2. Identify statements and evidence of social injustices.
3. Author an appeal for Social Justice
4. Design a courtroom scene as the venue
5. Use of Vocabulary (How student applies vocabulary during statements, questioning in court and in the appeal)
6. Oral presentation of evidence to support or contradict
7. Bridge findings to current legislative and policies i.e. Patriot Act, Gang Injunctions and/or Homeland Security.

**RUBRIC**

Feedback and evaluation of the essay will be given using a rubric appropriate to this grade level.

**INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES:**

1. Introductory Activity: Ask students to brainstorm the idea of “social justice”. “What comes to mind when you think of ‘social justice’?” Students work individually to record their responses on a graphic organizer such as the one shown. Students share responses in pairs or small groups. Encourage students to add ideas to their graphic organizer. Conduct a quickwrite activity, “Why is it important for all people to be protected by social justice in a democracy?”

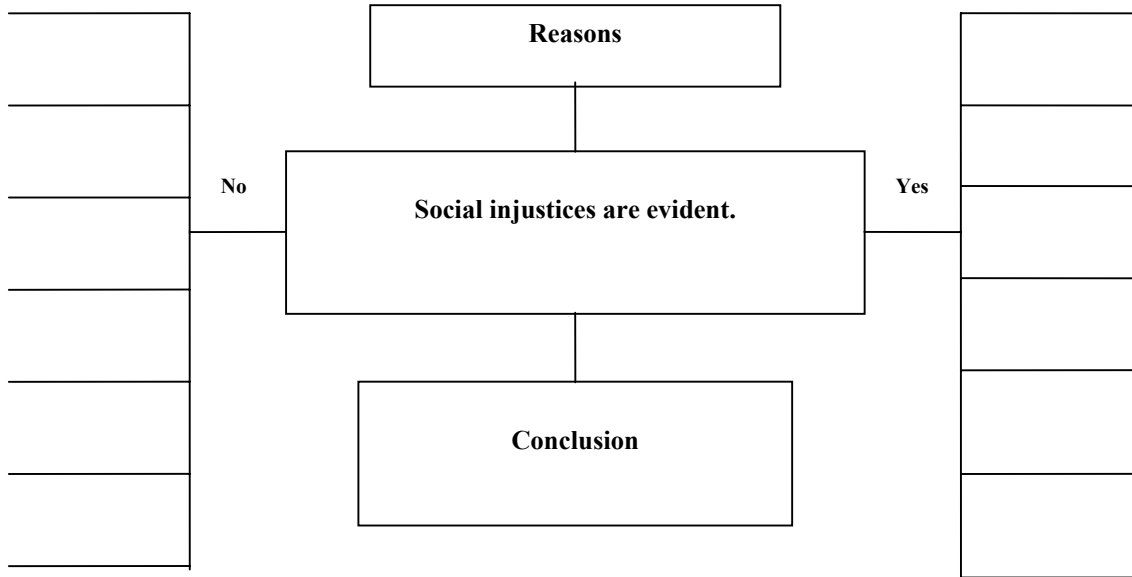


2. Ask students to read “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr. Examine and discuss his “four basic steps” for any nonviolent campaign: 1) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive; 2) negotiation; 3) self-purification; and 4) direct action.
3. Analyzing Historical Documents: Ask students to read and analyze three historical documents:
  - The Indian Removal Act of 1830
  - U.S. Theft of Mexican Territory Timeline
  - President Abraham Lincoln’s letter to Horace Greeley, 1862

**MUSIC EVOKES MEMORIES AND EMOTIONS**

4. Provide students with a graphic organizer to help them respond to the following questions about each document:
- What were the events that led to the writing of this document?
  - What was the purpose of the document?
  - Who/what was it designed to support?
  - Was there evidence of social injustice? If so, who’s rights were violated? How?

Use the graphic organizer below for each document/account.



5. Documents on Trial: Recreate a courtroom scene by engaging students in a mock trial of each of the documents/accounts. Students will be responsible for defending or indicting each document on the grounds that the document represents an act of social injustice. Divide students into two groups for each document. Half the groups will be responsible for supporting the claim that a social injustice occurred. The other groups will defend the opposite point of view. Each group needs to provide evidence to support its point of view and include arguments based on Martin Luther King Jr.’s four basic steps of a non-violent campaign as described in “A Letter from Birmingham City Jail.” Allow students to argue their case, provide testimonies, cross-examination, and appeals. Select a jury to determine the outcome of each case.
- Design a courtroom scene - To try the Indian Removal Act of 1830, U.S. Theft of Mexican Territories Timeline and President Abraham Lincoln’s letter to Horace Greeley for Social Injustices. (1 week)
  - Memorize Martin Luther King’s four basic steps of a nonviolent campaign as guidelines to use when arguing the case for Social Justice. (3 days)
  - Design and use of appropriate Graphic Organizers for courtroom exhibits (1 week)
  - Argue the case (allow for testimonies and cross-examinations) (1 week)
  - Jury Deliberations (2 days)
  - Individual Appeals for Social Justice (3 days)
  - Presentation of Appeals (2 days)
6. Contemporary Connections: Ask students to read and analyze current legislation and public policies for signs of social injustice (i.e. U.S. Patriot Act, Homeland Security policies). Ask students to develop guidelines for policy makers to help them develop policies that protect the rights of individuals in a socially just society.

**TIME ELEMENT:** 4-5 Weeks

**MATERIALS/RESOURCES:** *Required Reading*

- Historical Document – President Abraham Lincoln’s letter to Horace Greeley. <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/greeley.htm>
- Historical Document – President Andrew Jackson’s Message to Congress on Indian Removal (1830) <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?page+transcript&doc25>
- Account – U.S. Theft of Mexican Territory <http://academic.udatou.edu/race/02rights/guadalu3.htm>
- Historical Document – Letter from Birmingham City Jail - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. <http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/jail.html>

*Supplemental*

- Viva la Causa – 500 years of Chicano History (video)
- 500 Nations - Indian Removal (video)
- Africans in America (1831 –1865) Judgment Day (video)
- Graphic Organizers
- <http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/graphic>

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