

# america's civil rights movement

A TEACHER'S GUIDE BY JEFF SAPP

america's  
civil rights  
movement

**INCLUDES** 10 ready-made lesson plans with reproducibles  
**SUPPORTS** student learning & critical literacy  
**MEETS** content standards in U.S. history, civics & language arts

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# introduction

It has been 50 years since the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. In many cases, the parents and guardians of the children you are teaching weren't born when the Civil Rights Movement was happening. How do we teach today's students about a social movement that happened two generations before them? How can we keep the Movement's principles and legacies relevant to today's young people?

“One writes out of one thing only – one’s own experiences.”

James Baldwin, writer and activist

“These women heal us by telling our stories, by embodying emotion that our everydays can't hold.”

Elizabeth Alexander, poet

“We each live our stories and we learn most from the stories of others. When you feel alone, you can find community in stories; when you weaken, you can find strength; when you are disheartened, you can find resolve; when you are down, you can be lifted; when you feel pain, you can find comfort; when you question, you can find inspiration; when you tire, you can find new energy; when you wonder why, you can find inspiration.”

Louis Schmier, from *Random Thoughts: The Humanity of Teaching*

*America's Civil Rights Movement* introduces students to the Civil Rights Movement through the use of personal narratives. Personal narratives offer three things the brain craves most: relevancy, emotion and pattern. In this curriculum, students learn about the Movement through people like themselves. Ordinary people caught up in an extraordinary time. Parker J. Palmer says that this way of knowing is an “act of entering and embracing the reality of the other. In such knowing we know and are known as members of one community.” This is what bell hooks refers to as “engaged pedagogy.” Stories are one of our best tools in teaching about the Civil Rights Movement. Stories heal.

## MATERIALS

Your *America's Civil Rights Movement* package includes the 38-minute video *A Time for Justice* and the accompanying text *Free at Last: A History of the Civil Rights Movement and Those Who Died in the Struggle*, as well as this teacher's guide and an evaluation form. Once you have used this curriculum package in your classroom, please complete and return the evaluation form. Your feedback will help us make improvements to future editions.

## LESSON STRUCTURE

Into, Through and Beyond is a common strategy in teaching that gets to the depth of a subject. Into, Through and Beyond strategies assist students in the exploration of a text set or curriculum unit.

INTO the subject involves activating prior knowledge and establishing what additional information or understanding we want students to gain.

THROUGH the content requires comprehension. We must begin to integrate our new knowledge with the old.

BEYOND allows us to make personal and curricular connections and creatively apply the knowledge we have gained.

“To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.”

bell hooks, from *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

### CRITICAL LITERACY

“This is a great discovery, education is politics! When a teacher discovers that he or she is a politician, too, the teacher has to ask, What kind of politics am I doing in the classroom? That is, in favor of whom am I being a teacher? The teacher works in favor of something and against something. Because of that, he or she will have another question, How to be consistent in my teaching practice with my political choice? I cannot proclaim my liberating dream and in the next day be authoritarian in my relationship with the students.”

Paulo Freire, educator

It's one thing to teach about civil rights. It's another thing for teachers to challenge inequities that exist along lines of race, class and gender on a daily basis in our schools and communities.

This guide is written with critical literacy strategies in mind. Critical literacy, like critical theory, empowers the powerless. Issues of power are imbedded within the culture of a classroom. Unfortunately, schools often frame literacy in ways that empower the privileged and disempower others. There is an emphasis on language, both written and spoken, in this guide because students can use language in powerful ways to get things done in the world.

William Ayers, professor and democratic educator, says, “Teaching for social justice is teaching that arouses students, engages them in a quest to identify obstacles to their full humanity, to their freedom, and then to drive, to move against those obstacles.”

To explore critical literacy further, see the resource section of this guide.

### THE INTERNET

The Internet is quickly joining textbooks as a mainstay of classroom instruction, and it can add extra dimension to historical inquiries into the Civil Rights Movement. Computer-literate adults should always supervise students' Internet research. We have made every effort to ensure that the sites suggested in this guide are both accurate and appropriate for classroom use.

# standards

The content provided in this kit supports the goals and objectives of your state content standards. The lessons in this guide may be used to address the academic standards listed below. The standards are drawn from *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education: 2nd Edition*.

## UNITED STATES HISTORY STANDARDS

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Standard: Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

Benchmark 6-8: Understands individual and institutional influences on the Civil Rights Movement

Benchmark 9-12: Understands how diverse groups united during the Civil Rights Movement

Benchmark 9-12: Understands significant influences on the Civil Rights Movement

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Standard: Understands economic, social and cultural developments in the contemporary United States

Benchmark 6-8: Understands how different groups attempted to achieve their goals

Benchmark 9-12: Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved

## CIVICS STANDARDS

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Standard: Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

Benchmark 6-8: Knows major conflicts in American society that have arisen from diversity

Benchmark 9-12: Knows of examples of conflicts stemming from diversity, and understands how some conflicts have been managed and why some of them have not yet been successfully resolved

Benchmark 9-12: Knows how the racial, religious, socioeconomic, regional, ethnic and linguistic diversity of American society has influenced American politics through time

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Standard: Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life

Benchmark 6-8: Knows some of the efforts that have been put forth to reduce discrepancies between ideals and the reality of American public life

Benchmark 9-12: Knows historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and reality in American public life

## LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Standard: Critical Reading: Predictions and Inferences

Benchmark 6-8, 9-12: Uses text features and elements to support inferences and generalizations about information

### Grade Levels: 6-9

Standard: Literary Style and Technique  
Benchmark 6-9: Understands the effects of complex literary devices, such as irony, tone and allegory, on the overall quality of work

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-10

Standard: Story Elements/Literary Elements: Character and Point of View

Benchmark 6-8: Understands inferred themes in literary works

Benchmark 6-8: Understands complex elements of plot development (e.g. conflict and resolution, subplots, parallel episodes)

Benchmark 7-8: Understands recurring themes in literary works

Benchmark 9-10: Understands how themes are used across literary works and genres (e.g. universal themes)

### Grade Levels: 6-8

Standard: Story Elements/Literary Elements: Plot, Setting and Theme

Benchmark 6-8: Understands point of view in a literary text (e.g. first and third person, limited and omniscient, subjective and objective)

### Grade Levels: 6-9

Standard: Writing for Audience and Purpose

Benchmark 6-9: Uses content, style and structure (e.g. formal or informal language, genre, organization) appropriate for specific audiences and purposes

### Grade Levels: 8, 9-12

Standard: Literary Writing/Narrative Writing: Responses to Literature

Benchmark 8: Writes responses to literature that connects knowledge from a text with personal knowledge

Benchmark 9-12: Writes responses to literature that show an understanding of the author's stylistic devices and their effects

### Grade Levels: 7-8

Standard: Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Benchmark 7-8: Uses word choice appropriate for specific audiences and purposes

### Grade Levels: 6-8, 9-12

Standard: Oral Composition and Presentation

Benchmark 6-8, 9-11: Adjusts message, wording and delivery to particular audiences and for particular purposes

Benchmark 9-12: Makes formal presentations to the class (e.g. uses visual aids or technology to support presentation)

# INTO the civil rights movement

## ACTIVITY ONE: PREPARING FOR THE FILM AND TEXT READINGS

### Objectives

1. Students will explore key people, organizations and events of the civil rights era.
2. Students will ask elders about what they remember regarding civil rights.

### Time & Materials

- One class session
- Copies of “Entrance Tickets” – one for each student

### Whole-Group Discussion Questions

Begin a discussion and brainstorming session on the Civil Rights Movement by asking students the following questions. These questions are designed to aid students in making personal connections to civil rights issues. Chart their answers. This discussion is the lead-in for the “Entrance Ticket” homework assignment.

- What are civil rights?
- Have your civil rights ever been violated? How? How did this make you feel? Did you do anything about it?
- What groups do you believe have yet to realize their equal rights today?

The 42 topics at right are to be dispersed among your students. You can find “Entrance Tickets” on the facing page.

**ADMIT ONE TO CLASS**

My topic is segregation and I found out the following information:  
Blacks were forced to use separate, and most times inadequate, facilities. This included schools, water fountains and restrooms.

Two questions I have about this:

1. Who invented segregation?
2. Why did it take so long to change?

Tell students that to get into class the next day they’ll need to bring their completed tickets. Have several tickets filled out in case some lose, forget or simply don’t do the assignment. Students may find information in the following ways:

- Read *Free At Last* text
- Research it on the Internet
- Look it up in the school library
- Interview parents, guardians or other adults about civil rights memories

To share the information, say, “In 30 seconds when I say go, share your information with a classmate.” Do this share at least five times so they have multiple turns at sharing and listening to different information. Have several students share with the whole class what they found.

### Topics

**Ask Parents, Guardians or Adults**  
Segregation  
The Montgomery Bus Boycott  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
Holt Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama  
Little Rock’s Central High School  
The Little Rock Nine  
Lunch Counter Sit-ins in 1960  
Non-violence  
The Freedom Riders  
Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama  
Voter Registration for Blacks in 1964  
The Selma-to-Montgomery March  
“Jim Crow” Laws  
Gandhi  
Ku Klux Klan  
NAACP  
Freedom Summer, 1964  
“Black Power”  
King’s “I Have a Dream” Speech  
1964 Civil Rights Act  
Malcolm X

### Internet/Library Search

Emmett Till  
Roy Bryant  
J. W. Milam  
Michael Schwerner  
James Chaney  
Andrew Goodman  
Jimmie Lee Jackson  
Addie Mae Collins  
Denise McNair  
Cynthia Wesley  
Carole Robertson  
Cecil Price  
Lawrence Rainey  
W. E. B. DuBois  
Viola Gregg Liuzzo  
Elizabeth Eckford  
CORE – Congress of Racial Equality  
Frederick Douglass  
Sheriff Jim Clark  
White Citizens Council  
The Cotton Mouth  
Moccasin Gang

Discussions can follow the sharing of this information. Be prepared for some misinformation and some biased interpretations. These will be great leads for the discussion about civil rights.

For a complete list of answers, visit [www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/](http://www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/)

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Have students look back at the whole-group discussion questions at the beginning of this lesson and see if similarities exist between what they originally brainstormed and what they found as a result of their “Entrance Tickets.” Some students often feel that “we covered civil rights in the ’60s so we’re done with that, right?” Emphasize that Blacks — and others — still are seeking equal rights today. Bring in examples from this week’s newspaper where issues of race and equity are currently being discussed.

## ADMIT ONE TO CLASS

My topic is \_\_\_\_\_ and I found out the following information:

---

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Two questions I have about this:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## ADMIT ONE TO CLASS

My topic is \_\_\_\_\_ and I found out the following information:

---

---

Two questions I have about this:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

## ADMIT ONE TO CLASS

My topic is \_\_\_\_\_ and I found out the following information:

---

---

Two questions I have about this:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

# THROUGH the civil rights movement

## PREVIEW THE FILM

It's important that you preview the film before showing it to students. There are violent scenes in this video that reveal the harsh realities of racism. A statement to this regard is suggested as a preface to the video.

## ACTIVITY TWO: LEARNING WITH THE FILM

### Objectives

Students will understand the following:

1. Beyond the famous leaders of the Movement, there were ordinary men, women and children who participated in the struggle.
2. All of the participants of the struggle have a story to be told.

### Time & Materials

Two class sessions (one to watch the film and one to discuss the film)

Video guide handouts for each student (make up your own based on questions below or download examples from [www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/](http://www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/))

### Questions

The following questions are in the same order as the video. You may use them as a guide for the students to fill out as they watch the video or as a discussion guide following the film. They could be filled out individually as a homework assignment or in small groups during class after viewing the film. Pull out selected questions for general whole-group discussion. These questions are given as a guide; they should not be used in their entirety at one time. Again, all answers can be found at [www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/](http://www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/)

1. In the beginning, the film shows business signs that tell how Blacks and Whites were segregated. What do the signs say?
2. What was the average yearly income for a black person in Mississippi in the 1950s?
3. What single act wrote black people out of the political system?
4. What does it mean to do "a white man's work at a black man's wages"?
5. How old was Emmett Till? Why was he murdered?
6. What does it mean in the film when it says that Mose Wright "knew his place"?
7. Emmett Till was from Chicago. Why is this significant?
8. What did Emmett Till's mother ask to be done at his funeral? Why was this important to the Movement?
9. What was the race of the jury for Emmett's trial? Why was this important?
10. Where were Blacks in the courtroom during Emmett's trial? What does this tell you?
11. Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam were identified as the killers and even admitted to the murder, but the all-white jury took only an hour to declare them not guilty. What does this tell you?
12. A few months later, Blacks met at Holt Street Baptist Church in Montgomery to discuss their continued abuse. What event had happened only a few days earlier that prompted this meeting?
13. What race were the bus drivers of the all-black routes? How did they treat the paying customers? If passengers didn't do what the drivers said, what would happen?
14. How old was Martin Luther King Jr. when he was chosen to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott?
15. What did Blacks do instead of taking the bus?
16. How many days did Blacks stay off of the buses?
17. What did the mob at Central High School do to the nine black students who tried to integrate the school in Little Rock, Ark.?
18. How did the nine teenagers typically get to school?
19. One of the Little Rock Nine, as they were known, said that going to school every day was like going to war every day. What did he mean by this?
20. The Little Rock Nine inspired young college students to action. What was the first thing they organized in the winter of 1960?



21. What did the white people in the restaurants do to the peaceful protesters?
22. The video shows footage of white people violently beating peaceful black protesters but when people are arrested, who is taken to jail? Why do you think this is so?
23. What philosophy did the Movement use?
24. In Virginia and the Carolinas, the Freedom Riders suffered intimidation. What happened once they got to the Deep South?
25. Who set the bus on fire?
26. What happened to the riders of the second bus?
27. What happened when the Freedom Riders got to Montgomery?
28. One of the Freedom Riders said “our bodies became living witnesses to the cause of human dignity.” What does this mean?
29. What happened to the Freedom Riders in Jackson, Miss.?
30. Who was killed in the Sunday morning bombing at the Birmingham Sixteenth Street Baptist Church? Who did the bombing?
31. In 1964, hundreds of students from the North traveled to Mississippi to help Blacks register to vote. How were they first received? Why? What were Blacks afraid would happen if they registered to vote?
32. Why were Whites against Blacks having the right to vote?
33. Why do you think the four- or five-page test to register to vote was so difficult to pass?
34. What happened to Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman? Why did their deaths bring national attention?
35. When the FBI was dragging the river looking for these three men, who did they find?
36. Who was charged with the killing of the three civil rights workers? Were they convicted?
37. In Marion, Ala., 50 percent of the eligible voting population was black, but what percentage of them were registered to vote?
38. Who was Jimmie Lee Jackson trying to protect when he was killed?
39. At Jackson’s funeral, how long did the mourners walk in the rain before they could get to the Blacks-only cemetery?
40. What did Jackson’s tombstone say?
41. What was “Bloody Sunday”?
42. Who do you see participating in the march from Selma?

 **FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

Use these research questions to explore topics raised, but not fully developed, in the film.

- Who or what was Jim Crow?
- What is non-violence?
- What is the reference “We were making Gandhi’s march to the sea” about?

**Internet Sites to Search:**

- [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org)
- [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)
- [www.civilrightsteaching.org](http://www.civilrightsteaching.org)
- [www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches.html)
- [www.civilrightsmuseum.org/](http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/)
- [www.voicesofcivilrights.org/](http://www.voicesofcivilrights.org/)
- [www.thekingcenter.com](http://www.thekingcenter.com)
- [www.stanford.edu/group/King/](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/)
- [www.pbs.org/history/](http://www.pbs.org/history/)

## ACTIVITY THREE: JIGSAW STRATEGY

### Objectives

Students will understand the following:

1. Events that led to the Civil Rights Movement
2. Goals of the Movement and the strategies used by participants
3. Attributes of the Movement and how these led to its success

### Time & Materials

Two class sessions (one to learn the material and one to teach it)

*Free at Last* text and other resources to aid in answering questions

Poster paper and markers for students to record and present information

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that educators can use in a variety of ways for student acquisition and presentation of new material. The use of this structure creates interdependence and a leveling of status as students learn to rely on each other to accomplish their goals.

Each team becomes an “expert” on one topic by working with members from their teams. Upon returning to class, each team in turn teaches the group.

### A process for expert group jigsaw follows

1. Assign Questions—The content has been divided into six questions. Divide up the class evenly. Keep groups to three or four students. If needed, assign the same question to different groups (two groups can have question 1, for example).
2. Experts Consult—Students research and become experts on their topic, making certain each group member understands the information. A variety of strategies for checking for understanding can be used, including work sheets, cross group interviews, dialogue and so on.
3. Experts Create and Practice a Teaching Plan—Expert groups design and practice a plan for teaching their expertise to the class.
4. Experts Share—Experts take turns sharing their individual topic expertise with class members.

Adapted from: *Cooperative Learning* by Spencer Kagan, Ph.D., Resources for Teachers, Inc., 1992.

### Questions

What daily oppressive experiences were Blacks living in the South that led to the Movement?

What were key events that brought the Movement national attention?

What were the goals of the Movement?

What were the strategies of Movement participants?

How would you describe the people who participated in the civil rights struggle? Name some of their attributes.

In what ways did the Movement succeed?

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

#### Locating the curriculum in their own lives

Reflective learners are expert learners. “Settling time” is where students are allowed time to process the information that they have been given. Synaptic memory happens when there is little competing stimuli. Consequently, it is important to stop and let students ponder. These last three questions are for individual reflection.

### Reflective Questions

Given the chance to participate in any of the events of this Movement, which events would you participate in, and why?

You are asked to speak at a dedication of the memorial to the victims who lost their lives in the Civil Rights Movement. What would you say?

If you were going to plan a freedom ride anywhere in the United States today, where would you travel, and what injustices would you protest?

## ACTIVITY FOUR: MATRIX

### Objectives

Students will understand the following:

1. Men, women and children — both black and white — died in the struggle for civil rights.
2. Very few people who murdered black people and civil rights workers during the Movement were ever found guilty.

### Time & Materials

Two class sessions (one to create the matrix and one to discuss and generalize)  
8-1/2-by-11 sheets of paper, tape and markers

The Civil Rights Movement was complex and contains a lot of information for students to process. How can we help students organize and make sense of it? How can we help them to see the patterns?

A matrix helps students organize information. For instance, when we use the genre of fiction to enhance our non-fiction curriculum, we can see that story has a specific structure:

**title – characters – setting – plot – problem – solution**

We can help our students see the patterns in our content as well.

### Cooperative Group Work

After students see the model, break them into groups of three or four. Give each group several names from *Free at Last's* "Profiles." These can be photocopied from the text or downloaded online at [www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/](http://www.teachingtolerance.org/acrm/). In small groups, students fill out the answers to the six elements on 8-1/2-by-11 paper and tape them on the matrix below the teacher's model.

### Presenting the Work

A presenter is chosen to read each name on the list and tell the class that person's story.

**"We are what we say and do. The ways we speak and are spoken to help shape us into the people we become. Through speech and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us."**

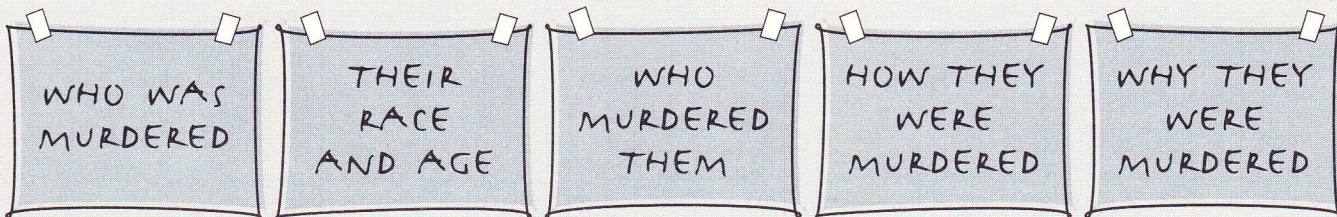
Ira Shor, educator and writer

### Generalization Chart

The power of this strategy begins once the chart is filled out and created. Now students view the categories vertically and look for generalizations that they see. You may ask the students, "What is it we can say as we look at all the answers

### Constructing the Matrix

THE STRUCTURE: First, the six structural elements (Who was Murdered, Their Race and Age, etc.) are taped across the front board using one 8-1/2-by-11 sheet of paper for each element. It will look like this:



THE MODEL: Next, the teacher can fill out the first row with the students so they can see a model of what is to be done. Use the following model:



A Completed Matrix

| WHO WAS MURDERED       | THEIR RACE AND AGE | WHO MURDERED THEM         | HOW THEY WERE MURDERED                      | WHY THEY WERE MURDERED                         |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| THE REV. GEORGE LEE    | BLACK<br>AGE 52    | WHITE LEADERS             | SHOT WHILE DRIVING;<br>FACE BLOWN APART     | FOR LEADING VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE           |
| EMMETT TILL            | Black<br>Age 14    | J.W. Milam<br>Roy Bryant  | Beaten,<br>shot in head,<br>dumped in river | He spoke to a white woman                      |
| MACK CHARLES PARKER    | Black<br>Age 23    | Eight masked<br>White men | Lynched                                     | Thought to be a rapist                         |
| WILLIAM MOORE          | White<br>Age 36    | Floyd Simpson             | Shot at close range                         | Marching against segregation                   |
| DENISE McNAIR          | Black<br>Age 12    | Klansmen                  | Church bombed                               | They were black                                |
| THE REV. BRUCE KLUNDER | White<br>Age 27    | Construction workers      | Ran over by a bulldozer                     | Protesting construction of a segregated school |
| SAMUEL YOUNGE JR.      | Black<br>Age 22    | Marvin Segrest            | Shot in the head                            | Dispute over Whites-only restroom              |
| WHARLEST JACKSON       | Black<br>Age 38    | Unidentified White men    | Blown up                                    | Had been promoted to a White man's job         |

in the first row?" The teacher can chart responses on a piece of poster. This becomes the assessment of this strategy as students are able to summarize the categories. This generalization chart easily organizes the information into a rubric that aids students in writing an essay about what they learned. At right is an example of a generalization chart on the model matrix on the facing page.

Important realizations and conversations can come as students see and process these summaries. Consider some advanced projects: researching hate-crimes; looking further into which crimes were solved and which never got solved; exploring race relations in the South.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY**

The matrix is a strategy that can be used in many different ways and with all content areas. Have students design their own matrices based on civil rights issues, social justice movements or international peace leaders. The following is an example:

**WHO WAS MURDERED?**

- MOSTLY BLACK PEOPLE BUT SOME WHITE PEOPLE
- PREACHERS AND MINISTERS
- CHILDREN
- CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS
- MILITARY PEOPLE

**WHO MURDERED THEM?**

- ALL MEN
- ALL WHITE
- SOME IDENTIFIED
- SOME UNIDENTIFIED
- NOT A SINGLE PERSON CONVICTED

**THEIR AGES?**

ALL AGES (MANY OF THEM WERE YOUNG)

**WHY WERE THEY MURDERED?**

- FOR LEADING OR PROTESTING
- FOR SPEAKING
- FOR BEING PROMOTED
- FOR ABSOLUTELY NO REASON OTHER THAN BEING BLACK

**HOW WERE THEY MURDERED?**

- BY VIOLENCE (BOMBING, SHOOTING, LYNCHING, RUN OVER)

| PEACE LEADER           | COUNTRY | ISSUE | STRATEGY | OUTCOME |  |  |
|------------------------|---------|-------|----------|---------|--|--|
| MOHANDAS GANDHI        |         |       |          |         |  |  |
| MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. |         |       |          |         |  |  |
| ROSA PARKS             |         |       |          |         |  |  |
| JIMMY CARTER           |         |       |          |         |  |  |



# BEYOND the civil rights movement

## FOCUS ON WRITING AND THE ARTS

“Good poetry and successful revolution change our lives. And you cannot compose a good poem or wage a revolution without changing consciousness. And you cannot alter consciousness unless you attack the language that you share with your enemies and invent a language that you share with your allies.”

June Jordan, poet and essayist

### ACTIVITY FIVE: A POEM FOR TWO VOICES



#### Objectives

Students will explore two sides of an experience or event in the civil rights era.



#### Time & Materials

Three class sessions (one to brainstorm ideas, one to write/edit and one to present)

Materials for writing

The following are examples of what students could write about:

What life was like for Whites vs. Blacks.

Compare and contrast any of the following:

Work

Travel

School

Skills

Housing

Play

Having rights vs. being denied rights

Violence vs. non-violence

For more information on Poems for two voices see Paul Fleischman's books *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* and *I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices*.

Depending on grade level, other types of poetry can aid in comprehension of material: name poems, haikus, bio-poems and others.

Poems for two voices are to be read by two readers at the same time. One reader takes the left side of the poem and the other reader takes the right side. The poems are read from top to bottom with lines at the same level being read together. When it is read, the poem becomes a type of performance art. An example is on the following page. It is helpful if the teacher takes the first risk and writes a poem to share with the class.

Once students have heard how this model works, have them write their own individual or small group poems on topics involving the Civil Rights Movement. The easiest way to begin is to consider opposing views. You could have them fill out a Venn Diagram and then work from the compare-and-contrast set of information.

“I cannot be a teacher without exposing who I am. Without revealing, either reluctantly or with simplicity, the way I relate to the world, how I think politically. I cannot escape being evaluated by the students, and the way they evaluate me is of significance for my modus operandi as a teacher. As a consequence, one of my major preoccupations is the approximation between what I say and what I do, between what I seem to be and what I am actually becoming.”

Paulo Freire, from *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*

**“I HEARD IT ON THE BUS ONE DAY”**

By Jeff Sapp

I drive the bus  
everyday.

Are you getting on or not?

Get to the back of the bus.

Every day.

One day  
I was driving  
and this woman  
I tell her to get up and let the white man sit.  
She doesn't move.

That's when it all started.

Montgomery, Alabama  
That Black preacher  
started  
trouble.

We waited.  
And screamed and yelled.  
381 days.

They made us  
integrate  
but we weren't done yet.

And that's how it all started.  
Refusing to obey.

I ride the bus  
everyday.

I get on and pay.

I move to the back.

Every day.

One day  
I was riding  
and this sister

She doesn't move.

That's when it all started.

Holt Street Baptist Church  
Montgomery, Alabama  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
started  
The Movement.

We walked.  
And walked and walked.  
381 days.

They made us  
protest

to keep our dignity.

And that's how it all started.  
Refusing to obey.



## ACTIVITY SIX: EXPLORING NON-VIOLENCE

### Objectives

1. Students will explore the concept of non-violence.
2. Students will understand the difference between “passive” and “active” violence.

### Time & Materials

- One class session
- Poster/board for charting student responses

### The Misconceptions of Non-violence

Ask students to brainstorm with you what they think it means to be non-violent and list their points on the board without editing them in any way. They will no doubt have many misconceptions about what it means to be non-violent. This lesson deconstructs misconceptions.

**MISCONCEPTION 1: Non-violence is merely the not doing of violence.** Non-violence is more than the mere absence of violence. It is a positive, constructive orientation to all living things. The roots of this creed are found in the Indian concept called “ahimsa,” which means non-injury.

**MISCONCEPTION 2: There is only one form of non-violence.** There are numerous techniques or forms that non-violence can take, including boycotts, strikes, marches, civil disobedience and non-cooperation.

**MISCONCEPTION 3: Non-violence is a political instrument and not a private or interpersonal way to interact with others.** Although non-violence gained popularity in the political arena, Gandhi did not limit it to this arena only. Early in the development of his philosophy and the techniques that came from it, he saw fit to live by the law of non-violence in all of his activities. These included his family relations, diet and work interactions. There simply was no area that did not reap benefit from the creed of non-violence. Gandhi’s entire life was embraced by the philosophy of non-violence. He did not believe one could only use non-violence in the political arena and not in all of one’s life. He said, “If one does not practice nonviolence in one’s personal relations with others and hope to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken.”

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Ask students if any of them has done an act of violence in the last 24 hours. If a student raises his or her hand, ask for an explanation. Most will not raise their hands. This is because most believe that violence is only physical. Discuss the violence of

bullying, name-calling, gossiping, teasing and other put-downs. Victory over Violence ([www.vov.com](http://www.vov.com)) offers helpful resources.

Then ask again if anyone has done an act of violence in the last 24-hour period. Most hands will go up. Talk more to your students about the many forms violence can take. For instance, when you say nothing as someone else gossips or puts down another person, that becomes passive violence.

Take the Victory over Violence “Peace Pledge” with your class. Have them read it aloud together or copy the reproducible on the next page and have them sign their own pledges.

“Nonviolence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being.”

Gandhi, peacemaker

# VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE

## PEACE PLEDGE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will value my own life. Recognizing that a lack of self-identity and hope for the future lay at the roots of all violence, I will reach beyond my limitations, taking concrete steps each day to uncover my real potential. I will never give up on my dreams, even if they seem impossible.

I will respect all life. Recognizing that violence comes in many forms, I will not isolate myself but will create an environment where others feel comfortable and can be themselves. I will see beyond superficial differences and reflect on my own behavior.

I will inspire hope in others. With courage, I will resolutely stand up against violence, be it verbal, physical or passive, and teach others through my own example. I will support others and encourage them to follow their dreams.

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## ACTIVITY SEVEN: MODEL-WRITE

This strategy helps students model the writing style of an author they are reading. It helps them become more aware of how writers communicate their ideas. Once you have shown students how to do a model-write, they can choose their own passages to model.

### Objectives

1. Students will write a response to a piece of literature that connects a text with personal knowledge.
2. Students will write a response to literature that shows an understanding of a particular author's stylistic devices.
3. Students will make formal presentations to the class.

An example of a model-write:

"I live in resistance"

with thanks to ntzake shange

by Jeff Sapp

i live in resistance

is this where you live

i live here in resistance

i live on suffragette street

my friend lives on equal rights avenue

do you live here in resistance

oppression

falls round me like a shackled chain

determined anger is my expression

\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_

hot like shadeless fields

hoping for the moon-cool night

i got hope where other brothers and

sisters got give-up

& a lot of courage is my pulsing heart and

my brain is tireless strategizing

i live in resistance

live in it

swim in it

i cd even breathe it through my nose

into my lungs

chest rises and falls so fulla resistance

ya cd breathe life into tireless causes &

sustain yrself

sustain yrself in a resistance

### Time & Materials

One class session

Model-write sheet for students to fill out  
(see next page)

Here is how the strategy works:

1. Select a piece of text that has a definite structure.
2. Designate words or phrases that must remain in the text. (Underline or bold them.)
3. Read the piece to/with the class. (An Echo Read works well here, echoing the bolded words.)
4. Have students write their own pieces, keeping the designated words or phrases.
5. Titles include the original and a thanks to the author.
6. Share this writing in pair/share or group read-alouds.
7. Encourage students to try a model-write of other authors.

Teaching Tolerance also recommends the following poems for use in the model-write activity:

*Let America Be America Again*, by Langston Hughes

*Who Can Be Born Black*, by Mari Evans

*Life Doesn't Frighten Me At All*, by Maya Angelou

*Where I'm From*, by George Ella Lyon

MODEL-WRITING ACTIVITY

i live in music  
by ntazake shange

**i live in music**  
**is this where you live**  
**i live here in music**  
**i live on c# street**  
**my friend lives on b-flat avenue**

**do you live here in music**  
sound  
**falls round me like** rain on other folks  
saxophones wet my face  
cold **as** winter in st. louis  
hot **like** peppers i rub on my lips  
thinking they waz lilies  
**i got** 15 trumpets **where other** women got  
hips  
**& a** upright bass for both sides of my heart  
i walk round in a piano like somebody  
else/be walkin on the earth

**i live in music**  
live in it  
wash in it  
**i cd** even smell it  
wear sound on my fingers  
sound **falls so fulla** music  
**ya cd** make a river where yr arm is &  
hold **yrself**  
hold **yrself in a** music

"I live in \_\_\_\_\_"  
with thanks to ntazake shange  
by \_\_\_\_\_

i live in \_\_\_\_\_  
is this where you live  
i live here in \_\_\_\_\_  
i live on \_\_\_\_\_ street  
my friend lives on \_\_\_\_\_ avenue  
do you live here in \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ falls round me like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ like \_\_\_\_\_

i got \_\_\_\_\_ where other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ & a \_\_\_\_\_

i live in \_\_\_\_\_  
live in it  
\_\_\_\_\_ in it  
i cd even \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ falls so fulla \_\_\_\_\_  
ya cd \_\_\_\_\_ &  
\_\_\_\_\_ yrself  
\_\_\_\_\_ yrself in a \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY EIGHT: CUBING

Cubing is one way to explore every side of a topic. You hear people say all the time that “There is more than one side to an issue.” Cubing is a way to visually see an issue’s different sides.

### Objectives

1. Students will explore key concepts and strategies of the Movement.
2. Students will take positions on key concepts of the Movement.

### Time & Materials

One class session

Example for class to see (use the one on “non-violence,” next page)

*Free at Last* text

Copies of “Cube” — one for each student  
(see reproducible pages)

### How to Cube

**Step One:** Introduction of the topic.

**Step Two:** In small groups, students explore the topic from the following six sides of the cube.

Describe it (What color is it? What shape and size?)

Compare it (What is it similar to or different from?)

Associate it (What does it make you think of?)

Analyze it (How is it made? What is it composed of?)

Apply it (What can you do with it? How is it used?)

Argue for or against it (Why should I support it? Why should I take a stand?)

**Step Three:** This process can be elaborated through optional writing assignments, including essays, letters to the editor or extended reports.

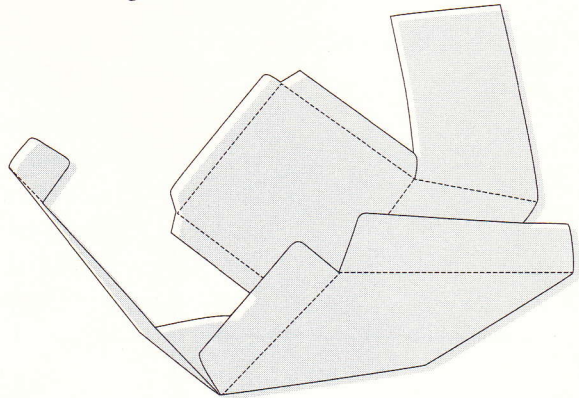
The following page is an example of cubing explaining the concept of non-violence. Feel free to make the cube so that students can see the 3-D model.

Teaching Tolerance recommends the following *Free at Last* topics for cubing:

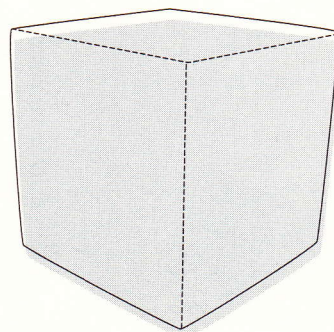
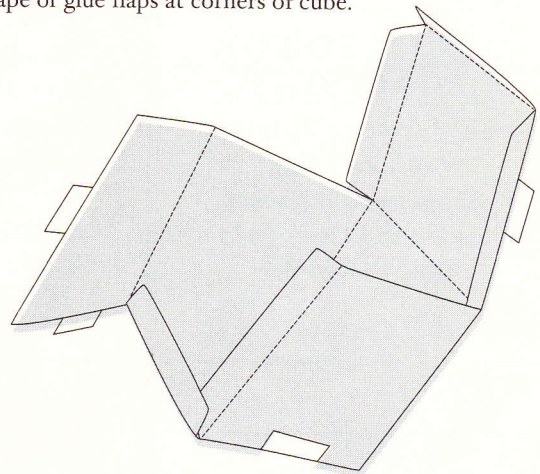
- “Jim Crow” laws (pages 6)
- Segregation (pages 17-20)
- Freedom Rides (pages 17-19)
- Freedom Summer (pages 27-29)

### Making the Cube

1. Cut along SOLID lines.
2. Crease along DOTTED lines.



3. Tape or glue flaps at corners of cube.



CUBE: NON-VIOLENCE

**DESCRIBE IT**

Non-violence is calm,  
peaceful. It is  
non-injury to all  
things.

It is boycotting,  
striking, marching,  
non-cooperation and  
civil disobedience.

**ASSOCIATE IT**

It reminds me of  
when somebody on  
another sports team  
has bad manners, but  
we still act kind and  
appropriate  
to them.

**COMPARE IT**

It is really the exact  
opposite of what you  
see most people do  
when they get mad.  
Most want to get  
even. Non-violence  
says let their act of  
violence indict them.

**ARGUE FOR OR  
AGAINST IT**

I am for it completely.  
You can't fight  
violence with more  
violence. That gets  
you nowhere.

**ANALYZE IT**

Gandhi first used it  
in India. King used it  
in America for civil  
rights. It is more than  
"not to hurt." It is a  
positive love for all  
things and all people.  
It is a way of life.

**APPLY IT**

Use it when someone  
calls you a name.  
Use it when someone  
gossips about you; you  
don't have to gossip  
back to get even.

# CUBE

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIBE IT

← Examine the subject closely and describe what you see.

↙ What is it similar to? Different from?

What does the subject make you think of? →

## ASSOCIATE IT

## COMPARE IT

↙ Use any kind of reasoning to take a stand for or against the subject.

## ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST IT

## ANALYZE IT

← Break the subject into parts; tell how it is made.

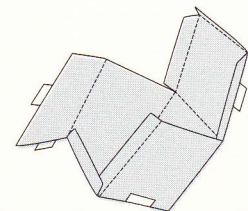
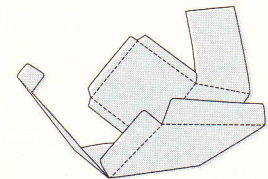
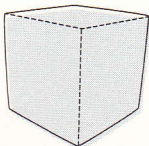
### To complete your cube...

1. Cut along SOLID lines.
2. Crease along DOTTED lines.

Describe the subject's uses. →

## APPLY IT

3. Tape or glue flaps at corners of cube.



## ACTIVITY NINE: PHOTO-ESSAY PROJECT

Pictures really do speak louder than words. A culminating activity to studying the Civil Rights Movement is a photo-essay project where students creatively synthesize all they have learned. Knowing that students process and learn information in different ways, students may elect to write a narrative essay, create poetry or create a visual work of art.

### Objectives

1. Students will write and create from the point-of-view of someone in the photograph.
2. Students will artistically represent aspects of the Movement.

### Time & Materials

This is an ongoing culminating project that can span a week. Until a teacher builds a repertoire of models from students, he/she may want to create several examples for students to follow. Allow class time for writing.

### Essay/Poetry Criteria

Essay/poem must be typed or word-processed. The essay can be no more than 1,000 words in length. Word count should be included at end. If a student chooses a poem, it must be no more than 30 lines. Line count should be included at end. The essay/poem must include a reference sheet, citing resources consulted and it must demonstrate historical accuracy, originality, personal connections and correct use of conventions of writing.

### Art Criteria

Art work may include photography and may be in charcoal, pencil, watercolors or oils. The entry must have a separate sheet with the following: title of the work, resources consulted, and a statement explaining how this work addresses the prompt.

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

To celebrate your students' work, have a '60s poetry reading. Set up your classroom so that it has the feel of a coffee house. Have students come up front and read their writings. Decorate the room with students' art. Instead of applauding, have students snap their fingers like the Beatniks did in the '60s. Invite guests since it's important for students to have an audience beyond the teacher.

Feel free to share your students' writing and art with Teaching Tolerance.



## ART AND WRITING PROMPT

Doing what is right is not always easy. It can, however, be such a brave act that it has far-reaching consequences. Sometimes our choices define us as heroes. During the Civil Rights Movement, many ordinary people became heroes. This photograph shows Elizabeth Eckford on her first day of school at Central High School in Little Rock. After appropriate research, write an essay or poem or create a work of art that reflects the spirit of this individual. You may also work from the viewpoint of others in the photograph as well. Your work should be based upon specific knowledge of the individual's choices and actions. As you face ethical dilemmas and complex choices, how will this individual help you to develop into a person of conscience and courage — into an “ordinary” hero?



## ACTIVITY TEN: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS OUT OF THE CLASSROOM AND INTO THE STREET

Action. This entire education kit leads up to this moment. The Civil Rights Movement is about people who acted on their ideals. Learning about injustice is one thing. Acting for justice is another. An action is a collective event or activity that confronts and informs a decision maker and pressures to make a change, or it educates the public about a problem and the campaign to solve it.



### Objectives

1. Students will identify a wrong in their own community and act to correct it.
2. Students will learn and implement the Steps for Social Justice.
3. Students will reflect on the intersection of the Civil Rights Movement with their own social justice project.



### Time & Materials

An ongoing social justice project

### STEPS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

You are following in the steps of many people who have worked for social justice and equity when you do this project. Go through the Steps for Social Justice and define, research and implement a project for social action.

#### STEP ONE: Choose a Problem

We say “choose” instead of “find” a problem because you won’t have any trouble at all finding one. There are lots of injustices right in your own neighborhood. The difficult thing isn’t finding a problem; it’s choosing one from so many options.

What is going on around you that makes you uncomfortable or bothers you in some way? Where do you see injustice in your school or your community? Brainstorm a list and narrow it down to your greatest concern.

#### STEP TWO: Learn All You Can About the Problem

Activism is work. The place to begin is researching everything you can about your issue. Read. Interview. Phone. Survey. Write letters.

#### STEP THREE: Who Might Oppose Your Efforts?

Identify who is not going to like that you have chosen this issue to confront. Someone, somewhere, is benefiting and it behooves you to know who they are and what’s in it for them.

#### STEP FOUR: Don’t Work Alone

One of the most important aspects of social justice work is building coalitions with people and groups who share your ideas and goals. Who else in your town would be interested in the issue you have identified? Can you enlist their resources?

There is no need to re-invent the wheel if an organization already exists that is equally concerned about the issue you have chosen. Join their ranks. Ask for help, assistance, expertise and resources.

#### STEP FIVE: Define a Plan of Action

What steps might you take to bring attention to your topic? Can the local radio station broadcast something about your efforts? The local newspaper may be interested in students bringing positive change to their community. Will you be writing letters of protest? Will you boycott? How can the strategies and actions of the civil rights workers you have studied give you insight and inspiration for your cause? What did they do that you can replicate?

#### STEP SIX: Act

A plan without action is like a balloon without air. Be sure to have your friends from Step Four stand with you and act alongside you.

#### STEP SEVEN: Reflect

Once you’ve acted, think about what you’ve done. What did you learn? Would you do anything differently? What? How? Write up your “Next Steps” so that if people join you, there will be a natural next step to do.

If your social justice action project needs a bit of funding, why not write Teaching Tolerance for a grant? Grant applications can be found online at [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org) and [www.mixitup.org](http://www.mixitup.org).

“No child can escape his community....The life of the community flows about him, foul or pure; he swims in it, goes to sleep in it, and wakes to the new day to find it still about him. He belongs to it; it nourishes him, or starves him, or poisons him; it gives him the substance of his life.”

Joseph K. Hart, author

## RESOURCE GUIDE

For more information on topics mentioned in this guide, read the following resources.

### Critical Literacy

*Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest*, by Patrick J. Finn

### Social Justice Action Projects

*The Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose – and Turn Creative Thinking into Positive Action*, by Barbara A. Lewis

*Co-Motion: Guide to Youth-Led Social Change*, by Alliance for Justice

### Read More About the Civil Rights Movement

*Putting the Movement Back Into Civil Rights Teaching*, by Deborah Menkart, Alana D. Murray and Jenice L. View

# TEACHING TOLERANCE



*A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center*

400 WASHINGTON AVENUE  
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104  
[WWW.TEACHINGTOLERANCE.ORG](http://WWW.TEACHINGTOLERANCE.ORG)

# introduction

It has been 50 years since the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. In many cases, the parents and guardians of the children you are teaching weren't born when the Civil Rights Movement was happening. How do we teach today's students about a social movement that happened two generations before them? How can we keep the Movement's principles and legacies relevant to today's young people?

“One writes out of one thing only – one’s own experiences.”

James Baldwin, writer and activist

“These women heal us by telling our stories, by embodying emotion that our everydays can’t hold.”

Elizabeth Alexander, poet

“We each live our stories and we learn most from the stories of others. When you feel alone, you can find community in stories; when you weaken, you can find strength; when you are disheartened, you can find resolve; when you are down, you can be lifted; when you feel pain, you can find comfort; when you question, you can find inspiration; when you tire, you can find new energy; when you wonder why, you can find inspiration.”

Louis Schmier, from *Random Thoughts: The Humanity of Teaching*

*America's Civil Rights Movement* introduces students to the Civil Rights Movement through the use of personal narratives. Personal narratives offer three things the brain craves most: relevancy, emotion and pattern. In this curriculum, students learn about the Movement through people like themselves. Ordinary people caught up in an extraordinary time. Parker J. Palmer says that this way of knowing is an “act of entering and embracing the reality of the other. In such knowing we know and are known as members of one community.” This is what bell hooks refers to as “engaged pedagogy.” Stories are one of our best tools in teaching about the Civil Rights Movement. Stories heal.

## MATERIALS

Your *America's Civil Rights Movement* package includes the 38-minute video *A Time for Justice* and the accompanying text *Free at Last: A History of the Civil Rights Movement and Those Who Died in the Struggle*, as well as this teacher's guide and an evaluation form. Once you have used this curriculum package in your classroom, please complete and return the evaluation form. Your feedback will help us make improvements to future editions.

## LESSON STRUCTURE

Into, Through and Beyond is a common strategy in teaching that gets to the depth of a subject. Into, Through and Beyond strategies assist students in the exploration of a text set or curriculum unit.

INTO the subject involves activating prior knowledge and establishing what additional information or understanding we want students to gain.

THROUGH the content requires comprehension. We must begin to integrate our new knowledge with the old.

BEYOND allows us to make personal and curricular connections and creatively apply the knowledge we have gained.