

## INTRODUCING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Learning Objectives: The student will

1. Examine the role of key individuals in the civil rights movement.
2. Participate in a group activity involving finding similarities and differences between people in the civil rights movement.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the contributions of key individuals in the civil rights movement.

TEKS: US.9A-D; US.29B

Materials Needed: Sets of cards for each group of three or four students

Teaching Strategy:

1. As an introductory activity in the study of the civil rights movement in the United States, prepare a set of cards for each group of three or four students. Explain to the students that these people are some of the significant individuals who had a role in the movement. Give the students time to read about each.
2. After the students have completed their reading, use the word sort strategy to process the information. In this strategy, the students are to sort the cards into categories based on a common characteristic they find in the cards. An example of a simple characteristic might be racial group, dates, or action. See how many different groups they can form before settling on the best categories and grouping of the individuals to share with the class.
3. Have each group share their categories and their grouping of people under each. This will provide an opportunity for the class to discuss the individuals and their contributions multiple times and ways. During this discussion, each individual student should make a list of the people and the role they played for the last part of the lesson which can serve as a formative assessment.
4. To conclude the activity, ask the following questions of each individual student to conclude this introductory look at some of the individuals in the movement:
  - A. Which two people were the most alike? How were they alike?
  - B. Which two were the most different? How were they different?
  - C. Which person would you most like to meet and why would you have liked to meet him/her? What question(s) would you ask of this person?
  - D. Using the blank card titled, "My Civil Rights Hero," create a visual representation of the chosen person's contribution.
  - E. Write a summary sentence about the people involved in the civil rights movement.

*Research on individuals provided by former LRE consultant Martin Conrardy*



## Rosa Parks

I was a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama. In December of 1955, I refused to give up my seat to a white passenger on a city bus. I was arrested for my 'crime'. My action sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-56), the first major challenge to the racial segregation system that existed in the United States prior to 1964.



## Thurgood Marshall

I was the NAACP's top legal counsel during the 1940's and 1950's. Under my direction, the NAACP made the decision to attack segregation head on by arguing against the segregation of children in schools. In 1954, our efforts paid off. We had argued that the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision was unconstitutional in that it created an inferior environment for African American children attending segregated schools. We won our case when the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were inherently inferior in the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954) case. I later became the first African American Supreme Court Justice.



## Dr. Martin Luther King

I was a Baptist Minister and the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. Under my direction, the African American community followed a policy of non-violent civil disobedience in the effort to get the rights we were guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. I directed the Montgomery Bus Boycott, formed the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) and led the March on Washington in 1963. Our efforts led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution (1964) and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. James Earl Ray assassinated me in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968.



## Elizabeth Eckford

When I was 15, I enrolled at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. When I tried to attend school on the first day of the year, I was refused entrance by an angry mob of white bigots. On September 2, 1957, however, I was admitted into the school under the protection of Federal troops sent to Little Rock by President Eisenhower. My action was the beginning of the end for school segregation in the state of Arkansas and the other states throughout the South that had refused to abide by the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* decision.



## David Richmond

I was a freshman at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in 1960. I, and 3 friends, staged a sit-in at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. We patiently waited to be served in the segregated restaurant. We weren't served on that day, but continued the tactic as a form of protest against segregation. Our actions eventually swept the South and led to the establishment of the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee).



## James Meredith

I was a US Air Force veteran. Upon my retirement from the service I used the GI Bill to get a university education. However, when I applied for admission at the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, I was denied entrance to the school because of the color of my skin. In 1962, President Kennedy ordered Federal troops to Oxford to ensure that I gained admission and entrance to the University.



## James Chaney

I was an organizer and worker for the Mississippi Summer Project during the summer of 1964. We were trying to register African American voters in the state of Mississippi and we opened up 'Freedom Schools'. The freedom schools educated African American children in academic and civic skills. It was an extremely successful program. Members of the Ku Klux Klan murdered me. My assassins were never charged by the state of Mississippi. They were convicted on Federal charges of violating my civil rights.



## Michael "Mickey" Schwerner

I was a graduate from Columbia University in New York City. In the summer of 1964, I volunteered to come to Mississippi to work for the Mississippi Summer Project. I was not widely accepted by the other student volunteers working for the Project at first. I don't think they trusted me all that much because I was white. However, that changed very quickly and much was accomplished. I was very good friends with James Chaney. I was murdered when he was, by the KKK.



## Cesar Chavez

I was a US labor organizer who formed the United Farm Workers Union in 1966. The reason I formed this union was to improve the lives of migrant farm workers, most of whom were Hispanic. I came to symbolize the Chicano Movement's struggle for equality. Due to my efforts in leading a boycott of non-union produce workers, the condition of the migrant farm workers was improved.



## John Salazar

I was a member of the Chicano Movement of the 1960s. The goal of this movement was to gain equal standing in American society for Hispanics and to instill in the Hispanic Community a sense of pride of our heritage. Our efforts were largely successful and culminated in the Bilingual Education Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1975. Many Hispanics were elected to public office as a result of our work.



## Mary Crow Dog

I am a member of the Lakota Sioux. I was an active participant in the struggle for Native American rights during the 1970s. We formed an organization called the American Indian Movement, or AIM, for short. The purpose of AIM was to promote pride in the Native American communities throughout the US and to address the problems of the reservations. The reservations were in deplorable condition. To dramatize our plight we seized Wounded Knee, a small town near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, in February of 1973. We held the town for 71 days, facing off against federal and local law enforcement and an uncaring US public.



## Vine Deloria, Jr.

I am a member of the Chippewa nation and was an active participant in the demonstration at Wounded Knee in 1973. I was one of the organizers of the American Indian Movement, also known as AIM. I wrote a book entitled "Custer Died for Your Sins" in 1969. The book was a best seller and illustrated the plight of Native Americans. It was a call for reform. Unfortunately, the reform that the book called for has fallen on deaf ears. Change on most reservations has been slow to come.



## Stokely Carmichael

I was one of the organizers of the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). However, after participating in the non-violent movement for social change, I became dissatisfied. Consequently, I advocated a more militant path to change. After the death of Dr. King, many African Americans joined the ranks of the dissatisfied and became militant. I was a part of the Black Power Movement. I later changed my name to Kwame Toure to reflect my African heritage.



## Malcolm X

I was a minister and political leader in the Black Muslim Movement. I advocated African American separatism, meaning that I favored separating blacks and whites. I held this belief for most of my adult life because under the white man's rule, I believed that African Americans would never be given a fair chance. There was nothing in history that would lead me to believe that we would be given a fair chance. I later became disillusioned with Black Muslim Movement when I discovered that Elijah Muhammed, the leader of the movement, was impregnating women members of the Nation of Islam. I exposed him for the fraud that he was. Members of the Nation of Islam assassinated me for doing this.



## Bobby Seales

I was a member of the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) when the organization underwent a change. We dismissed all of the SNCC members who were not African American and changed our philosophy and name. We became the Black Panthers. Our primary goal in the early years of our organization was to get African Americans elected to public office. However, we did not succeed. We then became a highly militant group, often attracting the disenfranchised youth of the inner cities in the US.



## Tom Hayden

I participated in the Freedom Rides of the 1960s and was a vocal participant in the Civil Rights struggle. I also became the symbol for the dissatisfied youth of the 1960s generation. I founded an organization called the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society). We expressed vocal opposition to the Vietnam War and to the existing American society. We were dissatisfied with the inequalities and injustices occurring daily in America.



## Betty Friedan

I was a feminist and strong leader of the Women's Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. I was the founder of NOW (National Organization of Women). We are an organization that fights for equality for women. I also established the political arm of NOW, the National Women's Political Caucus.



## Shirley Chisholm

I was a Democrat from New York and the first African American woman to serve in Congress. I was elected to Congress in 1968 and became noted for support of the Women's Movement and ERA, or the Equal Rights Amendment. I was also a champion of Civil Rights for African Americans. In 1972, I became the first African American woman to run for the Presidential Nomination for the Democratic Party. I have always maintained that the two dominant traditions of America are "antifeminism and racism".



## Kinney Kinmon Lau

I was a student in the San Francisco School District in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1973, I brought a case to the Supreme Court. I argued that because the San Francisco School District did not offer a bilingual education program, the school district was violating the Civil Rights Act of 1964. My case became the legal precedent for bilingual education in the US.



## My Civil Rights Hero