

Exploring the Civil Rights Movement in Fairfield, AL

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to evaluate the influence of events, organizations, and individual actions on the expansion of the Civil Rights Movement nationally.

STANDARDS ALIGNED (12th grade American Government):

- 7b Describe how Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, and the Selma-to-Montgomery March influenced the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- 7a Explain how increases and shifts in political participation by minorities and other voting blocs shape political party coalitions, campaigns, and voter turnout.
- 7c Analyze historic and current barriers to voting access and voter turnout, and weigh the benefits and consequences of possible solutions.
- 8b Analyze examples of legislation or policy decisions that reflect the influence of special interest groups, and describe methods by which these groups seek to sway the policy-making process.
- 9 Explain the role of the media in the political process, including how they shape public opinion.

ASSESSMENT/FINAL PRODUCT:

Students will create a comprehensive book on Fairfield and the Civil Rights Movement, incorporating research findings, interviews, and analysis of key events and figures.

KEY POINTS:

- Key events from 1945 to 1955 that contributed to the Civil Rights Movement's emergence.
- The role of civil rights activists and organizations from 1954 to 1965 in prompting federal action.
- Comparison of philosophies and actions of leaders
- Strategies used by opponents of the Civil Rights Movement to limit its progress.
- Contributions of key Alabamians, including Richard Arrington Jr., Willie Mays, and U.W. Clemons, to the movement.

OPENING:

- Pose the question: "What role do you think local actions played in the national Civil Rights Movement?"
- Facilitate a short discussion to gauge prior knowledge and engage student interest.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW MATERIAL:

- Present key events and figures through a multimedia presentation, including images, timelines, and video clips.
- Encourage students to research and take notes on significant events and their impacts.
- Anticipate the misconception that the Civil Rights Movement was only a national phenomenon, emphasizing its local roots and contributions.

GUIDED PRACTICE:

- Organize students into small groups to discuss specific events related to their research (each group will be assigned a topic to research and write about)
- Provide guiding questions, starting with simple prompts (e.g., "What was the significance of the 1963 Birmingham Campaign?") to more complex analyses (e.g., "How did local leaders influence national policies?").
- Monitor group discussions, offering support and feedback as necessary.

PRACTICE/CREATION OF PRODUCT:

- Assign students the task of conducting interviews with residents who lived in Fairfield during the Civil Rights Movement.
- Assign students with the task of researching their topic and how it relates to the Civil Rights Movement.
- Students will compile their research and interviews into a chapter for the class book, ensuring they meet the standards of analysis and historical context.
- Students will research about and write, with their group, a chapter on how local movements and individuals contributed to the national Civil Rights Movement, using specific examples from their research.

CLOSING:

- Compile all research-driven chapter into a bound book
(Teacher will compile students work and take them to be bound and published)
- Have book published
- Host a book launch party with students present to do a book signing
- Invite members of the community, Miles College, parents, dignitaries, and other people mentioned in the book

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- For students who finish early, invite them to create a digital presentation or artistic representation of a particular event or figure they found compelling.

