



Step Two: Essential Content Checklist

Use these questions to reflect on what your students are learning about the civil rights movement. How can you deepen your coverage of the movement by integrating these essential content areas into your instruction?

Leaders

1. Do my students think the civil rights movement had a single leader? Or that it was led by a small group of people?
2. Do my students understand that the civil rights movement was composed of many individuals?
3. Can my students identify at least six figures in the civil rights movement besides Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks?
4. Can my students associate civil rights figures with the ideas, actions and accomplishments that distinguish them?
5. Can my students identify local figures of the civil rights movement?

Groups

1. Can my students identify major groups involved in the civil rights movement?
2. Do my students understand the role groups played in organizing people during the movement?
3. Can my students explain the mission and accomplishments of each group?
4. Can my students trace the relationships among groups involved in the civil rights movement?
5. Can my students identify groups that were involved in the civil rights movement locally?

Events

1. Can my students identify key events in the civil rights movement?
2. Can my students place key events in the civil rights movement in chronological order?
3. Can my students identify the causes and consequences of key events in the civil rights movement?
4. Can my students link events in the civil rights movement with key figures and organizations?
5. Can my students identify key events that took place locally in the civil rights movement?

Historical context

1. Does my students' knowledge and understanding of the civil rights movement include generations before and after the 1954–1969 modern civil rights era?
2. Do I challenge my students to think about the historical roots of the civil rights movement?
3. Can my students trace the civil rights movement from slavery and the Civil War through Reconstruction and Jim Crow?
4. Do I present the civil rights movement to my students in rich and contextualized ways that help them appreciate its complexity and importance?
5. Am I mindful of historical context each time I introduce events, figures and groups important to the civil rights movement?

Opposition

1. Can my students identify key figures and groups who opposed the aims of the civil rights movement?
2. Do I provide opportunities for my students to examine how the persistence of structural racism and racist attitudes fueled the opposition to the civil rights movement?
3. Can my students distinguish between and give examples of de jure and de facto segregation and discrimination?
4. Can my students explain the diverse tactics used in opposition to the civil rights movement?
5. Can my students explain the nature of various obstacles to the civil rights movement, including internal conflict?

Tactics

1. Are my students able to discuss tactics when talking about events and accomplishments of the civil rights movement?
2. Can my students explain the advantages and disadvantages of nonviolent resistance?
3. Can my students compare a variety of strategies and ideas that shaped the tactics used in the civil rights movement?
4. Do my lessons ask students to analyze the strategic thinking and planning that led civil rights activists to choose certain tactics?
5. Can my students trace the intellectual roots of civil disobedience to Gandhi and Thoreau and explain the role of civil disobedience in a democratic society?



Connections

1. Do I plan instruction that makes connections between the civil rights movement and other social movements in history?
2. Are my students able to make connections between the civil rights movement and current events?
3. Do my lessons encourage students to apply the civil rights movement to their own developing ideas about citizenship?
4. Do I allow students to discuss their own views of the relevance of the civil rights movement today and how they think the movement must evolve and adapt to overcome new manifestations of injustice?
5. Can my students evaluate the long-term success of the civil rights movement by comparing its goals to the state of racial equality in the United States today?