

Subject: English Language Arts
Level: Middle School

CIVIC ACTION LESSON PLAN

This lesson plan offers teachers resource links from the **Library of Congress** and **inquiry-based teaching strategies**, using middle school English content and primary source analysis to engage students in developing their own personal goals for civic action.

Title: Standing Up for Equality		
ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What is equality?		
<p>Lesson Overview: Students will examine how equality under the law has evolved in the United States. Students will report on a problem of equality and its solution under the law. They will reflect on how lessons from history can help them as they consider issues of inequality in contemporary society and how they might contribute to insuring equality in their community.</p>	<p>Lesson Objectives Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze primary sources in order to inquire about the sources' historical content, context, and relevance. Evaluate how information gleaned from primary and secondary sources relates to the import and impact of striving for equal rights. Create a personal purpose statement that represents the importance of striving for equal rights. 	
<p>Inquiry Standards</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2</u> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary source.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.D</u> Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain [a] topic</p>		
Supporting Question 1 ENGAGING	Supporting Question 2 EVALUATING	Supporting Question 3 TAKING ACTION
Should you fight for equal rights?	What would you do to stand up for equal rights?	What values, beliefs, and actions can you take to make a difference in equal rights in our country?
PERFORMANCE TASK 1	PERFORMANCE TASK 2	CULMINATING TASK
Display image of the first march from Selma and relay background information. Give each student a sensory exploration chart . Explain that students will be listening to an excerpt from a	Display the image <i>Aerial View of Marchers Crossing Bridge</i> . The night of the march, ABC TV News interrupted regular network programming to show the nation video footage of what happened in Selma.	Display the image of President Lyndon B. Johnson giving Dr. Martin Luther King one of the pens used in the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Inform students that Congress responded to President

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<p>webcast with Lynda Blackmon Lowery, who describes her experience as a young teenager participating in the civil rights march from Selma, Alabama on March 7, 1965.</p> <p>Instruct students to listen carefully and, based on Lowery’s description of the march, to write down words that relate to what they might have seen, heard, smelled, felt, and tasted if they had been there.</p> <p>Ask students to share some of the words that they generated and respond to a few questions, noting questions on the board or in a digital document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you feel? • What did you learn? • What new questions do you have? 	<p>The video ran for 15 minutes with no narration and was seen by an estimated 48 million Americans. News reports called the day Bloody Sunday. Others who saw news photos experienced horror, shame, and an overwhelming desire to do something.</p> <p>Give each student a primary source analysis tool (PDF, digital) and provide students access to the <i>African American demonstrators</i> primary source image (digital file, printout). Direct students to use the primary source analysis tool to note what they see (observe), what they think about what they see (reflect), and what they wonder about (question). Ask students to share their observations, reflections, and questions with the class.</p> <p>Instruct students to review the bibliographic record and respond to a few questions, noting questions on the board or in a digital document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does what you’ve learned inform your thinking about the central question? • What new questions do you have? 	<p>Johnson’s call and passed the Voting Rights Act quickly; the president signed the bill into law on August 6, 1965. Then read the text from the image to students:</p> <p>“President Johnson hands one of the pens used in the signing of the Voting Rights bill 8/6 to Rev. Martin Luther King at the Capitol. The Chief Executive signed the bill 104 years to the day that President Lincoln travelled to the Capitol to sign a bill freeing the Negro slaves who were used to aid the Southern rebellion.” Ask students: What values are important to them? What ways can they create history? What actions can they take throughout their lives to support equality? How is equality their responsibility? Have each student create a vision board for their life goals related to standing up for equality.</p>
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**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS RESOURCES
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

<p>Sensory Exploration Chart</p> <p>Video: Oral history excerpt (1:54 minutes; transcript) of Lynda Blackmon Lowery describing the first march from Selma (full webcast)</p> <p>Library of Congress Images from March on Selma</p>	<p>Aerial view of marchers crossing bridge the march from Selma to Montgomery image bibliographic record</p> <p>African American demonstrators outside the White House image bibliographic record</p> <p>Primary source analysis tool (PDF)</p>	<p>President Lyndon B. Johnson gives Dr. Martin Luther King one of the pens used in the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (image curator note)</p>
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http://www.loc.gov/pictures/related/?fi=subject&q=Selma%20to%20Montgomery%20Rights%20March--%281965%20%3A--Selma%2C%20Ala.%29	<u>Primary source analysis tool</u> (digital)	
TEACHING STRATEGIES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct instruction • Primary source analysis • Big paper/silent conversation on equality issues in the USA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gallery walk • Pair share • https://nearpod.com to create a poll for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured academic controversy • Role-play

This lesson is part of a larger initiative, Citizen U, which aims to integrate civic learning across the curriculum for students in grades 2-12. For more lessons like it, in Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, or to learn more about related creative, community, and professional development opportunities, please visit our [Citizen U website](#)...