

Answer Key

Lesson Five: Continuing the Heroic Struggle for Equality: The Civil Rights Movement

Background Reading

- Several important factors included Black soldiers fighting against fascism in World War II, the breaking of the color barrier as Jackie Robinson did in baseball and a presidential desegregation order did for the military, the Black desire for justice and equality as represented in literature, Black activism, the NAACP's battle against segregation, and Blacks standing up to injustice publicly and in numbers.
- The drive for civil rights at the national level included the court decision in *Brown v. Board*, 1954 and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1963 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Efforts at the local level included the Montgomery bus boycott, the school integration enacted by the Little Rock Nine, the Greensboro sit-in, the CORE Freedom Rides, the Birmingham March, the March on Washington, and the Selma March.

	Martin Luther King, Jr., and SCLC	SNCC	Malcolm X	Black Power
Goal	Integration	Integration (Later, SNCC shifted to goals of Black nationalism and Black Power.)	Black nationalism	Black separatism, self-reliance and self-empowerment, celebration of Black culture
Method	Nonviolence (marches, sit-ins, boycotts)	Nonviolence (marches, sit-ins, voter registration drives)	"Any means necessary." While critical of nonviolence, his later views were more in line with it.	Armed self-defense; rhetoric sympathetic to socialism

Primary Source Warmup

Image: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee logo, 1961

1. The Black and white hands suggest allies working across race lines for change. The handshake suggests cooperation and working together for a common purpose.
2. Student opinions will vary but should be supported by clear reasoning and evidence.

Primary Sources

Richard Wright, *Black Boy*, 1945

1. He writes that he would become tense merely at their being mentioned, as if anticipating an unpredictable threat.
2. Wright grew up hearing of violence against Black people, to the point where he was conditioned to fear the idea of White people.

Sweatt v. Painter, 1950

1. It offered tangible advantages such as the number of teachers and the size of the library and the student body. It also offered other qualities “which make for greatness,” such as its standing in the community, its traditions and prestige, and the reputation of its faculty, administration, and alumni.
2. His full constitutional right was a legal education equivalent to that offered by the state to students of other races.
3. *Sweatt v. Painter* offered a reassessment of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Justice Vinson’s opinion says the court did not agree that *Plessy* should be reexamined, but the ruling in *Sweatt*’s favor implies that the equal but separate principle is unconstitutional as applied to law school admissions.

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 1952

1. He calls on him to be above the behavior of those who would tear him down as a Black man. He tells him to smile in the face of hatred and set an example of kindness.
2. People overlook him because of his race and do not recognize his personhood.
3. There are many individuals and groups who live their lives independently, making their own decisions, and even though they are independent, they are one society.

***Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954**

1. Education is the foundation of good citizenship and required for future success in life.
2. Segregated schools generate a feeling of inferiority that “affects their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.”
3. The equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment means that all are equal under the law, and segregated schools are inherently unequal.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Montgomery Bus Boycott* speech, 1955

1. Accept reasonable responses: Democracy on paper or in theory needs to be supported by putting democracy into practice, taking direct action, speaking up, and supporting the ideas and causes we believe in. Constitutional guarantees (thin paper) need to be made effective in practice by equal treatment under the law. The thick action is not only or mainly action by protesters; it is also action by governments charged with securing rights.
2. The right to protest is the “glory” of American democracy. King states that such a protest would not be possible in a totalitarian or communist regime.
3. “To gain justice on the buses of this city.”
4. King says that love and faith are pivotal in Christianity and are also a part of the principle of justice. He defines justice as “love correcting that which revolts against love.”

The Southern Manifesto, March 12, 1956

1. They refer to it as a clear abuse of judicial power, a belittling of Congress' authority to legislate, and an encroachment on the rights of states and individuals.
2. Their reason was that no constitutional amendment or act of Congress has changed the principle of "separate but equal."
3. It publicly criticizes the Supreme Court's reasoning in Brown, says opponents will support states in resisting attempts to integrate schools, and applauds them for such attempts at lawful resistance.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Statement of Purpose, 1960

1. The goals of seeking nonviolent change were a just social order, a peaceful society, and a moral society in which equality and human dignity are upheld.
2. Both combine the idea that justice is rooted in love. Nonviolence is rooted in love. Both show the influence not only of the Founding principles such as equality and justice, but also of the tenets of Judeo-Christian faith.

James Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," Esquire, July 1960

1. The neighborhood residents suffer grinding poverty, the housing is run-down and a slum, and there are few job opportunities for the future, so people give up. Blacks resented being expected by many whites to live in segregated urban projects
2. Baldwin says that Blacks suffer police brutality and mistreatment. He also states that police represent the white power structure in society and would do so even if they treated Blacks well.
3. By treating Blacks, or anyone, as anything less than equals, people diminish their own humanity. In other words, racism damages the person who holds such ideas as well as the person to whom these ideas are applied.

Freedom Rides Photographs, 1961

1. They were attacked, arrested, and jailed.
2. Without protection from local and national law enforcement, the Freedom Riders were in great danger, and even more so because they did not defend themselves. Accept reasonable answers for why Freedom Riders chose this tactic. The power of nonviolence is that it provokes a reaction from the other party and casts them in a negative light.

3. The courage and persistence of the Freedom Riders created a new momentum in the struggle for equal rights and freedom, as well as raising awareness about how violently some whites clung to Jim Crow segregation in the South..

Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” 1963

1. The letter was addressed to a group of white religious leaders who wrote to King.
2. King was invited to participate in the planned campaign and came to Birmingham to fight injustice.
3. He says that if negotiation fails, direct action will create a crisis such that the issue (injustice) must be confronted.
4. An unjust law violates the natural law, is sociologically unsound, distorts the dignity of the human person, and is morally wrong and sinful. An unjust law is one that a group in power imposes upon a minority group but will not impose upon themselves. Thus it violates the constitutional principles of majority rule and consent in a democracy.
5. King remains respectful and appeals to their common faith and humanity rather than their differences of race.

Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream” Speech, 1963

1. He was speaking in front of the Lincoln Memorial and went on to connect the Proclamation’s promise with the current injustices faced by African Americans.
2. King quotes the Declaration of Independence as a “promissory note” to all Americans. However, this promise has gone unfulfilled because “the Negro is still not free.”
3. King refers to all people as God’s children and quotes a Negro spiritual as a summation of his dream for America.

John Lewis, “March on Washington” Speech, 1963

1. He says it is corrupt, does not represent African Americans, and is slow to act.
2. He says that African Americans are tired of being beaten and suffering injustice. They cannot wait any longer and cannot be patient.

3. While both men were leaders in the civil rights movement, Lewis is a student leader, King a spiritual leader. While King is also critical of the current order, Lewis is more forceful and critical of both the current political and social orders, saying the people are involved in a “serious social revolution.” As a student, Lewis might appeal more than King to young people who are also impatient with the slow pace of change. Student opinions on their respective effectiveness will vary but should be supported by evidence.

“We Shall Overcome”

1. Protesters were frequently met with violent resistance, even if they themselves were peaceful.
2. A: Repetition and simplicity make the song easier for singers to memorize and listeners to understand.
3. The song addresses hardship, which can be applied to various circumstances. It also implies victory, which gives hope. The second-to-last verse refers to a larger world struggle for something better, which makes the song relevant to any effort against injustice.

Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots,” 1963

1. Malcolm X states that “the white man,” meaning white people, are the enemy.
2. Malcolm X believes that a Black nation is the only way to secure real change. Nonviolence can bring about changes to integration, but he belittles what integration actually means by using the example of a public toilet.
3. King believed in the goal of integrating Blacks into white society using nonviolent methods. Malcolm X was a Black nationalist who wanted a separate Black nation. Malcolm X did not advocate violence but did advocate self-defense. Both were leaders in the larger movement for Black rights, and both wanted better treatment and respect for their communities. This divide is similar to the split between the views of Booker T. Washington and Du Bois. Like King and Malcolm X, both were leaders in the movement for Black rights but differed in their methodologies. Washington advocated vocational education, hard work, and moral virtues for Blacks as a means of proving themselves to whites and advancing socially and economically. Du Bois maintained that Blacks should pursue a liberal arts education and fight for full political and civic equality. Du Bois criticized Washington for being an accommodationist, as Malcolm X criticizes Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, goal of integration.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

1. The law protected against barriers to voting (such as literacy tests), and against segregation in public places such as hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, and sports venues.
2. Accept reasonable answers. With this law, the federal government enforced protections for equal protection of Black suffrage under the Fourteenth Amendment and banned voting restrictions such as literacy tests. It also challenged local segregation statutes.

Fannie Lou Hamer Testimony before the Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention, August 22, 1964

1. Hamer describes and personally suffers violence for attempting to register to vote. Her description of Ivesta Simpson's beating is especially powerful because Simpson did not give in to the police and began to pray out loud.
2. Voting rights were imperfectly protected by the Civil Rights Act, and Hamer's story illustrates that African Americans still faced many obstacles to voting.
3. Accept reasonable answers. Hamer's final question appeals to human decency, not any notion of race. Her speech would likely garner sympathy and support for the civil rights movement from those shocked by her story.

Images of Bloody Sunday, 1965

1. The press captured the violence inflicted on the nonviolent protesters. The reports, images, and footage of the event helped to mobilize public opinion against southern resisters.
2. A variety of religious groups came to support the march.
3. Men and women of various races and ages participated in the march. By carrying the flag, they affirmed their patriotism and symbolically connected their protest with American principles.

Voting Rights Act, 1965

1. The Attorney General was authorized to appoint federal examiners to investigate and rectify any violations of the Fifteenth Amendment.
2. Accept reasonable answers. Change was slow to come in pursuit of principles of liberty and equality.

Loving v. Virginia, 1967

1. Laws preventing racially mixed marriages.
2. The court ruled in favor of the Lovings, arguing that the decision to marry (or not) and whom to marry is a basic civil right that cannot be infringed upon by the state. To deny the freedom to make these choices violates the principle of equality in the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Graphic Organizer for Document Analysis

Document Title and Date	Main Ideas	Connection to or Violation of Founding Principles
Richard Wright, <i>Black Boy</i> , 1945	Black man becomes conditioned to fear whites	Hostility and violence denying equality to Black men have become normalized in the Jim Crow South
<i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> , 1950	African Americans have a constitutional right to a legal education equivalent to that offered by the state to white students	Challenge to the idea of “equal but separate” and stepping-stone to equality in education
Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i> , 1952	Novel about a young Black man struggling in a society that does not recognize his personhood	Narrative of struggles of African Americans when denied equality and justice in society
<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , 1954	Public school segregation declared unconstitutional	Victory for equality in education

Martin Luther King, Jr., Montgomery Bus Boycott speech, 1955	King urges protesters to continue the bus boycott in Montgomery	Justice and equality are the goals of this protest
The Southern Manifesto, 1956	Southern resistance to Supreme Court ruling in <i>Brown</i>	Preferences states' rights over equality and justice
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Founding Statement, 1960	Student activists make a formal commitment to nonviolence	Justice and equality are possible when nonviolent methods are used to achieve them
James Baldwin "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," 1960	Account of bleakness of Black urban areas	Segregation (violation of equality) denies the humanity of all
Freedom Rides Photographs, 1961	Nonviolent efforts to desegregate interstate buses met with violent resistance	Courage of Freedom Riders in calling attention to inequality and injustice
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," 1963	Defense of nonviolent direct action tactics and discussion of just versus unjust law	Segregation violates principle of justice
Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" Speech, 1963	Speech presenting a vision for a more just and equitable future	References promise of liberty and equality in Declaration of Independence and Constitution

John Lewis, “March on Washington” Speech, August 28, 1963	Speech criticizing current political system and demanding action to end segregation	Impatience at unfulfilled promise of liberty, equality, and justice
“We Shall Overcome”	Folk song to inspire those in civil rights movement	Expresses hope in a more just and equitable future
Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots” Speech, 1963	Black nationalist criticizes integration and nonviolence	Equality and justice for Blacks is possible only in a separate nation
Civil Rights Act, 1964	Federal law providing protections against discrimination in voting, employment, federal assistance programs, and equal access to public accommodations	Stepping-stone to fuller realization of equality and justice
Fannie Lou Hamer Testimony before the Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention, August 22, 1964	African Americans still face barriers and violence in trying to vote in the South	Ineffectiveness of legislation to ensure equality and justice; courage of Blacks demanding justice and the right to vote
Images of Bloody Sunday, 1965	African Americans still face barriers and violence in trying to vote in the South	Ineffectiveness of legislation to ensure equality and justice; courage of protesters in demanding justice

Voting Rights Act, 1965	Federal law outlawing discriminatory voting practices in place in many southern states	Stepping-stone to fuller realization of equality and justice
<i>Loving v. Virginia</i> , 1967	Supreme Court ruling overturning anti-miscegenation laws	Principle of equality includes the decision to choose to marry (or not marry) any person you choose

Concluding Analysis - Suggested Answers

Document Title and Date	Laws and Policy	The Courts	"We the People" - Individuals and Groups
Richard Wright, <i>Black Boy</i> , 1945			<i>Writer shows that racial hostility and violence are normalized in the Jim Crow South</i>
<i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> , 1950		Supreme Court ruling challenges "equal but separate" in state law schools.	
Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i> , 1952			Novelist writes about struggles of an unnamed Black man
<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , 1954		Supreme Court ruling declares public school segregation unconstitutional	

Martin Luther King, Jr., Montgomery Bus Boycott speech, 1955			Leader urges protesters to continue bus boycott
The Southern Manifesto, 1956	Southern lawmakers invoke states' rights in effort to resist <i>Brown</i> decision	Resistance to <i>Brown</i> decision and desegregation	
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Founding Statement, 1960			Student activists make a formal commitment to nonviolence
James Baldwin "Fifth Avenue, Uptown," 1960			Activist and writer describes bleakness of Black urban areas under segregation
Freedom Rides Photographs, 1961			Activists attempt to desegregate interstate buses
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," 1963	Reaction to/description of unjust law		Leader in prison for nonviolent protest defends direct action to fight segregation
Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have A Dream" Speech, 1963			Leader presents a vision for a more just and equitable future

John Lewis, “March on Washington” Speech, August 28, 1963			Student activist and leader criticizes current political system and demands immediate action
“We Shall Overcome”			Gospel/folk song is optimistic about victory in movement
Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots” Speech, 1963			Black nationalist leader criticizes integration and offers alternative vision for success
Civil Rights Act, 1964	Federal law providing protections against discrimination in voting, employment, federal assistance programs, and equal access to public accommodations		
Fannie Lou Hamer Testimony before the Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention, August 22, 1964			Leader brings attention to continued violence against Blacks trying to vote in the South; organizes new political party to demand change
Images of Bloody Sunday, 1965			Nonviolent protesters demonstrate for voter registration

Voting Rights Act, 1965		Federal law outlawing discriminatory voting practices in place in many southern states	
<i>Loving v. Virginia</i> , 1967		Supreme Court ruling overturning anti-miscegenation laws	

- Despite repeated threats, violence, and imprisonment, activists continued their fight for equality. Examples may include:
 - Citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, continuing the bus boycott despite threats and inconvenience to their everyday lives
 - Freedom Riders, who were attacked violently during their nonviolent protest of bus segregation
 - Martin Luther King, Jr., who was imprisoned for nonviolent protests
 - Fannie Lou Hamer and others who suffered physically or economically (loss of job) for registering to vote
 - Protesters in the Selma to Montgomery March, for continuing their peaceful protest after being violently attacked by state, local, and deputized citizens.
- Religion played a central role in the movement, both formally and informally. Many religious groups organized protests and supported the actions of civil rights campaigners. Likewise, many leaders of the civil rights movement such as the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were from religious communities. Religious imagery, language, and views were also deployed in calls for increased equality and civil rights, such as in the founding statement of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC), the song "We Shall Overcome," and in the speeches and writings of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Students may discuss the continuity in debates over how best to move forward in securing equal rights and justice, whether through direct action or accommodation, integration, or Black nationalism. They may also describe the shifting position of the Supreme Court (from Plessy to Brown) and increasingly effective legislation at the federal level that overruled state Jim Crow laws. Both time periods saw divisions within white society over African Americans' work for equality and justice. Some whites supported these efforts throughout both time periods, and some violently resisted these efforts.
- Students should support their opinions with historical reasoning and specific evidence contained in the documents.