

Tracing Issues of Equality and Civil Rights in American Society Across Time Lesson Plan

Pamela Carter | High School Teacher, Social Studies | Windham High School | Windham, Maine

<p>Subject: U.S. History</p> <p>Grade: High School Level</p>	<p>Time: 2-4 class periods - It depends on the ability of students to work independently to complete steps 3-5 outside of class time.</p>
<p>Objective:</p> <p>Students will analyze the struggles for equal treatment and civil rights from the nineteenth century to the current time. Students will examine various tactics of protest and reflect on their usefulness.</p>	<p>Materials Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of Reformers from each time period (page 3)• Research Questions Worksheet (page 4)• Student Handout (page 5)• Questions for Panel Participants (page 6)• Assessment: Reflection Worksheet (page 7)
<p>Standards:</p> <p>Maine Learning Results</p> <p>Civics and Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students draw on concepts from civics and government to understand political systems, power, authority, governance, civic ideals and practices, and the role of citizens in the community, Maine, the United States, and the world.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (F1) Explaining basic civic aspects of historical and/or current issues that involve unity and diversity in Maine, the United States, and other nations. <p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (D1) Identifying and critiquing issues characterized by unity and diversity in the history of other nations, and describing their effects, using primary and secondary sources.	

Common Core Speaking and Listening:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Possible poets and poems:

Langston Hughes: *Dream Deferred*, *Cross*

Countee Cullen: *Incident*, *Yet Do I Marvel*

Claude McKay: *If We Must Die*, *White Houses*

Jean Toomer: *Reapers*, *Storm Ending*

Procedure:

1. Background information: Students will have an understanding of the efforts of minority groups to achieve equal rights throughout the history of the United States
2. Activator: Post chart paper in three spots around the room. Label each with a time period (see below). Have students divide into groups and station one group at each chart paper. Have students brainstorm the issues facing minority groups during that era. Briefly rotate student groups so each has a turn at each chart.
3. Use the chart papers to facilitate a discussion about ongoing efforts to achieve and expand equal rights over the course of U.S. history. If significant issues and reforms are missing, briefly add to their knowledge. Point out how the movement for equality has expanded to include more marginalized groups over time.
4. Each student is assigned a reformer. The teacher can decide how best to do this. Try to choose an equal number of students for each era (see list of possibilities below). Students conduct research to learn more about this person and to answer questions about their causes, methods of advocating for reform, and successes. Students may bring a note card on presentation day with key information such as books, laws or court cases, names of organizations, related to their reformer.

Procedure Continued:

5. Each student will create a name card for their reformer with a symbol and/or short quote that represents that person.
6. On the day of the panel discussions, students will come to class having done the preparation steps 1-5. In the front of the class, have 5-8 chairs. Call groups of students to sit in the chairs and answer questions in the role of their reformer. The name card should be posted on the wall or whiteboard behind each student while they are part of their panel. (See questions for panel participants)
7. Optional assessment: Reflection on the status of the movements today.

Possible reformers:

Antebellum: Dorothea Dix (mentally ill, imprisoned), Mary Lyon (female education), William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth, Theodore Weld, Frederick Douglass (abolition), Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (women's rights)

Progressive era to World War II: Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Ida B. Wells-Barnett (African American rights) - Helen Hunt Jackson (Native American rights) - Alice Paul, Susan B. Anthony, Victoria Woodhull, Margaret Sanger (women's rights)

Civil Rights Movement (1950s-1980s): Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Ella Baker, Fanny Lou Hamer, Angela Davis (African American Rights), Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem (women's rights), Cesar Chavez, Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales, Sylvia Mendez (Latin American rights), Marsha P. Johnson, Harvey Milk, Larry Kramer, Sylvia Rivera (LBGTQ+ rights), Wilma Mankiller, Leonard Peltier, Dennis Banks, Russell Means (Native American rights)

Research Questions Worksheet

Turn in on the day of the presentation

Research on (insert name of reformer):

Time Period:

Questions:

What issue was the focus for this individual? (briefly describe the problem that necessitated this call to action)

2. What methods did this individual use to improve the lives of a marginalized group in American society?
3. What accomplishments did this individual have regarding reform?
4. What other interesting details do you want to share about this individual? Maybe an interesting quote or story about the person.
5. What is the status of the reform today? What has been accomplished and what still needs to be done?

Student Handout:

On the day of the presentation, I will call about 5-8 of you up at a time to sit in the front of the room - like a panel. **You will respond as your reformer would.** You may use a notecard but please project your voice and make eye contact throughout your presentation. We want these to be interesting for those who have to listen to you.

Questions:

These should be done and turned in on Google Classroom. **These may not be used during the panel discussion.**

A Note Card:

- A 5 sentence maximum introduction of who you are. For example, I may ask something like "Mr. Washington, please tell us a little about your background."
- Other notes to help you answer questions – names of books you wrote, important things you did, names of people you worked with, names of laws you supported or opposed, important quotes, court cases

A Name Poster for the White Board - regular plain paper size:

- Your reformer's name clearly written/typed, large enough to read from the back of the room so the audience can address you by name
- An image that symbolizes your work or a picture, or a short quote. Some color is appreciated but not required.

Questions for the Panel Participants:

Introduction: "Good morning! Welcome to our panel of reformers/activists. We are very honored to be able to host this discussion today."

Use a variety of wording to ask these questions to keep it interesting. Not every student answers all the questions.

- What is the most important issue facing American society today?
- What methods do you use to draw attention to the issue?
- What is the biggest complaint of your critics? And how do you respond to your critics?
- What do you consider your biggest accomplishment?
- What do you hope your legacy will be?

Teachers have the option of having audience members (other students) ask questions.

Conclusion for each group: "Thank you for coming and participating today in this important discussion."

Reflection on the Current Status:

Consider the panels you heard from and their historical context. Think about the issues of equality and civil rights facing the United States today. Write a paragraph or two comparing and contrasting the issues today with the issues of the past. Include an evaluation of the tactics and their usefulness. You may choose to comment on any and all groups in society.