

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 8

TOPIC: Everyday People Respond to the Dream

CONTENT AREAS: Language Arts
Social Studies
Fine Arts



LEARNING OBJECTIVES/QCC:

The students will:

- **Social Studies:** Information Processing- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and determine respective uses;
- **Social Studies:** Information Processing-Analyze interpretations of the same event from multiple types of sources;
- **Language Arts:** Reading-Analyze differences between fiction and nonfiction;
- **Language Arts:** Reference and Study Skills-Use interviewing to gather information;
- **Language Arts:** Speaking- Participate in dramatic activities such as puppetry, pantomime, plays, choral speaking, and storytelling; and
- **Fine Arts:** Theatre Arts- Develop research skills and familiarization with available resources to gain information to support presentational and representational theatre activities.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS:

1. What was the purpose of the March on Washington?
2. What was the purpose of the keynote address delivered by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
3. Why have the speech and the March on Washington become two of the most celebrated symbols of the Civil Rights era?
4. Why did so many everyday citizens get involved in civil protest during the Civil Rights era?
5. What, if anything, can encourage everyday citizens to get involved in the struggle for civil and human rights today?
6. What connections can be made between the March on Washington, the “I Have a Dream” speech and current civil/human rights protests?

BACKGROUND:

This lesson introduces students to the March on Washington through Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech and the reaction of a few of the hundreds of thousands of everyday people who participated in the march and listened to the speech. In preparation for teaching this lesson, it will be helpful to read excerpts from the Library of Congress’ website entitled “African American Odyssey: Civil Rights Era”, I Have a Dream An Illustrated Edition and information on the March on Washington.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES:

Print:

I Have a Dream An Illustrated Edition by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Video/Audio:

Video clip from “Capture the Dream”

Online:

Personal Testimonies, Memorials, Photos, and Commentary

<http://www.crmvet.org/crmhome.htm>

<http://www.lr.k12.nj.us/site/cherokee/webquest/richter/primarysources.htm#process>

<http://home.sullivan.k12.il.us/teachers/dwyer/Rights.htm>

<http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jwilson/webquest.htm>

Attachments/Handouts:

Attachment 1: List of African American historical fiction.

Attachment 2: Graphic Organizer

Equipment:

Computers with internet access, tape recorders, cameras

HOOK:

1. Ask students: Have you ever done something you were proud of? Did you receive praise for your accomplishment? Was there any kind of ceremony to celebrate? Describe what you did and how you received acknowledgement. Write about the incident and how it made you feel.
2. Give students enough time to jot down their memories and then ask them to stop and read their papers to the person sitting to their right.
3. Ask a few students to share with the whole group.
4. On chart paper make a list of all the adjectives the students use to describe how they felt when they accomplished their goal and make another list of all the adjectives students use to describe how they felt when their accomplishments were publicly acknowledged.

PROCEDURES:

1. Show enlarged pictures of the crowd from the March on Washington. Ask the students if they recognize any of the faces of the people in the crowd. Emphasize that just because most of the faces don't belong to well-known historical figures, it doesn't mean that they are not worthy of our attention. In fact, the pictures are the faces of the people who made the marches a success. They are important and learning about their stories, why they chose to leave their homes and participate, is learning about some very powerful forces behind one of the greatest moments in human history.

2. Show students a video clip of the March on Washington to get a feel for how many people were there.
3. Play excerpts of the “I Have a Dream” speech. Have students discuss how they feel about Dr. King’s dream and identify their own dreams for universal civil and human rights.
4. Have each student go back to still pictures and select one unidentified marcher and observe his or her picture closely. What does his/her facial expression say to you? What do you imagine the marcher is thinking about as he/she listens to King’s speech? Have each student create a list of questions that he/she would ask the unidentified person if he/she could interview the person. Students make up a story explaining why their person is at the march and how she feels after listening to King. Include everything in the story that they already know about the March. Describe the person’s reaction to King’s speech.
5. Allow students to share their stories in think-pair-share teams. Once they have shared their stories, have each team make a diagram to identify key facts about the March on Washington that were included in both stories.
6. Have students search the web and classroom resources to find:
 - more key facts about the March on Washington.
 - stories about local march participants from old newspaper articles from the place where their unidentified person was from.

- actual stories of real people who attended/participated in the march. See if they can find out about any of these “unidentified persons” in the photographs.
 - webquest on civil rights.
7. Have students revisit their initial fictionalized story about an unidentified marcher and add interesting details and real-life events they discovered in their research.
 8. Have students plan and conduct a ceremony celebrating their fictionalized participants.

CENTERS/EXTENSION IDEAS:

1. Students read historical fiction about an earlier era of the African American struggle for civil rights.
(Attachment 1)
2. Student teams select an additional civil rights webquest to complete. (See list of online resources)
3. Students tape record and/or conduct written interviews of their own parents, grandparents and community members to determine their involvement in or first-hand knowledge of the March on Washington and the Civil Rights Era.
4. With the permission of the interviewees, have students take pictures and display them in the classroom along with excerpts of the interview.
5. Students can take on the role of their parents, grandparents or community members and perform their stories for the class and community. The interviewees can be invited guests. Students can

plan an awards ceremony to publicly acknowledge the everyday heroes.

SYNTHESIS:

Before Your Visit:

1. Discuss the issue of planning for a March on Washington. Have students write press releases, letters to key politicians and scripts for phone calls that they would need to make if they were the actual planners.
2. Have students do the planning for a March on Washington from the perspective of their “unidentified person.” For example, here are some questions for a female participant/marcher:

What did she have to do to prepare for the March?

How far in advance did she have to plan to have enough vacation days from her job?

What kind of preparations did she have to make for her family?

Where did she stay when she arrived in D.C.

How much money did she have to save to be a participant in the March?

After Your Visit:

1. Students create a “Junior” King Center for their school community by using the resources and material they gathered in their activities on the March on Washington.

2. Students create a “Dreaming On” King Center using contemporary issues of concern to them (students can refer back to their personal dreams for universal human rights).

REFERENCES:

Print:

I Have A Dream: An Illustrated Edition

Online:

African American Odyssey: Civil Rights Era (The Library Congress' Website)

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aaothml/exhibit/aopart9.html>.

The March On Washington

<http://www.mecca.org/~crights/wash.html>.

Video:

“Capture the Dream”

African American Historical Fiction

Berry, James. (1992). **Ajeemah and His Son**. HarperCollins.

Collier, James & Collier, Christopher. (1984). **Who is Carrie?** New York: Delacorte.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. (1997). **The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963**. Bantam Books.

Hamilton, Virginia. (1993). **Zeely**. Illustrated by Simeon Shimin. New York: Aladdin Books.

Hamilton, Virginia. (1993). **The Planet of Junior Brown**. New York: Aladdin Books.

Lasky, Kathryn. (1996). **True North: A Novel of the Underground Railroad**. Blue Sky.

Miller, E. Ethelbert. (1994). **In Search of Color Everywhere: A Collection of African-American Poetry**. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang.

Morin, Isobel. (1981). **Women Who Reformed Politics**.

Taylor, Mildred. (1987). **Let the Circle Be Unbroken**. New York: Dial Press.

Taylor, Mildred. (1987). **The Friendship** Pictures by Max Ginsburg. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Taylor, Mildred. (1989). **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**. Frontispiece by Jerry Pinkney. Santa Barbara, CA: Cornerstone Books.

Attachment 2

Students fill in graphic organizers to reflect details about their unidentified person (marcher) included in their historical fiction narratives.

