



KVIE Documentary Lesson Plan – Grade 11

African Americans in California's Heartland – The Civil Rights Era

The Civil Rights Era was one of the most tumultuous times in American history. African Americans in particular began demanding equality in education, housing and employment. In this second edition of an original KVIE documentary series on the history of African Americans in California's heartland, this program explores how the civil rights era affected change in the Sacramento region.

http://www.kvie.org/programs/kvie/viewfinder/aach_II/default.htm

THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT

California History Standard Addressed:

11.10.5 Discuss the diffusion of the civil rights movement of African Americans from the churches of the rural South and the urban North, including the resistance to racial desegregation in Little Rock and Birmingham, and how the advances influenced the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of the quests of American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans for civil rights and equal opportunities.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore the philosophy of the nonviolent civil rights movement.
- Understand the philosophy and actions of the Black Panther Party.
- Compare and contrast the nonviolent civil rights movement and the Black Panther Party.

Time: 2 days, assuming one-hour periods

Note to Teacher: This lesson assumes that the class has already studied the struggles and achievements of the nonviolent civil rights movement.

Day #1

1. Ask students to recap some of the major obstacles and struggles of the civil rights movement. Ask them how the movement dealt with the challenges presented them. Be sure that someone mentions that they remained nonviolent in the face of violence.
2. Have students complete a free-write on the following questions:

- a. Why did people choose to be nonviolent in the face of such extreme violence?
 - b. In the context of a struggle for civil rights, could you be hit without hitting back? Why/why not?
 - c. Is nonviolent resistance a weak method of fighting or a strong one? Give three reasons to support your answer.
3. Discuss their answers.
 4. Explain that the class will now read from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s writings to gain a better understanding of why those in the movement remained nonviolent. Have students read the excerpts from *Letter From Birmingham Jail* and *An Experiment in Love*. Ask them to create a T-chart in their notes, like the one below:

Goals to achieve	Methods to achieve goals

5. Discuss their analysis of the readings. Pay particularly close attention to the idea of creating tension in a community that cannot be ignored, a tension that will lead to negotiation. Also draw out a discussion around how King chooses to view and treat those who oppose the civil rights movement.

Day #2

1. Explain that the class will be exploring the Black Panthers, an organization fighting for civil rights in a militant way. Students should be encouraged to compare and contrast the Panthers' philosophy and actions with those of the nonviolent civil rights movement they have studied thus far.
2. Have students make a chart like they created yesterday in order to take notes on the movie clip they will be watching.

Goals to achieve	Methods to achieve goals

3. Watch the first 8 minutes and 36 seconds of Part 2 of KVIE's documentary, *African Americans in California's Heartland*. Students should fill out their charts as they watch.
4. Discuss their analysis of the clip. Ask how they think people both inside and outside the Black community reacted to the images of Black men with guns storming the capitol building in Sacramento. Be sure to distinguish between their militancy and actual violence.
 (**Extension activity: Have students research the extent to which the Panthers actually participated in violence.) Compare and contrast images of the Panthers with images of the nonviolent civil rights movement. Also, emphasize the diversity of programs the Panthers created. Show the students the list of programs at the end of the 10 Point Plan as outlined by Bobby Seale by clicking the Multimedia tab on the right side of the film's website:
http://www.kvie.org/programs/kvie/viewfinder/aach_11/default.htm
5. Have students read the Black Panthers' 10 Point Plan at the above site.
6. In pairs, students should closely analyze two points of the plan using a chart they create like the one below:

<i>What did they want? BE SPECIFIC!</i>	<i>Problems they see facing the Black community</i>	<i>Would you support giving in to these demands? WHY/WHY NOT?</i>

7. Have pairs share their analyses until the class has discussed the whole 10 Point Plan.
8. Have students complete a free-write answering the following questions:

- a. To what extent are the goals of the nonviolent civil rights movement and the goals of the Black Panthers similar? To what extent are their goals different?
- b. To what extent are the methods used by the nonviolent civil rights movement and those used by the Black Panthers similar? To what extent are their methods different?
- c. How does the tone of the Black Panthers 10 Point Plan differ from the tone of Dr. King in the excerpts from *Letter from Birmingham Jail* and *An Experiment in Love*?
- d. What type of people would be more drawn to the nonviolent civil rights movement? The Panthers? Why?
- e. Which movement do you think would be more effective in achieving their goals? Why?
- f. To which movement would you be more drawn? Why?

9. Discuss their answers.

Web Resources:

KVIE related documentaries

<http://www.kvie.org/programs/kvie/viewfinder/season5.htm>

The King Center

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

PBS African American World

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/reference/articles/black_power.html

PBS Eyes on the Prize: American's Civil Rights Movement 1954-1985

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/story/19_nbpc.html

Excerpts from Martin Luther King Jr. Writings

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Philosophy of Nonviolence

Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored... We must see the need of having nonviolent [agitators] to create the kind of tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. So the purpose of the direct action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation...

-Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963

The use of violence in our struggle would be both impractical and immoral. To meet hate with retaliatory hate would do nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love; we must meet physical force with soul force. Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man, but to win his friendship...

[Another] characteristic of the nonviolent method is that the attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. The tension is, at bottom, between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness... We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust...

The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives...

-Martin Luther King Jr., *An Experiment in Love*, 1958