

Author of Lesson: Beth Banning, bbanning@whitinsvillechristian.org

Group Concept: Leadership

Subject/Course: Grade 5 Social Studies, ELA

Lesson Plan Title: Words Matter



Young Boys Harassing the Horace Baker Family, the First African American Family to Move into the All White Delmar Village Neighborhood of Folcroft, Pennsylvania. Washington, D.C., 30 Aug. 1963.

The words these boys are using are not recorded for us, but the expression on their faces speaks loudly of their hatred. We can only imagine what it must have felt like to be the recipients of this hateful action. The family was prevented from moving in to their house for two days. The fact that this photo was taken in a northern state, Pennsylvania, makes it clear that racial discrimination was widespread beyond the South. However, in the South, particularly in Alabama, such hatred was common, not only from ordinary citizens, but from those in leadership positions.

Brief narrative

During the civil rights movement, many episodes of white violence against the African American community illustrate a climate of terror. In Montgomery, African Americans weary of unfair treatment boycotted the busses and faced the reactionary bombing of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s house. In Birmingham, Eugene "Bull" Connor employed fire hoses and police dogs to attack children who were marching for equality. Months later, "Dynamite Bob" Chambliss and others bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church, killing four girls. In Selma, marchers who crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, en route to Montgomery, were forced back by police armed with cattle prods and tear gas. Progress toward change was often slow and painful, but resilient leadership made change happen.

The question remains, how did such a system of racism and oppression thrive, especially in Alabama, during the 1950s and 1960s? People in power, like Governor George Wallace, Birmingham Director of Public Safety Eugene "Bull" Connor, and men like "Dynamite Bob" Chambliss created a climate of fear and oppression both through their words and actions. This lesson examines key events that illustrate the climate of violence and terror and analyzes several examples of the rhetoric of hate and white supremacy.

Guiding Questions

Who has the power in these events? Who doesn't have power?

What do the protesters want?

What do the people in power want?

How do leaders' words shape a society?

Learning Objectives

Develop a working idea of what discrimination is and what it feels like.

Analyze selected primary source photographs of civil rights demonstrations.

Evaluate actions of groups or individuals represented in photographs.

Analyze the content of quotes by civil rights leaders.

Identify words and phrases used to incite division and hate among people.

Identify words and phrases used to motivate peaceful, persevering protest.

Describe the role of leaders' words in shaping culture.

Class Periods: Plan on two 40 minute periods

Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably

- Massachusetts State Standard:

5.T5.7 Describe living conditions for African Americans following the Civil War, during the Jim Crow era, including limited educational and economic opportunities, separate public facilities (e.g., segregated schools and colleges, neighborhoods, sections in buses, trains, restaurants, and movie theaters), the organized perpetuation of white supremacist beliefs and the threat of violence from extra-legal groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Describe the role African American churches, civic organizations, and newspapers played in supporting and unifying African American communities.

DAY ONE

Preparation Activity: Simulation of Inequality (adapted from *Social Studies, Literacy, and Social Justice in the Common Core Classroom*, by Ruchi Agarwal-Rangnath, page 25):

1. Give each student a number (1-?)

2. Assign a simple art activity (any that fits with what you're doing in any other subject)
3. Have students with odd numbers gather to work at tables with abundant, new, special materials.
4. Have students with even numbers gather to work at tables with broken, old, junky materials.
5. Allow both groups to work for about 10 minutes.
6. Discuss:
 - a. How did that feel? (ask each group and note differences)
 - b. How did you feel about me the teacher when you heard the rules?
 - c. Was what I did fair? Why? Why not?
7. Define discrimination as unequal treatment based on a category you belong to instead of treating people as individuals.
8. Connect to the lesson: "When people are being treated differently because of the color of their skin, that is discrimination. And it feels unfair. We're going to think about that today in this lesson. I will show you some pictures that should help you see how they felt and how they responded."

Photograph Analysis Activity

1. Give each student a sheet for [Analyzing Photos & Prints](#)
2. Explain how the sheet will be filled out. Create an anchor chart with guiding questions or show the [analysis tool](#) under the document camera.
3. Form groups of about 3-4 students, as appropriate, to examine and analyze their assigned **photo** (see media and materials resources below). Let them know that they'll be sharing their work with the class when done.
4. Allow students about 5-10 minutes to complete the sheet in small groups. Remind students to refer to the anchor chart and circulate to assist as needed.
5. Reconvene the whole group. Ask a spokesperson from each group to share what they observed, their reflections, and anything they wonder about.

6. Ask students to identify commonalities and/or differences among the pictures.
7. Discuss the first three guiding questions, leading students to discover appropriate answers:
 - a. Who has the power in these events? *The white people* Who doesn't have power?
The black people
 - b. What do you think the black people want? *To be treated fairly, or similar answer*
 - c. What do the white people want? *To be in charge, keep control, or similar answer*
8. Ask students to wonder how things got to be this way? What was happening that allowed this kind of discrimination and violence? Ask student to wonder about that question in preparation for tomorrow's activity.

DAY TWO

Teacher Preparation/ Materials: Cut apart the strips from the sheet of [quotes](#). Have a supply of index cards for the formative assessment exit ticket.

1. Review yesterday's lesson about discrimination and violence in the face of protest.
2. Ask students if they have any thoughts about yesterday's closing question: What was happening to create the situations in the pictures? Tell them that today we will look at just one piece of the answer, the words that leaders used to shape the culture.
3. Put students in pairs. Give each pair/group one quote. Have them read their assigned text carefully, looking for the tone used and the mood established.
4. When everyone is ready, have them move to opposite sides of the room: one side for positive tone/mood, the other side for negative.
5. Prepare for discussion: Tell students that they will be asked to write an answer to these questions at the end of the discussion: What kinds of things do leaders say to encourage discrimination? What kinds of things do leaders say to encourage equality?
6. When everyone is in place, have them read the quote aloud and explain why they are standing where they are. For each "negative" quote, discuss briefly, helping student to see name-calling, encouragement of violence/discrimination, or lack of sympathy for

those who are oppressed. For each “positive” quote, discuss briefly, helping students to see encouragement to love, be patient and resilient, and remain steadfast for equality. Follow up on each quote by asking students what they think people might do in the days/weeks following the leaders’ words.

7. Give partners a few moments to pair/share in preparation for writing their assessment answers.

Formative Assessment

Exit ticket: Have students write one-sentence answers to the following question:

How do leaders’ words shape society? (Be specific.)

Lesson Extensions

- Following lessons will delve into the stories represented by the pictures from day one.
- Look at quotes and pictures from more contemporary speakers.
- Create a project to call for careful use of words: consider a song/poem/rap, bumper sticker/sign, or other project that appeals to the group of students

References

Carter, Dan T. *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*. Louisiana State University Press, 2013.

Manis, Andrew Michael. *A Fire You Can't Put out: the Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth*. University of Alabama Press, 2002.

McKinstry, Carolyn Maull, and Denise George. *While the World Watched: a Birmingham Bombing Survivor Comes of Age during the Civil Rights Movement*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2013.

Materials and Media (supported files)

[Quote Resource Sheet](#)

[Analyzing Photos & Prints](#)

[analysis tool](#)

Photos: [Birmingham Police with Dogs](#)

[Freedom Riders](#)

[Birmingham Fire Hoses](#)

[Selma March](#)

[16th Street Bombing](#)

[Children Attacked by Fire Hoses](#)