



# K-12 Civic Learning Opportunities: Black History Month

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month. It is a chance to learn about leaders and events important to the history and progress of African-Americans in the United States. One civic learning opportunity related to Black History Month voting rights. A large part of the civil rights movement was dedicated to establishing voting rights for all Americans.

### Background

The Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution guaranteed voting rights would not be denied “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude”. It was made official in 1870, after the Civil War.

In some states, African-Americans voted and were elected to local, state and federal offices. In other states, particularly in the South and in other areas, state governments enacted voting laws that required citizens to own property, pay a special tax or pass a literacy test to be eligible to vote. This meant that many people, including poor or uneducated African-Americans, were unable to register to vote.

Over time, civil rights supporters worked to overturn these voting requirements. This was done through activism, protests and other methods of communication and advocacy. The people involved included both famous leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. as well as other private citizens who wanted to make a difference.

In 1965, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. It outlawed the literacy requirements for voter registration. It also provided federal protection to help ensure that voters were given equal opportunity to register and vote.

### Objective and Activities

Use the context of Black History Month to learn and think critically about voting rights. A variety of activities are available. Modify based on your grade level or subject area. For example, you can focus students on the community, North Carolina, the United States or another country. Connect this to history, literature or in a global community. There are many opportunities for writing, reading, small group discussion and oral presentation. The activity aligns with several core standards. Skills include:

Critical thinking	History	Collaboration	Group discussion
Analysis	Writing	Civic leadership	Connecting historic events, personal knowledge, current events or global life
Reading	Civic literacy	Government	
	Media literacy	Effective communication	



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## Learning Activities

### CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE

Compare and contrast the roles of individuals, leaders and how leaders are selected at different levels from student council to global cities and countries. What are the differences and similarities? Who can make changes? How does it happen?

- Student Council
- School Board
- City or town
- County
- State
- United States
- Global
- Other?

### WRITE THE HEADLINE

If you were reporting on civil rights, including voting, what would your headline say? Search news headlines in history. Were you close? Were they right? Why or why not?

Read headlines about the address from different news sources. What do they say? How are they similar or different? Why?

A good resource is <http://www.ipl.org/div/farq/historyFARO.html> , or even Google. Use important dates in the Civil Rights Movement in 1965 including March 7 (March on Selma), March 17 (President Johnson sends Voter Rights Act to Congress), and August 6 (when the Voter Rights Act was signed into law).



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## LEADERS, CITIZENS AND COMMUNICATORS

Role-play leaders and citizens involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Possible roles:

- Famous African-American leader such as Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Citizens who want to change voting rights People who want to vote and are not allowed to register
- News reporters from the NY Times, Birmingham (AL) News and a global news source Governor of a Southern State
- President of the United States
- Egyptians in January 2011 who are researching different civil rights movements

### Questions to discuss and think about:

How do the leaders demonstrate their leadership? Are they persuasive? Collaborative? How?

How do the citizens get involved? How do they convey that they want to make a difference, not just trouble?

If you are reporting the news, is your coverage different depending on where you live?

What are a state governor's responsibilities? Does he/she have to work with other governments? Citizens? Leaders? Why or why not?

Why did the President enact the Voting Rights Act? How did he accomplish that task?

If you were working to make a difference this year, would you march and protest? Why or why not?

What are some ways you can make an impact on leaders, policies and decisions?



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## WEB RESOURCES

### Voices of Civil Rights (Library of Congress)

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civilrights/civilrights-home.html>

### Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution (Library of Congress)

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/15thamendment.html>

Reporting Civil Rights: Perspectives from reporters <http://reportingcivilrights.loa.org/>

Voting Rights Act (History.com) <http://www.history.com/topics/voting-rights-act>

### Voting Rights Act (document)

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=100>

### Voting Rights Act (Department of Justice)

[http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro\\_b.php](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_b.php)

This Day in History <http://www.ipl.org/div/farq/historyFARQ.html>

## MORE LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

Kids Voting USA <https://kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum>

- Grades K-2 Wish Tree: Students make wishes for the country regarding changes they would like to see
- Grades 3-5 Non-voter Simulation and Suffrage Timeline: Students explore the concept of voting rights.
- Grades 6-8 Part of the Franchise: Students personalize the history of voting rights.
- High School 1965 Alabama Literacy Test, Voting Rights Act of 1965: Students experience injustice of voter discrimination and explore impact of the Voting Rights Act.

*\* These lessons are provided directly to Charlotte area schools through Kids Voting Mecklenburg, a program of GenerationNation. If your school is in the Charlotte area and you would like a copy emailed to you, contact [info@kidsvoting.org](mailto:info@kidsvoting.org). If you are not in Charlotte or want to download from the web, visit [www.kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum).*



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**Constitutional Rights Foundation** <http://www.crf-usa.org/black-history-month/>

**iCivics** <http://www.icivics.org/curriculum/civil-rights>

**C-SPAN** <http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Topics/CR/Civil-Rights.aspx>

## **Suggested correlations to North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

Teachers are encouraged to align as appropriate to the grade and subject area. The activities are intentionally adaptable to various uses, ages and objectives.

### **Kindergarten**

#### Language Arts

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.01 Use new vocabulary in own speech and writing.

4.02 Use words that name and words that tell action in a variety of simple texts (e.g., oral retelling, written stories, lists, journal entries of personal experiences).

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.

5.02 Use capital letters to write the word I and the first letter in own name.

5.03 Use legible manuscript handwriting.

### **Grade 1**

#### Language Arts

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.04 Extend skills in using oral and written language:

4.06 Compose a variety of products (e.g., stories, journal entries, letters, response logs, simple poems, oral retellings) using a writing process.

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively.

5.04 Use complete sentences to write simple texts.

### **Grade 2**

#### Language Arts

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.04 Use oral communication to identify, organize, and analyze information.

4.08 Write structured, informative presentations and narratives when given help with organization.

4.09 Use media and technology to enhance the presentation of information to an audience for a specific purpose.

Goal 5 The learner will apply grammar and language conventions to communicate effectively

All

### **Grade 3**



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## Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

- 2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, or viewing.
- 2.05 Draw conclusions, make generalizations, gather support by referencing the text.
- 2.06 Summarize main idea(s) from written or spoken texts using succinct language.
- 2.08 Listen actively.

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

- 3.01 Respond to fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes.
- 3.03 Use text and own experiences to verify facts, concepts, and ideas.

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

- 4.03 Share written and oral products in a variety of ways (e.g., discussions, presentations).
- 4.09 Produce work that follows the conventions of particular genres (e.g., personal narrative, short report, friendly letter, directions and instructions).

## Social Studies

Goal 1 The learner will characterize qualities of good citizenship by identifying people who made a difference in the community and other social environments.

- 1.01 Identify and demonstrate characteristics of responsible citizenship and explain how citizen participation can impact changes within a community.
- 1.02 Recognize diverse local, state, and national leaders, past and present, who demonstrate responsible citizenship.
- 1.04 Explain the need for leaders in communities and describe their roles and responsibilities.
- 1.05 Suggest responsible courses of action in given situations and assess the consequences of irresponsible behavior.

Goal 7 The learner will analyze the role of real heroes in shaping the culture of communities.

- 7.01 Identify the deeds of local and global leaders.

## **Grade 4**

### Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

- 2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by: setting a purpose using prior knowledge and text information, making predictions, formulating questions, locating relevant information, making connections with previous experiences, info and ideas.
- 2.05 Make inferences, draw conclusions, make generalizations, support by referencing text.
- 2.06 Summarize major points from nonfiction text(s) to clarify and retain info and ideas.
- 2.07 Determine usefulness of information and ideas consistent with purpose.
- 2.08 Verify the meaning or accuracy of the author's statement(s) by referencing the text or other resources.
- 2.09 Listen actively.

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

- 3.03 Consider the ways language and visuals bring characters to life, enhance plot development, and produce a response.



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3.04 Make informed judgments about television and film/video productions.

3.05 Analyze and integrate information from one or more sources to expand understanding of text including graphs, charts, and/or maps.

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.02 Use oral and written language to: present info and ideas in a clear, concise manner.

## Social Studies

Goal 4 The learner will analyze social and political institutions in North Carolina such as government, education, religion, and family and how they structure society, influence behavior, and respond to human needs.

4.03 Explain the importance of responsible citizenship and identify ways North Carolinians can participate in civic affairs.

## **Grade 5**

### Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will apply strategies and skills to comprehend text that is read, heard, and viewed.

2.02 Interact with the text before, during, and after reading, listening, and viewing by: making predictions, formulating questions, supporting answers from textual information, previous experience, and/or other sources, drawing on personal, literary, and cultural understandings, seeking additional information, making connections with previous experiences, information, and ideas.

2.05 Evaluate inferences, conclusions, and generalizations and provide evidence by referencing the text(s).

2.07 Evaluate the usefulness and quality of information and ideas based on purpose, experiences, text(s), and graphics.

2.08 Explain and evaluate relationships that are: problem-solution

2.09 Listen actively and critically.

Goal 3 The learner will make connections through the use of oral language, written language, and media and technology.

3.02 Make connections within and between texts by recognizing similarities and differences based on a common lesson, theme, or message.

3.04 Make informed judgments about television, radio, video/film productions, other electronic mediums and/or print formats.

3.05 Integrate main idea and supporting details from multiple sources to expand understanding of texts.

3.07 Make informed judgments about: bias, propaganda, stereotyping, media techniques.

Goal 4 The learner will apply strategies and skills to create oral, written, and visual texts.

4.03 Make oral and written presentations to inform or persuade selecting vocab for impact.

## Social Studies

Goal 2 The learner will analyze political and social institutions in North America and examine how these institutions respond to human needs, structure society, and influence behavior.

2.01 Analyze major documents that formed the foundations of the American idea of constitutional government.

2.02 Describe the similarities and differences among the local, state, and national levels of government in the United States and explain their legislative, executive, and judicial functions.

2.03 Recognize how the United States government has changed over time.



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2.04 Compare and contrast the government of the United States with the governments of Canada, Mexico, and selected countries of Central America.

Goal 4 The learner will trace key developments in United States history and describe their impact on the land and people of the nation and its neighboring countries.

4.05 Describe the impact of wars and conflicts on United States citizens, including but not limited to, the Civil War...

4.06 Evaluate the effectiveness of civil rights and social movements throughout United States' history that reflect the struggle for equality and constitutional rights for all citizens.

## **Suggested correlations to North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

*Teachers are encouraged to align as appropriate to the grade and subject area. The activities are intentionally adaptable to various uses, ages and objectives.*

### **Grade 6**

#### Language Arts

Goal 2 The learner will explore and analyze information from a variety of sources.

2.01 Explore informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed.

Goal 3 The learner will examine the foundation of argument.

3.01 Explore argumentative works that are read, heard, and/or viewed.

#### Social Studies - Use to make knowledge connections, compare and contrast

Goal 9 The learner will analyze the different forms of gov't developed in South America and Europe.

9.04 Describe how different governments in South America and Europe select leaders and establish laws in comparison to the United States and analyze the strengths and weaknesses.

Goal 10 The learner will compare the rights and civic responsibilities of individuals in political structures in South America and Europe.

10.01 Trace the development of relationships between individuals and their governments in selected cultures of South America and Europe, and evaluate the changes that have evolved.

### **Grade 7**

#### Language Arts

Goal 1 The learner will use language to express individual perspectives in response to personal, social, cultural, and historical issues.

All objectives

Goal 2 The learner will synthesize and use information from a variety of sources.

2.01 Respond to informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed.

Goal 3 The learner will refine the understanding and use of argument.

3.01 Explore and analyze argumentative works that are read, heard and/or viewed.

Goal 4 The learner will refine critical thinking skills, create criteria to evaluate print/non-print material.

All objectives

#### Social Studies - Use to make knowledge connections, compare and contrast

Goal 9 The learner will analyze the different forms of government developed in Africa, Asia, Australia.

9.04 Describe how different governments in Africa, Asia, and Australia select leaders and establish laws in comparison to the United States and analyze the strengths and weaknesses.

Goal 10 The learner will compare the rights and civic responsibilities of individuals in political structures in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

10.01 Trace the development of relationships between individuals and their governments in selected cultures of Africa, Asia, Australia, and evaluate changes that have evolved over time.



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## **Grade 8**

### Language Arts

Goal 1 The learner will use language to express individual perspectives through analysis of personal, social, cultural, and historical issues.

All objectives

Goal 2 The learner will use and evaluate information from a variety of resources.

2.01 Analyze and evaluate informational materials that are read, heard, and/or viewed.

2.02 Use multiple sources of print and non-print information to explore and create research products in both written and presentational forms by:

Goal 3 The learner will continue to refine the understanding and use of argument.

3.01 Explore and evaluate argumentative works that are read, heard and/or viewed by:

All points, especially public documents

3.03 Evaluate and create arguments that persuade.

Goal 4 The learner will continue to refine critical thinking skills and create criteria to evaluate print and non-print materials.

All objectives

### Social Studies

Goal 8 The learner will evaluate the impact of demographic, economic, technological, social, and political developments in North Carolina since the 1970's.

8.03 Describe the impact of state and national issues on the political climate of North Carolina.

Goal 9 The learner will explore examples of and opportunities for active citizenship, past and present, at the local and state levels.

9.01 Describe contemporary political, economic, and social issues at the state and local levels and evaluate their impact on the community.

## **Suggested correlations to North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

*Teachers are encouraged to align as appropriate to the grade and subject area. The activities are intentionally adaptable to various uses, ages and objectives.*

### **Civics & Economics**

Goal 1 The learner will investigate the foundations of the American political system and explore basic values and principles of American democracy.

1.08 Compare the American system of government to other forms of government.

Goal 2 The learner will analyze how the government established by the United States Constitution embodies the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy.

2.03 Explain how the United States Constitution grants and limits the authority of public officials and government agencies.

2.04 Describe how the United States Constitution may be changed and analyze the impact of specific changes.



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Goal 4 The learner will explore active roles as a citizen at the local, state, national levels of gov't.

4.02 Describe the election process and the qualifications and procedures for voting.

4.04 Demonstrate active methods of promoting and inhibiting change through political action.

Goal 5 The learner will explain how the political and legal systems provide a means to balance competing interests and resolve conflicts.

5.01 Evaluate the role of debate, consensus, compromise, negotiation in resolving conflicts.

5.06 Analyze roles of individual citizens, political parties, the media, and other interest groups in public policy decisions, dispute resolution, and government action.

Goal 6 The learner will explain why laws are needed and how they are enacted, implemented, and enforced at the national, state, and local levels.

6.05 Investigate the role and responsibility of government to inform the citizenry.

Goal 10 The learner will develop, defend, and evaluate positions on issues regarding the personal responsibilities of citizens in the American constitutional democracy.

10.01 Explain the distinction between personal and civic responsibilities and the tensions that may arise between them.

10.02 Develop, defend, and evaluate positions on issues regarding diversity in American life.

10.05 Describe examples of recurring public problems and issues.

## US History

Goal 11 Recovery, Prosperity, and Turmoil (1945-1980) - The learner will trace economic, political, and social developments and assess their significance for the lives of Americans during this time period.

11.02 Trace major events of the Civil Rights Movement and evaluate its impact.

11.06 Identify political events and the actions and reactions of the government officials and citizens, and assess the social and political consequences.

Goal 12 The United States since the Vietnam War (1973-present) - The learner will identify and analyze trends in domestic and foreign affairs of the United States during this time period.

12.02 Evaluate the impact of recent constitutional amendments, court rulings, and federal legislation on United States' citizens.

12.04 Identify and assess the impact of social, political, and cultural changes in the US.

12.05 Assess the impact of growing racial and ethnic diversity in American society.