

HIGH SCHOOL LESSON PLAN

TOPIC

The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

LEVEL

High School

OBJECTIVES

While reading Dr. King's biography and engaging in teacher-directed activities, students will:

- define terms associated with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.
- evaluate the effectiveness of strategies that Dr. King used to bring about change.
- compare African American life before 1968 with African American life today.
- recognize persuasive elements in Dr. King's speeches.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Guided Reading

Before students read "The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," list the words below on the board.

- reformer
- Jim Crow
- segregation
- civil rights
- nonviolence
- boycott
- sit-in
- protester
- march
- integration

Tell students to look for the words as they read the biography. Have them use context to figure out the words' meanings and write the meanings on a sheet of paper. Then instruct them to look up the words in a dictionary and compare their meanings with the dictionary definitions.

Cooperative Learning Activity

After students read “The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” organize the class into groups. Have each group prepare a chart like the one below.

Effectiveness of the Civil Rights Movement				
Strategy	Date and Place	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome	Effectiveness

Tell the members of each group to identify strategies, such as boycotts and sit-ins, that Dr. King and other civil rights workers used to bring about change.

Have them list these strategies in the first column. In the second column, have them list a place and date for each strategy. Next, have them decide what expected outcome the civil rights workers hoped to achieve at each place and date, listing these outcomes in the third column. Then instruct them to describe the results—or actual outcome—of each strategy in the fourth column. Finally, in the fifth column, tell them to rank the effectiveness of each strategy based on a comparison of the expected and actual outcomes.

Critical Thinking Activity

Ask students to fold a sheet of paper to create two columns. Tell them to write “Before 1968” at the top of the first column and “Today” at the top of the second column. Next, have them find passages from “The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.” that describe African American life before 1968. For example, students might include “These laws forced African Americans to wait at the back of the store, sit at the back of the bus, go to separate schools, and live in separate neighborhoods.” Instruct students to copy the passages in the first column. Then have students visit the Web sites created for and about African Americans. Tell them to look for passages that describe life for African Americans today and to copy these passages in the second column. Finally, have students write a brief paragraph comparing the two periods based on the passages.

Enrichment Activity

Print copies of “I Have a Dream” and distribute them to students. Explain that effective speakers use several techniques to sway listeners’ emotions and inspire them to action. List the following persuasive strategies used by Dr. King:

- metaphor, or a figure of speech in which the speaker replaces a word, phrase, or description with another to suggest a similarity between the two as in “seared in the flames of withering injustice”
- repetition of a phrase, as with “One hundred years later” in the second paragraph
- alliteration, or neighboring words that start with the same consonant, as in “sweltering summer”
- contrast, as in “Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning.”
- rhetorical questions answered by the speaker, as in “When will you be satisfied?”
- appeals to the senses, as in “Let freedom ring”

Ask students to find more examples of each strategy in the speech and to share them with the class.

ASSESSMENT

Have students choose a cause, such as the abolition of the death penalty or the elimination of drunk driving. Next, ask them to outline a plan to further the cause using Dr. King’s nonviolent strategies. Then tell them to write a speech to persuade listeners to support their cause. Have them use techniques that Dr. King used in the speech “I Have a Dream.”