

Rise Up: The Movement that Changed America

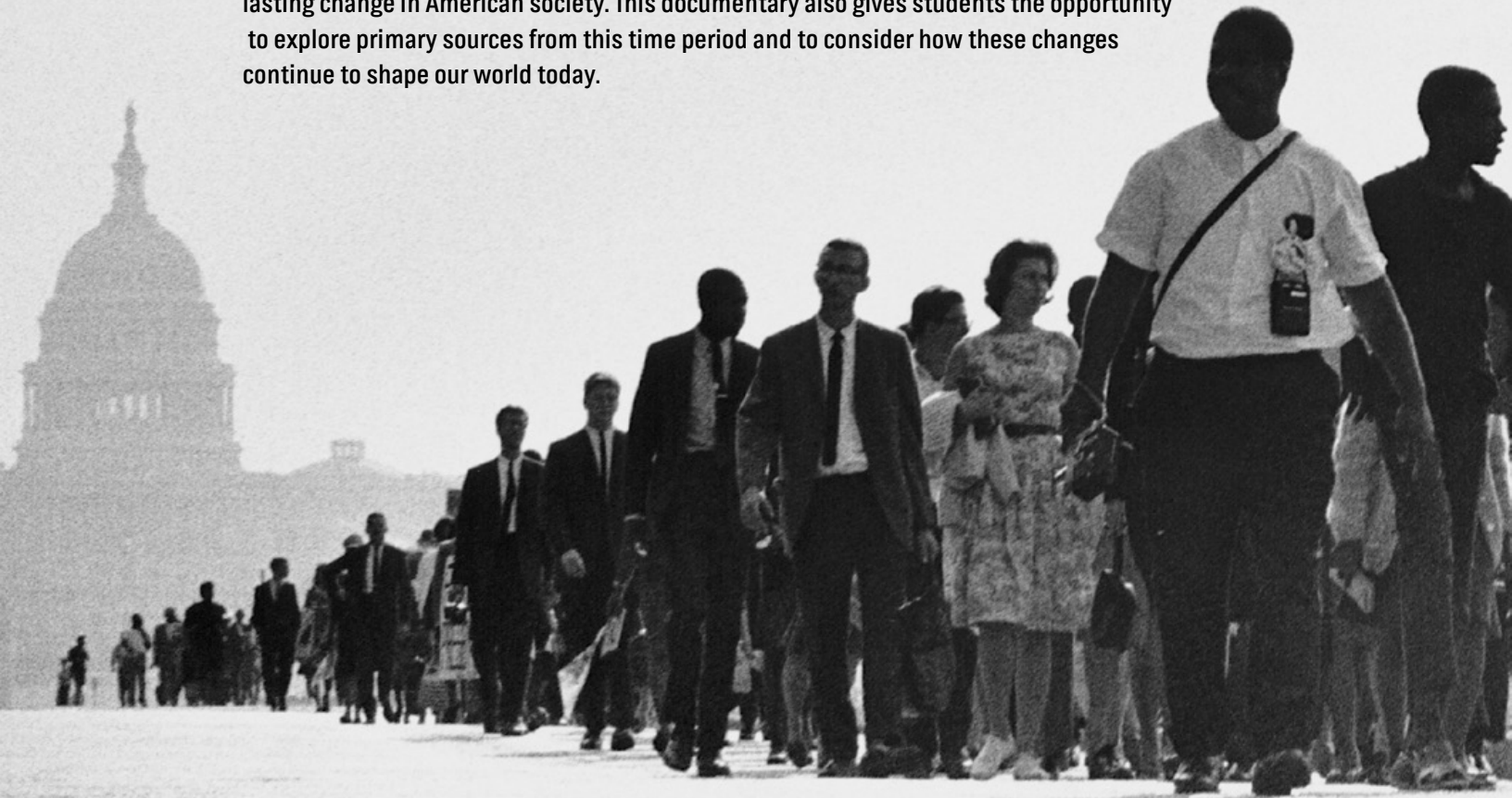
Discussion Guide

"Whatever my individual desires were to be free, I was not alone. There were many others."

– Rosa Parks

Fifty years after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., HISTORY® presents Rise Up: The Movement that Changed America, a one-hour documentary executive produced by LeBron James and Maverick Carter for SpringHill Entertainment and Emmy-Award winning filmmaker Stanley Nelson. This documentary follows the inner workings of the civil rights movement and four legislative decisions that resulted, including the Montgomery Campaign which declared that segregated public transportation was in violation of the 14th Amendment, the Birmingham Campaign which led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Selma Campaign which led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Chicago Campaign which led to the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Interviewees include Civil Rights movement activists, politicians and historians, such as: President Bill Clinton; Jesse Jackson; Andrew Young; Sen. Cory Booker; Sen. Doug Jones; Harry Belafonte and more. Students will learn about the key strategies of the civil rights movement which resulted in lasting change in American society. This documentary also gives students the opportunity to explore primary sources from this time period and to consider how these changes continue to shape our world today.



RISE UP

THE MOVEMENT THAT CHANGED AMERICA

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HISTORY.

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Rise Up: The Movement that Changed America would be useful for History, American Culture, African American History, and Political Science courses. It is appropriate for high school and college students.

Watch a preview and learn more about this documentary:

<https://www.history.com/specials/rise-up-the-movement-that-changed-america>

TERMS TO DEFINE:

Using a dictionary (www.merriam-webster.com) and an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms:

Segregation

Integration

Grassroots

Boycott

Jim Crow

Mobilization

Injunction

Arbitrary

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What role did everyday people play in helping make the Montgomery Bus Boycott a success? Why do you think they were successful?
2. What were some of the goals of the Birmingham campaign, and what were some of the tactics used to achieve these goals? (Discuss the difference between goals and tactics.)
3. Why did activists in Birmingham decide to launch the Children's Crusade? Why was this such a momentous decision?
4. Young people put "their bodies on the line" during the civil rights movement. What did that mean then? What did they risk and why were they willing to take those risks?
5. What role do you think the media played during the civil rights movement?
6. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about the difference between "de facto" and "de jure" segregation. Look up the meaning of these terms and discuss the difference. How did the Civil Rights movement change both forms of segregation in the U.S.?
7. Why do you think civil rights leaders decided on a policy of nonviolence? Why was this philosophy so important?
8. What do you think were the key factors that led to the 1964 Civil Rights Act?
9. Who were Fred Shuttlesworth and Amelia Boynton? Why do you think it is important to remember leaders like them?
10. What were the goals of the Selma march? Why do you think the marchers forged on despite resistance to their movement?
11. Why was the Fair Housing Act such a landmark decision for African Americans?
12. Sen. Cory Booker says in this documentary, "Change doesn't come from Washington, it comes to Washington." What do you think this means? In what ways has change come to Washington since the civil rights movement?

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

1. **14th Amendment.** The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution framed the civil rights of Americans and established the importance of "equal protection of the laws." View the full text of this amendment here: <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=43> Discuss the meaning of "due process" and write a short essay about why this concept was integral to the civil rights movement.
2. **Civil Rights Act of 1964.** Read the full text of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97> Summarize this act in bullet points or essay format. What were the key components of the act?
3. **Voting Rights Act of 1965.** You can read the full text of the Voting Rights Act here: <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=100> In small groups, discuss the importance of this act. How do the issues covered in this act still resonate today?
4. **Fair Housing Act.** Read a short article about the Fair Housing Act here: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fair-housing-act> Consider the ramifications of this act. Why was it a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement?

PRIMARY SOURCE EXCERPT:

LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL, DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Birmingham, Alabama became a flashpoint for the Civil Rights Movement in 1963 when demonstrators protesting segregation were arrested for being in the streets without a permit. On April 12th of that year, Dr. King was arrested and put in solitary confinement. Alabama church leaders published a negative letter in The New York Times in the wake of these events, accusing King and his followers of creating chaos in the city. King penned his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in response, explaining his philosophy of social change. Below is an excerpt from this letter, followed by discussion questions.

"Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right." – April 16, 1963. ©The Estate of Martin Luther King Jr

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think Dr. King means when he says that time can be used destructively or constructively?
2. Why did he believe that the Civil Rights Movement was an example of using time constructively?
3. How do you interpret the phrase "human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability"? Can you think of an example to support your answer?
4. Why do you think Dr. King decided to write this letter? Why do you think it is still remembered for being an important document?

STUDENT RESPONSE WORKSHEET

What did you find most interesting or shocking about this documentary?

What impact do you think the civil rights movement had on America and on the world?

What words come to mind when you think of the civil rights movement?

How do you think this documentary is relevant today?

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

"We were told in some of the mass meetings that the day would come when we could really do something about all of these inequities that we were experiencing. And we were calling it D-Day. That was May 2, 1963," remembers Janice Kelsey.

Kelsey was one of thousands of young people who participated in a series of non-violent demonstrations known as the Children's Crusade in Birmingham, Alabama, during the first week of May 1963. For many African-American children in Birmingham, the Civil Rights Movement was already part of their lives. They had witnessed their parents involvement through mass meetings organized at churches like the 16th Street Baptist Church. While many parents and Civil Rights leaders were cautious about involving young people in the protests, it turned out that the brave actions of these children helped make lasting change in Birmingham at a key turning point in the movement.

View this article to read more about the Children's Crusade:

<https://www.biography.com/news/black-history-birmingham-childrens-crusade-1963-video>

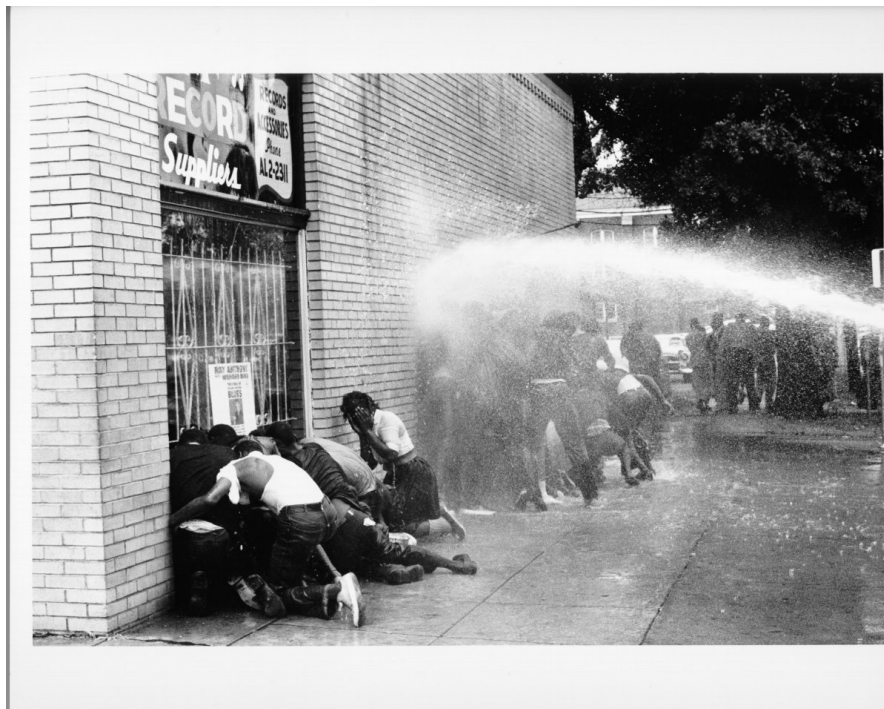
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think some parents would not have wanted their children to participate in the Civil Rights Movement? Why do you think so many children decided to participate despite the risks?
2. Do you think students today face any challenges equivalent to those experienced by young people in these videos?

Related videos:

[Sheyann Webb: Smallest Freedom Fighter](#)

[Children's Crusade of 1963](#)



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. **Key Moments in Civil Rights History.** Working individually or in small groups, create a timeline of the key events featured in this series: Montgomery Bus Boycott, Children's Crusade, 16th St. Baptist Church Bombing, March from Selma to Montgomery. Students should also include 10-12 additional events from Civil Rights history on their timelines such as: Brown v. Board of Education, Greensboro Lunch Counter Sit-ins, March on Washington, Civil Rights Act (1964), Freedom Summer, Voting Rights Act (1965). Visit this timeline to get started: <https://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement-timeline>
2. **The Civil Rights Act of 1964: In Depth.** HISTORY, together with the Library of Congress, created a special edition of the Idea Book For Educators featuring primary sources, activities, and oral history guidelines. Visit http://ideabook.aetncsg.com/Archives/Idea_Book_Civil_Rights_Edition.pdf to download this special issue.
3. **Eyewitness History:** One of the most powerful ways to learn more about history is to talk to those who have lived through events from the past. Locate someone in your family, neighborhood, or school who lived through this era and interview them about their memories of the civil rights movement. For instructions on conducting and transcribing an interview, consult oral history guidelines online at: <https://cdn.watch.aetnd.com/prod.cdn.watch.aetnd.com.s3.amazonaws.com/sites/2/2017/03/OralHistoryGuidelines.pdf>
4. **Histories Heroes.** There were many people throughout the country who contributed to the civil rights movement and helped bring about change. Research another participant or leader in the civil rights movement using books or the Internet. Using PowerPoint or poster boards, create a visual biography of this person. You can include relevant dates, images, quotes and publications. Share your discovery with your classmates or group.

RELATED WEBSITES:

Official show site:

<https://www.history.com/specials/rise-up-the-movement-that-changed-america/about>

Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture:

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/>

Read more about the civil rights movement:

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>

Resources from the ADL:

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/civil-rights-movement>