



A Questlove Jawn

Summer of Soul

(...OR, WHEN THE REVOLUTION COULD NOT BE TELEVISED)





1969: A Unique Year

Enduring Understandings

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were important steps in advancing social and political equality.
- As African Americans achieved political and social equality, correcting economic inequality became a focus.
- African American activism continued past the civil rights movement.

Essential Questions

- How did African Americans pursue social equality?
- How did African Americans pursue political equality?
- How did African Americans pursue economic equality?
- How does *Summer of Soul* highlight these efforts?

Notes to the Teacher

Most of the people attending the Harlem Cultural Festival in 1969 had lived through an important decade in Black history: the rise of the “Black is Beautiful” movement; the founding of the Black Panthers; the civil rights movement; the leadership of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael, among others; and the urban uprisings. After a decade of struggle, taking time to celebrate Black culture was particularly meaningful. In this lesson, students explore the events of this decade that made the music especially significant.

In March of 1964, Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam. Upon his departure, he planned to focus on bringing the plight of people of African descent across the globe to light. His leadership reignited Pan-Africanism, which inspired African Americans to connect with other people of African descent in the diaspora. His call to meet violence with violence also inspired many African American youth as they faced an extremely turbulent and violent existence.

All throughout the 1960s, African Americans sought to hold government institutions accountable to the judgments won in court cases. After the Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* (the ruling that allowed “separate but equal” accommodations) in the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, the court decided that schools should desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” This ruling allowed southern states to drag their feet on integrating schools; some even implemented “massive resistance” policies through which they closed schools rather than integrate.

In the 1960s, the courts abandoned the “all deliberate speed” philosophy. A cascade of school integration stories like those of elementary school student Ruby Bridges and college student James Meredith flooded the media. These stories

continued to emphasize the abuses African Americans faced at the hands of government institutions and some whites. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed to challenge the non-enforcement of civil rights cases. The organization galvanized college youth into non-violent social action. In 1961, SNCC organized the Freedom Rides, which challenged segregation on interstate travel.

Before his death, President John F. Kennedy vowed to sign comprehensive civil rights legislation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 represent that promise, although they were signed by President Lyndon Johnson after Kennedy's assassination. These pieces of legislation became the foundation for government response to discrimination and inequality.

As African Americans achieved social and political equality, addressing economic inequality came into focus. Before his death, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. launched a focus on the lives of people living in poverty. King's Poor People's Campaign was intended to put pressure on President Johnson to deliver on his "Great Society" plans and promises.

Dr. King was assassinated before he could carry out his plan, and many cities erupted in violence in response to his murder. Both economic inequality and violence against Blacks spurred unrest within cities. As a part of the campaign to address economic inequality and to provide safety in Black communities, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) emerged as a leading community organization. The Black Panthers adopted a 10-point plan that directed the organization's efforts to address economic inequality and safety. The Black Panthers inspired many young people to action. In addition to the social services the BPP provided, it also elevated Black militarism and echoed Malcolm X's call to meet violence with violence.

Here are some additional resources that might be helpful:

<https://guides.library.plu.edu/c.php?g=316972&p=2117149>

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/?dates=1960-1969&fa=subject:african+american+civil+rights+workers&sb=date>

<https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans>

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

In this lesson students will read, research, and synthesize information about some major events in African American history. Prior to this lesson students should have had exposure to some media literacy lessons about evaluating and interrogating sources. Students will investigate the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and the significance of each event. This lesson can be completed in a physical library as a research activity or as an Internet search activity. Part of the lesson can be completed before viewing the documentary. In addition, students will investigate how the event connects to the *Summer of Soul* documentary. This part should be completed after viewing the documentary.



Common Core Standards addressed by this lesson

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3

Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.10

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/ social studies texts in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Duration of lesson

One or two 90-minute class periods

Assessments

Completion of **Handout 1: Major Events in African American History**

Class discussion

Essay (optional)

Materials needed

Access to computers with internet for research

Classroom projector

Handout 1: Major Events in African American History

Teacher Resource 1: Major Events in African American History (Answer Sheet)

Procedure

1. Distribute copies of **Handout 1: Major Events in African American History**. If students have already watched *Summer of Soul*, explain that they are going to be researching and learning about events that had a tremendous impact on the creation of the Harlem Cultural Festival in 1969.

2. Review the handout with students before they begin.

- a. Introduce the importance of the 1960s for African Americans. Highlight the eight events covered on the grid.
- b. Point out that students will be identifying the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and the significance of each event.
- c. After students have viewed the documentary, ask them to note how each event appears or has an impact in *Summer of Soul*.

3. Complete the first column, Malcolm X leaving the Nation of Islam, with the class to model responses. Go to the website at <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Malcolm-X>. Select students to read sections of the passage aloud. Once the class has read the passage, guide the class through completing the grid for the first column.

The *where* and *when* may require an additional internet search for those details.

4. Once the class has completed the first column together, direct the students to complete the full handout individually, or assign separate groups to complete each topic. Then have students work independently or in groups as you prefer.

5. When the handout has been completed, provide ample time in class for students to share responses. Review and discuss what students discovered for each topic.
6. Hold a class discussion about the chart as a whole, using these questions:
 - a. In what ways were young people at the forefront of change during the civil rights movement and the period that followed? (Segregation was overturned through schools first in *Brown v. Board of Education*; this impacted millions of young people. In addition, most people forget that Dr. King was only 25 years old when he stepped into the spotlight during the Montgomery bus boycott. As the movement gained momentum, young people led protests and activism through numerous organizations like SNCC and CORE. These groups would later form the foundation of groups like the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.)
 - b. What were some of the most important factors that led to the development of a Black Power movement in the mid-1960s? (The Black Power movement grew out of the failure of the United States to provide for tangible social, political, and economic equality for African Americans. African Americans faced resistance as they tried to gain equal education, suffering persistent violence at the hands of police and unequal economic conditions with little remedy in sight. In response, African Americans became more vocal about their presence within the United States and the inequalities that needed to be dealt with.)
7. To wrap up the lesson, ask students to write in their notes three important ways that the music of the Harlem Cultural Festival reflected or was influenced by the events of the 1960s. Allow time for several volunteers to share their writing. If you wish, you may assign this topic as an essay prompt.

Extension activities

1. Explore the writings of Lorraine Hansberry with your students, especially her autobiography, *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*.
2. Have students learn more about protest songs, especially by investigating the music and recordings of Nina Simone and Gil Scot Herron.
3. Have students write an essay using this prompt: “What themes in *Summer of Soul* are still relevant to our current time period?”

Additional resources

A. Print materials

Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman’s Story*
 Alex Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X*
 James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*
 Melba Pattillo Beals, *Warriors Don’t Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock’s Central High*
 Martin Luther King, Coretta Scott King, et al.,
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Companion: Quotations from the Speeches, Essays, and Books of Martin Luther King, Jr.
 Nina Simone, *I Put a Spell on You: The Autobiography of Nina Simone*

B. Internet Resources

Explore the Black Panther Party’s History in Oakland, CA
<https://www.visitoakland.com/blog/post/black-panther-party/>
 National Museum of African American History and Culture
<https://nmaahc.si.edu>

C. Film Resources

Eyes on the Prize
I Am Not Your Negro
What Happened, Miss Simone?
Who Killed Malcolm X?
One Night in Miami

Handout 1

Major Events in African American History

	Malcolm X leaves the Nation of Islam	Integration of Schools	Civil Rights Act 1964
Key words to include	<i>Pan-Africanism</i>	<i>Ruby Bridges James Meredith</i>	
Who			
What			
Where			
When			
Significance			
Impact in <i>Summer of Soul</i>			



	The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)	Voting Rights Act 1965	Poor People's Campaign
Key words to include	<i>Stokely Carmichael, Diane Nash, John Lewis, Freedom Rides</i>		<i>Martin Luther King Jr.</i>
Who			
What			
Where			
When			
Significance			
Impact in <i>Summer of Soul</i>			



	Urban Uprisings (1965–1968)	Black Panther Party: the Ten-Point Program
Key words to include	<i>Watts (1965), Newark (1967), Chicago, Washington D.C., Baltimore (1968)</i>	<i>Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Elaine Brown</i>
Who		
What		
Where		
When		
Significance		
Impact in <i>Summer of Soul</i>		

Teacher Resource 1

Major Events in African American History

	Malcolm X leaves the Nation of Islam	Integration of Schools	Civil Rights Act 1964
Key words to include	<i>Pan-Africanism</i>	<i>Ruby Bridges</i> <i>James Meredith</i>	
Who	Malcolm X, a minister of the Nation of Islam and human rights activist	Students across the South like elementary student Ruby Bridges and college student James Meredith	Under the request of President John F. Kennedy, Congress passed comprehensive civil rights legislation
What	Malcolm X left the religious organization due to political and personal conflicts with its leader, Elijah Muhammad	They sought equitable educational opportunities by enrolling in schools still resisting the <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) decision	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Provisions also forbade discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as race, in hiring, promoting, and firing. The Act prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and federally funded programs. It also strengthened the enforcement of voting rights and the desegregation of schools.
Where	<i>New York Times</i> article	Schools across the South	Throughout the United States
When	March 8, 1964	Bridges: 11/14/1960 Meredith: 9/30/1962	Signed into law July 2, 1964
Significance	Upon leaving the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X broadened his ideas and shifted his focus to looking at the plight of people of African descent across the globe.	After the <i>Brown</i> decision, schools across the South deliberately dragged their heels until the judicial system would no longer allow resistance. (Due to restrictive land covenants, most schools in the North were <i>de facto</i> segregated.)	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the nation's central civil rights legislation and actively sought to counter the impact of the "Jim Crow" laws that enforced segregation.
Impact in <i>Summer of Soul</i>	You see Pan-Africanism displayed through featuring Afro-Latin artists like Mongo Santamaria, as well as artists from the African continent like Dinizulu and his African dancers and drummers.	Charlayne Hunter-Gault speaks to her experience desegregating the University of Georgia and the resistance she faced from whites.	Despite its ability to reform legal practices, this legislation was not able to eradicate segregation. Members of the 5 th Dimension spoke to how music was racially segregated.



	The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)	Voting Rights Act 1965	Poor People's Campaign
Key words to include	<i>Stokely Carmichael, Diane Nash, John Lewis, Freedom Rides</i>		<i>Martin Luther King Jr.</i>
Who	Young college students including Diane Nash and John Lewis.	Congress aimed to increase the number of people registered to vote in areas where there was a record of previous discrimination.	Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) decided to launch a Poor People's Campaign.
What	They formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). It was composed mostly of Black college students who practiced peaceful, direct-action protests.	The legislation outlawed literacy tests and provided for the appointment of federal examiners (with the power to register qualified citizens to vote) in certain jurisdictions with a history of voting discrimination. In addition, these jurisdictions could not change voting practices or procedures without pre clearance" from either the U.S. Attorney General or the District Court for Washington, D.C.	The campaign was meant to highlight and find solutions to the problems facing the country's poor. The campaign would culminate with a Poor People's March on the country's capital and an encampment on the National Mall.
Where	SNCC participated in several major civil rights events across the south. One of the earliest was the Freedom Rides in 1961 to challenge the non-enforcement of Supreme Court rulings related to integration.	The legislation targets areas with a history of voting discrimination.	The National Mall, Washington, D.C.
When	SNCC was active between 1960 and 1973	Signed into law August 6, 1965	June 19, 1968
Significance	SNCC efforts help demonstrate the need for comprehensive legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.	This act shifted the power to register voters from state and local officials to the federal government. It also enabled African Americans across the South to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote.	The Poor People's Campaign was the last national cause led by Dr. King. He was assassinated in April before the march.
Impact in <i>Summer of Soul</i>	In 1966 Stokely Carmichael became chairman of the organization, and the platform shifted to be more militant. It focused on asserting Black power, resembling the growing youth culture highlighted in the documentary.	Stevie Wonder advocated for people to register to vote.	<i>Summer of Soul</i> highlights Operation Breadbasket and the fact that many in the Black community thought that the money spent on the lunar landing could have been better spent within their community.

	Urban Uprisings (1965–1968)	Black Panther Party: Ten-Point Program
Key words to include	<i>Watts (1965), Newark (1967), Chicago, Washington D.C., Baltimore (1968)</i>	<i>Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Elaine Brown</i>
Who	Citizens in major metropolitan cities in the U.S.	Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and developed the organization’s philosophy, named the Ten-Point Program.
What	Violence erupted due to continuing economic, political, and social inequality. The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. was a catalyst for the 1968 uprisings.	<p>Influenced by Black nationalism, Communism, and anti-colonial works, Newton and Seale developed the Ten-Point Program to address issues faced by Black communities.</p> <p>The ten points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community. • We want full employment for our people. • We want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of our Black community. • We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings. • We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society. • We want all Black men to be exempt from military service. • We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of Black people. • We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails. • We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States. • We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace.

	Urban Uprisings (1965–1968)	Black Panther Party: Ten-Point Program
Where	Watts (1965); Newark (1967); Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore (1968)	Originated in Oakland, California, but chapters emerged across the U.S.
When	Watts (1965); Newark (1967); Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore (1968)	October 1966
Significance	As Dr. King famously said, “Let me say as I’ve always said, and I will always continue to say, that riots are socially destructive and self-defeating. ... But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years. It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, equality, and humanity. And so in a real sense our nation’s summers of riots are caused by our nation’s winters of delay. And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again.”	<p>The Ten-Point Program led to the community services function of the BPP, spearheaded by members like Elaine Brown. The BPP provided free breakfast for school children, sickle cell anemia screening, legal aid, and adult education.</p> <p>Because of its practice of armed self-defense against police, as well as its Communistic and revolutionary elements, the BPP was frequently targeted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s COINTELPRO program, as well as by state and local law enforcement groups.</p>
Impact in <i>Summer of Soul</i>	<i>Summer of Soul</i> opens discussing the anger and rage simmering in the U.S. after the assassinations of Black civil rights leaders.	According to <i>Summer of Soul</i> , the Black Panthers provided security for the Harlem Cultural Festival because the police were unreliable.



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