

#9026

AFRICAN-AMERICANS MARCHING TO FREEDOM

FILMS FOR THE HUMANITIES & SCIENCES

1999

Grade Levels: 7-13+

54 minutes



DESCRIPTION

This ABC News program chronicles the rise of the Civil Rights movement and black political consciousness. Begins briefly in the '20s and '30s, but focuses on the last half of the 20th century. Archival footage, photos, and personal reflections add power to the documentary.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: The History of the United States

- Standard: Understands how democratic values came to be, and how they have been exemplified by people, events, and symbols
 - Benchmark: Understands how people over the last 200 years have continued to struggle to bring to all groups in American society the liberties and equality promised in the basic principles of American democracy (e.g., Sojourner Truth; Harriet Tubman; Frederick Douglass; W.E.B. DuBois; Booker T. Washington; Susan B. Anthony; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Rosa Parks; Cesar Chavez)
 - Benchmark: Understands the ways in which people in a variety of fields have advanced the cause of human rights, equality, and the common good (e.g., Frederick Douglass, Clara Barton, Elizabeth Blackwell, Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks, Jonas Salk, Cesar Chavez)

Subject Area: United States History

- Standard: Understands massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity
 - Benchmark: Understands the experiences of diverse groups and minorities in different regions of the country (e.g., the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans; the anti-Chinese movement in the West; the rise of lynching in the South; the impact of Jim Crow laws on African Americans)
- Standard: Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

Captioned Media Program

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- Benchmark: Understands individual and institutional influences on the civil rights movement (e.g., the origins of the postwar civil rights movement; the role of the NAACP in the legal assault on the leadership and ideologies of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X; the effects of the constitutional steps taken in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government; the shift from de jure to de facto segregation; important milestones in the civil rights movement between 1954 and 1965; Eisenhower's reasons for dispatching federal troops to Little Rock in 1957)
- Standard: Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States
 - Benchmark: Understands various influences on American culture (e.g., the desegregation of education and its role in the creation of private white academies; the influence of the media on contemporary American culture; how ethnic art, food, music, and clothing are incorporated into mainstream culture and society)

Subject Area: Civics

- Standard: Understands the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society
 - Benchmark: Knows how shared ideas and values of American political culture are reflected in various sources and documents (e.g., the Bill of Rights, The Federalist and Anti-federalist writings, Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points," Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," landmark decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To illustrate the march towards freedom for African Americans.
2. To depict the primary historical players in changing American democracy to include African Americans.
3. To consider the motivation and obstacles needed to change the public mindset in America during the 20th century.

BEFORE SHOWING


1. Discuss significant time periods in African American history.
 - a. Slavery
 - b. The Civil War and emancipation
 - c. Jim Crow laws
 - d. The Civil Rights Movement
 - e. Desegregation
2. Evaluate the current status of freedom and equality for African Americans. Consider employment, education, socioeconomic status, current events, incarceration, and national spokespersons and role models.
3. Locate the following places on a map of the United States.
 - a. The South
 - b. Montgomery, Alabama
 - c. Baltimore
 - d. Little Rock, Arkansas

- e. Greensboro, North Carolina
- f. Anniston, Alabama
- g. Selma, Alabama
- h. Albany, Georgia
- i. Stone Mountain, Georgia

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss Jim Crow laws.
 - a. What were the Jim Crow laws?
 - b. How did these laws all but wipe out the freedom and equality once promised by emancipation?
2. Discuss how lynching and burning at the stake influenced the African American community, the white community and white politicians.
 - a. Why was there no good time in the early 1900s for black Americans to challenge the status quo?
 - b. Why had America moved little beyond the days of Jim Crow by 1950, particularly in the South?
3. Discuss African American participation in the American armed services.
 - a. What wars did African Americans serve in the armed services?
 - b. How did these experiences help and hinder civil rights?
 - c. Why did African Americans eagerly respond during World War II to defend the very democracy that was denying them rights?
 - d. What was the difference of being an American soldier in Europe during World War II and living in the Deep South in the years following the war?
 - e. How were the years right after World War II a time of broken boundaries and seemingly limitless possibilities?
4. Discuss the American presidents who played key roles in African American's march to freedom. Consider Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson.
 - a. Which president made the decision to order the desegregation of the armed forces and of the federal government?
 - b. Which president was at first reluctant to interfere in the desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School?
 - c. Which president needed pressure on his administration to intervene in enforcing the desegregation of waiting areas in bus stations?
 - d. Why was there fear in that the civil rights movement was about to take a step backward when this president took over?
 - e. Which president was Southern-born and Southern-bred?
 - f. Which president declared war on poverty?
 - g. Which president's Great Society was meant to match the power and vitality of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal?
5. Discuss the effect of unjust laws.
 - a. What are the pros and cons of American citizens no longer being afraid of going to jail?
 - b. How did arrests of young people in diners touch the conscience of America?
 - c. What was the effect of these protests?

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- d. Why is it important for citizens in a democratic society to believe that it is possible to make change and that individuals have a responsibility to take part in change?
 - e. How true is James Baldwin's statement: "To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage all the time."
 6. Discuss the change in the civil rights movement after the Voting Rights Act was passed.
 - a. Why did the civil rights movement seem to split into warring factions?
 - b. How did Malcolm X differ from King?
 - c. Why did some people think that the pace of change was too slow?
 - d. Why did some people feel that King was too accommodating?
 - e. What was the separatist rhetoric of Malcolm X?
 - f. What was the contradiction in King's involvement in action confronting the enemy and Malcolm X's not?
 7. Discuss civil rights issues in the 1990s.
 - a. Why did the African American campaign for civil rights move into education, politics, finance, media and corporate America?
 - b. Why did blacks still take to the streets?
 8. Discuss civil rights issues in the 21st century.
 - a. How will America be different when by the year 2050 the majority of Americans will not be White Anglo-Saxon Protestants?
 - b. How are our destinies linked?
 - c. How can we find ways to bridge the gap, link arms, attack problems and not attack each other?

Applications and Activities

1. Categorize each of the following persons as a hero, a villain or a neutral player in African Americans' march to freedom. Justify the label.
 - a. Booker T. Washington
 - b. Matthew Henson
 - c. Robert Peary
 - d. Harry Truman
 - e. Jackie Robinson
 - f. W. E. B. Du Bois
 - g. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - h. Melba Beals
 - i. George Wallace
 - j. Bull Connor
 - k. Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner and James Chaney
 - l. Revered James Reeb
 - m. Malcolm X
 - n. Michael Faith
 - o. Louis Farrakhan
 - p. Chuck Burris
2. Survey the local community regarding terms used to refer to the African American community. Consider black, African American, Negro and other commonly used terms.
3. Imagine participating in one of the following events. Write or dramatize your experience as both a white and African American participant. Focus on events and feelings.
 - a. A lynching in the Jim Crow South

- b. Serving in the armed services overseas during World War II and then returning to live in the Deep South
 - c. The first day the Little Rock Nine attended Central High School
 - d. The first day that the 101st Airborne escorted the Little Rock Nine to Central High School
 - e. Growing up knowing that Jim Crow laws are unjust and yet supported by the American government and most whites
 - f. The marches from Selma on March 7, 1965, and March 21, 1965
 - g. The day that Michael Faith was stabbed at South Boston High
4. Debate the truth of the following quotes from the video.
- a. "There was no way you could be black in this country and not be affected by it." (Life among blacks and whites remained separate and unequal.)
 - b. "And I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever." George Wallace, mayor of Birmingham
 - c. "These are people who accepted that you have to put everything on the line, because if you don't, you're not going to get anything."
 - d. "Fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South. Where legal remedies are not at hand, redress is sought in the streets." John F. Kennedy
 - e. "I shall ask the Congress of the United States to act, to make a commitment that is not fully made in this century to the proposition that race has no place in American life or law." John F. Kennedy
 - f. "Their cause must be our cause too. It's all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice." Lyndon Johnson, 1965
 - g. "If a man slaps me in the face, I'm not turning my cheek. If I slap him back, he won't slap me again." Malcolm X
 - h. "The real evil in America is white supremacy." Louis Farrakhan
 - i. "Black man, you don't have to bash white people. All we gotta do is go back home and turn our communities into productive places...and decent safe places to live." Louis Farrakhan
5. Memorize and dramatize the following quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr. Consider how these words have influenced the public agenda and mindset.
- a. "We will do it in an orderly fashion. This is a nonviolent protest. We're depending on moral and spiritual forces." (The Montgomery bus boycott)
 - b. "No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream." (The 1963 march on Washington)
 - c. "I have a dream...that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." (1963)
 - d. "We will be able to speed that day when all of God's children—black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics—will be able to join hands ..."
 - e. "...join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last, Free at last, thank God almighty, we're free at last." (1963)
 - f. "All the world today knows that we are here, and we are standing before the forces of power in the state of Alabama, saying we ain't going to let nobody turn us around."
6. Debate the application of King's philosophy, "What we need is morality" with Malcolm X's philosophy, "What we need is power."

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- African-American Heroes of Sport #8605
- Black American History Series Volume 3: Reconstruction #8640
- Black American History Series Volume 4: Civil Rights #8641
- Black American History Series Volume 5: Modern History #8642
- Booker T. Washington: The Life and the Legacy #2258
- Free at Last #2891
- From the Ku Klux Klan to the Black Panthers #2561
- The Jackie Robinson Story #2191
- Legacy of a Dream: Martin Luther King, Jr. #1516
- Malcolm X #2311
- Malcolm X: Make It Plain, Part I #3634
- Malcolm X: Make It Plain, Part II #3635
- Malcolm X: Make It Plain, Part III #3636
- Rosa Parks: The Path to Freedom #3654
- We Shall Overcome: A History of the Civil Rights Movement #2695



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **BLACK HISTORY**

<http://www.blackhistory.com/>

A diverse in-depth site that offers general information, focus on individuals and great links. Features African American culture and history via a library of well-known music, photos, video clips, famous speeches, and 20th-century icons.

- **BLACK HISTORY HOTLIST**

http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/bh_hotlist.html

Provides a collection of links about African American history, news and arts. Get details about Black History Month.

- **TIME CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY**

<http://www.time.com/time/reports/blackhistory/>

"TIME" magazine features a celebration of Black History. Find profiles of important leaders and a photo essay from "LIFE" magazine.