

Activity Plan

<i>Title</i>	We Are The Freedom Riders
<i>Subject</i>	Art: Connecting
<i>Author</i>	ArtsEdge: Stuart Stotts <i>Original Writer</i>
<i>Grade level</i>	6-8
<i>Time duration</i>	120mins
<i>Overview</i>	Students will learn about the song, "We Shall Overcome," and the role it played as an anthem for the civil rights movement in America. Explore the lives, motivations, and actions of Civil Rights activists and create interviews to demonstrate our understanding. Students will also brainstorm new verses to the song "We Shall Overcome." We will use internet resources and recorded music to become more familiar with this time and these events.
<i>Objective</i>	Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize the impact individual and group actions can have on society• Identify individual responsibility in a democratic society• Appreciate the influence music has had historically as an agent of change• Role play interviews based on freedom rider biographies• Create new verses for the song "We Shall Overcome"
<i>Materials</i>	Materials Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printable• Music Analysis• Vocabulary• Verse/Lyric Writing Organizer• Bio Graphic Organizer• Video

Activities and procedures

- [Joan Baez](#)
- [Marian Anderson](#)

Required Technology

- Speakers
- Internet Access

Required Plugins

-  [Quicktime](#)

ENGAGE

1. As a class, listen to "We Shall Overcome" by both [Joan Baez](#) and [Marian Anderson](#). Both are available in the Resource Carousel above in the *Engage* tab.
2. Have students complete the [Music Analysis](#) handout located within the Resource Carousel while or after listening to the song.
3. Students can also visit [We Shall Overcome: Story Behind the Song](#) for more information about the history of the song.

BUILD

1. Introduce vocabulary for the lesson. Use the Vocabulary for We Shall Overcome handout. Ask each student to indicate their level of understanding about each term by placing a checkmark in the appropriate column.
2. Have students work in groups of 3-4 students to talk about the terms.
3. Lead a class discussion on the terms. Clarify misconceptions and definitions.
4. Ask students to listen for the terms as you read Chapter 1 of *We Shall Overcome (Keep Your Eyes on the Prize)*. Ask students to make notes on their vocabulary handout as you read the chapter.
5. After reading the chapter, have students reexamine their [Vocabulary](#) handouts located within the Resource Carousel and see what words they can now define and use. Have students reconvene with their original group to discuss their new understanding of the vocabulary.

APPLY

1. Lead the class in a discussion about the Freedom Riders and what they hoped to accomplish.
2. Working in pairs students will choose a figure who participated in the Freedom Ride protest. Using the internet and the resources provided partners will research create a [bio](#) of their Freedom Rider using the [Bio Graphic Organizer](#) located within the Resource Carousel to collect key facts and information to share. Students will

prepare for a role-play interview. One of the students will be a news anchor and the other will be the civil rights activist. After collecting information, together the students will create an interview. They will prepare 4-5 key questions with responses. One of the questions for each individual will be about the song, *We Shall Overcome*. (*How did you feel as you sang the song during threatening situations? How do you feel today when you hear the song? Do you still sing the song today and what memories does it evoke?*) Encourage students to come up with their own unique question.

3. Model an interview with a student and provide partners time to practice the role-play interview to present to the class. Each interview should be no longer than 5 minutes. Encourage students to look at the photos and dress as the Freedom Riders would have dressed.

Day 2

4. As partners present interviews, have the rest of the class individually record one interesting fact they hear in each interview.

5. After each interview, ask students to do a Think, Pair, Share while the next pair prepares. They will get up and move to someone they have not talked to and discuss their interesting point from the interview. This allows movement and opportunity to process the information.

6. After the interviews, as a class project students will compose an original verse for *We Shall Overcome* to sing together. Have students use the [Verse/Lyric Writing Organizer](#) handout located within the Resource Carousel to do so.

7. After the completion of the interview presentations, have the class reenact the Montgomery Bus Terminal incident by joining hands in a circle to sing *We Shall Overcome*, including their new verse. If possible, consider recording a video of the interviews and the singing of *We Shall Overcome* to create a “class documentary” on the Freedom Riders.

Conclusions

REFLECT

1. Play [video](#) *On Acting Your Conscience* interview by Bernard Lafayette Jr. The video may be found within the right column of the page.

2. Have students write a short response to the following questions: Freedom Riders put their personal lives on hold to devote their energy to a movement that would effect change for people living in oppression.

- What are examples of personal sacrifice that you’ve seen?
- What cause would you be willing to sacrifice for?
- Would you be able to do what the Freedom Riders did?

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- What kinds of inequalities exist in our world?
 - What can you do when you see inequality?

Adaptations

Extend the Learning

Teachers may extend the lesson any of the following ways:

- Invite a local community organizer or civil rights activist to talk to the class about nonviolent protest. Identify a local issue that students can learn about and become involved in: homeless needs in your community, migrant workers, undocumented workers, etc.
- For a shorter lesson activity, use a website or **print** out bios of Freedom Riders. Students will use graphic organizer to collect information. Instead of interview role-play students will use information to complete a mini poster on the Freedom Rider or a Bio Cube. See Bio Cube handout or complete the Bio Cube online **activity**.
- Consider working with the music teacher to write the new verse of *We Shall Overcome* and to prepare for the musical performance.
- Partners will print a picture of their Freedom Rider to post in the classroom with a mini-poster bio. *Optional: Create a class book of the Freedom Riders.*
- Create individual or a class timeline of events of the Freedom Rider movement.
- Have students work in small groups to create a visual (Drawing, Poster, PowerPoint, Video) for each event. Create a timeline of important events where the song *We Shall Overcome* has been sung.
- Create a sidewalk timeline using sidewalk chalk. Students place their events in order on the sidewalk and decorate with drawings.
- Create a class map to trace the Freedom Riders Movement.
- Consider recording for a video or create a class book.

Teacher Background

Teachers should obtain:

- Stotts, S. (2010). *We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World*. New York: Clarion Books.
- Computers with internet connectivity to access Freedom Riders biographies and videos

Optional:

- Print Freedom Riders [bios](#) from
- Non-fiction literature for civil rights movement

Prior Student Knowledge

General knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement.