US History Independent Project

Hello Students,

This resource packet includes a project that you can work on independently at home. You should also have project packets for some of the other courses you are enrolled in. These projects are standards-aligned and designed to meet the Remote Learning instructional minutes guidelines by grade band.

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Activity 1: Accessing Prior Knowledge and Unpacking the Question to Explore.

Step 1: Accessing Prior Knowledge.
- What do you already know about civil rights? Try to list at least 3 details. You may ask your family or friends for help.
- What do you think it means for civil rights to be inclusive? Try to list at least 3 details. You may ask your family or friends for help.

Step 2: Opening Up the Investigation. Once you have as many details as you can think of for Step 1, read Document A:
- How has Document A added to your understanding of civil rights? Try to list at least one detail.
- How has Document A added to your understanding, what do you think inclusion means in terms of Civil Rights?

Step 3: Preliminary Reflection. Given your responses in Step 1 and Step 2 and your own prior knowledge:
- How do you think civil rights have become more inclusive over time?
- How have individuals and groups worked to assure that civil rights are inclusive?

Activity 2: Summary Document analysis. The first type of documents in this project are secondary source summary documents. This includes Documents B-E, and they provide context for the time period and background information on different eras of Civil Rights Movements. Answer the following questions for Documents B-E on your own paper.
A. What were people fighting for during this era, and which groups were involved in this struggle for civil rights? List 3 details to answer the question. Then, cite one piece of evidence from the text to support your answer.
B. What do you think was the most significant outcome of this fight for civil rights? Cite one piece of evidence from the text to support your answer.
C. Connecting to the Question to Explore: Based on what you have read so far,
   a. How did individuals and groups work to ensure civil rights?
   b. To what extent was this era of civil rights movements inclusive to different groups of people? What were the limitations of this civil rights movement? If needed, reference Document A and Activity 1 for a better understanding of “inclusion.”

Activity 3: Primary Document analysis. The second type of documents in this project are primary source images and charts. These include Documents F-O. Answer the following questions for Documents F-O on your own paper.
A. What do you see? As you look at each of the documents, what do you see? Be very concrete in your observations of the images and charts. For example, in Document E, there are children, confetti, stairs, smiles, a building.
B. What do you think? Now, read the caption and source. Based on your answers for A (what do you see), what can you infer about the document?
C. Why do you think this document was created? Explain what you think the author’s intent was in creating this document? What is the purpose of this document? Who was expected to see/read it?
Activity 4: Synthesis and Drawing Conclusions.

A. Review Documents B, F-H. Based on what you have read so far, how did individuals and groups work to assure this era of civil rights movements inclusive to different groups of people?

B. Review Documents C, I-K. Based on what you have read so far, how did individuals and groups work to assure this era of civil rights movements inclusive to different groups of people?

C. Review Documents D, L-M. Based on what you have read so far, how did individuals and groups work to assure this era of civil rights movements inclusive to different groups of people?

D. Review Documents E, N-O. Based on what you have read so far, how did individuals and groups work to assure this era of civil rights movements inclusive to different groups of people?

Activity 5: Drawing Conclusions Through Reflection.

Now that you have completed Activities 1-4, reflect on the limitations of each civil rights era and how individuals and groups worked to assure the expansion of civil rights over time. In 4 paragraphs respond to the prompts below. Make sure to include at least one piece of evidence per paragraph from the sources to support your answer.

Paragraph #1: How have civil rights become more inclusive over time?

Paragraph #2: How have individuals and groups worked to assure that civil rights are more inclusive?

Paragraph #3: What is the responsibility of individuals and government to assure civil rights are inclusive?

Paragraph #4: How has your thinking on the Question to Explore expanded as a result of this project packet?

Cross Content Connection:
Math / Science / PE - Documents K-L
Fine Arts - Documents F-O analysis

ELA - Document analysis

CTE - Documents I-J

World Language - Documents M-N
Document A: What are Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and Human Rights?

Civil rights and civil liberties are an essential part of American democracy. Despite the country’s legacy of slavery and continued inequalities, people’s individual rights and freedoms are considered sacred. Our Constitution includes a Bill of Rights that outlines our civil liberties, and interfering with another person’s civil liberties is a violation of our laws. But what are civil rights? What are civil liberties? How are they connected, and how are they related to human rights?

Civil Liberties vs. Civil Rights

Civil liberties in the U.S. include the following:
- free speech
- right to remain silent
- right to vote
- right to marry
- freedom from unreasonable searches
- right to a fair trial
- right to privacy
- right to privacy

Civil rights, on the other hand, is the right to be free from discrimination based on:
- Race
- Sex
- Age
- Religion
- National origin
- Disability
- Sexual orientation

All Americans have the right to their civil liberties. For example, no one is supposed to be barred from voting. However, people in prison are often denied this right. That’s because removing the right to vote as punishment for a crime isn’t seen as discrimination. Meanwhile, promotions at work are not a guaranteed civil liberty. However, people with disabilities can’t be overlooked for a promotion just because they have a disability. That is seen as discrimination under our civil rights.

Civil Rights Basics

Civil rights protect the rights of individuals to receive equal treatment in places such as schools, jobs, housing, and public places. Historically, the “Civil Rights Movement” referred to efforts made by African-Americans to achieve equality. However, many groups have struggled to gain equality, including women, Latinx, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and the LGBTQ community. Today, “civil rights” has been expanded to include the advancement of equality for all people. Most laws guaranteeing civil rights originate at the federal level, through federal legislation. Civil Rights also come from Supreme Court cases, and from state laws. State laws can be more protective of civil rights than laws written at the national level, especially for people who identify as LGBTQ. At the same time, state and local laws are where most discrimination takes place, which highlights the need for federal regulations, as well.

Human Rights and Inclusion

Human rights, on the other hand, are rights that all people have because they are human, rather than because they are citizens of a specific country. Human rights are more inclusive than civil rights. Human rights are outlined in the Declaration of Human Rights, which was written by the United Nations in 1948, and signed by all countries participating in the UN.


By the mid-20th century, racial inequality, in particular the notion of the superiority of the white race, had been enshrined in American law for more than two centuries. Following World War II, a renewed interest in ending this belief led to a series of civil rights movements in communities ranging from African-Americans, to Latinx, to Indigenous communities. These civil rights movements were closely tied to many other international movements for human rights, as people across Asia and Africa demanded liberation from European colonialism and the right to rule themselves. All of these movements also looked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had been signed by the United Nations in 1948. 

In the US, one of the first fights was to end the racist practice of segregation. While segregation of African-Americans may be the most commonly referenced segregation, this was not the only group struggling for inclusion and recognition during the 20th century. Indigenous communities across the US had been arguing for their right to equitable treatment since the 18th century. Latinx and Asian-Americans, particularly on the West Coast, fought back growing racism, including lynchings and other community violence, when they attempted to desegregate communities in California. It took many regional movements to get federal civil rights legislation enacted between 1954 and 1965. These new laws ended legal segregation and restored voting rights to all Americans. This legislation also opened new opportunities for African-Americans, Latinx, and members of Indigenous communities in education, employment, and other aspects of public life.

However, desegregation did not happen overnight. In fact, it took years for some states to get on board, and some had to be brought on kicking and screaming. Schools, neighborhoods, and businesses were three areas of focus for desegregation movements. While it became increasingly clear that these three were interconnected, civil rights groups continued to fight for access to each one individually. The Supreme Court spent a fair amount of time discussing schools in its opinions on desegregation. But the Court also had time to issue opinions on the other areas, as well. For instance, the Court ruled in favor of Congress passing laws that allowed Blacks to integrate with whites in the area of employment. The Court also supported Congress in writing laws that prevented racial discrimination in facilities like restaurants. And the Court even went so far as to integrate love, holding that states could no longer prohibit interracial relationships. The importance of the Supreme Court’s willingness to uphold civil rights for Blacks and other Communities of Color by ending segregation cannot be denied. Some of the most notable cases on desegregation include:

- Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States, and Katezenback v McClung (1964) - private businesses cannot discriminate on the basis of race, etc.
- Loving v. Virginia, (1967) - barring interracial marriage was made illegal

https://exhibits.library.pdx.edu/exhibits/show/gates/integration.html


“Lesson Plan: Civil Rights or Human Rights?” The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education
Document C: Summary of the Fight for Economic Equality

Once Congress had put legislation in place to protect minority communities from segregation, and the Supreme Court had upheld those laws as protecting civil rights, minority groups began to turn their attention to some of the more detailed aspects of discrimination. Specifically, activists began to look for ways to address the more persistent ways that systemic discrimination permeated not just institutions and laws, but the individual interactions at work and school.

Affirmative Action was a policy introduced in the early 1960s, as a way to combat racial discrimination in the hiring process. It was later expanded to address gender discrimination, as well as discrimination against people with disabilities. Affirmative Action, first signed into law by President Kennedy in 1961, required government employers “not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, creed, color, or national origin.” It went on to say that government employers had to treat all applicants and employees equally. President Johnson added “sex” to the list of protected categories in 1967, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 added “disability.” In spite of facing discrimination in all aspects of society, from housing to marriage to educational access to employment, the LGBTQ community is not protected by Affirmative Action.

While Affirmative Action legislation has always been aimed specifically at employment, the effects of Affirmative Action have rippled out to other institutions, particularly to housing and school. Schools are one of the main areas where this has been seen. For several decades, both private and selective enrollment public K-12 schools, as well as universities and colleges, have used Affirmative Action in their enrollment policies. In the US, access to education is expected to be an equalizing agent that overcomes other inequalities. Assuring access to elite and higher education facilities is one of the most important ways to assure that education is equalizing.

Housing is another area where Affirmative Action had an impact. Desegregation decrees banned racist neighborhood covenants that kept historically marginalized groups out of white neighborhoods. However, it took time to get real estate agents to begin showing available houses in white neighborhoods to Black, Asian, and Latinx buyers. Affirmative Action pressured real estate agents and contractors to prove they were advertising to all potential home buyers, not just whites. As Affirmative Action expanded, others also gained housing protections. For example, it is considered a violation of civil rights to refuse to rent or sell to families, particularly to single parent families. Finally, because racial demographics are often closely tied to class, gaining access to white neighborhoods allowed Asian, Latinx, and Black students to access better funded schools, as well.

Document D: Summary of the Fight for Access

The struggle for Civil Rights in the US has always been about equality and the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. The push for desegregation provided equality in housing and education, while Affirmative Action campaigns led with the idea of providing equality in employment. Equality isn’t the only thing needed to guarantee American ideals, however. For millions of Americans, access is about physical and language barriers, not just racist or sexist practices.

Some of the most overlooked battles for Civil Rights have happened in communities of people with disabilities. For centuries, people with disabilities have been stigmatized and marginalized, banished to institutions, abused, and forced to undergo sterilization in the name of “protecting” the rest of society. The first major push to change these practices came after World War I, when veterans with disabilities expected the US government to provide rehabilitation. In the 1930s, new technology and new government assistance contributed to self-reliance and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. However, people with disabilities didn’t gain access to public transportation, bathrooms, phones, stores - or the education and employment that accompanied these - until the 1970s. Frequently, people with disabilities were even barred from participating in mainstream Civil Rights movements because activists didn’t know how, or weren’t prepared, to offer the needed accommodations.

In 1973, the Rehabilitation Act was passed. It provided equal opportunity for employment within the federal government and in federally funded programs, and prohibited discrimination on the basis of either physical or mental disability. Section 504 of the Act also established a Board that mandated equal access to public services such as housing and transportation. In 1975, children with disabilities were guaranteed access to full inclusion in public school. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed. This law prohibited discrimination in employment, government services, public places, transportation, and communication. It also required that public accommodations be made so that people with disabilities could access the services.

Indigenous communities and immigrants have also struggled with access in the US because English is their second language. Native Americans faced harsh discrimination in all areas of the US during the 20th century. Bilingualism was punished in schools and by government organizations. In addition, millions of immigrants were recruited to come to the US to support our economy. They often faced unfair labor practices, and discrimination in housing and education. Because access to many parts of society is dependent on English language fluency, immigrant workers faced civil rights violations while being exploited at work. Between 1964 and 1981, a series of court decisions and laws were passed that protected bilingual students from discrimination. Public schools were required to provide education in the primary language of the student. Affirmative Action and other
Civil Rights Legislation was also expanded to include language access under “national origin”. 


Document E: Summary of the Move from Civil Rights to Human Rights

Over the course of the 20th century, many groups and communities have struggled to access their constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties through civil rights movements. African-Americans, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, Latinx communities, women, and the LGBTQ community have all worked to end discriminatory practices in the US, and make America more accessible and equitable for all. These communities have not worked in isolation, and the work of each has reflected in the work of them all as they build on the successes of each other. This becomes more clear the more voices that find space to be heard.

In the most recent struggles for civil rights, the focus often shifted to the right to privacy and the right to marry. These two civil liberties were the newest to be questioned in our ever-evolving society. Who has the right to privacy? This was the foundation for the landmark case Roe v Wade, which granted access to abortions in 1973. Similarly, who has the right to be public with their private lives? As the 20th century came to a close, that question began to play out in courts and legislatures across the US as anti-LGBTQ laws were over-turned, and anti-LGBTQ violence was labelled a hate crime. In 2015, the right to marry became a listed civil liberty of all Americans, when the Supreme Court ruled in Obergefell v Hodges that the right to marry is guaranteed to all Americans. And yet, people with disabilities continue to lose their disability benefits if they get married, showing that “all Americans” still leaves people out.

Other civil rights struggles have continued to focus on the enduring impacts of racism. At the end of the 20th century, the US had more people in prison than any other country in the world. In spite of making up less than one-third of the country’s population, African-American and Latinx populations made up close to two-thirds of the prison population. There was also an increase in private prisons. These prisons were business ventures that contracted with states. States promised to house a certain number of inmates in these prisons, and the private prisons offered the inmates “jobs,” where they were paid low wages, usually under $1 an hour. These workers produced everything from clothing to electronics, reaping huge profits for the owners of these prisons, and protests from civil rights activists. Private prisons raise questions about the 13th Amendment, which bans slavery, except when in punishment for a crime. Many civil rights activists are finding themselves in the same fights that their grandparents fought a century ago.

Today, American civil rights movements cannot be separated from the broader struggle for human rights. While civil rights are protections granted by the Constitution, Human Rights are those things we should all have simply because we’re human. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was passed by the United Nations in 1948. It included things that American civil rights activists have been fighting for all century, such as: access to housing and education, equal employment opportunities, and the right to marry. Human rights also include things like: security, the right to be
free from discrimination, the right to have a family, and the right to rest and leisure. Civil rights activists in the US continue to fight for these human rights, and will continue that struggle until we are equal.


**Document F: Fighting for Desegregation in School**

Prior to 1945, California schools were segregated along multiple racial lines. In some districts, Latinx and Black students had to attend separate schools from white students while Asian students weren’t segregated. In other districts, Black, Asian, and Latinx students were segregated from white students. Following the California case, *Mendez v Westminster*, however, students of all races attended schools together - white, African-American, Latinx, and Asian. In this image, students celebrate the last day of school at Hoover Street Elementary School, 1949.


**Document G: Fighting for Desegregation in Housing**

Many landlords in Detroit openly refused to rent to African-Americans. Those who did rent, often charged 20-40% more than they did to whites. The government in Detroit enforced racially segregated public housing and the mayor used his veto power to stunt integration in white areas of the city. White homeowners frequently greeted African Americans who attempted to move into white neighborhoods with violence, forcing them to leave.
**Document H: Fighting for Desegregation of Public Accommodations**

On February 1, 1960, four Black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina protested against segregated lunch counters. When the college semester ended, and despite growing threats from the white community, high school students took over the protest. In July, Woolworth’s in Greensboro agreed to desegregate their lunch counter. Their action sparked a nationwide Sit-In Movement that brought young people together - white and Black - to end racial discrimination. Sit-Ins took place on college campuses, in restaurants, and in bus terminals, among other locations.


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**Document I: The Fight for Economic Equality for Women**

In August, 1970, the National Organization of Women (NoW) organized a Women’s Strike in New York City. 50,000 people attended in that city alone. The strike demanded: free childcare, equal opportunity in the workforce, and free abortion. While Affirmative Action had already been signed into law, and expanded to include women, not much movement had yet been made towards equality in either education or employment. However, by 1990, white women had benefited the most from Affirmative Action campaigns in both areas.
**Document J: The Fight for Economic Equality for Disability Communities**

Disability advocates began to come together in the late 1960s, particularly on college campuses in California. This early group focused on the ability to exercise control over their social lives, including medical care and living arrangements. Eventually, they opened an independent living center for young people with disabilities. The movement grew more political as it spread across the country, advocating for equal treatment in society as a whole and barrier-free access to living arrangements and employment. This image shows the group Disabled in Action in a New York City protest, 1970.


**Document K: The Fight for Economic Equality Through College Access**

Affirmative Action protocols began to be implemented in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These practices impacted primarily employment opportunities, but eventually made their way into college application and acceptance policies, as well.
Document L: The Fight for Accessibility for Students with Disabilities

The bar chart shows the percentage of students with disabilities served under the IDEA and graduating with a regular high school diploma from 1995-1996 to 2014-2015.


Document M: The Fight for Accessibility for English Language Learners

The Chicano Movement was begun in California and other Western states in the 1960s. The name was chosen by Mexican-Americans as a name of pride and solidarity. The Chicano Movement was one of the first civil rights groups focused on instruction for students in their native language. In early March 1968, nearly 20,000 Chicano students in East L.A. walked out of their schools to protest the racial injustice and
inequity of the schools.


**Document N: The Fight for Human Rights in Indigenous Communities**

The American Indian Movement was initially founded in Minnesota, with branches in urban areas across the country, to protest systematic poverty and police brutality facing Indigenous communities. It soon expanded to include Tribal concerns such as treaty rights and preservation of cultural traditions. In this image, Oklahoma City mayor David Holt issuing a decree to recognize October 8th as “Indigenous People’s Day,” rather than Columbus Day. This is one small way to recognize Native Americans within the broader history of the US.


**Document O: The Fight for Human Rights for LGBTQ Communities**

Marsha P. Johnson was one of many leaders of the Stonewall Rebellion that took place in New York City on June 28, 1968. This is often cited as the start of the modern fight for LGBTQ rights. Johnson was instrumental in focusing the community on aid beyond the more typical civil rights concerns of desegregation and jobs. The high rates of homelessness and medical neglect that the LGBTQ community faces were a priority for Johnson, and remain a priority today for activists.