

Digital Snapshot Classroom Lesson Plan: Freedom Summer Foner Letters

Students Will:

- Learn the significance of the 1964 Freedom Summer Project and the broader reach of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi.
- Explore one volunteer's daily life and thoughts during his time in Mississippi in 1964.
- Understand the fear and struggles of the volunteers of the Freedom Summer Project.
- Create an article to attract attention to the plight of Freedom Summer Project volunteers.

Materials:

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- National Archives Written Document Analysis Sheet, one copy per student
- Paper and writing utensils
- Rubric provided

Preparation:

- [The 1964 Freedom Schools](#)
- [When Youth Protest: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement](#)
- [Freedom Summer Project](#)

Students will need a basic understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. They should know about civil rights and the disenfranchisement of Black Mississippians throughout the state's history.

Required Links:

Independent student use:

- [Series one correspondence](#) Students will use pages 3 through 11 of this series.
 - Transcript Available: dh-mdah.org/foner-series1-letter-to-parents-july1964
- [Series one correspondence](#) Students will use pages 12 through 15 of this series.
 - Transcript Available: dh-mdah.org/foner-series1-letter-to-parents-1964
- [Series two Program for voter registration](#) Students will use pages 1 and 2 of this series.
 - Transcript Available: dh-mdah.org/foner-program-voter-registration-canton

Classroom or teacher-led use:

- [Series 4 news clippings](#) The teacher may elect to use the provided transcribed news clips or all 8 in the collection.
 - Foner Collection articles transcribed in Digital Snapshot Exhibit:
 - Newspaper Article "Rumbling of a Mississippi Storm": dh-mdah.org/foner-series4-ms-storm-june15-1964-newsclip
 - Newspaper Article "17 are Honored for the Courage it Took to Wait.": dh-mdah.org/foner-series4-17honored-jan28-1965-newsclip
 - Newspaper Article "Ex-CIA Boss to Lead Miss. Hunt: Rights Team's Car Is Found in Swamp": dh-mdah.org/foner-series4-ex-cia-boss-to-lead-miss-hunt-june24-1964-newsclip

- National Archive Document Analysis Sheet:
 - Novice/Younger Students (Spanish version available through link): [archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/analyze-a-written-document-novice](https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/analyze-a-written-document-novice)
 - Intermediate/Older Students (Spanish version available through link): [archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/analyze-a-written-document-intermediate](https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/analyze-a-written-document-intermediate)

Curricular Connections

2022 Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Social Studies

World History: Age of Enlightenment to Present

WH11 | Contemporary World

- Debate the changing role of globalization in the contemporary world.
 - 1. Examine social and political issues that helped advance civil and human rights.

U.S. History 1877 to Present

USH 11 | Civil Rights Movement

- Evaluate the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on social and political change in the United States.
 - 1. Explain the importance of President Truman's order to integrate the U.S. military and the federal government.
 - 2. Trace the federal government's involvement in the modern Civil Rights Movement.
 - 3. Explain the contributions of individuals and groups to the modern Civil Rights Movement.
 - 6. Describe the accomplishments of the modern civil rights movement.
 - 7. Evaluate the effectiveness of major non-violent demonstrations and events of the Civil Rights Movement.

United States Government

USG.8

- Describe and evaluate the role, rights, and responsibility of a citizen in American Democracy.
 - 1. Evaluate the effectiveness of citizen efforts to influence decisions of state and local governments by examining events.
 - 2. Compare the ways that citizens participate in the political process.
 - 3. Analyze trends in voter turnout.

African American Studies

AAS.8

- Analyze the successes and challenges of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.
 - 3. Define various methods used to obtain civil rights.
 - 4. Identify various organizations and their role in the Civil Rights Movement.
 - 5. Assess the extent to which the Civil Rights Movement transformed American politics and society.

Problems in American Democracy

PAD.8

- Examine how and under what circumstances state governments and the federal government have expanded or constrained the civil and political rights of African Americans and other groups since the Civil War.
 - 2. Describe the social, economic, and political disenfranchisement of African Americans under the Jim Crow laws.

Minority Studies

MIN.6

- Examine the major events, methods, and leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.
 - 2. Evaluate the prominent methods, leaders, and events of the Civil Rights Movement culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
 - 3. Analyze the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the status of African Americans and the American social and political culture in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Vocabulary

(**Bold print** indicates content-specific terms)

Racism: The harmful belief that one's race or skin color makes that person better than another, which leads to mistreatment of others based on race.

White Supremacists: A person who believes that the White race is superior to other races and that White people should have control over people of other races.

Caucus: A closed meeting of a group of persons belonging to the same political party or faction usually to select candidates or to decide on policy.

Sharecropper: A tenant farmer especially in the southern U.S. who is provided with credit for seed, tools, living quarters, and food, who works the land, and who receives an agreed share of the value of the crop minus charges.

Ascendancy: A governing or controlling influence.

Introduction

To understand the past and see its impact on the present, students should engage with primary sources from past events. For students to truly understand the documents and have the correct context, teachers must first lay the groundwork for this connection. The teacher should begin this lesson with a brief introduction to the Freedom Summer Project and the Civil Rights Movement. A scholarly introduction to the Freedom Summer Project is linked here. (www.dh-mdah.org/freedom-summer-history.)

This activity uses a collection of correspondence, voter registration plans, photographs, and news clippings from Thomas Foner's work as a volunteer with the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project in 1964. The collection documents his work with the project and contains substantial information about the conditions faced by volunteers during that summer.

Using an analysis sheet, students will examine some of the documents from the Thomas Foner Collection. Using the same document, students will also develop a news story with a headline that would bring attention to the circumstances in Mississippi. Student work can be displayed online or in the school.

Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson to students by explaining the Freedom Summer Project and why activists felt it was necessary.
2. Expand upon the Freedom Summer Project primary documents from the archives.
3. Introduce the National Archives document analysis tool to the students.
4. Assign each student the provided documents. Teacher should introduce documents to the students as individuals or in small groups.
5. Have students analyze the documents using the National Archives tool.
6. Instruct students to write an article to gain public attention on the events happening in Mississippi. Include information on the use of media to bring attention to Freedom Summer for people in other parts of the country.
7. In pairs, students should review each other's articles and provide feedback. If small groups are used, have groups swap to review articles.
8. Have students implement changes from the peer review.
9. Students could find images to accompany the article if the teacher chooses.
10. Articles should be displayed online or in the school.

Rubric:

| Category | 4 Advanced | 3 Proficient | 2 Adequate | 1 Basic |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Construction | The organization of the article follows a logical, orderly progression that enhances the readers' experience. | The organization follows a mostly logical progression that has order and compliments the information provided. | The article is organized but it doesn't add to the reader's overall experience. | There is little to no organization. |
| Grammar | Minimal (2 or less) errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. | Some (3-5) errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. | Several (6-10) errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. | Many (over 10) errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. |
| Connection | Demonstrates a knowledge of the significance of this topic in history. | Showed a degree of knowledge of the importance of the topic in history. | Kept to the topic but did not show a connection to the significance of the topic in history. | Inaccurate and did not connect the topic to its significance in history. |
| Document Analysis | Exhibits a strong understanding of the key elements in the document. | Exhibits a good understanding of the key elements in the document. | Exhibits some understanding of the key elements in the document. | Exhibits little understanding of the key elements in the document. |