

Headlines of History

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Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

During this activity, you and your child will look at a historical newspaper and compare it to the book *Freedom on the Menu* and the school’s social studies textbook. Then, together, you will think about what “equality” and “discrimination” meant in history and today.

WHY

Research skills, like comparing different sources of information, are important skills in school and everyday problem-solving. Also, being able to make connections between history and life today makes learning history seem more interesting and more valuable.

TIME

- 40 minutes

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best with children in third or fourth grade.

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **boycott:** to refuse to conduct business with a person, store, or organization, usually to express disapproval or to peacefully force changes
- **discrimination:** a negative action or attitude directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics
- **equality:** the state of things being the same for each member of a group, class, or society
- **historical fiction:** a type of literature that mixes characters, settings, and plot events based on historical evidence with others that the author has imagined
- **nonviolent:** a philosophy or strategy for change that opposes using violence
- **picket:** to walk or stand in front of like a fence-post, often in protest
- **primary source:** an interpretation of an event written or created by a person or group of people who did not witness that event
- **protest:** public demonstration of disapproval

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- **segregation:** the practice of keeping people in separate groups based on their race or culture
- **sit-in:** an act of sitting in the seats or on the floor of an establishment as a means of organized protest (see the images of boys sitting at lunch counter)

GET READY

- Read *Freedom on the Menu* together. *Freedom on the Menu* is a story about the civil rights movement, as told through the eyes of a young girl. For tips on reading this book together, check out the *Guided Reading Activity* (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/freedom/lunchcounter_reading.pdf).
- Before starting, you may want to look for a recent local newspaper article that includes an example of discrimination or equality. It can take children a long time to skim through newspapers!

YOU NEED

- Directions sheet (*attached*)
- Background sheets (*attached*)
- Read All About It! sheet (*attached*)
- Computer with Internet connection
- (*optional*) Recent local newspapers
- (*optional*) *Freedom on the Menu* book

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/freedom/>.



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For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/freedom/>.

Racial **segregation** was not illegal in the United States on February 1, 1960, when four African American college students sat down at a “whites-only” **lunch counter** at an F. W. Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina. Politely asking for service, their request was refused. When asked to leave, they remained in their seats.

In Greensboro, hundreds of students, civil rights organizations, churches, and

members of the community joined in a six-month-long **nonviolent protest** that spread to other places in the South. Many people continued to show their unhappiness through **sit-ins**. Others held **picket** signs on the streets outside the store with messages for people to see, while other people decided to **boycott**. All of these **protest** strategies caused Woolworth, and other businesses that practiced **segregation**, to lose customers and drew national attention.

The **protests** put college students and young people into an important position in the ongoing movement to challenge racial inequality across the United States. Some of the people involved in the **protests** were sent to jail. Their commitment led to the end of **segregation** at the **lunch counter** on July 25, 1960; but, it took four more years before **segregation** finally ended across the country with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



The students who started the sit-ins were only seventeen or eighteen years old.

From *Freedom on the Menu*



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The National Museum of American History added a portion of the Greensboro lunch counter to its collection after the Woolworth store shut down. Today, it is on display as one of the landmark objects in the Museum. For more information, visit <http://americanhistory.si.edu/news/factsheet.cfm?key=30&newskey=53>.



A piece of the lunchcounter from Greensboro, North Carolina

At the National Museum of American History

How do you get the news?

*Do you ask your parents or friends?
Watch TV? Read the newspaper? Surf
the Internet?*

Take a look at some news from the civil rights movement in the 1960s and some from today!

Facts and Fiction

Freedom on the Menu is a work of historical fiction for kids. To tell the main story clearly, the author wrote about a fictional family and pulled together details from slightly different times in history and locations in the South.

Check out *The Jim Crow Laws and Racism in American History* by David K. Fremon, a nonfiction resource, to get just the facts.

Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Jerome LaGarrigue. Text (c) 2005 by Carole Boston Weatherford. Illustrations (c) 2005 by Jerome LaGarrigue. Used by permission of Dial Books for Young Readers, A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 345 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014. All rights reserved.

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Directions

For adults and kids to follow together.

1. *(optional)* Turn back to the part of *Freedom on the Menu* when Connie and Daddy are reading the newspaper article about the **sit-ins**. What part of the article does Connie mention? What does she talk about with Daddy?
2. Visit the *SitIns.com newspaper section* to read newspaper articles from 1960 (http://www.sitins.com/media_hl.shtml#headlines) and pick a headline that grabs your attention. As you read, think about the questions on the *Read All About It! sheet*.

Tip Instead of filling out the Read All About It! sheet, consider reading the questions and discussing them together.

Tip If more than one child is working on this activity, have them look at different articles and then compare the different articles.

3. Brainstorm what the words “**discrimination**” and “**equality**” mean.

Tip Consider making a web of ideas that are related to, connect to, or define these words. *ReadWriteThink’s Webbing Tool* could help you organize your thoughts (<http://interactives.mped.org/webbing127.aspx>).

4. Read and summarize an article from a recent local newspaper that includes an example of discrimination or equality today.

Tip With advanced readers, have the readers look through the newspapers themselves to look for another article of their own.

Tip For extra challenge, think of a way you could take action on the current event. How could you support equality or fight discrimination in your community or elsewhere?

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Read All About It!

After reading the historical newspaper article, try to answer these questions using your own words.

What happened in the article?

When did this event happen?

Where did this event happen?

Who were the important people involved in this event?

What impact did this event have on the United States?

How is this newspaper article like and unlike the way your social studies textbook tells the story of the civil rights movement?

Like: _____

Unlike: _____

How Is this newspaper article like and unlike the story in *Freedom on the Menu*?

Like: _____

Unlike: _____

Historians would call these newspapers **primary sources**. A **primary source** is written, created, or used by someone who experienced events at the time they took place.

Historians would call your social studies textbooks **secondary sources**. **Secondary sources** are made by a person or group of people who did not witness an event.

Historians would call *Freedom on the Menu* **historical fiction**.

Historical fiction is a type of literature that mixes characters, settings, and plot events that are based on historical evidence with others that the author imagined.

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Read the Directions sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

Students will examine a historical newspaper, a piece of historical fiction, and their social studies textbooks for accounts of the civil rights movement, and then define “equality” and “discrimination.” They will use these definitions to look for instances of equality and discrimination in modern society.

RATIONALE

Through examining primary and secondary resources, students will develop their research and analysis skills. These skills are useful across academic disciplines and in everyday problem solving. Furthermore, by making connections between historical and modern situations, students will develop their abilities to apply knowledge outside of its original context.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- recall historical details about the student sit-ins held in Greensboro, N.C.
- analyze newspaper articles.
- explain and give examples of “equality” and “discrimination.”

TIME

- 2 minutes for *Freedom on the Menu* warm-up question
- 15 minutes to read and analyze 1960s articles
- 8 minutes to compare articles with other sources
- 5 minutes to define “discrimination” and “equality”
- 10 minutes to search current newspapers

AGE GROUP: 3rd–4th Grade

TARGET VOCABULARY:

- **boycott:** to refuse to conduct business with a person, store, or organization, usually to express disapproval or to peacefully force changes

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- **protest:** public demonstration of disapproval
- **segregation:** the practice of keeping people in separate groups based on their race or culture
- **sit-in:** an act of sitting in the seats or on the floor of an establishment as a means of organized protest (see the images of boys sitting at lunch counter)

MATERIALS

- Directions sheet (*attached*)
- Background sheets (*attached*)
- Read All About It! sheet (*attached*)
- Computer with Internet connection
- (*optional*) Recent local newspapers
- (*optional*) *Freedom on the Menu* book

PREPARATION

- Read *Freedom on the Menu* together. *Freedom on the Menu* is a story about the civil rights movement, as told through the eyes of a young girl. For tips on reading this book together, check out the *Guided Reading Activity* (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/freedom/lunchcounter_reading.pdf).
- Before starting, you may want to look for a recent local newspaper article that includes an example of discrimination or equality. It can take children a long time to skim through newspapers!
- (*optional*) If you do not have computers for each student, consider printing copies of the articles from the newspaper section of the *SitIns.com Web site* (http://www.sitins.com/media_hl.shtml#headlines) for use in class.

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STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Identify details within the historical newspaper article.
- Compare the historical newspaper article to *Freedom on the Menu* and/or social studies textbook.
- Explain and give examples of “equality” and “discrimination.”

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

- 2B: Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.
- 2D: Read historical narratives imaginatively.
- 2E: Appreciate historical perspectives.
- 3B: Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas.
- 3C: Analyze historical fiction.
- 3D: Distinguish fact and fiction.
- 3E: Compare different stories about a historical figure, era, or event.
- 4B: Obtain historical data from a variety of sources.

K-4 Historical Content Standards

- 1B. The student understands the different ways people of diverse racial, religious, and ethnic groups, and of various national origins have transmitted their beliefs and values.
- 4A. Demonstrate understanding of how the United States government was formed and of the nation’s basic democratic principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- 4B. Demonstrate understanding of ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.
- 4C. Describe how historical figures in the United States and other parts of the world have advanced the rights of individuals and promoted the common good and identify character traits such as persistence, problem solving, moral responsibility, and respect for others that made them successful.

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IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy

Life and Career Skills

- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

ISTE National Educational Technology Standards (NETS.S)

Research and Information Fluency

- B. Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.