

Protest Signs

Parent Guide, page 1 of 2

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

SUMMARY

During this activity, you and your child will look at examples of protest signs from the civil rights movement, and then create your own expressive chalk art or poster.

WHY

You and your child will use critical thinking and creative skills to look at and send messages through protest signs. Children can use what they learn about protest signs to change the world around them by making their own statements clear and convincing.

TIME

- 5 minutes to examine signs from the civil rights movement
- 20 minutes to create poster or chalk art

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best with children in kindergarten through 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
- **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- **primary source:** a historical document, photograph, or artifact written, created, or used by someone who experienced events at the time they took place
- **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)

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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) (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/freedom/lunchcounter_reading.pdf).

YOU NEED

- Directions sheet (*attached*)
- Background sheets (*attached*)
- Fine Signs sheet (*attached*)
- *EITHER* Sidewalk chalk and outdoor space *OR* paper/posterboard and art materials
- (*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.



Image of students starting the sit-ins

From *Freedom on the Menu*

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.

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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

Have you ever seen a sign?

What was it trying to tell you?

Look at two protest signs from the civil rights movement and then make your own statement in paper or in chalk.

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 helps her family make a sign. Look in the picture. What does her sign say?
2. Use the [Fine Signs](#) sheet to look at and compare two signs from the civil rights movement.

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

3. In the book and the Author’s Note on the last page, look for different things that you think are unfair for Connie, her family, or others. Think of a short message about an unfair thing for your own sign or chalk art.

Tip If there is another cause that you think is important, like promoting healthy eating habits or recycling, you could make a message about that instead.

4. Spread your message! Use a piece of poster board and art materials or take sidewalk chalk outside. Try to include some of the ideas from the posters in the book and the [Fine Signs](#) sheet.

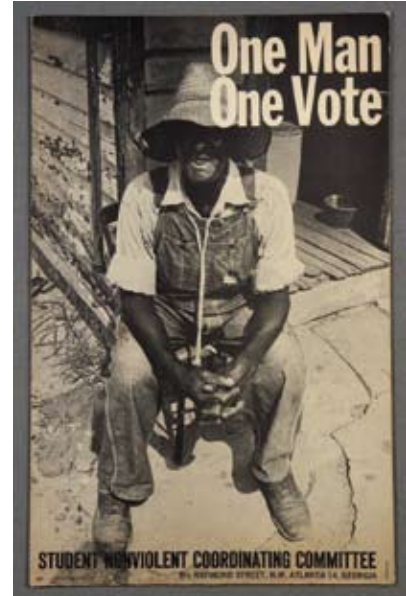
Tip If you are making chalk artwork, make sure you pick a place that’s all right for you to decorate. Some places, like public sidewalks, don’t necessarily welcome decorations, so others may ask you to wash your artwork away before you want to.

5. Once you’ve finished your poster or chalk art, ask someone to take a picture of you and your message.

Tip Consider hanging finished posters in the window, facing outside!

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Fine Signs



	<i>Target Freedom</i>	<i>One Man One Vote</i>
Does it look hand-made?	yes no	yes no
Does it look printed?	yes no	yes no
What colors are used?		
Does it show a person?	yes no	yes no
Does it rhyme?	yes no	yes no
Does it use repetition?	yes no	yes no
Does it use a picture?	yes no	yes no
Does it say who created the poster?	yes no	yes no
Does it use symbols?	yes no	yes no
Has ___ words in the main message		

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

SUMMARY

Students will look at examples of protest signs from the civil rights movement, and then create their own expressive posters or chalk art. Students can either spread a message connected to the civil rights movement or another cause with which they are personally involved.

RATIONALE

Primary source research is an important historical skill which both requires and hones critical thinking skills. Through guided examination, students will develop better observation skills and begin to build historical research skills.

While creating and presenting their messages for social change, students will develop and apply their communication skills. Students can also use what they learn about protest signs to change the world around them by making their own statements clear and convincing.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- recall specific injustices that the civil rights movement sought to end.
- express themselves through written and visual communication.
- examine, describe, and interpret historical artifacts.
- create an original work as a means of personal expression.

TIME

- 5 minutes to examine signs from the civil rights movement
- 20 minutes to create poster or chalk art

AGE GROUP: K-4

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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- **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
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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*)
- Fine Signs sheet (*attached*)
- *EITHER* Sidewalk chalk and outdoor space *OR* paper/posterboard and art materials
- (*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).

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Analyze and interpret information from signs.
- Identify themes and subjects found in works, and link them to the history of the civil rights movement.
- Clearly express ideas through artwork.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

2H: Draw upon the visual data presented in photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings.

3F: Analyze illustrations in historical stories.

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- 4B: Obtain historical data from a variety of sources.
- 5A: Identify problems and dilemmas.
- 5E: Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.
- 5F: Identify the solution.

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.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

- 2. 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.
- 3. 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).

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4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

21st-Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration

Information, Media, and Technology Skills

- Media Literacy

Life and Career Skills

- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Leadership and Responsibility

ISTE National Educational Technology Standards (NETS.S)

Creativity and Innovation

- A. Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or process.
- B. Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
- D. Identify trends and forecast possibilities.

Communication and Collaboration

- B. Communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.