

Got the Vote? Voter Registration Advertising & Design

Objective: Students will think critically about advertising messages, techniques, and the importance of designing and pitching advertisements to target audiences.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Student-selected advertisements, markers, colored pencils, ink pens/pencils, colored and non-colored paper, and other art supplies that are appropriate for students who desire to create a physical advertisement/design (Students may also opt to create their advertisement/design online).

Procedure: Prior to doing this activity, ask students to search for an age-appropriate magazine, newspaper, web or television advertisement that resonates with them. Ask students to bring their advertisements to class or to forward the link to you and the class. Ask students to share their chosen advertisement and tell the class why they chose that particular advertisement either to the full class or in groups.

After everyone has had an opportunity to share, ask students to re-examine their advertisement and identify what item is being marketed, to whom, and through what venue (e.g. television, magazine, billboard, cereal box). Ask them about the advertisement's effectiveness or ability to resonate with them as a young consumer. (For example, students may make an argument for how language, images, and colors factor into how effective or successful an advertisement is). Next, ask students to identify ineffective advertising techniques used in their select advertisements and compile a class list of both effective and ineffective techniques. Encourage students to consult this list as they engage in the following activity.

Here is a list of sites that you can consult to help start a conversation on advertising tactics:

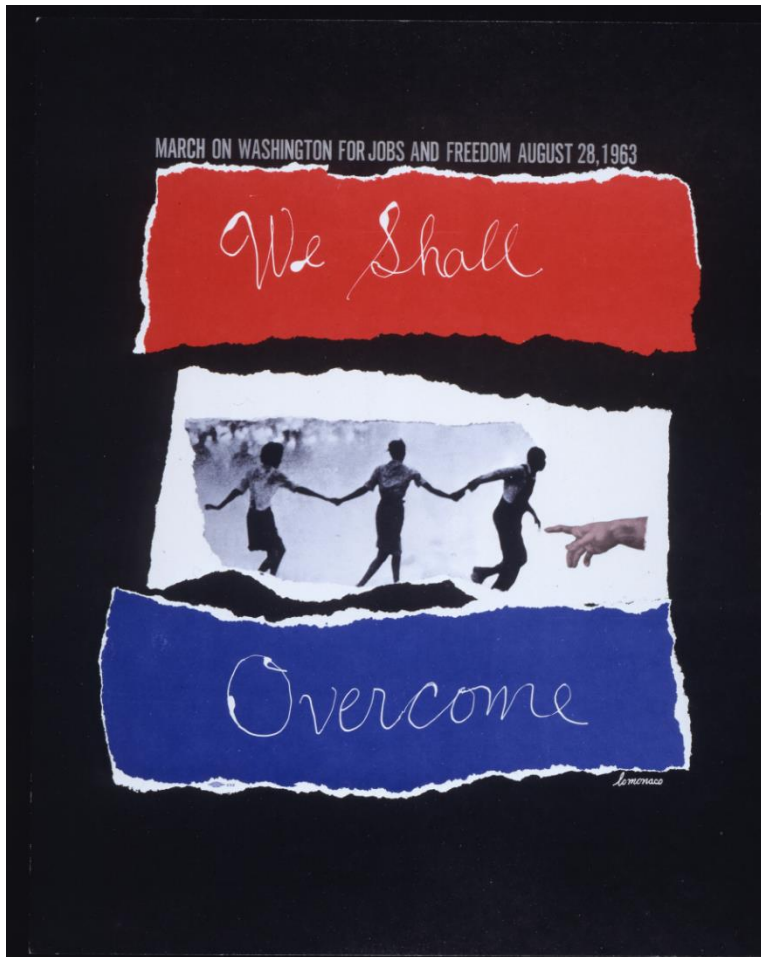
- National Museum of American History advertising collection:
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/subjects/advertising>.
- National Museum of American History *American Enterprise* online exhibition:
 - Brown University students tackle advertising history with the Smithsonian.
<http://americanenterprise.si.edu/2012/02/brown-university-students-tackle-advertising-history/>
 - Brown student's advertising exhibition—Bradley Burns. Retrieved from
<http://americanenterprise.si.edu/2012/02/brown-student-advertising-exhibition-bradley-burns/>.
- Organization of American Historians. *Magazine of History*. vol. 24, no. 1 (Jan. 2010).
<http://magazine.oah.org/issues/241/>

In order to help students understand and appreciate the power of words, imagery, and presentation, ask your students to examine images of historical civil rights propaganda shown below. Have them evaluate the images with the same criteria they developed for effective and ineffective advertising techniques.

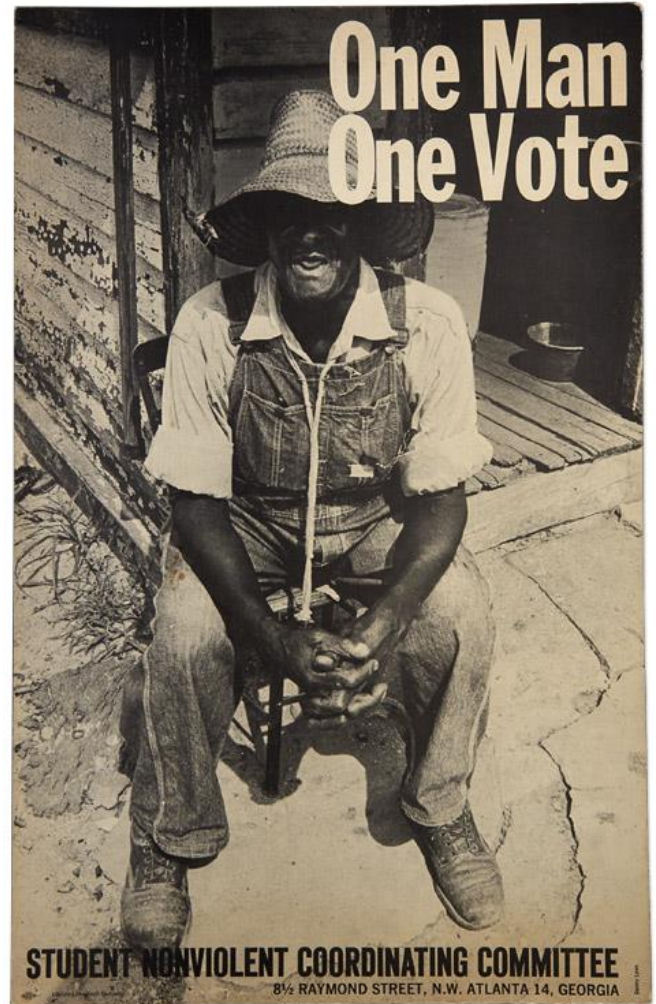
As they examine these images, ask them to draw upon what they have learned about Freedom Summer as they work with a partner or in a group of 2-3 persons to create a slogan or advertisement to motivate youth of varying ages to vote at the school, local, state, national, or international level. Remind them that the advertisement/design should inspire youth so much that it will be difficult for them to refuse to exercise their right to vote.



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NMAH Collections: 2010-25762 Poster
"We Shall Overcome"



NMAH Collections:
Student Nonviolent Coordinating
Committee Poster, circa 1963



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Thinkfinity | verizon foundation

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Follow-up Activity

Check out *Rock the Vote*'s official website at <http://www.rockthevote.com/about/>. This non-profit, nonpartisan organization has been credited with registering more than five million young people to vote and is geared toward encouraging and empowering youth engagement in the American political sphere. It merges music, pop culture, grassroots activism, and emerging technologies to get the next generation involved in our nation's democracy (ibid).

*Are you revved up about Rock the Vote after visiting their official site?! If so, grab the wheel in your neighborhood and help to register family, friends, and community members. Organize a voter registration drive at your school and neighboring schools. Hey! You can even get creatively competitive and raise the stakes by holding a competition to see who can get the most people registered at your school or between neighborhoods. Check out *Rock the Vote*'s Street Team Resources at <http://live.rockthevote.com/page/content/voter-registration-resources/> to learn more about hosting your own drive!*

