CONVERSATION KIT

NATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT

FREEDOM SUMMER

Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center
Thank you for participating in the Smithsonian’s National Youth Summit on Freedom Summer.

This kit is designed to provide you with ideas for leading group discussions on the history of Freedom Summer, information on key players and issues in the movement, and how these issues are relevant today. It also provides details on ways to participate in the Summit. The National Youth Summit is a program developed by the National Museum of American History in collaboration with PBS’s American Experience and Smithsonian Affiliations, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Verizon Foundation.

OVERVIEW

The fourth annual National Youth Summit will occur on February 5, 2014 and will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Freedom Summer, also known as the Mississippi Summer Project. The Summit will feature Freedom Summer activists, academics, and 2013 Freedom School Scholars, who will serve as moderators for the event. The national dialogue will consist of testimonies from such activists as Dr. Robert Moses, who envisioned and helped lead the Mississippi Summer Project. Scholars include Dr. Marshall Ganz, civil rights activist and Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

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Mississippi Freedom Summer Map, National Museum of American History Political History Collections

On the cover: Freedom Summer volunteers sit on the porch of a house and speak with a woman about voter registration in Mississippi, 1964. Ted Polumbaum/Newseum collection
COMMON CORE STANDARDS

English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration, Grades 9–10
1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension and Collaboration, Grades 11–12
1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

English Language Arts: Writing

Text Types and Purposes, Grades 9–10
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

3d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

Text Types and Purposes, Grades 11–12
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

3d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

Production and Distribution of Writing, Grades 9–10
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Production and Distribution of Writing, Grades 11–12
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS: NATIONAL STANDARD FOR HISTORY

United States History Content Standards for Grades 5–12

Era 9: Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)
Standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties
Therefore, the student will be able to:
Assess the reasons for and effectiveness of the escalation from civil disobedience to more radical protest in the civil rights movement.

Thinking Standards

Standard 2: Historical Comprehension
• Read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved—their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

Standard 3: Historical analysis and interpretation
• Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.
• Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.
• Hypothesize the influence of the past, including both the limitations and opportunities made possible by past decisions.

Standard 5: Historical issues analysis and decision-making
• Evaluate alternative courses of action, keeping in mind the information available at the time in terms of ethical considerations, the interests of those affected by the decision, and the long- and short-term consequences of each.
• Formulate a position or course of action on an issue by identifying the nature of the problem; analyzing the underlying factors contributing to the problem; and choosing a plausible solution from a choice of carefully evaluated options.
• Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served; by estimating the position, power, and priority of each player involved; by assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and by evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives.
In the early 1960s, as the Civil Rights Movement swept across America, bringing about massive changes in laws, in mores, and in the way Americans thought about themselves and their nation, there was Mississippi. In 1955, the same year that Rosa Parks famously refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, launching both the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the career of Martin Luther King Jr., a young boy, Emmett Till, was tortured, mutilated, and murdered for “talking fresh” to a white woman in the Mississippi Delta. In 1961, the same year that saw hundreds of Freedom Riders put their lives on the line to ride buses through the South and force the federal government to protect its citizens and enforce its laws, Mississippi farmer Herbert Lee was shot in the head in broad daylight by a Mississippi state legislator for daring to persuade black people to vote. The terrorism used to support white supremacy in Mississippi was as renowned as it was horrific. Racism and oppression in Mississippi were thought by many to be so intractable and deeply rooted that there was little reason to even try to change it through nonviolent direct action. Many felt like Emmett Till’s uncle, Moses Wright, who gave up home for change after his nephew’s murder and declared, “they can have my part of Mississippi.”

Amazingly, not everyone was ready to give up. In 1964 thousands of Mississippians and college students from all across the country decided to attack the violence and hopelessness with peace, courage, and optimism. Freedom Summer planners and volunteers said they hoped the Mississippi Summer Project would “make Mississippi part of the United States.” They knew that simple and perfectly legal actions—helping people register to vote, teaching children and adults to
read, or even sitting down and eating with someone of a different ethnicity—might get them killed.

They also believed that it might change the entire nation. If simple justice could be achieved in Mississippi just by young people organizing and volunteering for a summer, what did that suggest for the rest of the nation? Perhaps even more importantly, how would Freedom Summer affect the people involved in it? Taking on the daunting task of wading into non-violent battle against unrestrained and brutal racial subjugation would forever change all who participated in Freedom Summer. Those experiences would be carried with Freedom Summer veterans and affect their work as the Civil Rights Movement continued, the conflict over the Vietnam War escalated, and Americans struggled to decide what equality and democracy meant in the late 20th century.

**PANELISTS**

**Robert “Bob” Parris Moses** received his BA from Hamilton College (1956), and his MA in Philosophy from Harvard University (1957). Moses was a prominent figure in the Civil Rights Movement as a field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1961, Moses initiated SNCC’s Mississippi Voter Registration Project, and was appointed its director in 1962. He helped to lead the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) into the Mississippi Summer Project (1964 Freedom Summer), which parachuted the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City. He received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (1982-87), and subsequently started the Algebra Project (AP), which uses mathematics as an organizing tool for a Quality Education as a Constitutional Right (QECR) for all students. With support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) since 2002, the AP has been working with cohorts of high school students who previously performed in the lowest quartile on standardized exams. This work has led AP to propose a math high school “benchmark” for bottom quartile students: that they graduate high school on time, in four years, ready to do college math for college credit. To this end AP is exploring collaborations around a concept of “Math Cohort High Schools”. Moses is co-author of *Radical Equations–Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project* (Beacon, 2001) and co-editor of *Quality Education as a Constitutional Right-creating a grassroots movement to transform public schools* (Beacon Press, 2010). In 2011-2012, Moses was the Distinguished Visitor for the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University, and was a visiting lecturer at NYU School of Law during the fall semester, 2012, and is President of the Algebra Project, Inc.

An interview with Bob Moses on education and civil rights history is available from NOW with Bill Moyers: http://www.pbs.org/now/society/moses.html

**Michelle Deardorff:** Since earning her Ph.D. from Miami University in 1993, Dr. Deardorff’s teaching and research have focused on the constitutional and statutory protections surrounding gender, race, and religion. She is currently completing a book, entitled *Pregnancy and the American Worker*, which examines the lower federal courts’ interpretation of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in relationship to pregnancy protections in employment, which is under contract with Palgrave Macmillian.

Most recently, she served as Professor and Chair of
Background Information

Political Science at Jackson State University, a historic black university in Mississippi. Prior to her relocation to Jackson State in 2003, Deardorff was the Griswold Distinguished Professor of Political Science, former chair of the Department of Political Science, and Acting Dean of Arts and Sciences at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. Michelle is a founding member of the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy, a coalition of academics who promote civic engagement and popular sovereignty through the study of the struggle for civil rights in the United States.


**Marshall Ganz**, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, entered Harvard College in the fall of 1960. In 1964, a year before graduating, he left to volunteer as a civil rights organizer in Mississippi. In 1965, he joined Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers; over the next 16 years he gained experience in union and community issues, and political organizing, and became Director of Organizing. During the 1980s, he worked with grassroots groups to develop effective organizing programs, designing innovative voter mobilization strategies for local, state, and national electoral campaigns. In 1991, in order to deepen his intellectual understanding of his work, he returned to Harvard College and, after a 28-year “leave of absence,” completed his undergraduate degree in history and government. He was awarded an MPA by the Kennedy School in 1993 and completed his PhD in sociology in 2000. He teaches, researches, and writes on leadership, organization, and strategy in social movements, civic associations, and politics. Ganz is widely credited with devising the successful grassroots organizing model and training for Barack Obama’s winning 2008 presidential campaign.

*Students can view an interview with Marshall Ganz entitled Making Social Movements Matter from Moyers and Company: [http://billmoyers.com/segment/marshall-ganz-on-making-social-movements-matter/](http://billmoyers.com/segment/marshall-ganz-on-making-social-movements-matter/)* or *view a short introduction to Ganz, his work, and his relationship with President Obama’s 2008 campaign on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgIxpj94Z2o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgIxpj94Z2o)*

**Hollis Watkins**, President of Southern Echo, Inc., of Jackson, Mississippi was the first Mississippi student to become involved in the 1961 Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Voting Rights Project. Before founding Southern Echo, he was field director for the sustainable agriculture program of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives. Mr. Watkins was a core participant in the successful community-based redistricting efforts in Mississippi in the 1990s. Mr. Watkins has presented seminars, workshops, training, and technical assistance to communities across Mississippi, throughout the United States, and in Latin America on community organizing, redistricting, and political access and accountability.

*Students can read and listen to a segment of an interview with Watkins about police intimidation during Freedom Summer on the History Matters website: [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6923/](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6923/)*
CENTRAL QUESTIONS FOR THE SUMMIT

1. What are the lessons of Freedom Summer for today’s world?
2. Is Freedom Summer a template for social change?
3. What can or cannot be achieved at the grassroots level?

SUMMIT MODERATORS

Harry Clarke, Joy Lyman, and Nicholas Nchamukong spent the fall semester of 2013 at the National Museum of American History learning about the civil rights movement and preparing to host the National Youth Summit on Freedom Summer. Harry and Nicholas will moderate the panel discussion for the Summit and Joy will serve as the moderator for the online chat portion of the Summit.

Harry Clarke is a 2013 graduate of the University of Mississippi with degrees in history and biology and an interest in social media and in higher education. As Harry wrote in his application, “My motivation for applying to this internship is to learn a great deal more about the civil rights movement through hands on interaction with primary sources… [and] with people who lived it but also, at a deeply personal level, to connect these struggles with my experiences of Mississippi and the deep South in general as both a white and gay man.”

Joy Lyman is a 2013 graduate of the University of Michigan with degrees in History and English secondary education. During her undergraduate years, Joy was a writing peer tutor at the University as well as a student teacher in diverse settings in and around Detroit. Through her education and internship she has had the unique opportunity to look at the ways that history and social justice interact to push our country forward. Joy hopes to return to public school teaching after her internship at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, but is also considering museum work or higher education.

Nicholas Nchamukong is a junior and a history major from the University of California, Irvine with a passion for documentary and media, and a specific interest in race and class issues. As Nicholas wrote in his application for the internship program, “after the intimate, hands-on education I will get from working so closely with my History as an intern in the Freedom School, there is no doubt I will be capable of, then, presenting lessons to those affected by adverse conditions in a more effective manner.”
Section II

FREEDOM SUMMER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

All lesson plans can be found at:
http://americanhistory.si.edu/freedom-summer/teacher-resources

PRE-SUMMIT ACTIVITIES

In addition to introducing students to the panelists using the biographical sketches and links, suggestions for introducing the history of the Freedom Summer through close readings and analysis using primary source material and critical thinking and reflective exercise are included below. Pre-session materials are designed to provide students with a broad context about what Freedom Summer entailed. They also encourage students to think deeply about the experiences of Freedom Summer volunteers during that historic period.

The Foundations of Freedom Summer: Close Reading
http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/Freedom_Summer_Close_Reading.pdf

Description: This activity is designed to encourage students to practice their critical reading and historical comprehension skills by reading the primary source document entitled the “Development of Freedom Summer” and examining a Freedom Summer volunteer application form. Key questions are posed after the reading to gauge students’ understanding of the text.

Take a Stand: Human Barometer Activity
http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/Human_Barometer_Activity.pdf

Description: This activity addresses the Common Core Standards for comprehension and collaboration. This class activity is designed to have students make an informed decision based on a series of questions asked and (if they so desire) to share the rationale for their position with their peers.

The Sound of Freedom: Survey of Freedom Songs
http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/Freedom_Songs.pdf

Description: This activity is designed to enable
students to engage with and analyze Freedom Songs used during the Civil Rights Movement and the Freedom Summer Project.

**WEBCAST**

Students are encouraged to listen closely to the perspective brought to the discussion by the panelists. The worksheet helps students follow one speaker very closely, to facilitate post-summit discussion.

**Freedom Summer Panelist Analysis: Scoping the Speaker**

http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/Scoping_the_Speaker.pdf

**Description:** This activity addresses the Common Core Standards for Comprehension and Collaboration. It is designed to provide students with an opportunity to deeply engage with at least one Summit panelist by examining his/her role in the Freedom Summer movement, identifying key points made during the presentation, and posing questions about intriguing, complex, or perplexing topics that were raised.

**WEB RESOURCES ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

**Smithsonian’s History Explorer**

Civil Rights Movement:
http://historyexplorer.si.edu/themes/theme/?key=14

**Site description:** Smithsonian’s History Explorer is the National Museum of American History’s searchable site for K–12 standards-based educational materials including lesson plans and interactives. This theme page within History Explorer includes materials for teaching about the modern civil rights movement, including podcasts and archived versions of past Youth Summits on the Greensboro Sit-ins and the 1961 Freedom Rides.

**Library of Congress Civil Rights:**

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/civil-rights/index.html

**Site description:** This site houses primary source materials and lesson plans regarding race in America and civil rights. It includes a bibliography of online civil rights resources geared specifically towards students.
**Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture**

Oh Freedom! Teaching African American Civil Rights through American Art at the Smithsonian: [http://africanamericanart.si.edu/index.php](http://africanamericanart.si.edu/index.php)

*Site description*: This site (complete with a glossary of key terms, lesson plans, and a timeline) places the Smithsonian’s extensive collections in the limelight and allows teachers, students, and the general public to “re-imagine and re-interpret the long struggle for civil rights, justice, and equality” through art.

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**Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement**

http://crmvet.org/

This website, created by Movement veterans, includes a wealth of resources: primary source documents, oral history interviews, a timeline of the movement, and a section for students.

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**Veterans of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement**

http://www.mscivilrightsveterans.com/

Founded in 2004, this group of veterans of the fight for civil rights in Mississippi has collected oral histories from its members and holds a variety of events.

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**National Park Service**


*Site description*: This site contains an introductory background into the civil rights movement and the significance of place. There is also an interactive map of historic landmarks located throughout America.

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**iCivics**

Teachers Guide Civil Rights: [http://www.icivics.org/sites/default/files/Road%20to%20Civil%20Rights_0.pdf](http://www.icivics.org/sites/default/files/Road%20to%20Civil%20Rights_0.pdf)

*Site description*: This iCivics document contains lesson plans involving civil rights, complete with an answer key. This resource may be a useful lesson to help middle grade students understand what the civil rights movement for African Americans entailed.

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**Oh Freedom Over Me**


*Site description*: The site highlights the events that occurred during the 1964 Freedom Summer. It features four interviews and offers a slideshow of photographs of the summer by Steve Schapiro.
Section III

YOUTH LEADERSHIP
AND ACTIVISM

Note: Prior to having students engage in conversations concerning the discussion prompts on page 13, please encourage them to:

1. Begin and remain open-minded. Acknowledge that some topics are difficult to discuss and to solve.
2. Begin with a shared understanding.
3. Embrace the idea that there are many ways to define freedom.
4. Respect the opinions of others.
5. Agree to respectfully disagree.
6. Think of how Freedom Summer experienced its share of both failures and successes, and how these were portrayed during, as well as after, the movement.
7. Be responsible, accountable, and honest with themselves.

Freedom Summer volunteers sit on the porch of a house and speak with a woman about voter registration in Mississippi, 1964. Ted Polumbaum/Newseum collection
DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Description: Outlined below are some discussion prompts you can use to discuss Freedom Summer with high school students. Listed directly underneath each prompt are suggested questions and ideas on ways to approach the outlined topics.

What do you need to change in order to make change?
• What can you change about your personal thoughts, actions, attitudes, behaviors, etc., to encourage change?
• What area(s) (local, state, national, international) need to be included in conversations, action plans, etc., to help execute change?

What do civil rights movements learn from each other?
• List movements and make note of mission.
• List results that happened as a result of the movement(s) listed above.
• Make note of similarities/differences between movements and results.

What is the significance of food and fellowship to the movement?
• Think of Freedom Summer and other movements discussed. What role did food play in these movements?
• Is food a display of a movement’s or participants’ culture(s)? What impact does the economy have on food selection and distribution?
• Who prepares and serves food? To whom is it served? Are there any foods specific/special to a particular movement?

What’s the strategy?
• What strategies are essential for mobilizing groups of people?
• What recruitment strategies were used during Freedom Summer?
• Identify successful strategies used at your school or in your community to promote change.

What are the abilities and limits of government action within a movement? What can government change and what can it not?
Consider local, state, and federal government.
• How did the government respond when Freedom Summer leaders/volunteers requested protection?
• How has the government responded to past movements?
• How can government intervention be helpful and/or act as a hindrance?

Do the arts advance the movement only when they are produced by the movement, rather than produced about it?
• Think of music inspired by social movements such as the modern civil rights movement. Listen to the NPR compilation entitled The Mix: Songs Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement. This mix consists of religious songs, pop music, social conscience tunes, and others that relay messages centered on the modern civil rights movement. A list of the songs compiled in the mix is available on the lower half of the webpage. (Note: Some songs may be inappropriate for young audiences.)

Will the revolution be tweeted?
Will it be on Facebook?
• Do you know of any revolutions that were started or maintained online? If so, which? What role do media, including social media, play in social movements?

Is there a “new civil rights movement”?
• Is equal access to quality education the new civil rights movement? Why or why not?
• What needs to change in order to make schools more just and equitable institutions?
• Is economic inequality a social injustice? If so, how can it be remedied?
• If so, how can civil rights strategies be utilized to mobilize people around poverty issues and effectively combat it?
What is the legacy of the civil rights movement?

Compare the civil rights movement to these modern issues:

- Anti-bullying
- Gay marriage
- Immigration/Path to citizenship
- Second amendment
- Jobs, the American economy
- Education
- Health care
- Occupy Wall Street
- Poverty/Living wage
- Reproductive rights

**POST-SUMMIT ACTIVITIES: WHAT NEXT?**

After the session, students are encouraged to investigate Freedom Summer issues and its historical precedents more deeply through active engagement.

**Reframing History through Graphics: Creating Historic Graphic Novels**

http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/History_through_Graphic_Novels.pdf

**Description:** This activity is designed to allow students to either reflect on a Freedom Summer newsletter and create a graphic comic strip based on ideas/content contained in the newsletter or depict how the National Youth Summit helped to shape/inform their understanding of self, society, civil rights, freedom, and other aspects of citizenship.

**Got the Vote?: Voter Registration Design & Advertisements**

http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/Got_the_Vote.pdf

**Description:** Students will have an opportunity to advertising strategies and historical voter registration propaganda. Afterward, they will have an opportunity to create their own voter registration slogans and/or advertisements in an attempt to encourage their increased participation in school, community, local, and/or national elections.

**Final Product:**

**Youth on the Move: Social Activism through Art**

http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/Activism%20through_Art.pdf

**Description:** Students will have an opportunity to briefly familiarize themselves with artist/activist Candy Chang’s work, which has been seen worldwide. Afterward, they (like Chang) will have an opportunity to create a social justice “word wall” and make images of their work available to the public.
Our Partners

The National Youth Summit on Freedom Summer is presented by the National Museum of American History in collaboration with PBS’s American Experience and Smithsonian Affiliations with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Verizon Foundation. The program is based on the upcoming American Experience documentary Freedom Summer, directed by Stanley Nelson and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Check your local listings for the film this summer.