

# Civil Rights Movement and Utah

## Summary

In this lesson students will be introduced to some of the experiences of African-Americans in Utah. This discussion includes issues related to: employment, culture, religion, prejudice, WWII, and the Civil Rights Movement. This lesson is intended to be a follow-up to a lesson about the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

## Time Frame

3 class periods of 70 minutes each

## Life Skills

Communication, Character, Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

### Day One

Television and VCR

- [Utah's African American Voices](#)
- [Teachers Notes on Utah's African American Voices](#)
- [Video Worksheet](#)

Copy of [Little Black Sambo](#)

### Day Two

- [Excerpts from Missing Stories](#)
- Overhead projector/chalkboard/whiteboard

### Day Three

- [Terry Lee Williams story](#)
- [Utah's African American Voices](#)

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should have knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States as well as background on the impact the Movement had in Utah. Teachers should be familiar with the tensions that existed during this time period and how the social, political, cultural, and economic landscape of the nation (and Utah) was effected.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Prior to teaching this lesson, teachers should spend a week to two weeks on the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. This material should include the history of racial prejudice and discrimination against African Americans. Students should also be familiar with the main events of the movement itself, including: school de/segregation, bus de/segregation, Freedom Rides, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the March on Washington.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

This lesson plan will make students aware of the treatment of African Americans during the period of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the effect this national movement had on the culture (political, economic, social) of Utah.

Students will gain a better understanding of the diversity that exists in their own community.

Students will gain an awareness of the struggles experienced by many black citizens in Utah, at

the same time as many others throughout the country.

## Instructional Procedures

### Day One

#### *Activity One*

As a class, watch approximately 35-40 minutes of the video Utah's African American Voices, as a way to introduce students to the experiences of African Americans in Utah.

As the students watch the film they will answer the questions on the " [Video Assignment](#)."

When the first portion of the video is complete and students have finished the assignment, grade the worksheet as a class (have students trade papers so that each student has another student's paper). Discuss the answers to the worksheet as they are being graded. Teachers should grade the final question since there are a variety of possible answers.

#### *Activity Two*

Read the story Little Black Sambo to the students. Discuss how this book came to be written, and how this version of the book can be perceived as racist. (Download a free copy of the book from the link at the bottom of this lesson plan.)

Information about the book can be found on [Wikipedia](#).

As a class, discuss student's perceptions of the book and how they believe it represents African Americans. You might want to start by only showing the class the cover of the book, and asking them what they think the book is about.

### Day Two

Either as a class or individually, read the six excerpts from [Missing Stories](#).

Have an overhead prepared with the following questions:

What is your reaction to the stories we just read? How did they make you feel? *Answer in at least one paragraph.*

Have you ever experienced prejudice or discrimination of any kind? Have you ever observed it happening to someone else? EXPLAIN. How did it make you feel? *Answer in paragraph form.*

What do you personally think is the best way to react to prejudice and discrimination? Why do you think this? EXPLAIN. *Answer in at least one paragraph.*

After students turn in their assignments, discuss possible answers with the class.

### Day Three

#### *Activity One*

As a class, read the packet of material on former Utah State Senator [Terry Lee Williams](#).

This reading covers his experiences as the first black senator in Utah, and the effort he put into getting the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday passed in Utah.

#### *Assignment*

Write this question on the board:

Are you glad that the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday passed here in Utah? Why or why not?

*Explain your answer in at least one paragraph.* Discuss student responses as a class. Encourage each student to share one thought/idea.

#### *Activity Two*

Finish watching Utah's African American Voices (this portion of the film should take 15-20 minutes).

On an overhead write the following questions:

Who are your role models? Why?

What do you think about the story how Ahmad Rashad (a famous football player) wouldn't sign autographs for kids until they already had autographs from a parent, a teacher, etc.? What point was he trying to make?

After students complete and turn in their assignment, discuss some of their answers as a class.

Then briefly discuss these questions:

What did you learn in the past three days that you did not know before, or that particularly surprised or interested you?

What parts of the lessons did you enjoy, and which parts of the lessons did you find less enjoyable?

What can we do today to make sure that racism does not persist in Utah?

### Bibliography

Kelen, L.G, & Stone, E.H. (2000). Missing Stories: An Oral History of Ethnic Minority Groups in Utah. Utah State University Press. Logan, UT.

Bannerman, H. (1923). The Story of Little Black Sambo. Harper Collins.

Utah's African American Voices (video) KUED Public Television.

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