

# TURNING 15 ON THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

MY STORY OF THE 1965 SELMA VOTING RIGHTS MARCH

Based on the book by Lynda Blackmon Lowery



 **STATE** | **THEATRE**  
NEW JERSEY

**KEYNOTES**

# WELCOME!



photos (above & cover) © Rob Brizzell

State Theatre New Jersey welcomes you to the school-day performance of *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*. This musical adaptation of Lynda Blackmon Lowery’s moving autobiography brings to life her story of courage and determination as a teenager playing a part in the movement to secure the right to vote for African Americans.

These *Keynotes* provide information to help you prepare for the performance. Included are discussion questions, suggested activities, and an extensive list of resources to help you make the most of your theater experience.

We look forward to seeing you at The State Theatre!



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*State Theatre New Jersey—creating extraordinary experiences through the power of live performance.*

*Portions of this guide are taken from the Penguin Publishing Co. teaching guide for *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*.*

## CONTENTS

Welcome! .....	2
About the Show.....	3
The Company .....	4
Songs in the Show.....	5
Martin Luther King, Jr.....	6
Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Movement .....	7
Why Voting Rights? .....	8
“Steady, Loving Confrontation” .....	9
Children in the Movement.....	10
Music of the Civil Rights Movement.....	11
“We Shall Overcome” .....	12
Segregation.....	13
Talking About Race and Racism .....	14
Then and Now.....	15
Keeping Democracy Strong .....	16
At the Show.....	17
Resources .....	18-19
Credits .....	20

# ABOUT THE SHOW

In 1965, at age 15, Lynda Blackmon Lowery was the youngest person to march all the way from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, on the Voting Rights March. Jailed nine times before her 15th birthday, Lynda, along with her friends and neighbors, fought alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to secure the right to vote for African Americans. Lowery, who still lives in Selma today, wrote an illustrated memoir about her experience for young readers: *Turning 15 On The Road To Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March*.

Now Lowery's award-winning memoir has been turned into a new musical, *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*. The stage adaptation, by Ally Sheedy (*The Breakfast Club*, *High Art*, *Psych*), features traditional and original Gospel and Freedom songs.



photo © Rob Britzell

# SONGS IN THE SHOW

**"Woke up this Morning (With My Mind Stayed on Freedom)"**

**"This Little Light of Mine"**

**"Oh, Freedom"**

**"Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around"**

**"We Shall Overcome"**

**"Go, Tell it on the Mountain"**

**"It's Me, It's Me, It's Me, O Lord  
(Standing in the Need of Prayer)"**

**"Eyes on the Prize"**

**"Eye on the Sparrow"**

**"Sing Out, March On"**

**"Battle Hymn of the Republic"**

## **LISTEN TO THESE SONGS FROM THE SHOW:**

"Woke Up This Morning"

[soundcloud.com/user-319748413/woke-up-this-mornin](https://soundcloud.com/user-319748413/woke-up-this-mornin)

"This Little Light of Mine"

[soundcloud.com/user-319748413/this-little-light](https://soundcloud.com/user-319748413/this-little-light)

"Oh, Freedom"

[soundcloud.com/user-319748413/oh-freedom](https://soundcloud.com/user-319748413/oh-freedom)

"We Shall Overcome"

[soundcloud.com/user-319748413/we-shall-overcome](https://soundcloud.com/user-319748413/we-shall-overcome)

"Sing Out, March On"

[soundcloud.com/user-319748413/sing-out-march-on](https://soundcloud.com/user-319748413/sing-out-march-on)



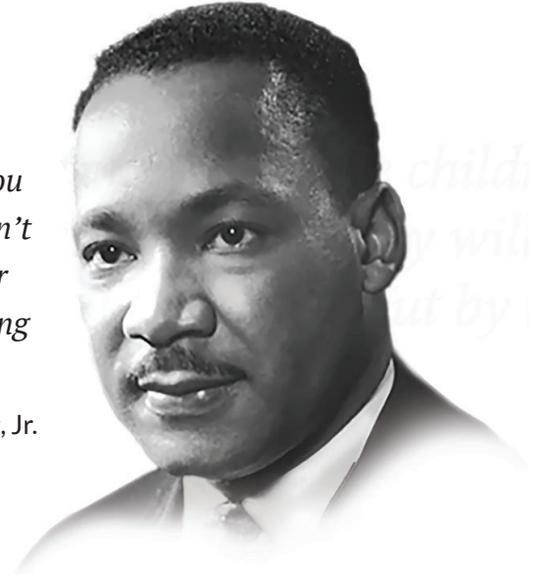
# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Born in 1929, Martin Luther King, Jr., was only 39 years old when he was murdered on April 4, 1968. He had first come to national fame in 1955 when he led the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. At that time the young African American minister was just 26 years old. Over the next 13 years, he would transform the Civil Rights Movement, demonstrate the power of nonviolence, and describe for Americans a dream of racial equality.

Lynda Lowery first heard Dr. King speak in Selma in 1963 when she was 13 years old. His message of the power of nonviolence and the importance of the vote galvanized the young teenager and changed her life.

*“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- At the 1963 March on Washington, Dr. King described his dreams for the future of race in America. Hearing Dr. King speak in Selma inspired Lynda Lowery to become involved in the Civil Rights Movement. What are your dreams for the future of relationships among Americans, and what actions might you take to make them come true?
- In 1983, the third Monday of each January was declared a federal holiday honoring Dr. King. His widow, Coretta Scott King, said, “This is not a black holiday. It is a people’s holiday.” What do you think she meant by this?

## ACTIVITIES

- Research the life of Dr. King. Working with classmates, create a ‘talking timeline’ in which you describe key events in his life in chronological order.
- Write a tribute to Dr. King.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the only federal holiday that is a tribute to one individual. Why do you think Dr. King was deemed important enough for this honor? Write an editorial supporting the holiday.

# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., AND THE VOTING RIGHTS MOVEMENT



On January 3, 1965, Dr. King spoke to a crowd of people in Selma, Alabama. Lynda Lowery was in the audience that day. Dr. King roused the black citizens of Selma to demand the ballot, and to change a century of racial prejudice and restrictions that prevented African Americans in the South from exercising their Constitutional right to vote. Throughout the Selma Voting Rights Movement, King made it clear that voting was essential to creating a just and equal society.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Selma activist Amelia Boynton had a sign in her office saying “A voteless people is a hopeless people.” What do you think this means? Why would Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference believe that voting was so important?
- Why was King’s involvement such a key part of the success of the Voting Rights Movement in Selma?
- Dr. King said: “So long as I do not... possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind—it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact—I can only submit to the edict of others.” Think about how you would feel if you were denied the right to vote when you turn 18.

## ACTIVITIES

- Research voting patterns today. Imagine that Dr. King could talk to a group of 18-year-olds who just became eligible to vote. Write a speech he might make to explain why voting matters .
- Read aloud, then summarize, Dr. King’s speech on March 25, 1965, in Montgomery (<http://www.mlkonline.net/ourgod.html>).
- Work with a small group to create a storyboard of the history of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Beginning with Bloody Sunday, show the events including President Johnson’s speech to Congress, the Voting Rights Act, and changes in voter registration in the South. End with current controversies regarding the Voting Rights Act and voter suppression.



photo © Dan Budnik/Contact Press Images

# WHY VOTING RIGHTS?

Why were Martin Luther King, Jr., and many others focused on voting rights in 1965? Why not segregation and the white supremacist violence that supported it? Let's look at the center of the voting rights movement in Selma, Alabama to find out.

There were 14,400 white and 15,115 black citizens eligible to vote in and around Selma. So there were more black citizens than white. But the black citizens were fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes if they tried to register to vote. Those who still tried had to pass a test with questions like "How many jelly beans are in this jar?" So of the 9,530 people registered to vote, 9,195 were white. And whom did they vote for? Segregationists all, but the worst one was Selma's vicious white supremacist sheriff, Jim Clark. In 1965 it seemed the only way to change was to vote the brutal segregationists out of office.



photo © Lauren Shiplett

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Lynda Lowery was 14 years old when she joined the Voting Rights Movement in Selma. When asked why she marched and went to jail, she said, "I just felt that once my parents got the right to vote, it would be a whole lot better. There was power in a vote." What did she mean by that?
- What ethnic and religious groups live in your community? Do you think your community's elected officials represent everyone fairly? Why or why not?
- What are some of the efforts today to keep certain Americans from voting? Where are they happening? Who are the people most affected by attempts at voter disenfranchisement and voter suppression?

**DISENFRANCHISEMENT** - taking away someone's right to vote

**VOTER SUPPRESSION** - legally or illegally preventing eligible voters from voting



NAACP poster

## ACTIVITIES

- Design a campaign to encourage voting.
- Take a poll of 7 to 10 adults. To get a range of views look for diversity in the adults you speak to. Ask: What do you think the most important issue in our community is today and do you think our elected representatives are addressing it? Choose one of their issues or one of your own and write a flyer that brings attention to the issue for the next election.



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

# "STEADY, LOVING CONFRONTATION"

In 1963, 13-year-old Lynda Lowery heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., urge the people of Selma to fight discrimination non-violently, with “steady, loving confrontation.” These words changed Lynda’s life. Lynda says that “steady” told her not to give up—to keep up the protest. “Loving” told her to listen with her heart, not just her ears. And “confrontation” told her to face injustice openly and strongly, without backing down.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Many people say Dr. King ended the terror of living as a black person, especially in the South. How might the idea of “steady, loving confrontation” help someone like Lynda overcome fear?
- Bayard Rustin (who introduced Dr. King to Gandhi’s ideas) said, “We need in every community a group of angelic troublemakers.” What do you think he meant by “angelic troublemaker”?
- Imagine protesting an issue that matters to you. What would be challenging about nonviolence? What would be constructive?
- A 2011 study on civil resistance found that nonviolent resistance was more than two times as effective as violent resistance in bringing about change. Why do you think that would be the case?
- In our own time, there are protests happening all around the world, for example: NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick taking a knee during the national anthem, the National School Walkout against gun violence, the worldwide climate change protests, and pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. Most of these started out as peaceful protests. Did they all stay that way? Why might some of these protests have turned violent?
- How has social media affected protest movements today? Has it had a positive or negative influence? Why?



Bayard Rustin



Mahatma Gandhi

## ACTIVITIES

- Research the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi or Bayard Rustin. Explain how they influenced Dr. King and the nonviolent movement.
- Plan a nonviolent protest on an issue you care about. Explain how you would take action and why.



Beginning with civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, children—sometimes as young as eight or nine years old—played a crucial role in the movement. They faced the police force’s fire hoses and attack dogs, and many were arrested. Although civil rights leaders were criticized by some for putting children in harm’s way, Dr. King believed involving children was “one of the wisest moves we made.” He believed their participation gave young people an understanding of “their stake in freedom and justice.”

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Dr. King believed that having children in the movement helped to convince people that the civil rights case was just?
- Do you agree or disagree with civil rights leaders who decided to involve children in protests? Explain.
- As a young person, how would you have felt about participating in civil rights protests such as those in Birmingham and Selma?

## ACTIVITIES

- Choose a civil rights protest such as the Selma Voting Rights Movement, the Birmingham Children’s Crusade, or the Leesburg “Stockade Girls.” Imagine that you were jailed for taking part in the protests. Write a letter to your parents, telling them how you feel.
- Research the experiences of young people in both Birmingham and Selma. Write newspaper articles comparing the two.



Police in Birmingham take a group of young protesters to jail. photo © Bill Hudson/AP



The Leesburg, Georgia “Stockade Girls”

*“Without these songs, you know we wouldn’t be anywhere. We’d still be down on Mister Charley’s plantation, chopping cotton for 30 cents a day.”*

—Cordell Reagon, founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and one of the original Freedom Singers

Music played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement. Activists and musicians—both black and white—came together to create and share songs that would reflect the events of the time, unify people, and keep up their courage and solidarity in the face of harassment and brutality. These songs were sung at marches, demonstrations, and even in prisons.

Many songs of the Civil Rights Movement were based on music that people already knew, such as African American spirituals, gospel, and American folksongs. Activists changed the words of the songs to reflect the political aims of the Civil Rights Movement. A number of famous musicians (including Pete Seeger, Odetta, Harry Belafonte, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan) wrote and recorded their own original protest songs and performed at concerts and rallies.

Movement organizers put together concert tours to raise awareness and financial support. One of the most prominent groups was the Freedom Singers—Rutha Mae Harris, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Cordell Reagon, and Charles Neblett—who started singing together as students at Albany State College in Albany, Georgia. They performed far beyond the South and across racial lines, fundraising for voter registration drives, raising awareness, and recruiting new supporters. Looking back at their activities, Bernice Johnson Reagon said, “We told stories in song (sometimes we called ourselves a singing newspaper) that let our audiences know firsthand about racism in the United States and that helped them find ways for themselves to witness for freedom.”



Folksinger and civil rights activist Joan Baez sings “We Shall Overcome” at the 1963 March on Washington.  
photo © Rowland Scherman 2016



The Freedom Singers (left to right): Charles Neblett, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Cordell Reagon, and Rutha Mae Harris.



## FOR DISCUSSION

*“They sang as they were dragged into the streets. They sang in the paddy wagons and in the jails. And they sang when they returned to the Black community’s churches for strategy rallies.”*

— Bernice Johnson Reagon, SNCC Freedom Singers

- In the quote above, who is the “they” Reagon is referring to?
- What does Reagon suggest about the importance of music to the Civil Rights Movement?
- How might a song be a particularly effective way to deliver a human message?
- What are some of the songs that inspire us today?

# "WE SHALL OVERCOME"

"We Shall Overcome" is generally considered the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement. Originally an African-American gospel song, it was first used for political protest in 1945, during a strike by tobacco workers in Charleston, SC. The song began to be performed by political activist musicians, who then introduced it into the Civil Rights Movement. At rallies and other events, crowds would sing the song together, swaying side to side, arm in arm.

"We Shall Overcome" has become a song of freedom around the world. It has been sung, in Spanish, by striking Mexican farm workers in the late 1960s; by anti-apartheid protesters in South Africa; by civil rights activists in Northern Ireland; in a Bengali translation during the Bangladesh War of Independence; and in countless other places where people have fought for their rights.



## "WE SHALL OVERCOME": TWO HISTORIC MOMENTS



**AUGUST 28, 1963**

The crowd sings "We Shall Overcome" after Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

[d2fpdfwogdqmw5.cloudfront.net/00\\_MLK\\_IHaveADream1963\\_RRAS.mp4](https://d2fpdfwogdqmw5.cloudfront.net/00_MLK_IHaveADream1963_RRAS.mp4)

- Where is the speech taking place?
- What is in the background? Why is this significant?
- What is King's main message?
- What happens in the crowd when the speech ends and you can hear the voice at the microphone saying "keep order"?
- Why do you think the crowd begins singing at that point?
- Who is in the crowd? Is it only African Americans? What does this tell you about the Civil Rights Movement?
- What is the crowd doing while it sings? What impression does this convey?



**MARCH 15, 1965**

President Lyndon B. Johnson quotes the song in his speech to Congress proposing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

[d2fpdfwogdqmw5.cloudfront.net/00\\_LBJ\\_VotingRights1965\\_RRAS.mp4](https://d2fpdfwogdqmw5.cloudfront.net/00_LBJ_VotingRights1965_RRAS.mp4)

- What is Johnson arguing for? Why does he say this is necessary?
- What phrase does he use at the end of this clip? What is the reaction of the senators and congressmen watching?
- Why do you think Johnson used this phrase?
- What does Johnson's use of this phrase and the reaction suggest about the influence of the song "We Shall Overcome" on the country's view of the Civil Rights Movement?

In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that facilities could be segregated, or separated, by race as long as they were equal for whites and nonwhites. Laws did not overturn this “separate but equal” policy until 1954. Textbooks show us segregated water fountains. But the issue was much bigger than that. The military and major sports teams were segregated across the country, for example. And in many places, schools, housing, hospitals, swimming pools, beaches, parks, libraries, restaurants, hotels, public bathrooms, churches, and other places were segregated. There was even segregation after death—in cemeteries.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What happens when two groups of kids in one community can't play together or get to know each other at all?
- In segregated communities, separate was never equal because every elected official was white. They chose to provide more funding to the white schools and libraries. Why do you think it was important for those officials to keep black people from voting?
- Look at the photograph (right) of a “colored” entrance to a movie theater. Discuss what it would be like to have to use this entrance. Do you like to choose where you sit at the movies? What if you were with someone elderly, disabled, or afraid of heights? What problems would this “separate but equal” entrance cause and how would it make you feel?



## ACTIVITIES

- Have you ever been made to feel 'less than' others or not liked by a group? Do you think the people who didn't accept you were prejudiced in some way? Write a poem or rap song about the experience.
- Research and report on a hero such as Elizabeth Eckford, Ruby Bridges, or James Meredith, who helped end segregation in schools, or Jackie Robinson, who integrated baseball.
- Racial segregation in public education has been illegal in the United States for more than 65 years. Yet American public schools remain largely separate and unequal, and are growing more so each year—with serious consequences, especially for students of color. Research your own school district. Then write an essay, create an oral presentation, or make an annotated map on school segregation and educational inequity in your community.



When Lynda Blackmon Lowery was a child in Selma, Alabama, her mother died. She has said, “Segregation killed my mother. I believe that.” Lynda’s mother died because there was no ‘black blood’ at the hospital and she could not be given ‘white blood.’ Even blood was segregated. Is there a difference between ‘black blood’ and ‘white blood’? No. The idea that there is a difference is called racism. Racism killed Lynda’s mother—and it continues to kill.

So let’s talk about it.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is race? What, if anything, can one’s race tell you about a person? How might this concept impact how you think about others or how others think about you?
- Racism is the idea that one race is superior to others. Is that possible? Think about these three points:
  1. What are racial differences? There are differences we can see with our eyes. People from Europe, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa look different. And we call each different look a race. But how people look changes gradually over huge distances. There is no place on Earth where one look begins, and another ends.
  2. More differences can be found within a race than between races.
  3. None of the differences between races has anything to do with intelligence or personality.
- When is it harmful to point out the differences between people? When is it natural or necessary? Is it possible to divide people into groups without privileging one group over another?

## ACTIVITIES

- Fear of strangers may be as old as the human species. But ideas of race and racism are only hundreds of years old. Research and report on the history of racism.
- Working in a small group, research the impact of race on one of these areas: income, housing, education, health care, or criminal justice. Look at these questions:
  1. What is the nature and scope of the disparity or problem?
  2. What impact has it had on African American communities?
  3. What historical and present-day factors helped create the problem?
  4. What needs to change to fix the problem?
  5. How can groups and individuals help make these changes happen?

Create a presentation to share with the rest of the class that addresses these five questions.

- Take a stand against racism. Have you heard a racist statement or seen a racist action? Think about what could be said or done, non-violently, to counter that action, and write a short play or story about it.





In recent years, protests against racism and discrimination have intensified again. Movements such as Black Lives Matter have grown, fighting against issues that are both the same as and different from those of the 1950s and 1960s.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you explain the meaning of the name “Black Lives Matter” to someone from another country?
- Study the photograph (right) of protesters in Selma in 1965. What does it tell you about differences and similarities in nonviolent protests then and now?
- The Civil Rights Movement had songs like “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round” and “We Shall Overcome.” What songs would you consider the anthems of the Black Lives Matter Movement?

## ACTIVITIES

- Research and report on the Black Lives Matter movement.
- With a partner or small group, write a dramatic scene in which a parent who participated in the Selma March discusses issues with a young person involved in Black Lives Matter.



High school students in Selma, Alabama, protesting for the right to vote. photo © John Kouns



Japan

A healthy democracy depends on informed citizens who vote. How healthy is our democracy? According to one source, the United States ranks 138th out of 172 countries in voter turnout. Why do so many Americans not exercise their right to vote? Many can't because they are not registered. For those registered who still didn't vote in the last presidential election, the top reason they gave was they were too busy, followed by illness or disability, lack of interest, or dislike for the candidates or issues. Here are some practices used in countries with better voter turnout:

- Same-day voter registration, as in Canada (13 states including Iowa and Colorado have already adopted this.)
- Automatic voter registration when you turn 18, as in France (and Oregon)
- Most countries have a much shorter campaign period. Japan's is just 12 days!
- Mandatory voting, as in Australia (People pay a fine if they don't vote.)
- Elections held on the weekend, as in Greece or Australia
- Early voting, as in New Zealand (and in increasingly more U.S. states and the District of Columbia)
- Online voting, as in Estonia
- Lower voting age (16), as in Brazil, Nicaragua, and Austria



India



South Africa

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which solutions used in other countries do you think could be successful in the United States? Give your reasons.
- What do you think would be the impact of 16-year-olds voting? Would you be supportive of that? Would it boost interest in the issues and candidates?
- Election interference has become a huge issue. Do you think this is a serious problem? What are some of the potential ways that the voting process might be corrupted? What could be done to make voting more secure?

## ACTIVITIES

- How healthy is democracy in your state and community? Research the voter turnout using your state's website or the U.S. Census Bureau to find out, and give your state a report card grade. Write an editorial about this.



Bolivia

## BE A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER.

Going to see a show at the theater is not the same as going to a movie or watching TV. The performers will be right there with you and the rest of the audience, which makes it very exciting! It also means you have a special responsibility to respect the performers and the rest of the audience so that everyone can enjoy the show. Make sure to follow these rules:

- **If you have a phone, make sure to turn it off before the show starts. Keep it off until the show is over.**
- **During the show, give the performers all your attention. Stay in your seat and don't talk.**
- **Taking pictures or recording the show is not allowed.**
- **Don't eat or drink in the theater. And no chewing gum, please!**

## BE A GOOD OBSERVER.

During the performance, pay attention to everything that's going on onstage—not only the words, but the lighting, the way the performers move around on stage, how they're dressed, and how they interact with the audience. Notice how all of these elements come together to create a unique experience.

Also try to observe how the performers interact with each other. What are some of the ways you see them working together as a team?



photo: Jason Paddock



photo © Kim Kenney



## Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom

*Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March*, by Lynda Blackmon Lowery, as told to Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley. Published in hardcover by Dial Books, paperback by Puffin Books, and audio by Listening Library, imprints of Penguin Random House LLC.

*Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom* - the play

[turning15ontheroad.com](http://turning15ontheroad.com)

Library of Congress Young Readers Center: conversation with Lynda Blackmon Lowery, along with Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley, co-authors of *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom*. (52 minutes)

[youtu.be/8I9XUTn88y4](https://youtu.be/8I9XUTn88y4)

NPR interview with Lynda Blackmon Lowery. (6 minutes)

[npr.org/2015/01/17/377197156/new-memoir-recalls-marching-in-selma-at-just-15](http://npr.org/2015/01/17/377197156/new-memoir-recalls-marching-in-selma-at-just-15)

## The Selma to Montgomery Marches

*Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights that Changed America*, by Russell Freedman. An account of the events leading up to and through the march. Holiday House, 2016.

*The Story of the Selma Voting Rights Marches in Photographs*, by David Aretha. Enslow Publishing, Inc., 2014.

C-SPAN American History TV - *Cities Tour: Selma*. A video tour of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. (20 minutes)

[www.c-span.org/video/?444944-1/voting-rights-march-selma](http://www.c-span.org/video/?444944-1/voting-rights-march-selma)

*Selma | The Bridge to the Ballot*. Teacher's toolkit from the Southern Poverty Law Center that includes a video of the documentary, viewer's guide, timeline, and map.

[www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/selma-the-bridge-to-the-ballot](http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/selma-the-bridge-to-the-ballot)

John Lewis talks about participating in the march from Selma to Montgomery. (4 minutes)

[youtu.be/q1\\_KtW-9tlg](https://youtu.be/q1_KtW-9tlg)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Research & Education Institute - Selma to Montgomery March

[kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/selma-montgomery-march](http://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/selma-montgomery-march)

National Voting Rights Museum and Institute - the Selma Marches

[nvrmi.com/?page\\_id=43](http://nvrmi.com/?page_id=43)

## The Civil Rights Movement

*Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*, by Juan Williams. Penguin Books, 2013.

*Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round: Stories and Songs of the Civil Rights Movement*, by Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Shane Evans. Grades 4-8.

*Oh, Freedom!: Kids Talk About the Civil Rights Movement with the People Who Made It Happen*, by Casey King and Linda Barrett Osborne. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 1997. Taken from interviews conducted by Washington, D.C., fourth graders with their parents, grandparents, neighbors, and others who helped fight against segregation. Grades 3-7.

*The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*, by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff. Vintage, 2007. Examines the way news reporting influenced the nation's ideas about civil rights in the 1950s and 60s.

*Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s Through the 1980s*, by Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer. Bantam Books, 1990. A narrative of the civil rights movement told by the people who were there: activists, politicians, reporters, Justice Department officials, and ordinary people who took part in the struggle.

*Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*, by Mildred Patillo Beales. Perfection Learning; Abridged Simon Pulse ed., 2007. Grades 7-12.

*We Are One: The Story of Bayard Rustin*, by Larry Dane Brimmer. Calkins Creek, 2007. Grades 6-7.

*Facing History and Ourselves* has a wide range of resources—including videos, blogs, and lesson plans—for teaching about the Civil Rights Movement.

[www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)

The Library of Congress Civil Rights History Project website includes sections on music and the roles of women and young people in the movement.

[www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays](http://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays)

*Black Lives Matter (Protest Movements)*, by Duchess Harris. Core Library, 2017. The history and ideas behind the movement, aligned to Common Core and state standards. Grades 6-12.

San Francisco Public Schools offers resources for teaching about the Black Lives Matter movement.

[sfusd.libguides.com/blacklivesmatter](http://sfusd.libguides.com/blacklivesmatter)

## Children and the Civil Rights Movement

*Marching for Freedom: Walk Together Children and Don't You Grow Weary*, by Elizabeth Partridge. Viking Books for Young Readers, 2009. Describes the pivotal events of the Selma march from the perspective of children who participated. Grades 5-10.

*We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March*, by Cynthia Levinson. Peachtree Publishing Company, 2015. A photo essay focusing on four young people who participated in the Birmingham Children's March. Grades 4-12.

*Hidden Herstory: The Leesburg Stockade Girls*. From the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, the little-known story of the African American girls who were arrested and imprisoned without charges for 45 days under appalling conditions for protesting segregation.

[nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/hidden-herstory-leesburg-stockade-girls](http://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/hidden-herstory-leesburg-stockade-girls)

*How the Children of Birmingham Changed the Civil-Rights Movement*.  
[www.thedailybeast.com/how-the-children-of-birmingham-changed-the-civil-rights-movement](http://www.thedailybeast.com/how-the-children-of-birmingham-changed-the-civil-rights-movement)

*Mighty Times | The Children's March*. A teacher's toolkit from the Southern Poverty Law Center that includes a video of the documentary and a teachers' guide with lesson plans.  
[www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/mighty-times-the-childrens-march](http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/mighty-times-the-childrens-march)

*Freedom's Children*. A *Time* Magazine feature about segregation in Selma's high schools, 50 years ago and today.  
[time.com/freedoms-children/](http://time.com/freedoms-children/)

## Race, Racism, and Segregation

*A Different Mirror for Young People: A History of Multicultural America*, by Ronald Takaki, adapted by Rebecca Stefoff. Explores the experiences of American immigrants from a variety of cultures, as shown through letters, diaries, and other primary sources. Triangle Square, 2012. Grades 6-12.

*Miles to Go for Freedom: Segregation and Civil Rights in the Jim Crow Years*, by Linda Barrett Osborne. Harry N. Abrams, 2012. An overview of racial segregation and early civil rights efforts in America, told through first-person accounts, photographs, and other primary sources. Grades 3-7.

*Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell About Life in the Segregated South*, edited by William Henry Chafe, Raymond Gavins, and Robert Korstad. The New Press, 2001. A book and CD with first-person accounts of African Americans' experiences living in the Jim Crow South.

*A Look at Race Relations through a Child's Eyes*. Featuring interviews with children, CNN's Anderson Cooper examines a study about the way black and white children perceive each other. (10 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPVNJgfDwpw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPVNJgfDwpw)

*Race, Racism, Prejudice and Discrimination—What Are They?* An animated video explaining these terms. (5 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt0f5WvAoGU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt0f5WvAoGU)

## Music and the Civil Rights Movement

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee website has first-person accounts of the crucial role played by freedom music in the Civil Rights Movement.  
[snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/culture-education/music/](http://snccdigital.org/inside-sncc/culture-education/music/)

TeachRock's unit on Music of the Civil Rights Movement includes resources and lesson plans.  
[teachrock.org/lesson/the-music-of-the-civil-rights-movement/](http://teachrock.org/lesson/the-music-of-the-civil-rights-movement/)

The Library of Congress' American Folklife Center traces the long history of the song, "We Shall Overcome."  
[blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2014/02/tracing-the-long-journey-of-we-shall-overcome/](http://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2014/02/tracing-the-long-journey-of-we-shall-overcome/)

*Rolling Stone* magazine highlights the history of "We Shall Overcome," from the 1950s to today.  
[www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-lists/we-shall-overcome-the-theme-song-of-civil-rights-12766/joan-baez-1963-139733/](http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-lists/we-shall-overcome-the-theme-song-of-civil-rights-12766/joan-baez-1963-139733/)

In 2010, Bernice Johnson Reagon and the Freedom Singers performed at the White House Celebration of Music from the Civil Rights Movement. (3 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhafyI6-Bp0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhafyI6-Bp0)

## Martin Luther King, Jr.

*A Time to Break Silence: The Essential Works of Martin Luther King, Jr., for Students*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. (with an introduction by Walter Dean Myers). Beacon Press, 2013.

*The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, edited by Clayborne Carson. Warner Books, 2001.

*I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. Turtleback Books, 2003.

The Life and Words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Story Map  
[storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/mlk/](http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/mlk/)

Stanford University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Encyclopedia  
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia>



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## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTERS

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