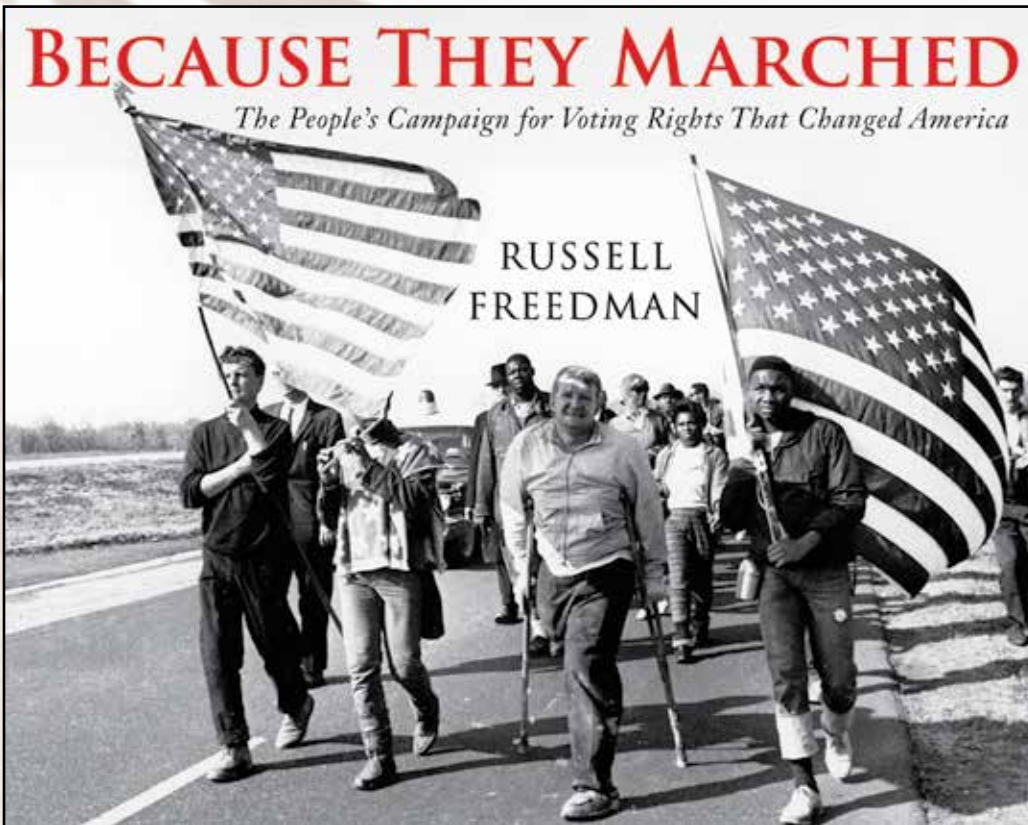


Holiday House
Educator's Guide

**Common
Core
Connections
INSIDE**



Because They Marched

The People's Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America

RUSSELL FREEDMAN

Grades 5 up

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Illustrated with photographs. Includes a time line, source notes, a bibliography, and an index.

ABOUT THE BOOK

For the fiftieth anniversary of the 1965 march for voting right from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, Newbery Medalist Russell Freedman has written a riveting account of this pivotal event in the history of civil rights. Illustrated with more than forty archival photographs, this is an essential chronicle of events every American should know.

Until January 1965, black teachers in Selma, Alabama, taught lessons in citizenship but stood back and observed their students lodge protests for voter rights. They were afraid of losing their jobs, but Rev. Frederick Douglass Reese, a teacher and president of the Dallas County teachers association, finally convinced his colleagues that it was time to practice what they taught and join the fight against voter discrimination. The teachers were careful to keep their protests peaceful, but Dallas County sheriff Jim Clark and his possemen terrorized the protesters. This fueled a greater determination among black demonstrators, and on March 7, 1965, state troopers charged and brutally attacked a group as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma on their march to the state capitol in Montgomery. This day, known as "Bloody Sunday," drew the attention of the nation and convinced President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress that it was time for a voter rights act. It was signed into law on August 6, 1965, and became the "crowning achievement of the civil rights movement."

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified on February 3, 1870. In class, read aloud the amendment and discuss why it was considered a “Reconstruction Amendment” (www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/15thamendment.html). Then read aloud the 1964 Civil Rights Act (www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=97&page=transcript). Have students write a brief paper that compares these two documents. What is missing in the 1964 Civil Rights Act that is covered in the Fifteenth Amendment? How does this explain why a voting rights act was needed?

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 6-8.2; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 5-8.1, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.4; Writing: Text Types & Purposes 5-8.2.

Questions for Classroom Discussion

- ★ Chapter 1 is called “The Day the Teachers Marched.” Why is this an especially significant way to begin the book? Explain why the black teachers had been reluctant to participate in civil rights protests in the past.
- ★ How were black teachers important role models for their students and in their communities? Discuss how the respect they feared losing ultimately fueled their decision to participate in the protests. Explain the teachers’ plan to show the nation how difficult it was for blacks to register to vote in the South.
- ★ Protest marches had been banned in Selma, Alabama, but 105 black teachers walked to the Dallas County Courthouse to demand equal voting rights. Discuss the measures they took to avoid the appearance of a march.
- ★ The protesters followed the example of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and lodged nonviolent demonstrations and protests. Discuss the courage it took for them to stay committed when white law enforcement officers were so brutal to them. Segregationists viewed the voting rights demonstrators as “terrorists.” Who were the real terrorists in the streets and public buildings of Selma? Discuss their “terror” tactics.
- ★ Some of the demonstrators found it tough to adhere to the principles of nonviolence, especially when they were brutally terrorized. Annie Lee Wilkerson Cooper slugged Sheriff Jim Clark after he shoved her to the ground. Explain how her actions became “part of the folklore of the voting rights campaign” (p. 29). What other events belong to the “folklore” of the campaign?
- ★ When Sheriff Jim Clark blocked the Dallas County Courthouse door to the marchers, Rev. Frederick Douglass Reese, who was also a teacher, stated, “We have the right to enter our courthouse” (p. 3). How does the courthouse belong to all citizens? Explain the irony in the following statement by the sheriff: “You can’t make a playhouse out of the corridors of this courthouse” (p. 3).
- ★ What are the qualities of a hero? Discuss how the teachers were given a “heroes welcome” when they marched into the Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. How was their march a turning point in the fight for equal voting rights? Discuss how they set an example for other black professionals to let their voices be heard.

- ★ Discuss why many blacks felt that voting was “strictly ‘white folks’ business” (p.6). What barriers did white lawmakers use to deter blacks from registering to vote? How did this make outside volunteers more determined to educate blacks about the importance of their votes?
- ★ How did the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacy groups use violence to intimidate black citizens? They set the Rev. J. D. Hunter’s house on fire, and he lost everything he owned. Explain what Bernice Morton meant when she said, “That fire went out, but the fire that was burning inside the preacher could not be quenched” (p. 8). How did this statement become a metaphor for the voting rights campaign?
- ★ Why had the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced “snick” for short) almost given up on registering blacks to vote in Selma, Alabama? Bernard and Colia Lafayette refused to be intimidated and accepted the challenge by moving to Selma. After two white men assaulted Bernard Lafayette, he continued wearing his bloodstained shirt in public. Explain why he considered this the “symbol we need” (p. 16). How did this become a turning point for “public sympathy”? Charles Bonner was sixteen years old and a student at Hudson High School when Lafayette spoke to the student body about the voter rights campaign. What did Bonner mean when he said that Lafayette opened a window for them?
- ★ The number of black teen activists surprised a lot of people, especially white law enforcement officials. Discuss how being jailed was a sense of pride for black teen activists. How did they become role models for their parents?
- ★ At what point was Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called to Selma? King and his aides checked in as the “first-ever black guests” (p. 26) at the Hotel Albert in Selma. What did this action symbolize? How were they received? Explain why some marchers later felt betrayed by King.
- ★ Chart the events of “Bloody Sunday.” Hostile whites tried to drown out Rev. Joseph Ellwanger and other sympathetic whites by singing “Dixie.” Why did they choose that particular song? Blacks responded with “We Shall Overcome.” Explain how this became a musical confrontation. Why did hostile whites wave the Confederate flag?
- ★ Discuss the events of “Turnaround Tuesday.” Explain the significance of a rabbi offering prayers alongside two ministers. How did all the violence of segregationists and the commitment to nonviolence among blacks cause President Lyndon B. Johnson finally to move forward with the Voting Rights Act? Explain what he had learned from the 1964 events of Freedom Summer in Mississippi.
- ★ The Voting Rights Act was signed into law on August 6, 1965. Explain why this was considered the “crowning achievement of the civil rights movement” (p. 69). Discuss the purpose of the book’s “Epilogue.”
- ★ Analyze how the photographs support the text. What is a primary resource? Discuss whether the photographs are primary or secondary resources. Look at Freedman’s source notes and identify the primary sources.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Key Ideas & Details RI. 5-8.1, RI. 5-8.2, RI. 5-8.3, Craft & Structure RI. 5-8.4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RI. 5-8.8; History/Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 6-8.1, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RH. 6-8.9; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 5-8.1, SL. 5-8.3, Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.4, SL. 5-8.6; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-8.1, Knowledge of Language L. 5-8.3.

Curriculum Connections

LANGUAGE ARTS

- ★ Rev. Frederick Douglass Reese used the following simile to create a visual image of the brutal treatment the teachers suffered at the hands of Dallas County sheriff Jim Clark and his possemen: “We began to fall back like bowling pins” (p. 3). Ask students to write a simile that best describes the feelings of black voters in 1966 when they managed to turn Sheriff Clark out of office.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Craft & Structure RI. 5-8.4; Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 4-8L, 5-8.5.

- ★ Rev. Frederick Douglass Reese posed the question: “How can you teach citizenship, telling boys and girls to be good citizens and you are not registered [as voters], and you are making no attempt to register?” (p. 2). Have students write a letter that Reverend Reese might have written to black teachers encouraging them to “practice what they teach” by joining the march for voting rights.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.3.

- ★ A black reporter watched the teachers’ march from a telephone booth and shouted, “I can’t believe it! This is bigger than [President] Lyndon Johnson coming to town!” (p. 2). Instruct students to write a front-page newspaper story that the black reporter may have written about the march. Remember to include who, what, when, where, and why. Consider including interviews with students, their parents, and Frederick Douglass Reese, who was president of Selma’s black teachers association. Encourage peer editing for clarity, spelling, and grammar.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2, Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-8.5.

- ★ Divide the class into two groups and ask them to prepare one of the following poems as a choral reading. Groups may wish to assign subgroups to a specific stanza. Instruct them to introduce the reading by summarizing the message of the poem and connecting it to the information in *Because They Marched*:

“The Road from Selma” by June Brindel (www.crmvet.org/poetry/abrindel.htm)

“Selma, 1965” by Gloria Larry House (www.crmvet.org/poetry/phouse.htm)

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RI. 5-8.7; Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.6.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- ★ As a class, read the mission statement of the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute (http://nvrmi.com/?page_id=45). Discuss the meaning of the following phrase: “the opportunity to learn the lessons of the past to assure we will not make the same mistake in the 21st century and beyond.” Ask students to locate and read five newspaper or magazine articles about voter suppression in the United States in the last two national elections. Then write a paper that draws a parallel between voter suppression today and in the South before the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. In a concluding paragraph, state whether there are “lessons learned” or “same mistakes made.” Cite sources used.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History/Social Studies: Key Ideas & Details RH. 6-8.1, RH. 6-8.2; Craft & Structure RH. 6-8.6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RH. 6-8.8; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.1, W. 5-8.2, Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-8.4, Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-8.8.

- ★ Congressman John Lewis of Georgia was one of the founders of SNCC in the 1960s. Each year, the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation grants the Profile in Courage Award to a public servant. John Lewis is the only person to be recognized with a Profile in Courage Lifetime Achievement Award. Read about Lewis’s many contributions to the civil rights movement (<http://johnlewis.house.gov/john-lewis/biography>) and his continued public service as a congressman. Then ask students to write a feature for the *Washington Post* on the day that Lewis received the award. Include imagined quotes from other civil rights activists, the Kennedy family, and black voters in the South.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Texts: Key Ideas & Details RI. 5-8.3, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RI. 5-8.7; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2, Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-8.4, Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-8.7, W. 5-8.8, W. 5-8.9.

MATH

- ★ Have students construct a bar graph that illustrates the ratio of blacks of voting age to the number who were actually registered to vote in Dallas County, Alabama, in the early 1960s. Then construct a graph that illustrates the ratio of registered white voters to the number of eligible voters. Ask students to write a summary paragraph about why the voting rights campaign was so important.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in History/Social Studies: Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RH. 6-8.7.

MUSIC

- ★ Tell students that an annotation is a note or comment of explanation. Instruct them to read the lyrics of Bob Dylan’s song “The Times They Are A-Changin’” (www.bobdylan.com/us/songs/times-they-are-changin) and annotate each verse. Then have them write a short paper about the overall message of the song and apply it to the events of the civil rights movement.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-8.2.

DRAMA

- ★ Stage a class debate about the controversial 2013 ruling of the Supreme Court that struck down “a key provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965” (p. 71). One group should consider Chief Justice John Roberts’s claim, “Our country has changed” (p. 71) and the other should consider Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s dissenting opinion. Locate and quote from other resources to support claims.

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Reading: Informational Text: Key Ideas & Details RI. 5-8.1, RI. 6-8.3, Craft & Structure RI. 5-8.6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RI. 5-8.7, RI. 5-8.8; Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 5-8.4, SL. 5-8.6; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 8.1.

VOCABULARY/USE OF LANGUAGE

- ★ Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and attempt to define them, taking clues from the context. Such words may include: *confrontation* (p. 3), *coaxing* (p. 5), *defiance* (p. 5), *fundamental* (p. 6), *reprisals* (p. 8), *accelerated* (p. 10), *oppressed* (p. 10), *intimidation* (p. 10), *vigilantes* (p. 12), *vagrancy* (p. 16), *cowing* (p. 20), *submission* (p. 20), *resolve* (p. 20), *injunction* (p. 23), *exuberant* (p. 24), *compliance* (p. 27), *indignant* (p. 31), *infuriated* (p. 33), *conducive* (p. 39), *disperse* (p. 39), *protracted* (p. 47), *retaliatory* (p. 51), and *turbulent* (p. 65). Have them use a dictionary to check the definitions. How well did they do?

Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Standards in Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 5-8.4.

Related Internet Resources

National Park Service

www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/al4.htm

The Selma-to-Montgomery march is covered on this National Park Service feature of historic places of the civil rights movement.

100 Milestone Documents of American History

<http://ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=100>

This site provides the content of the Voters Rights Act of 1965.

Constitutional Rights Foundation

www.crf-usa.org/brown-v-board-50th-anniversary/race-and-voting.html

This official website of the Constitutional Rights Foundation discusses “Race and Voting in the Segregated South.”

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute

http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_selma_to_montgomery_march/

This site discusses the role that Martin Luther King Jr. played in the events of “Bloody Sunday.”

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Project Group

www.ibiblio.org/sncc/lewis.html

This website features John Lewis and the work of SNCC from 1960 to 1966.



Photo Credit: Evans Chan

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RUSSELL FREEDMAN is well known for his riveting biographies and masterful accounts of the history of the United States. One of the most honored writers for children, his many awards include the Newbery Medal, three Newbery Honors, the Robert F. Sibert Award, a Sibert Honor, the Orbis Pictus Award, the May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture Award, the National Humanities Medal, and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award for a “substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.” Russell Freedman lives in New York City and travels the globe to gather material for his works.

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READING: INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Key Ideas & Details

- RI. 5-8.1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI. 5-8.2** Determine central ideas of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details, provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RI. 5-8.3** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.

Craft & Structure

- RI. 5-8.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- RI. 5-8.6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Integration of Knowledge & Ideas

- RI. 5-8.7** Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
- RI. 5-8.8** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

SPEAKING & LISTENING

Comprehension & Collaboration

- SL. 5-8.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussion (one on one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL. 5-8.3** Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

- SL. 5-8.4** Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details to support main ideas.
- SL. 5-8.6** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation.

LANGUAGE

Conventions of Standard English

- L. 5-8.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Knowledge of Language

- L. 5-8.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition & Use

- L. 5-8.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content.
- L. 5-8.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

WRITING

Text Types & Purposes

- W. 5-8.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- W. 5-8.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- W. 5-8.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production & Distribution of Writing

- W. 5-8.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W. 5-8.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- W. 5-8.6** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing.

Research to Build & Present Knowledge

- W. 5-8.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
- W. 5-8.8** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
- W. 5-8.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

Key Ideas & Details

- RH. 6-8.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- RH. 6-8.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Craft & Structure

- RH. 6-8.6** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge & Ideas

- RH. 6-8.7** Integrate visual information with other information in print and digital texts.
- RH. 6-8.8** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- RH. 6-8.9** Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.