

# YOU'RE INVITED! A DINNER PARTY WITH HEROINES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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## GUIDING QUESTION:

How did women contribute to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States?

## OVERVIEW

Students will conduct independent research to investigate the actions and experiences of women in the Civil Rights Movement. Using both primary and secondary sources, students will determine what roles women had in the Civil Rights Movement and how their actions contributed to the creation of a more perfect union.

## OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Describe the roles women had in the Civil Rights Movement;
- > Research primary sources to make connections to major events and people within the Civil Rights Movement; and
- > Determine some of the ways women helped create a more perfect union in the United States.

## STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

### CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- > D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.
- > D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.
- > D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

## DOCUMENTS USED

### PRIMARY SOURCE

Janie Culbreth Rambeau, Getting Arrested, February 2017  
SNCC Digital Gateway  
<https://snccdigital.org/our-voices/strong-people/part-1/>

### SECONDARY SOURCES

Civil Rights History Project  
National Museum of African American History and Culture  
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/oralhistory/civil-rights-history-project>

Exhibition, Women in the Civil Rights Movement  
Library of Congress  
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>

Smithsonian Learning Lab  
<https://learninglab.si.edu/search>

SNCC Digital Gateway  
<https://snccdigital.org/>

## TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- > Special Guest Appearance Handout
- > Differentiation Guide
- > Heroine Investigation
- > Scrapbook Contribution
- > Dinner Party Guestbook

## ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make one copy of the Heroine Investigation and Scrapbook Contribution handouts for each student (or distribute electronically).
- > Make copies of the Dinner Party Guestbook so that each member of a group has at least two copies.
- > Familiarize yourself with the [SNCC Digital Gateway website](#), the Library of Congress' [Women in the Civil Rights Movement digital exhibit](#), and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture's [Civil Rights History Project](#). These resources host a plethora of information regarding women during the Civil Rights Movement.
- > Review the Differentiation Guide for your reference.

## PROCEDURE

### ACTIVITY ONE (15 MINUTES)

- > Ask students: *The preamble to the U.S. Constitution includes the phrase, "in order to form a more perfect union." What does this mean to you? What moments in history have we discussed that demonstrate people trying to "form a more perfect union?"*
- > Discuss student answers. Read the Special Guest Appearance Handout. Do not tell students who made this statement. Instead, have them envision the person who said this.
- > Ask students the following questions:
  - » *How does this statement connect to what we have already learned about the Civil Rights Movement?*
  - » *How does this statement demonstrate someone working toward building a more perfect union?*
  - » *What did you notice about the person making this statement? How does this person communicate his or her ideas?*
  - » *How old do you think this person is? Why do you think that?*
- > Reveal to students that the person who made this statement was Janie Culbreth Rambeau, an active member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).
- > Let students know that today they will investigate other women who were active in the Civil Rights Movement to understand their contributions to the creation of a more perfect union.

### ACTIVITY TWO (45 MINUTES)

- > Assign each student a heroine from the Civil Rights Movement (see the Differentiation Guide for options to research).
- > Distribute a Heroine Investigation handout to each student. Encourage students to use the recommended sources as solid starting points for research.
- > Distribute the Scrapbook Contribution page after students complete their research. Direct students to find at least one primary source connected to their heroine. After choosing a primary source, students will create a scrapbook page dedicated to their heroine to share at the dinner party.
  - » The source does not have to be created by the heroine, or one in which she is even pictured. It can be representative of an event that she participated in or helped to orchestrate.
  - » Students can be creative with this page. They can complete it on paper or digitally.

### ACTIVITY THREE (45 MINUTES)

- > Create groups of at least four students who represent different heroines from the Civil Rights Movement. Together these students will attend a dinner party where they will share their heroine's experiences with each other.
- > Distribute the Dinner Party Guestbook handout. While others in their group share, students will record the experiences they hear on the handout. When presenting, students should use their selected primary source to highlight their heroine's experience.

## CONNECTIONS

Movements are led by people. Throughout U.S. history, groups of people have gathered to organize and advance (or restrict) political, social, and economic change. Organization is a powerful form of civic action. This resource features lessons on people who organized for abolition, suffrage, American Indian rights, and labor rights.

- > Discussion questions:
  - » *In which events or movements was your heroine involved? Explain her involvement and accomplishments.*
  - » *Does this woman deserve to be known as a heroine? Why or why not?*
  - » *Explain your primary source. Why did you select this particular source and how does it connect to your heroine?*
  - » *Share a quote by or about your heroine. Why did you select this particular quote? What does the quote reveal about her commitment to civil rights?*
- > Instruct students to combine their individual scrapbook pages together. Together, students will create one final page that they feel encompasses the women highlighted on the pages within. This page should tell the story of the women collectively and can include pictures, words, and symbols.
- > Instruct students to use their completed Dinner Party Guestbook to write a one-page reflection of the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement and how their actions contributed to creating a more perfect union.

#### ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- > Collect the Heroine Investigation handout.
- > Collect the final scrapbook and assess each student on their individual scrapbook pages and their collective page.

### STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING THE FOLLOWING FOR AN NHD PROJECT

- > Ella Baker and the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
- > Gloria Arellanes and the Brown Berets
- > Martha Cotera and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement
- > Diane Nash and the Nashville Student Movement
- > Septima Clark and the Highlander Folk School

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to:

[WWW.NHD.ORG/250](http://WWW.NHD.ORG/250)

## EDSITEment!

RELATED RESOURCES

Lesson Plan: The Freedom Riders and the Popular Music of the Civil Rights Movement

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/freedom-riders-and-popular-music-civil-rights-movement>

Lesson Plan: Places and People of the Civil Rights Movement

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/ordinary-people-ordinary-places-civil-rights-movement>

Closer Readings Commentary: Grassroots Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement: Focus on Women

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/closer-readings/grassroots-perspectives-civil-rights-movement-focus-women>

Humanities Blog: “Tune in Tuesdays: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi”

<https://www.neh.gov/divisions/preservation/featured-project/tune-in-tuesdays-the-struggle-civil-rights-in-mississippi>

Media Resource: BackStory: Legislation Impossible – The Civil Rights Act of 1964

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/backstory-legislation-impossible-civil-rights-act-1964>

# SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE HANDOUT

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“...when I got to high school and we started seeing more cases of discrimination, outright discrimination, hatred, abuse. And everywhere you went you saw these signs that said ‘White Only’ or ‘Colored Only.’ Water fountains, bathrooms. And of course, the colored bathrooms were always dirty, although they had black people cleaning them. People like Charles Sherrod, Charlie Jones, Cordell Reagon, and several other SNCC students came to Albany. They started talking to the students about equal rights, values. And we were so concerned that we became involved. And so when demonstrations started in December.

“We were ready to go...I remember the morning that we marched and went to jail. I’d like to share this part of my story y’all, and some of you have heard it before but I want to tell it one more time. That morning, I was getting ready to go, taking final exams at Albany State. Getting ready to go to school, my daddy told me, ‘I want you to go to school today and take your tests.’ And I said, ‘Ok,’ and I really meant to do that. Then I started off walking and by the time we got downtown on Jackson Street, we heard these brothers and sisters holding hands and singing ‘We Shall Overcome. We Shall Overcome.’ And I want you to know that that singing, the spirit, the influence that they had was so serious that you’d get goose pimples on your body, on your arms, on your head, everywhere because you really wanted to hear it...we were singing, we got in the line, and we were still singing, and everything was so good.

“All of a sudden, a caravan, I guess you could call it, with Chief Pritchett—who was chief of police at the time—drove by and at first admonished us to go on about our daily routine. And nobody moved. We continued to sing ‘We shall overcome.’ And he said, ‘You’re all under arrest.’ It was raining so hard that morning the umbrellas folded over. The...sweaters we had on were soaking wet. We were cold. It was a cold December morning, and they arrested us and took us to jail. In the jail, they had these steel like bunks that had been covered with some kind of spongy, fleecy material. I like to call them germinating bunks. They took the covers off those bunks to add to our discomfort. We were already wet and cold, and then you face this horrible, horrible steel cold bunk, and they expected us to rest here.”

# DIFFERENTIATION GUIDE

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The following women were prominent in the Civil Rights Movement. Those marked by a \* would be a good choice for students needing additional challenge.

- > Victoria Adams\*
- > Gloria Arellanes
- > Ella Baker
- > Josephine Baker\*
- > Daisy Bates
- > Luz Bazán Gutiérrez
- > Unita Blackwell\*
- > Johnnie Carr\*
- > Rosie Castro
- > Septima Poinsette Clark
- > Peggy Jean Connor\*
- > Martha Cotera
- > Connie Curry\*
- > Annie Devine\*
- > Victoria Gray\*
- > Fannie Lou Hamer
- > Dorothy Height
- > Dolores Huerta
- > Annell Ponder\*
- > “Mama Dolly” Raines\*
- > Amelia Boynton Robinson\*
- > Jo Ann Robinson
- > Coretta Scott King
- > Diane Nash

You can find more options on the SNCC Digital Gateway People page: <https://snccdigital.org/category/people/>.

# HEROINE INVESTIGATION

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Who is your heroine? \_\_\_\_\_

Quality research sources to begin your work:

- > SNCC Digital Gateway: <https://snccdigital.org/category/people/>
- > *Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>
- > Civil Rights History Project, National Museum of African American History and Culture: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/oralhistory/civil-rights-history-project>
- > Smithsonian Learning Labs created for National History Day students by EDSITEment: <https://learninglab.si.edu/search> and enter “EDSITEment” into the search bar

Biographical Information (include where your heroine lived, when she was born, etc.):

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Why did she get involved in the Civil Rights Movement?

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# HEROINE INVESTIGATION (CON'T)

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How was she involved in the Civil Rights Movement? Think about specific events or movements she participated in, as well as the context for those events or movements.

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Find one quote by or about your heroine that you feel is representative of her and her involvement in the movement. Explain why you chose this particular quote.

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What does it mean to create a more perfect union?

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# HEROINE INVESTIGATION (CON'T)

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What impact do you think your heroine had on creating a more perfect union?

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Do not forget to cite your sources! What resources did you use to learn this information? How do you know they are reliable?

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# SCRAPBOOK CONTRIBUTION

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At the dinner party, you and the other guests at your table will create a scrapbook of memories to share with the public. Each guest must bring one scrapbook page. This page must include a primary source. This does not have to be something that your heroine created herself, or that she is pictured in. It needs to connect to your heroine in a way that you can easily explain. Please answer the questions below once you have found your primary source. Then, create your scrapbook page.

Which primary source are you taking with you to the dinner party?

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Who created it? \_\_\_\_\_

When was it created? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was the intended audience? \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Source (provide the URL):

\_\_\_\_\_

What does this primary source teach us about the past?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why did you select this source to represent your heroine? Write at least three to five sentences explaining your choice and connection to your heroine.

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# DINNER PARTY GUESTBOOK

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Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

What important event(s) was she involved in? Include specific information about her involvement.

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Connection to other heroines:

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Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

What important event(s) was she involved in? Include specific information about her involvement.

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Connection to other heroines:

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Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

What important event(s) was she involved in? Include specific information about her involvement.

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Connection to other heroines:

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# BUILDING A MORE PERFECT UNION



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

EDSITEment!

THE BEST OF THE HUMANITIES ON THE WEB

NHD  
NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY