

# PEOPLE OF PEACE

**GRADE LEVEL:** 4 and 5

**TOPIC:** Voices of the Civil Rights Movement

**CONTENT AREA:** Social Studies  
Language Arts

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The students will:

### Technology:



- **Information Processing** – Gather information through reading, listening, observing and surveying to plan and conduct an interview and to create a visual to accompany the interview;
- **Information Processing** - Locate and utilize information from a variety of sources, e.g., books, newspapers, atlases, glossaries, photographs, laser-disks, computer software, others; and
- **Information Processing** – Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and determine respective uses.

### Social Studies:

- **Post World War II:** Categorize the economic, social and political changes in the United States and Georgia since World War

II including segregation, desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement.

## **CRITICAL QUESTIONS:**

1. What would happen to society if no one ever wrote history down?
2. What are notable people of the 1950s and 60s Civil Rights Movement doing today?
3. How did people's connection to the Civil Rights Movement affect their life's choices (i.e., career, place of residence, current civic participation)?
4. Was the Civil Rights Movement only for and about African Americans?

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Say to the students:**

Oral histories are what living individuals tell about the past. They can be personal histories or stories of other people. Whatever the topic, they present personal perspectives on historical events. Preserving oral history is critical to research and information preservation.



***Note to the teacher: Participation in oral history projects affords students the opportunity to become actively involved in preserving the past. It promotes critical analysis, synthesis of information and documentation of historical records. Through the means of oral history, students are encouraged to step beyond passive reading and memorization of information. They are encouraged to make connections between history's "big ideas" (the Civil Rights Era) and the personal experiences and memories of historical events (words of the people who shaped the era). Furthermore, this process provides the context for students to make intellectual, emotional, and***

*personal connections between significant historical events and decisions made by seemingly ordinary people.*

## **MATERIALS/RESOURCES:**

- Newspapers and magazines
- Dictionaries and thesauruses
- Recording devices
- Camera
- Art and craft materials
- Computers

## **HOOK:**

1. Have students play “pass the message.” Think of a complex and unfamiliar message like: *Next Tuesday we will have a picnic on the lawn if our experiment shows that mold grows faster with moisture than without.*
2. Have students pass the secret message, mouth to ear, to each student around the classroom.
3. When the message reaches the last student, have that student say the message aloud.
4. Discuss the results of this activity. Was the message the same at the end as it was at the beginning? What are the implications for passing on history orally and never recording it in any manner?



**Note to the teacher:** *Tell students that they are going to take a step back in history through the words of formerly enslaved individuals. They will see, hear, and read personal accounts of what life was like during the years of slavery.*

5. Have students visit the following website to explore the powerful words and images of the *Slave Narratives* as well as to explore the accompanying sound file.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/wpahome.html>

6. Discuss the difference between the “pass the message” game the students played and the actual narratives. Is it important to record history in some manner?

## **PROCEDURES:**

1. Begin the class by constructing a simple KWHL chart. **(Handout 1)** Ask students what they already know about the Civil Rights Movement (column one). Record student responses. Move to column two and record what students would like to know if they could actually speak to people who lived and participated in that movement.
2. In column three, ask students to list ways in which they may find answers to questions generated in column two.



***Note to the teacher: Tell students that many of the participants in the Civil Rights Movement are still alive today. Perhaps someone that they know was an observer, a supporter of the movement or was frightened or angered by the events of that time. Tell students that they will talk to people who lived during the late 50s and 60s. Tell them that they should be able to find people in their community today who were in some way involved in the movement.***

3. Have students look for people who were involved in marches, sit-ins, boycotts, or even civil rights organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) or the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Students can talk to neighbors, people in church, members of current civil rights organizations, or search the web for people who were involved during the movement.

4. Have students research articles about local Atlantans in old newspapers, particularly the Atlanta Daily World.
5. After your students have selected a person that they would like to interview, assist them in contacting the person.
6. Rehearse students after developing an interview protocol with them to explain the project to the interviewee, which includes getting their consent to participate, getting them to give you permission to share the information from the interview in your classroom and then setting a time for the interview.



***Note to the teacher: Tell students that the interview can take place in person (invite the person to the classroom) or by phone. If these two strategies fail, e-mail or write to the person. This will not exactly qualify as an oral interview, but the students will still get some first-hand information about an important time in US history. Do not forget to have students ask for photos of the era or if they may photograph the interviewee.***

7. An oral history interview according to one source is really “a planned conversation between two persons.” Therefore, have students create a detailed questionnaire for the interview. Have students do background research on the era to support their questions. This is a good time to introduce primary and secondary sources. Arrange the questions in some logical order and try to use open-ended questions.
8. Have your students brainstorm some general questions that they might ask to get the session started such as: How old were you in 1955, when the bus boycott was happening in Montgomery; in 1960, when the sit-ins were taking place; in 1963, when the March on Washington took place? Do you remember

seeing Dr. King on television delivering his “I Have a Dream Speech?”

9. Have students develop additional questions based on the research they conduct.
10. Conduct the interviews.
11. Have students transcribe their tapes, look over notes and photographs and prepare to share their findings through written reports that will be presented orally.

### **CENTERS/EXTENSION IDEAS:**

1. Set up a center in your classroom where students can **create a personal life map.**

A life map depicts pictures of significant events, decisions, or people in one’s life. The pictures represent one’s life story.



*Note to the teacher: A life map can represent a student’s life today, their neighborhood, or significant events. It could be set up like a road map showing events, hobbies, interests, or significant people. You could add metaphors – mountains for hard times, rainbows for happy times, or the life cycle of the butterfly for major changes that may have occurred.*

The map should be clearly marked so that readers can easily follow it. (Handout 2) To make the maps more interesting, have students write a short story or explanation to accompany each picture on the map. The pictures should cover the story so that the reader has to lift the picture to see the story or explanation.

2. **Build a family tree.** Have students conduct research, record their own family’s history through the construction of a family tree, and share results.

3. Create a brochure, pamphlet, flyer, or some other visual display based on the oral history reports.
4. In small groups, use comparison/contrast charts to compare slave revolts with non-violent protests.

## **SYNTHESIS:**

- Have students complete an Anticipation/Reaction Guide (**Handout 3**) before their visit to the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and after their visit.

## **REFERENCES:**

### **Print:**

Hooper, James (1979). *Oral History: An Introduction for Students*, Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Shumway, Gary L. and Hartley, William G. (1973). *An Oral History Primer*. Salt Lake City, UT: Primer Publications.

### **Online:**

Examples of Oral Histories  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/wpahome.html>

American Slave Narratives Online Anthology  
Guide to Conducting an Oral History  
<http://www2.blackside.com/blackside/EducationOutreach/eyes1-guidetext7.html>

**Media/Video:**

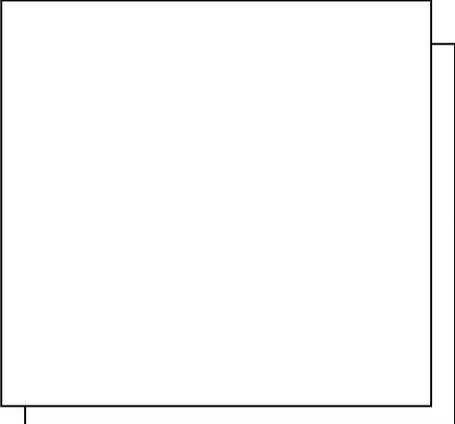
“Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954 –1965”\_provides a guide on how to conduct oral history on the Civil Rights Movement.

**Handout 1**

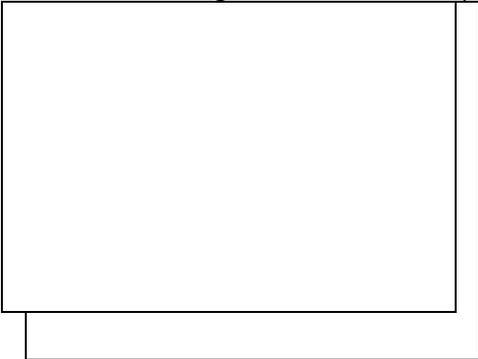
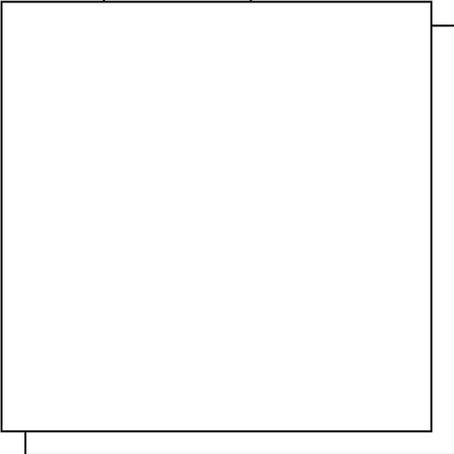
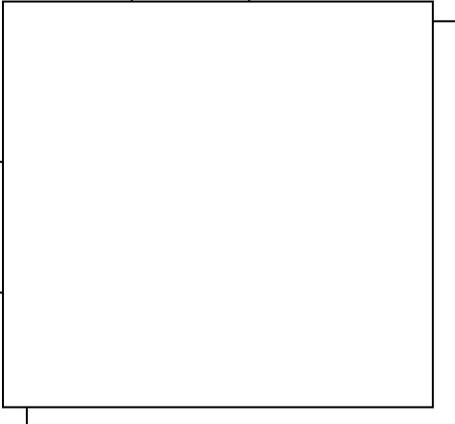
Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

K (Know)	W (Want to know)	H (How to find out)	L (Learned)

**Life Map**



Place a short vignette or explanation behind the picture.



**Anticipation/Reaction Guide**

Respond to each statement twice: once before the visit and again after the visit.



**Note to Teacher:** Use the *Visitor Exhibit Center* section to add additional topics.

- Write **A** if you agree with the statement
- Write **D** if you disagree with the statement

Response Before Visit to the King Center	<b>TOPIC:</b> <b>M. L. King, Jr. National Historic Site</b>	Response After Visit to M. L. King, Jr. National Historic Site	List evidence or support for your response
	The King Center Historical site has personal artifacts that once belonged to Dr. King.		
	In 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was carried on a farm wagon drawn by mules to Southview Cemetery where he is buried today.		
	Initially, Dr. King was a reluctant leader.		
	Dr. King went to jail only once.		

**Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years  
1954 –1965 - A Guide to the Series**

**How to Conduct Oral History on the Civil Rights Movement**

The history of the civil rights movement is not an abstract story from long ago. What happened during these years has had an effect on the lives of all Americans.

To create this program, the “Eyes on the Prize” production team made extensive use of oral history. We interviewed many leaders and public officials, particularly those in the South who were associated with major events. We also spoke with dozens of people who had never been interviewed before. These people are not famous; their names didn't appear in the newspapers. But in their own way, they took part in one of the greatest social transformations this nation has ever seen.

We seldom have the privilege of looking back at a period of history with such an eye for its importance. It is even more unusual when most of the participants in that history are still alive to tell their story. By personally exploring this history, you can learn how the movement affected your life and the lives of your family and community. Ask around. You may be surprised to discover what your family and friends thought about the civil rights movement during these years. You may find some who supported the movement or took part. Others perhaps may have been frightened or angered. By asking, you'll learn more about American history in an intimate and relevant way.

### ***What is Oral History?***

Oral history involves collecting, through tape-recorded interviews, the spoken memories of a person's life. The oral history technique collects personal perceptions and recollections of past events by a person with first-hand knowledge of those events.

### ***Locating and Selecting an Interviewee***

The events of 1954 through 1965 affected people in all regions of this country, not just in the South. You should be able to find people living in your community today who were involved in some way in the civil rights movement. Look for people who participated in marches, boycotts, freedom schools, or civil rights organizations. Talk with people in your church and consult with news people and those active in current civil rights groups. Visit your public library and review old newspapers to identify the civil rights issues, activities, organizations and leaders in your area during the fifties and sixties. See if you can locate people who participated in sit-ins, voter registration drives, Freedom Summer, the March on Washington, or the Selma-to-Montgomery March.

When selecting your interviewee, don't assume that only the very old have a story to tell. The "Eyes on the Prize" production team interviewed people who were born between 1892 and 1957.

### ***Arranging the Interview***

No matter who you want to interview, it is best to give them some time to prepare for the session. Even your immediate family and friends will provide more information if you let them know beforehand what the interview will be about, so they can give the subject some thought. You should also take the time to do some research yourself. Find out as much as you can about your interviewee and prepare your questions carefully.

### ***Equipment and Materials***

You'll need a cassette tape recorder, three high-quality

60-minute cassettes; a handheld microphone, a notepad and pen to jot down questions you may think of during the interview, and an extension cord or batteries for the recorder.

### ***Preparing Interview Questions***

An oral history interview is really a planned conversation between two people. You should have a well-thought-out and well-written questionnaire for your interview session. In order to ask intelligent questions and recognize important information given by the interviewee, you must do some background research on your topic from written accounts. Many of your questions should be based on your research. Put your questions into logical order. Be familiar with your questions and their order so that you don't have to read them one-by-one during the interview - - you don't want interviewees to feel that they are answering a questionnaire that could have been done in writing. Remember that a good interview is a conversation. You should be ready to ask questions that may not be on your prepared list. You want your interview to be open and spontaneous, so don't share the questions with your interviewee beforehand.

### ***Guideline Questions***

Producers usually conduct a preliminary interview over the telephone to determine what special information the interviewee might be able to offer, whether they will be easy to interview, and whether they are good storytellers. You can save yourself a good deal of time by conducting such a pre-interview. Ask a few general questions that will help you focus your real interview. Here are some examples:

What is your first memory of the civil rights movement?

Did you take part in any civil rights protests?

Did you ever write letters of support or concern to politicians or newspapers concerning civil rights?

If you are interviewing family members, you may want to know how they felt about these civil rights years, whether they participated or not. But if you want first-hand accounts of what people in your area were doing during this period, pre-interviewing will save you a great deal of time.

When you conduct the actual interview, your first goal should be to help the interviewee remember where he or she was during the period under discussion. Certain key moments in this history have fixed themselves in the memories of the entire nation. Use these milestones to help take the interviewee back to the period you want him or her to talk about. For instance, you might ask: How old were you in 1963, when the March on Washington took place?

Do you remember seeing Dr. King on the news delivering his "I Have a Dream" speech? How did you feel about that speech?

What were you doing when you heard the news that President Kennedy had been assassinated?

Do you remember watching the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City? Do you know anyone who participated in Freedom Summer?

**Here are some additional guidelines to follow when conducting your interview:**

1. Make sure that your interview takes place in an environment free of noise and distractions.
2. Set up your recorder efficiently and unobtrusively. Place the microphone on a soft surface such as a magazine or book to reduce background noise.

3. Explain the purpose of the session again to your interviewee before you start asking questions. To begin, record your stated purpose and the interviewee's name, the date, and the location of the interview. Check your recorder by playing back this information.
4. Ask brief, noncontroversial questions at the start.
5. Talk only when absolutely necessary; let the interviewee do the talking. You should hear yourself on the tape only when asking questions.
6. Do not ask questions that require a **yes** or **no** answer.
7. Do not interrupt the interviewee.
8. Keep the interview to approximately one hour.
9. Pause during the interview when you sense that the person needs to rest or think, or feels tired.
10. Follow your prepared questionnaire. Do not be concerned if the interviewee digresses from the questions; this often results in important information.
11. Adding good questions that are not on your questionnaire will require good listening.
12. Do not take notes while the interviewee is talking; take them at breaks before questions, or when the interviewee pauses.

Remember, the quality of your interview depends on your questioning to get the full story, the proper sequence of events, and specific details.

### ***Transcribing Oral History***

An oral-history tape is invaluable in itself for people to listen to years from now. Typed transcripts of tapes are even more valuable and easier to use for discussion and learning. The transcription should be verbatim -- every word, repeated word in sequence, pause, laughter, and false start should be included.

The unpublished words of a person who grants an oral-history interview are his or her own property. Permission to use the interview material, for whatever use, should be obtained in writing at the start of the interview. Sample release forms can be found in the books listed below.

### ***Oral History Books***

Hooper, James (1979). *Oral History: An Introduction for Students*, Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Shumway, Gary L. and Hartley, William G. (1973). *An Oral History Primer*. Salt Lake City, UT: Primer Publications.