

Pre- and Post-Visit Materials, Grades 3-5

Racing to Change: Oregon's Civil Rights Years – The Eugene Story

Overview

What was life like for African Americans living in Oregon in the 1960s and 1970s? What obstacles did they experience? What are we still working on today? Through a guided tour, hands-on activity, and discussions, students will learn about the civil rights years in Oregon and specifically Eugene.

“The Civil Rights Movement is one of the defining events in American history, during which Americans fought to make real the ideals of justice and equality embedded in our founding documents. When students learn about the movement, they learn what it means to be active American citizens. They learn how to recognize injustice. They learn about the transformative role played by thousands of ordinary individuals, as well as the importance of organization for collective change. They see that people can come together to stand against oppression.” – from *Teaching the Movement*

Objectives

After completing the pre- and post-visit activities and visiting the *Racing to Change* exhibit at the museum, students will be able to:

- Define civil rights, racism, segregation, and white privilege
- Identify obstacles Blacks experienced in Oregon in the 1960s and the early 1970s
- Describe actions Blacks and their supporters took to overcome the obstacles they faced in Oregon in the 1960s and the early 1970s
- Have resources to take their own action

Pre-Visit Materials

Complete one or more of these activities prior to your visit to the museum's *Racing to Change* exhibit to better understand the tour.

Activity 1:

Examine class and school rules.

- Identify the rules in your classroom and at the school. (Raise your hand to speak, listen to others, keep hands to yourself, treat everyone kindly, respect, etc.)
- Ask your students **WHY** do we have these class and school rules? (So everyone can be treated fairly, so everyone is kind to each other, so everyone can learn, etc.)
- Identify behaviors that do not follow the rules (bullying, teasing, etc.) and problem-solve actions to take in the classroom and school to correct these unfair and mean behaviors (speak up and tell someone to stop bullying, ask someone to sit with you and your group at lunch, etc.)

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- For younger students, role play the problem behavior and different actions to solve the problems.
- For older students, define bias/anti-bias terms and classify behaviors that exemplify bias/anti-bias, such as racism/anti-racism, sexism/anti-sexism, bullying/anti-bullying, etc.

Activity 2:

Read aloud *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles. Emphasize how Ruby, her family, and a lot of people worked hard for Black children to go to the same schools as white children. They changed the laws and took action. Define the terms **segregation**, **racism**, **laws**, and **action**.

- 1) For all students, define “**civil rights**”.
 - a. Civil rights are basic rights every citizen has in the United States of America. In the USA the civil rights are protected by the Constitution, which is written down. Civil rights mean a person should not be discriminated against – treated unfairly – because of their skin color, beliefs, age, gender, where they come from, or disability. And, our civil rights mean we can think, say, and believe what we want (right to freedom of thought, free speech, and religion), meet with who we want (right to assembly), and go to court to see a judge.
- 2) For older students, introduce the following laws and rights:
 - a. **13th Amendment** (1865): Slavery is made illegal.
 - b. **14th Amendment** (1868): All people born in the US are citizens. No state may take away the right of citizens; i.e., equal treatment of all people with respect to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property and to the protection of the law.
 - c. **15th Amendment** (1870): The right to vote cannot be denied to citizens because of their race or color because they were once enslaved.
 - d. *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1856), 60 U.S. [393](#), known as the **Dred Scott Decision**, was a landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. It made two main rulings: First, African Americans were not citizens, and therefore had no standing to sue in federal court. Second, the federal government had no power to regulate slavery in any territory acquired subsequent to the creation of the United States.
 - e. *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) is a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities under the doctrine of "separate but equal." In 1890, Louisiana state passed a law (the Separate Car Act) requiring separate accommodations for Blacks and whites on railroads, including separate railway cars. Concerned, a group of prominent Black, creole, and white New Orleans residents formed the Committee of Citizens dedicated to repeal the law.

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- f. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), 347 U.S. [483](#) - U.S. Supreme Court case which declared state laws establishing separate public schools for Black and white students unconstitutional. The decision overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* which allowed state-sponsored segregation. The Court's (9–0) decision stated that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." Thus, racial segregation was ruled a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

Activity 3:

Watch one or more of the “Racing to Change” videos on the museum’s YouTube page at: www.youtube.com/user/uomnch/videos. Discuss what life was like for community members and/or University of Oregon students during the 1960s and 1970s based on the videos.

Post-Visit Materials

Complete one or more of these activities after to your visit to the *Racing to Change* exhibit to comprehend the civil rights materials.

Activity 1:

Discuss different topics and **imagine** how similar but different life was for Black and white youth your age in the 1960s and 1970s in Oregon.

Topics could include, but not limited to: Schools (elementary or high school), College, Housing, Press/Media, Fashion, Music, TV, Sports, Churches/religion, etc.

Activity 2:

Write a fictional story about being Black in Oregon in the 1960s and 1970s. Include information from the exhibit and the “similar but different” discussion in Activity 1. Be historically accurate as you write about where you played, lived, went to school, and so on. Illustrate your story and include a cover with a title.

Activity 3:

Read aloud the quote: “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time.” Who said this and when? (Former President Obama; in your lifetime.) What do you think this means? What could you and your classmates, teachers, and families do to make good changes? What might be a good change?

- What could you do when a classmate is being bullied?
- What could you do when people talk badly about others because of their hair, skin color, because they are girls, because they have old clothing, and so on?

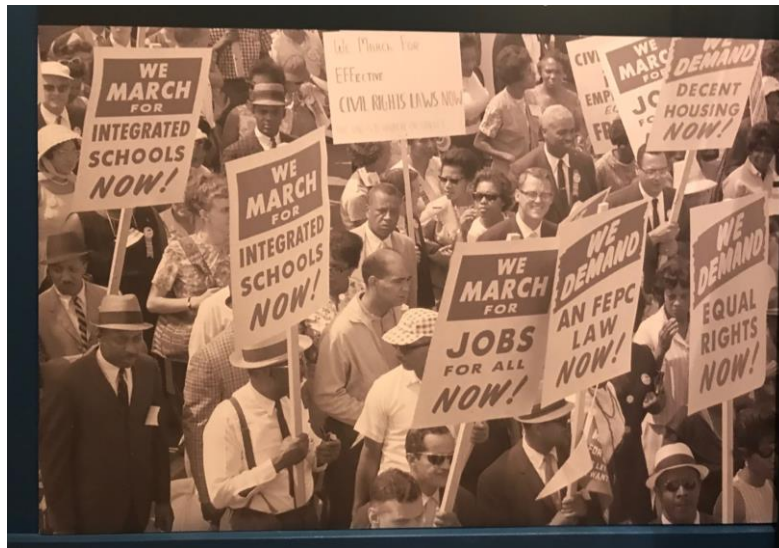
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Activity 4:

Define “civil rights”. Design and create a civil rights/fairness poster or mural with specific sections. Look at the 1960s and 1970s historic photos for ideas.

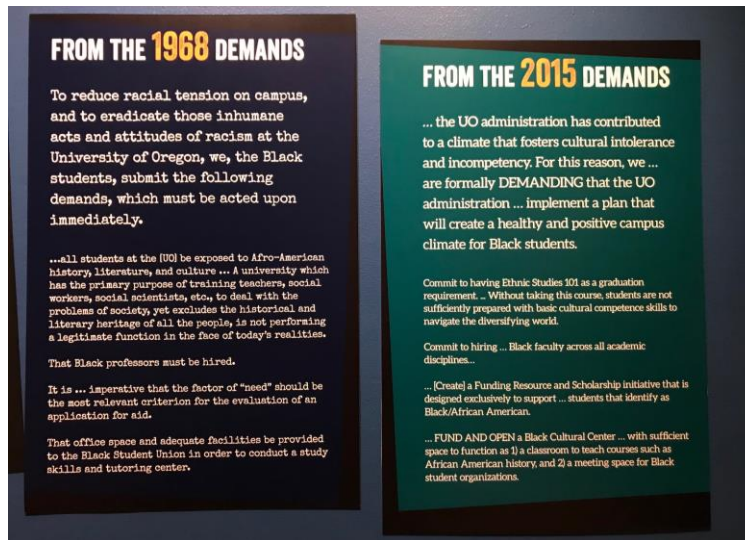


Activity 5:

Create a two-sided bookmark. One side should proudly show off what you look like and captures some positive personality trait that is unique to you. The other side should use positive words to describe your identity. Hang them together as a mini exhibit, labeled “Power to the People of _____ (insert teacher’s name) Classroom”. Look at each other’s bookmarks and share positive comments on each.

Activity 6:

Look at the University of Oregon’s Black student demands from 1968 and compare them to the demands in 2015 (full copies of the demands are located on the museum’s Educator Resources webpage). What are similar? How much has changed? What still needs to be done?



Additional Resources

- [“A Hidden History”](#) by Walidah Imarisha
- [Blacks in Oregon \(essay\)](#) by Darrell Millner, the Oregon Encyclopedia
- Teaching Tolerance website: tolerance.org
- [Teaching the Civil Rights Movement](#) from the Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Black Pioneers website: oregonblackpioneers.org
- Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs, oaba.us
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), naacplanecounty.org
- The Community Alliance of Lane County, calclane.org
- The Oregon League of Minority Voters, minorityvoters.org
- The City of Eugene Office of Human Rights and Neighborhood Involvement, eugene-or.gov/526/Human-Rights-Commission
- Momentum Alliance, momentumalliance.org
- The Oregon Affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, aclu-or.org
- Black Lives Matter Global Network, blacklivesmatter.com
- The University of Oregon Black Strategies Group, inclusion.uoregon.edu/bsg