Lesson Starters

African Americans: Fighting for Equality

Grade Level: 9–12

Subject: Social Studies

Channel: Black History Month

Instructional Strategy: Instagram-in

Possible Learning Objectives

- Identify well-known African Americans and their achievements.
- Discuss the roles that African Americans have played in the military during U.S. history and the barriers they have faced and overcome.
- Describe the challenges African Americans have faced to achieve equal treatment in the United States.
- Analyze how African American activists such as Rosa Parks organized and worked together to change discriminatory laws in the United States.
- Define and use key terms such as abolition, activism, civil rights, discrimination, equality, Jim Crow, NAACP, and segregation.

For Starters…

Ideas from DE to Kickstart Learning

SOS Instagram-in: The Tuskegee Airmen

Create an inquiry question about the Tuskegee Airmen that will encourage students to respond visually. For example: Why was the Tuskegee Airmen’s service during World War II revolutionary? Write the question on chart paper to display for students and have them brainstorm what they know about the topic. Write responses on the chart paper, surrounding the question. Then, play the video segments “Tuskegee Airmen: Colonel Charles McGee” and “Who Were the Tuskegee Airmen?” Using an Instagram-in’ template, have students respond to your essential question visually by drawing an image as their answer. In the comment field below, have students explain their illustration. They also can develop hashtags to categorize comments and make connections. Post the Instagram-in’ results around the class so other students can see them and respond in the comments fields with their own insights or hashtags.

Half the Story: African American Soldiers

Open the image African American soldiers in Cuba. Zoom in on the upper-left corner so that you can see only part of the image. Ask students what they predict they will be studying today. Scroll down through the image from upper left to lower left, then to lower right, then to upper right, ending with the section of the image that shows the African-American soldiers’ faces, and ask again what students think they will be studying today. Show the entire picture and repeat the question. Read the description of the image with the class and elicit students’ ideas about how this image connects to the topic of Black History Month.
Rosa Parks Journals

Explain to students that they will be viewing a video and recording information they learn. Play the video “The PBS NewsHour: The Story We Did Not Know About Rosa Parks” (start at 3:45 and stop at 6:52). Tell students they cannot take notes while watching the video, but they will draw a picture and write about something they learned. After viewing the video, ask students to take out a piece of paper and fold it in half; students also can use a notebook with side-by-side blank pages. On the left side of the page, have students draw a picture with labels to represent something they learned. This allows a nonlinguistic representation of their learning. On the right side, have students write a few sentences or phrases describing their picture or additional facts from the segment. This provides a linguistic explanation of their illustration. Have students pair-share journal pages with a neighbor to discuss their drawings and summaries. You also may want to collect journal pages or notebooks to provide students with feedback. After sharing with their neighbor, students can add to their drawings, make additional drawings, and add to their summaries. Students can use Studio to present their drawings and summaries.

Target Vocabulary*

- **abolition** – the act of abolishing slavery
- **activism** – a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action, especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue
- **civil rights** – the rights that every person should have regardless of his or her gender, race, or religion
- **discrimination** – the practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people
- **equality** – the quality or state of having the same rights, social status, and so on
- **Jim Crow** – ethnic discrimination especially against blacks, by legal enforcement or traditional sanctions
- **landslide** – an election in which the winner gets a much greater number of votes than the loser
- **NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)** – a civil rights organization for ethnic minorities in the United States
- **racism** – poor treatment of or violence against people because of their race
- **segregation** – the practice or policy of keeping people of different races, religions, and so on separate from each other
- **Supreme Court** – the highest court of law in the United States
- **Underground Railroad** – a system of cooperation among active antislavery people in the United States before 1863 by which fugitive slaves were secretly helped to reach the North or Canada

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