

Why Protest (Nonviolently?)

Audience: High School Students

Rationale: Social studies subjects often cover famous wars and tend to glorify military leaders. Once in a while, peace studies, peacemakers or peace advocates will be in the spotlight but usually superficially. In “Peace is Our Profession: Teaching Nonviolence in Schools,” Peter Schmidt explains that, “Our lack of imagination too frequently narrows the focus of our inquiry into nonviolence to the accomplishments of people such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, rather than the **tactics** which were employed in leading their respective struggles against British imperialism and American racial bigotry...To improve their abilities to think creatively about how to change the world, students must learn about nonviolence and the **strategies** used by pacifists in the pursuit of their causes.”[1]

[1] Schmidt, P. (1984) Peace is our profession: Teaching nonviolence in the schools. National Endowment for the Humanities, 1-23.

Objectives: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify different types of power in society (past and present day) and discuss how power struggles can lead to forms of injustice and inequality in society.
- summarize a secondary source news article and primary source video in order to explain the role of individuals and institutions during the Civil Rights Movement.
- explain why people protest

Standard: CCSS - RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Compelling Question: Why do people protest?

Supporting Questions: 1) What is power? 2) What is the impact of using nonviolent tactics?

Materials:

Computer/Projector/Internet

PPT Slides w/ Do Now Prompt/Slides; Objective, 5 whys protocol.

Do Now – Photos on slides

<http://www.crmvet.org/images/imgcoll.htm>

<http://www.library.nashville.org/civilrights/photos.htm>

Right to Assembly Video: <http://www.youthforhumanrights.org/>

5 whys protocol – Flip Chart Paper

Power Chairs Activity – 5 chairs without armrests/attached desks

<http://dev.trainingforchange.org/tools/chair-power-three-types-power-0>

Primary Source Newsfilm (Civil Rights Digital Library):

<http://crdl.usg.edu/cgi/crdl?action=retrieve;rset=002;recno=1;format= video>

Fifty years after the Nashville Sit-Ins (needs to be edited by teacher based on school rules around language)

<http://www.nashvillescene.com/nashville/fifty-years-after-the-nashville-sit-ins-the-students-who-challenged-the-nations-conscience-revisit-downtown/Content?oid=1227017>

Summary of Nashville Movement (Overview – edited):

<http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/films/afmp/stories/nashville.php>

A Force More Powerful Clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= CGInjfJvHg&list=PLqT6HXIC198K-4B0RgayspMk2OCxE1hii>

Time: 90 minutes

Procedures:

90 minute class period:

- 1) Do Now: 5 min
- 2) Objective: 2 min
- 3) 5-Whys Protocol: 6 min
- 4) Power Chairs Activity: 7 min
- 5) Debrief/Discussion: 10 min
- 6) Notes (Power-Over; Power-With-Others; Power-from-Within) – 3 min
- 7) Feb 27, 1960 Newsfilm clip – 1 min
- 8) Fifty years after article – Reading + Summary: 22 min
- 9) Summary of Nashville Movement – 6 min
- 10) A Force More Powerful Video Clip – 4:30 min
- 11) Power Presentations (Groups) – 20 min
- 12) Exit Ticket – 5 min

- Do Now:** Why do people protest? - This activity support visual learners. Students will see a series of photos of nonviolent protesters (some of which expose violence) from the past and present-day. They will then be shown a one-minute clip that promotes the right to assembly. After seeing these photos and video, students will brainstorm and provide an initial draft response of the compelling question: Why do people protest?

- After they have drafted their initial response, students will be in groups of 3-5 depending on class size where they will participate in the 5 Whys process where each student has the role of asking “Why” to every question. The first question is: **Why do people protest?** The student who answers first can share their Do Now response. *Example response:* “Because they are mad.” Then the Why question-asker asks the next person, “Why are people mad?” Then that second person answers that question by explaining “Because...” It keeps going until the question WHY has been asked 5 times. The group will record the final response on the flip chart paper. This activity is engaging and helps students get to the root of a deeper question. One group member

will read their group's poster out and they will be posted around the room. This activity supports linguistic learners.

- Students will participate in the Power Chairs activity. This is a silent activity that will support kinesthetic and intrapersonal learners. -Provide instructions for the Power Chairs exercise (adapted from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed) There are five chairs lined up. Students can volunteer to rearrange the chairs in a way to illustrate "Power". Rules: 1) No Talking 2) Only one student can get up and rearrange the chairs at a time 3) You can only go again if others have taken a turn and no one else wants to go. After activity is over, students who rearranged the chairs and observers will get a chance to explain what they saw or why they rearranged the chairs in a certain way and how that represented power in their mind. Eventually, people will come to similar conclusions about power being one person in control and/or power being with groups/numbers. This will lead into the quick note-taking and direct instruction on the three different kinds of power used by George Lakey (adapted from Starhawk).
- Students will watch a primary source news clip of African American students holding a lunch counter sit-in and the policemen arresting demonstrators in Nashville, Tennessee, 1960 February 27. Fast forward fifty years – students will explore that event by reading a complex news article (edited slightly by the teacher due to language) that starts with a dialogue which is actually a re-enactment from the actual lunch-counter protestors who visited Nashville 50 years after their movement. Students will be tasked with summarizing the article that piece together the ideas, actors, places and events during the sit-in movement in Nashville. This will lead them to being able to explain not just the role of individual leaders but also identify specific nonviolent tactics and strategies used during the Civil Rights Movement and reflect on their original compelling question from the beginning of class.
- Students will get a short summary of the Nashville Movement that is taken from the website of the book & documentary – *A Force More Powerful*. Students will compare this summary with the one they wrote and then watch a clip of James Lawson from that film showing how protestors were trained in nonviolence. This summary and video will clarify any misunderstandings or confusion from previous sources.
- Student Presentations: Class will break into three groups and each group will get a flip chart paper with either "Power-over," "Power-With-Others" or "Power-Within" written at the top. Based off the readings and chair exercise/debrief, students will be asked to define their assigned "power" and then identify power struggles and describe these powers in the context of the stakeholders and situations in the Nashville sit-in movement. The group will have 6 minutes to prepare and each group will have 3 minutes to present (including questions from other groups).
- Exit Ticket: Students have to respond in writing to the original compelling question: "Why do people protest?" Students will expand upon their Do Now response.

Assessment:

Students will participate in formative assessments throughout the class and will be evaluated on their participation and performance on the following tasks:

- 1) Group (5 Why Process – Final Response)
- 2) Individual (Article Analysis)
- 3) Group (Power – definitions/presentations)
- 4) Individual (Exit Ticket)

Possible Homework Assignments:

Option 1: Students will be provided a handout of Albert Einstein Institution's "198 Methods of Nonviolent Action." <http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/198-Methods.pdf>. Student must pick at least one method of nonviolent action and find a movement that used that tactic. The student will be assigned to write one paragraph explaining the movement and methods (who, what, where, why, when, how). Teacher will show students online resource to help them locate nonviolent movements: Global Nonviolent Action Database - <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/>

Option 2: Connecting the past and present (reading/writing exercise). This activity will support reading comprehension and writing strategies, while allowing students to make connections between present day police and race issues with the training involved in learning about a "difficult history."