



Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater and Academy In-School Touring Program

Freedom Riders Study Guide

Join two girls from 1961, Jennifer and Tiffany, as they explore the intense history behind the Civil Rights Movement. As Jennifer persuades Tiffany to join her on the Freedom Ride to Alabama, historical figures appear to share their own stories. From Martin Luther King, Jr. to Malcolm X to the Little Rock Nine students, witness history come to life onstage. But will their stories be enough to convince Tiffany to join the freedom ride herself?

The content in this study guide was created by Walnut Street Theatre's Educational Department. Freedom Riders was originally performed by the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEFORE THE SHOW

- ★ What is racism? Can you think of any examples of racism that you have witnessed?
- ★ How can we overcome racism?
- ★ What are civil rights? What have you learned about the Civil Rights Movement?
- ★ What civil rights leaders do you expect to see in the show? Why?
- ★ What do you think "freedom riders" are?

AFTER THE SHOW

- ★ How do you think the actors used their voices and bodies to play so many different characters in one show?
- ★ What do you think is the message of Freedom Riders?
- ★ Did Freedom Riders teach you anything new about Civil Rights leaders or events?
- ★ What needs to change before we can truly reach social equality?
- ★ How far have we come in the fight for Civil Rights since 1961?

CLASS ACTIVITY: SINGLE IDENTITY

DIRECTIONS

- ★ Have students rip or cut a piece of paper into five strips.
- ★ Have them write a different word or phrase that identifies them on each strip (i.e. age, race, physical characteristics, hobbies, strengths, weaknesses, etc.).
- ★ Have students arrange strips in order of what they think is their best quality to their least.
- ★ Now, ask them to take away one strip.
- ★ Ask students to think about what it feels like to lose that part of themselves.
- ★ Now, ask students to lose another strip.
- ★ Continue this exercise until only one strip remains.
- ★ Ask the class: "Now that you have been reduced to a single characteristic, what kind of person are you? What would it feel like to only be defined that way by others?"

VARIATIONS: ACT IT OUT!

- ★ After completing the activity, then ask students to tape their final strip of paper to their shirt.
- ★ Have students walk around the classroom wearing their "single identity" on their shirt.
- ★ Encourage students to interact with each other treating one another solely based off of their label.

FOLLOW-UP

- ★ Discuss the results of this activity as a class:
 - ★ How did it make you feel?
 - ★ What did you discover about yourself? About your classmates?
 - ★ How long would you be able to tolerate being treated and identified by a single characteristic before you snap?
 - ★ Did this activity change your perspective on how to view/treat others?



CLASS ACTIVITY: "ACT OUT" AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

1 STEP ONE

- ★ Divide students into groups of 3-5.
- ★ Give groups a few minutes to discuss times in their life where they either witnessed or were the victims of an act of discrimination.
- ★ Ask the following prompts:
 - ★ Have you ever heard someone make an offensive joke?
 - ★ Have you ever seen a person criticize or ridicule someone else because they were different?
 - ★ How did you respond in this situation?

2 STEP TWO

- ★ Instruct each group to pick one story told that was particularly strong.
- ★ Have one student be the narrator and tell the story to the class while the other group members act out what happened. Pay close attention to the student's choice of body language used to tell their story.
- ★ Give each group a few minutes to rehearse their scene and then present their stories to the class.

3 STEP THREE

- ★ Have students identify the root of the conflict.
 - ★ What are the strongest words that best capture the essence of your story?
 - ★ Who was the oppressed? Who is the oppressor?
 - ★ How is the oppressed different from the oppressor?

4 STEP FOUR: PAPPARAZZI!

- ★ Lastly, have students recreate the essence of their story as if it were a captured as a photograph in a tabloid.
- ★ *Note: Without dialogue, physicality becomes greatly important. Pay close attention to how body language can tell a story.*

BEFORE THE SHOW

Consider reviewing the following historical figures & events surrounding the Civil Rights Movement.

Brown vs. Board of Education ★ **W.E.B. DuBois**
Jim Crow Laws ★ **The Ku Klux Klan** ★ **Little Rock Nine**
Martin Luther King Jr. ★ **Malcolm X** ★ **NAACP**
Diane Nash ★ **Rosa Parks** ★ **Plessey vs. Ferguson**

CREATING YOUR PICTURE

Character Roles & Relationships

Who has the power in the story? If there are bystanders in the story, do they side with the oppressed/ oppressor?

Composition: How might you convey the story as a photograph?

Experiment with characters' proximity to one another. What does it say about two characters that are very close to each other vs. two characters that are far apart? Consider the different playing levels: high, medium, and low. Which level has the most power? The least?

FOLLOW-UP

- ★ Discuss the results of this activity as a class:
 - ★ Was it easier or harder to convey your story without words?
 - ★ What did you learn from this activity?
 - ★ What was difficult?
 - ★ How might we prevent this behavior from happening again in the future?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Critical Analysis ★ **Leadership** ★ **Concentration**
Group Collaboration ★ **Problem Solving** ★ **Creative Expression**

CLASS PROJECT: LIVING WITNESS

DIRECTIONS

- ★ Have students go home and interview someone (a parent, relative, neighbor, etc.) who lived through the Civil Rights Movement (1950's-1960's)

STUDENTS SHOULD ASK THE FOLLOWING

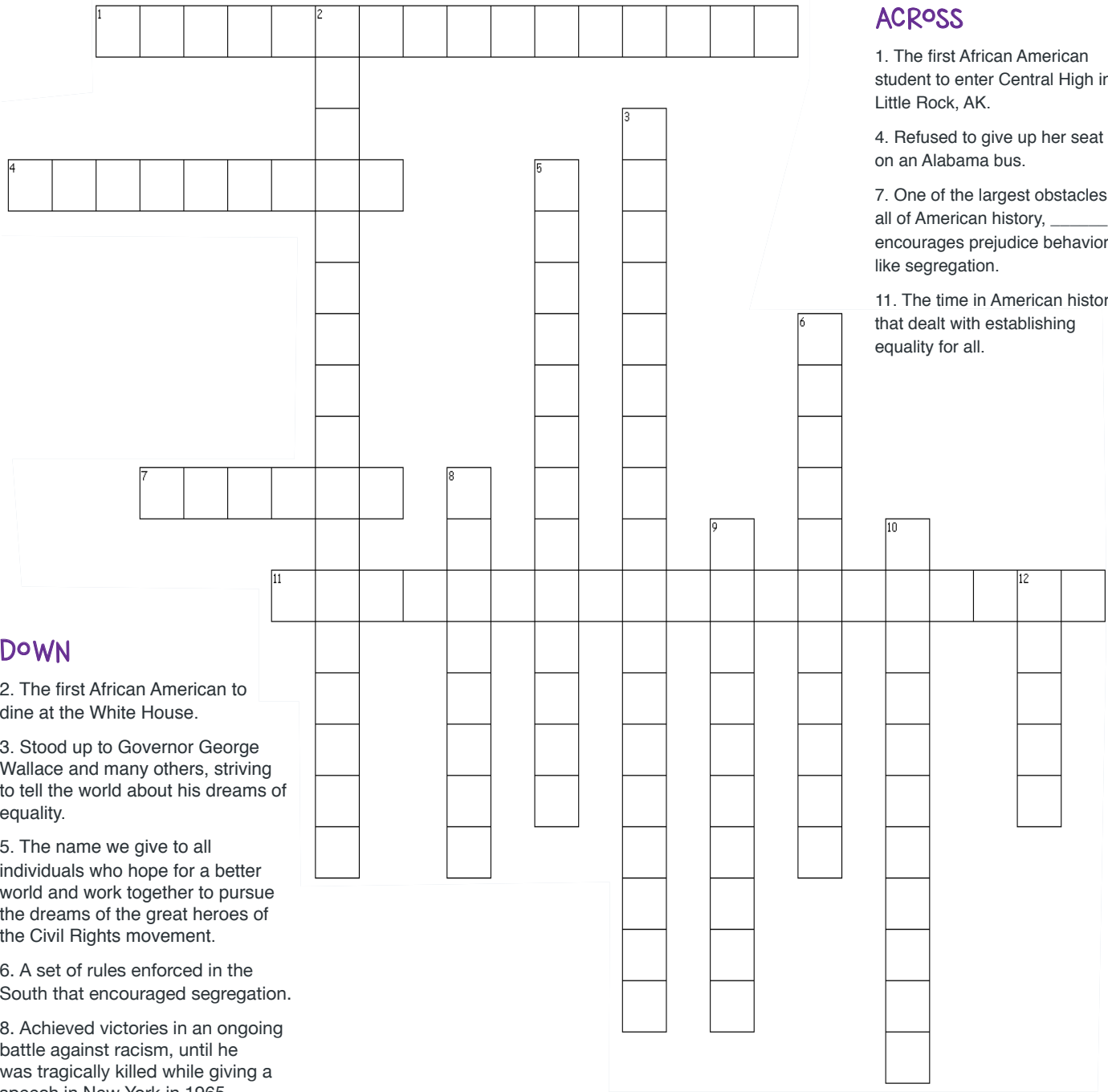
- ★ What was your experience of race relationships during the 1950's-60's?
- ★ Did you ever witness any racial discrimination during the 1950's-60's? How often? What were the consequences?
- ★ What are the differences (involving equality) between then and now?
- ★ How have your views changed?

FOLLOW-UP

- ★ After students complete their interviews, have students rewrite their answers into paragraph form. Have students perform these as monologues either in groups to each other or in front of the class.
- ★ Follow the presentations with a group discussion on what was learned in talking to a "living witness" of the Civil Rights Movement.
- ★ Did you learn anything new by performing this?



STUDENT WORKSHEET: CIVIL RIGHTS CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. The first African American student to enter Central High in Little Rock, AK.
4. Refused to give up her seat on an Alabama bus.
7. One of the largest obstacles in all of American history, _____ encourages prejudice behavior like segregation.
11. The time in American history that dealt with establishing equality for all.

DOWN

2. The first African American to dine at the White House.
3. Stood up to Governor George Wallace and many others, striving to tell the world about his dreams of equality.
5. The name we give to all individuals who hope for a better world and work together to pursue the dreams of the great heroes of the Civil Rights movement.
6. A set of rules enforced in the South that encouraged segregation.
8. Achieved victories in an ongoing battle against racism, until he was tragically killed while giving a speech in New York in 1965.
9. African American actor who spoke at the funeral of Malcolm X.
10. The practice of keeping black and white people apart, calling them "separate but equal." This was also the main topic of Plessy vs. Ferguson.
12. The initials of the organization that works to eliminate racism and promote equality for all.



*See Answers On Page 5

STUDENT WORKSHEET: CREATE YOUR OWN FREEDOM RIDE!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- ★ Research and discuss possible social issues to “take a stand” on.

DIRECTIONS

- ★ In groups of 3-5, create a scrapbook page of your adventure, using the template below.



NAME OF OUR RIDE:



OUR CAUSE:

DRAW A "SNAPSHOT" OF OUR GROUP

OUR FAVORITE PLACE WE WENT TO:

BECAUSE:

DRAW OUR GROUP LOGO

CHALLENGES WE FACED:

CITIES WE VISITED:

DRAW THE BUS

CHARACTER PROJECT: A CIVIL RIGHTS TALK SHOW

1 STEP ONE: CHARACTER RESEARCH

- ★ Assign each student a major historical figure from the Civil Rights Movement. This will be their “character” of which they are to research in-depth. How did you respond in this situation?

🔍 RESEARCH THE FOLLOWING ON EACH CHARACTER

DEMOGRAPHICS

- ★ Gender, age (during the peak of their career), race, home life (number of siblings, name of spouse, number of children, etc.), geography, social status.

SOCIAL ACTION

- ★ What was their major contribution to the Civil Rights Movement?
- ★ What was the consequence of their actions at the time?
- ★ How do their actions reflect today’s society?

CHARACTERIZATIONS

- ★ **Costume:** How would your character dress/present themselves?
- ★ **Voice & Dialect:** Can you find any recording of this character’s voice? Does your character speak with an accent? Do they have a high pitched voice? A deep, raspy voice?

2 STEP TWO: TALK SHOW PRESENTATION

- ★ Conclude this project with an all class “live talk show” where the students are interviewed in-character and in-costume about their involvement with the Civil Rights Movement.
- ★ The teacher or a designated student should act as the talk-show host/facilitator.
- ★ One character at a time, welcome in each guest.
- ★ As their character, students respond to basic questions about their life and previous class discussions.
- ★ Questions can be facilitated by the talk-show host or open to the classroom.
- ★ While not being interviewed, the rest of the class acts as the audience.

CONTINUED LEARNING: SUGGESTIONS FOR AFTER THE SHOW

📄 DIRECTIONS

- ★ Have students choose a major historical figure in Freedom Riders (see list on p. 2).
- ★ Students should research their characters more in depth to understand the depth of their accomplishments and contributions to society.
- ★ Then have students write a letter thanking that person for their bravery and social progression.

✉️ INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR LETTER

- ★ The result of their actions
- ★ How they triggered progress in America
- ★ What we have in America today as a direct result of their contribution?
- ★ How your life would be different had they not taken a stand against discrimination?
- ★ Any other personal opinions of their involvement on the Civil Rights Movement.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Critical Analysis ★ Reading Comprehension

Self-Confidence ★ Communication ★ Memorization

Research ★ Creativity

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE (PAGE. 3)

Across:	3. Martin Luther King Jr.
1. Elizabeth Eckford	5. Freedom Riders
4. Rosa Parks	6. Jim Crow Laws
7. Racism	8. Malcolm X
11. Civil Rights Movement	9. Ossie Davis
Down:	10. segregation
2. Booker T. Washington	12. NAACP

SUGGESTED CIVIL RIGHTS FIGURES

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ★ Malcolm X ★ Ossie Davis

Linda Brown ★ Rosa Parks

Teddy Roosevelt ★ W.E.B. Dubois

George Wallace ★ Andrew Goodman

Harry Briggs ★ Jerome Robbins

Robert Kennedy ★ Bayard Rustin

Daisy Bates ★ Jesse Jackson



SHARE YOUR CREATIVITY WITH US!

We would love to hear from you! Please share your work, stories, or pictures from your class by sending to the address below!

Fantasy Playhouse Children’s Theater & Academy
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Huntsville, AL 35805

FANTASY PLAYHOUSE

CHILDREN'S THEATER & ACADEMY

ABOUT US



Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater & Academy (FPCTA) provides theatre arts access through production, education, and outreach, reaching more than 31,000 residents annually, including 21,000 children and youth. FPCTA enriches the lives of children and families through theatre and arts education, encouraging students to become self-confident, academically successful, creative-thinking citizens who are more likely to invest in their communities as adults. FPCTA's core programs include live children's theatre productions, classes, camps, workshops, and educational outreach through after school classes and In-School Touring programs. Recognizing the transformative power theatre arts can have in the life of a child, FPCTA prioritizes theatre arts access for all by engaging local underserved communities.

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THANK YOU!

FPCTA gratefully acknowledges the support from the following.



IN-SCHOOL TOURING PROGRAM

BRING PROFESSIONAL SHOWS TO YOUR SCHOOL



By: Tom Quinn
 APPROPRIATE FOR GRADES K-6

Have no fear! In this story Superheroes save the world by empowering students to take control of their health.



POARCH
 CREEK
 COURAGE

By: Mariah Beachboard
 APPROPRIATE FOR GRADES 3-5

The most courageous Alabambian community stands against every challenge to become and inspiring success story.



By: Tom Quinn
 APPROPRIATE FOR GRADES 6-12

A story of the brave men and women who fought for equality.

About

Our In-School Touring Program introduces students to the art of theatre through age appropriate curriculum based pieces, which are socially relevant, entertaining, and exciting. Our professional actors will bring to life an experience for each child in hopes of stretching te mind, inspiring the heart, and promoting education through our plays.

For booking information, please contact:

Candice Cooper, Education Director
 256-539-6829 ★ FieldTrips@Fantasyplayhouse.com



FANTASY PLAYHOUSE

CHILDREN'S THEATER & ACADEMY

FANTASY IN THE CLASSROOM



FPCTA after-school programs are modifications of our general acting curriculum. Students work on basic acting skills and apply them to a final presentation at the end of each session that inspire creativity and build self-confidence. FPCTA is currently in partnership with Huntsville City, Madison City, and Madison County Schools.



ADOPT - A - SCHOOL

In this production-based class, we focus on creating a custom-designed drama program for your school, specific to your needs and budget. This class culminates in a simple but fully realized play or musical appropriate for any age range.



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