

# **Knocking Down Fences**

## **A Civil Rights Unit for Third Graders**

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### **Abstract:**

Often 3rd graders are familiar with the names Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King and their connection to the Civil Rights Movement. Those same third graders, however, often lack background knowledge for understanding the social conditions that compelled these individuals and others to push back against the conditions of the times. It is the intent of this unit to provide background knowledge that is truthful and meaningful, while at the same time being sensitive to students' age and maturity.

### **Essential Questions:**

How and when were Blacks and Whites separated in society?  
Who benefited and who suffered from this separation?

### **Goal:**

Students will read and discuss historical fiction and make connections between text and primary sources [photographs] that provide evidence of social conditions in the past. Students will follow guidelines from worksheets adapted from the National Archives and Records Administration. At the end of the unit, students will "blog" or make a written entry into a classroom writing folder where the question is: "What is worth standing up for?"

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to define primary sources, investigate evidence of past events through analysis of photographs and develop new vocabulary in context. Students will be able to make connections between primary sources and historical fiction text as they relate to the Civil Rights Movement.

### **Internet Resources Related to This Lesson:**

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/public-programs/index.html>

[http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/085\\_disc.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/085_disc.html)

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what/>

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAjimcrow.htm>

Worksheets for analysis for written documents, photographs and artifacts designed and developed by Education Staff, National Archives:

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>

Website for many graphic organizers. For purposes of this mini-unit, graphic organizers were used for organizing information from historical photographs:

[http://www.edHelper.com/teachers/graphic\\_organizers.htm](http://www.edHelper.com/teachers/graphic_organizers.htm)

Other Materials:

*The Other Side*, by Jacqueline Woodson. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002.

### Lesson 1: The Other Side

\*Teacher introduces the book The Other Side, by Jacqueline Woodson, to students by doing a picture walk, asking students to look carefully at pictures and describe what's going on.

\*Students brainstorm their ideas about the story; i.e., setting, characters and plot.

\*Teacher reads the text and revisits the ideas the students had, establishing the time and place and actions in the story.

\*Teacher asks students the significance of the fence—who put up the fence, why is it up, and what does the fence “do”?

\*Teacher directs the students to the last page where Annie says, “Someday somebody's going to come along and knock this old fence down.” And Clover responds, “Yeah, someday.” and provides a connection [if the students haven't already] to the Civil Rights Movement.

### Lesson 2: The Power of “Fences”

\*Teacher connects back to The Other Side and the fence, using the fence as a metaphor for the Jim Crow laws, defining the laws as laws in the South that kept Blacks and Whites separated, explaining that these fences or separations were the barriers to freedom for Blacks.

\*Teacher uses a transparency of “cluster/word web” and hands out paper copies to students. Together, teacher and students brainstorm and organize thoughts about freedom [the topic]. identifying 4 different freedoms that were denied [e.g., freedom to eat at a restaurant of choice] and finally, 2 ways the freedom would be blocked [how would it look?].

[http://www.edHelper.com/teachers/graphic\\_organizers.htm](http://www.edHelper.com/teachers/graphic_organizers.htm)

### Lesson 3: Analysis of Primary Sources

\*Teacher introduces the term “primary source”— a source that links the event to the past, something used or made

\*Teacher hands out photocopies of photograph, and using a transparency of modified Photo Document Analysis Worksheet, teacher models how to use worksheet to photo document.

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/public-programs/index.html>



### Lesson 4: Analysis of Photos

\*Teacher provides students with photographs depicting evidence of separation of the races.

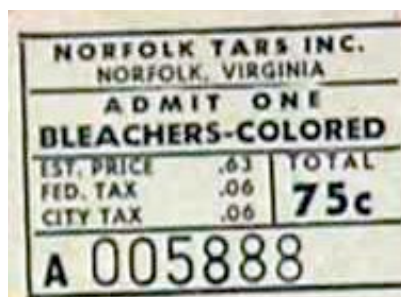
\*Students analyze the photographs using the photo analysis document worksheets.

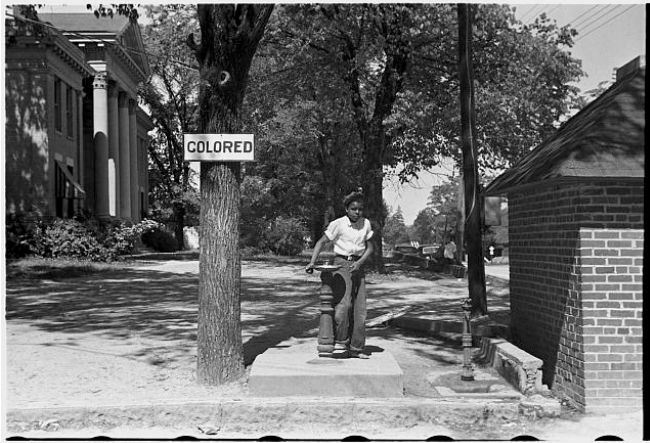
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/public-programs/index.html>

[http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/085\\_disc.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/085_disc.html)

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what/>

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAjimcrow.htm>







## Lesson 5: Looking For “Fences”

\*Teacher redistributes photographs from Lesson 4 and asks students to work in table groups. Students choose a reporter [to take notes and report for the table group]. Teacher asks students to consider for group discussion the following:

Where are the “fences” in the photos; i.e., for what purpose are Blacks and White separated?

Who benefited from the separation and who suffered? How?

## Lesson 6: What Is Worth Standing Up For?

Teacher will create a writing folder for student blogging. The writing topic is “What is Worth Standing Up For?” Students will write or blog about anything they feel is important to them. Students will make a written entry in the folder and others are free to read the blogs, comment on them and/or write their own.

Assessment:

Use expectations as outlined for Analysis Worksheets for Photos, informal assessment of individuals in table groups and whole group discussions and writing folder activity.