

Say It Plain: A Century of Great African American Speeches

A Listening Comprehension/Research Project

Summary:

This is a one-week (5 day) group research project in which students draw on secondary sources to locate and present information about famous African American civil rights leaders from the past century. Students will also listen to primary sources, speeches given by African American leaders, in order to understand the evolution of the struggle for civil rights during the past century.

Note: This project was implemented during a week of mandatory standardized state testing. Thus, each class period was extended (approximately 66 min) for at least 3 days. Therefore, this project may take longer to complete than the original 5-day period.

Essential Questions:

- ✗ What is the meaning of the phrase “civil rights”?
- ✗ Who were some of the people involved in the struggle for civil rights, and what were their roles/messages?
- ✗ What rights were these leaders fighting to attain?
- ✗ How do the goals of the civil rights movement from the beginning of the century compare to the civil rights message of today?

List of Materials:

- ✗ Project syllabus
- ✗ “Say It Plain” radio program and transcript
- ✗ CD player
- ✗ Informational packets for each African American leader that includes:
 1. Their picture and a quote on the front of the packet.
 2. The directions for the research portion, assigned topics/questions to look up for the presentation segment, websites needed for research, and a presentation rubric should be placed on the second page.
- ✗ Computers with Internet access
- ✗ Reflective questions worksheet
- ✗ Essay assignment
- ✗ Group feedback form

Setting the Purpose:

The students’ prior knowledge should be activated using an approach such as Mind Streaming, which is a discussion strategy. Propose this question to the students: What do you know about the Civil Rights movement? Let the students brainstorm for 5 minutes by writing down everything they know on a piece of paper. Next, each student should pick a partner to work with. The

students should all stand up and take turns telling their partners what information they know. For example, students will face one another and partner “A” will talk for 1 minute without interruption. Then, partner “B” will talk for 1 minute without interruption. At the end come together as a class and prepare a list to be referred to at the end of the project.

Assessment:

- ✘ Presentation rubric
- ✘ Group feedback form
- ✘ Reflective questions
- ✘ Essay assignment

Procedure:

Day 1:

- ✘ Class should be held in a computer lab, or in a regular classroom with access to a mobile computer lab.
- ✘ Show students the brainstorming list that was made the other day. Go over the list and remind students that they will be researching the Civil Rights movement.
- ✘ Hand out the **project syllabus**. Have students read it quietly. Discuss the goals, procedures, and assignments for this project.
- ✘ Assign the students into mixed ability groups and let them move to sit by their partners. There should be a total of 11 groups per class – 1 group for every civil rights leader they will be researching/listening to. Let each group know which civil rights leader they will be researching. Pass out the **informational packets** to each group.
- ✘ Allow the students a few minutes to look through their packets with their groups. Review the procedures for the research/presentation portion.
- ✘ Instruct the students to begin gathering data for their presentations. Assist as necessary.

Day 2:

- ✘ Class should be held in a computer lab, or in a regular classroom with access to a mobile computer lab.
- ✘ Review the procedures for the research/presentation portion.
- ✘ Instruct the students to resume gathering data for their presentations. Assist as necessary.
- ✘ If groups finish early, allow them to practice their presentations for tomorrow.

Day 3:

- ✘ Students should have completed the research portion of this project and must be prepared to present their information.
- ✘ Hand out the **reflective questions worksheet and the radio transcript**. Inform the students that they will be expected to reflect upon and answer the questions as they listen to the radio program. Also, students are to read along with the transcript as they listen to the radio program.

- ✘ Have the groups representing Dick Gregory, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Booker T. Washington present their research. Encourage a “good audience” environment. Introduce each presentation and reiterate the information presented after each group finishes. Grade the presentations using the **presentation rubric**. Allow members of the class to ask questions.
- ✘ Begin the “**Say It Plain**” radio program using a **CD player** with a proper introduction and inform students that they will be reflecting and thinking about the answers to questions 1-3 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Stop the radio program after Booker T. Washington’s speech. Review the messages presented by the civil rights leaders and go over questions 1-3 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Have the groups representing Marcus Garvey, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Stokely Carmichael present their research. Encourage a “good audience” environment. Introduce each presentation and reiterate the information presented after each group finishes. Grade the presentations using the **presentation rubric**. Allow members of the class to ask questions.
- ✘ Begin the radio program once more with a proper introduction and inform students that they will be reflecting and thinking about the answers to questions 4-6 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Stop the radio program after Stokely Carmichael’s speech. Review the messages presented by the civil rights leaders and go over questions 4-6 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.

Day 4:

- ✘ Have the group representing Martin Luther King Jr. present their research. Encourage a “good audience” environment. Introduce the presentation and reiterate the information presented after the group finishes. Grade the presentation using the **presentation rubric**. Allow members of the class to ask questions.
- ✘ Begin the radio program with a proper introduction and inform students that they will be reflecting and thinking about the answer to question 7 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.

Note: The speech given by Martin Luther King Jr. is one of particular importance and carries a very powerful message. In this speech Martin Luther King discusses the fact that because of who he is and what he’s doing he will eventually be assassinated. The next day after giving this speech he was killed. This information needs to be stressed to the students.

- ✘ Stop the radio program after Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech. Review the message presented by this civil rights leader and go over question 7 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Have the groups representing Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan present their research. Encourage a “good audience” environment. Introduce each presentation and reiterate the information presented after each group

finishes. Grade the presentations using the **presentation rubric**. Allow members of the class to ask questions.

- ✘ Begin the radio program with a proper introduction and inform students that they will be reflecting and thinking about the answers to questions 8 and 9 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Stop the radio program after Barbara Jordan's speech. Review the messages presented by the civil rights leaders and go over questions 8 and 9 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Have the groups representing the Reverend Jesse Jackson and Barack Obama present their research. Encourage a "good audience" environment. Introduce each presentation and reiterate the information presented after each group finishes. Grade the presentations using the **presentation rubric**. Allow members of the class to ask questions.
- ✘ Begin the radio program with a proper introduction and inform students that they will be reflecting and thinking about the answers to questions 10 and 11 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.
- ✘ Stop the radio program after Barbara Jordan's speech. Review the messages presented by the civil rights leaders and go over questions 10 and 11 on the **reflective questions worksheet**.

Day 5:

- ✘ By day 5 students will have heard all 11 speeches presented in the radio program and should have finished every group presentation.
- ✘ Review the original brainstorming list that was made at the beginning of the unit. Point out new information learned and correct information that is false.
- ✘ Have students fill out a **group feedback form**.
- ✘ Hand out the **essay assignment** and review the instructions.
- ✘ Allow students to work on their essays for the rest of the hour.
- ✘ Collect the reflective questions worksheet.
- ✘ Collect the essay assignment at a later date.