

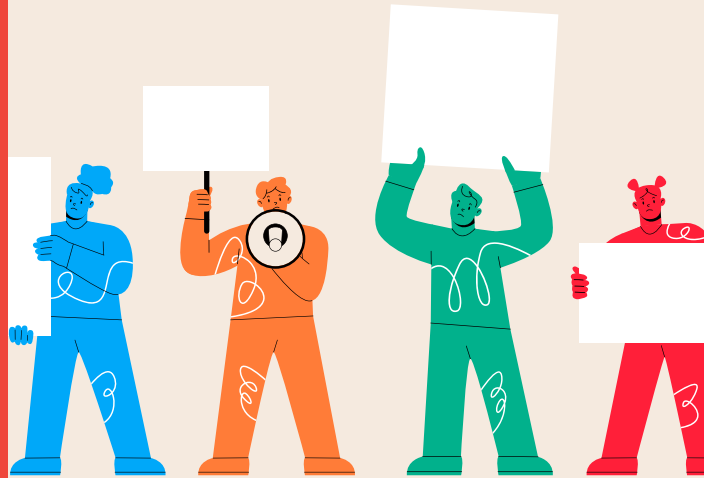
## EXPLORING CIVICS THROUGH HISTORIC SPACES:

A MODEL FOR CIVIC LEARNING AT MUSEUMS,  
HISTORIC SITES, AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

**FOURTH GRADE**

90 minutes

# FIGHTING FOR CHANGE



### OVERVIEW

This activity is geared toward students in fourth grade and is intended to take place in a museum setting.

As attitudes and beliefs about race, gender and sexual identity in the United States shift, so do the policies and practices that impact US citizens. Many individuals and groups throughout the 20th century advocated for a more equitable society. Some were impacted directly by these policies and practices, while others advocated for their peers.

In this activity, students will tour a historic space or museum, starting with the context of the historic site/museum and making connections to the broader policies and practices within the United States at the time.

They will reflect on the relationship between policies and practices at the historic site/museum and in the broader United States. Finally, students will discuss how both groups and individuals fought against oppression to make change.

*Content Warning: Depending on the content that will be discussed during your program, there may be language you want to address before the start of your program.*

*Sample language:*

*In this lesson, the term \_\_\_\_\_ is used to describe \_\_\_\_\_. At the time, this term was not considered offensive; however, today it is considered inappropriate.*

### EAD DRIVING QUESTIONS

#### Civic Participation

CDQ1.2

- Why might we want to make changes at local, state, or national levels?
- How can we promote change in an effective way?
- Why might you question decisions that are made for/ in your community?

#### We the People

HDQ3.2

- How has the U.S. population changed over time?
- How have push-pull factors changed the U.S. population over time?
- How have different groups (e.g., religion, race, ethnicity) shaped our society?

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will be able to identify institutional and non-institutional ways that people have made changes to society.

## MATERIALS

### ■ PRIMARY SOURCE FOCUS

Objects and Exhibitions related to:

- Policies and practices that limited opportunities for a particular group
- Actions that individuals or groups took to make change

- Images of primary source focus objects, printed
- Objects in touch or education collection, if applicable
- Roll of white butcher paper
- Markers

## PROCEDURE

### 1. INTRODUCTION (15 MIN)

Groups will find a space to sit that is comfortable. It can be on stools, benches or the floor. Give a welcome, provide context on the historic site/museum, including when it was built or founded, and give a brief overview of which communities lived there.

- What historical events or movements were significant in the United States at this time?
- How was life different in the United States during this time versus now?
- How was access to opportunities for each group at the historic site/museum different then versus now?

Pass out images or documents that provide context about inequities present in the United States that connect to the community you will be discussing fighting for change. It may be helpful to go over photo analysis strategies with students before they look at the images if they are unfamiliar with this practice.

- What do you notice at the top of this picture? The left? The right? The bottom of this image?
- What words do you see? Where might they be?
- Who is in this image? Who might this image have been shared with?
- How are the different images similar?
- How do they make you feel?

## EAD DRIVING QUESTIONS CONT.

### We the People

HDQ3.2

- How do we engage with hard histories (e.g., enslavement, genocide, terrorism)?

### Institutional & Social Transformation- A Series of Refounding?

HDQ5.2

- How have people improved U.S. society over time?
- How have Americans resisted or reacted to the expansion of rights and citizenship claims?

CDQ5.2

- What are the institutional and non-institutional ways that people have made changes to society?

### A People with Contemporary Debates & Possibilities

HDQ7.2

- How do we evaluate and reflect on the actions of people in the past?
- How do we acknowledge the failures and accomplishments of people and leaders while respecting their humanity?

CDQ7.2

- How can we assess and challenge leaders when we see the need for change?

Discuss policies and practices that created inequality for the community you are discussing, including how people were impacted and how they are expressed in the documents you shared.

- How do you think members of this community felt during this period?
- How do you think the laws in place during the period impacted the people connected to this historic site/museum?

## 2. INVESTIGATION (40 MIN)

Introduce students to space using an object from the collection.

Discuss the historic site/museum and what historical events or movements were taking place at the site/museum during the time period being discussed, including stories of community members or information on how their opportunities may have been limited.

- Why do you think there were so many restrictions on what \_\_\_\_ could do?
- Who was making these decisions?
- How might the limitations that \_\_\_\_ faced impact their experience at the historic site?
- How do you think these community members felt being restricted in their roles?

When looking at objects, ask students to look at the images and/or artifacts and ask the following:

- What do you see? What does this make you think? What does that make you wonder?
- Who is in the images you see?
- If applicable: What role does each person in the image have?

When discussing the inequality that community members face, ask the following:

- How do you think this made \_\_\_\_ feel?
- How is this similar to the policies and practices in the broader United States?

Share information about how individuals fought against the policies and practices they believed were unfair.

### EXAMPLE FROM THE INTREPID MUSEUM

During the tour, Museum Educators discussed with students how opportunities for Black sailors and other people of color were limited during World War II.

To discuss segregation within the United States during World War II, Museum educators shared photos of segregated spaces with students.

#### Museum educators asked:

- How do you think Black Americans felt during the years of Jim Crow?
- How do you think the Jim Crow laws impacted sailors on board *Intrepid*?

Museum Educators brought students to a model of the ship to discuss the attack on Pearl Harbor that took place six days after construction was started on the aircraft carrier.

Educators discussed that after the attack on Pearl Harbor, millions of American men and women wanted to join the war effort. American men of all races signed up to join the Navy, ready to fight for their country.

Black sailors, however, were met with restrictions on what jobs they could have and how high they could rise within the ranks.

When looking at objects to discuss individuals making change, ask the following:

- What do you know about the time period that might have restricted this person's opportunities?

When looking at objects to discuss individuals taking action to make change or being the first to accomplish something in their community, ask the following:

- What do you know about the time period that might have restricted this person's opportunities?
- Why did \_\_\_\_ try fighting for \_\_\_\_?
- How do you think \_\_\_\_ felt being able to do \_\_\_\_?

### 3. ACTIVITY (30 MIN)

Groups will move to a larger quiet space or a classroom. Share that people during the time you have been discussing used many strategies to fight against the oppression they faced. Share one example that you discussed earlier on the tour.

- Can students think of ways people might have fought against injustice during this time?

Show and distribute images of activism taking place during the time period of focus. Ask students how these sources could have had an impact on the fight to put an end to the policies and practices limiting opportunity for the community you are focusing on.

Discuss with students that there are many ways for citizens to take action if they believe someone or a group is being treated unfairly.

- How can they advocate for and make change? How did \_\_\_\_\_ during \_\_\_\_\_ create change?
- Contacting your elected representative
- Getting the word out publicly, like writing in the newspaper or online
- Joining a group already working for change
- Running for office when you are old enough
- Protest
- Raise money for people affected or organizations working towards the same goal

### EXAMPLE FROM THE INTREPID MUSEUM

Museum Educators shared how many Black sailors and Black Americans felt like they were fighting two wars: one was around the world, in Europe and Asia, against Germany and Japan and one was against the injustice they were facing in the United States. They called the fight for freedom in these simultaneous wars "Double Victory."

Museum educators shared the story of Alonzo Swann, a Black crewmember of the USS *Intrepid* who received a lesser award (Bronze Star) than the award promised (Navy Cross) after a heroic effort to protect the ship from a kamikaze attack. He did not receive the higher award due to his race. Swann spent the next 50 years fighting to be awarded the proper accolade. He gathered documentation, went to court, and eventually he and four other Black sailors were given the Navy Cross.

When asked how Alonzo Swann might have felt after receiving the proper award, a student answered "happy and sad." When asked to elaborate, the student shared, "Happy because they got it, but not happy that it took 50 years."

Ask students to think about a cause they believe in. They will be making a class poster to represent causes for which they are advocating.

Students will go to butcher paper laid on the floor labeled with “We are Fighting For...” and write the causes they believe in.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (5 MIN)

After students write, ask students to share their responses.

Ask them:

- What is something you can do now to support the cause you wrote down?
- What is something you can do when you are an adult to support the cause you wrote down?

#### EXAMPLE FROM THE INTREPID MUSEUM

Museum Educators shared a pamphlet for a planned March on Washington in 1941, fundraiser and conference fliers, and a March on Washington movement poster.

The pamphlet and poster related to a march planned by A. Philip Randolph, which eventually inspired the 1963 march.

The fundraiser and conference fliers were created by the NAACP during World War II to encourage civilians to support them. Ask students how these sources could have had an impact on the fight for Double Victory.



These materials were created with the support of the Educating for American Democracy participants. The National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom. <http://www.neh.gov> Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this resource, do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## APPENDIX:

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

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#### ACTIVIST BOOK REPORT

Share grade-level appropriate books with students and have them write a book report on the activism they see. Students should answer the following:

- Who is your story about?
- What did they want to change?
- Why did they want to change it?
- How did they try to make change?

#### Potential Books

*All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything* by Annette Bay Pimentel

*Sofia Valdez, Future Prez* by Andrea Beaty

*Malala: Activist for Girls' Education* by Raphaele Frier

*Miss Paul and the President: The Creative Campaign for Women's Right to Vote* by Dean Robbins

*Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909* by Michelle Markel

*Seeds of Change: Wangari's Gift to the World* by Jen Cullerton Johnson

*Act* by Kayla Miller

*Fighting for Yes!* By Maryann Cocca-Leffler

#### Novels/Longer nonfiction

*Greta's Story: The Schoolgirl Who Went On Strike To Save The Planet* by Valentina Camerini

*Sofia Valdez and the Vanishing Vote* by Andrea Beaty

*This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality* by Jo Ann Allen Boyce