



# Disability History in the United States

## History Lesson

[Image description: Upper left: Orange silhouette of a boy holding a can and pointing his finger to a blue circle below him. A green gradient burst is behind him. The Office of the Education Ombuds' orange logo is displayed in the bottom right.]



“October is Disability History Month in the state of Washington. Today we are going to learn about disability history in the United States. First, I’m going to introduce our vocabulary words ‘civil rights’ and ‘activism’ with some famous pictures about those topics.”



[Image description: A black and white photograph of a black man with mustache in a suit and tie standing with his right arm raised in front of a curtain and candlesticks.]



[Image description: A black and white photograph of a huge crowd of people, mainly black men and women in dress clothes marching together holding many different signs. Some of the signs say, "We march for jobs for all NOW!" "We demand voting rights NOW!" and "End segregated rules in public schools."]



[Image description: A black and white photograph of a black woman sitting on a bus. She wears a hat and coat and looks out the bus window. A white man in a suit sits behind her.]

"These are pictures that are commonly associated with civil rights and activism. What is happening in these pictures? Who is the man? What did he do? Who is the woman? What did she do?" Prompt discussion around civil rights and tie into existing classroom knowledge about Martin Luther King Jr., The March on Washington, and Rosa Parks. "In the past, we learned about the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s which focused on gaining rights for black Americans. Today we will learn about how civil rights is an important part of disability history in this country."

Differentiation: Ask students to write or draw on a mini whiteboard what they know about each picture instead of calling out

Transition: "Next we are going to define 'activism' and 'civil rights' and talk about activity we are going to do later today."

# Civil Rights:

The rights of each person in a society, including equality under the law and in employment and the right to vote

Definition of "civil rights" from the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary © Cambridge University Press

"Here is one definition of civil rights." Read from slide 3. "What are ways civil rights has impacted your life?"

Differentiation: Ask students to write or draw on a mini whiteboard what they know about each word instead of calling out

# **Activism:**

Taking action to make social or political change

“Here is one definition of activism.” Read from slide 4. “Do you know any people who are activists today? What do they do?”

## Activity Expectations:

1. **Every person in your group must read every timeline strip**
2. **Decide as a group what your categories will be (at least three)**
3. **Organize each timeline strip into one of the categories**
4. **There are no right answers! Be creative with your categories.**
5. **Categories that do not count:**
  - **Disability**
  - **History**
  - **United States**

**Some examples of categories are...**

“Today we are going to learn about disability history in the United States with an activity using these strips.” Hold up stack of strips. “On each of these strips is a picture and caption, or a description of something or someone important in disability history. In groups, read through each of the strips and sort them into different categories. After, we will share the different categories people came up with.”

Differentiation: Students can work individually, or be divided into groups.

Read slide. “These are the expectations of the activity.”

“I am going to show you an example of how to participate in this activity.” Model with three timeline strips not chosen for students,

## **Discussion:**

- What were your categories and how did you choose them?
- How do those categories compare to other groups?
- What is something that surprised you?
- What is something new you learned?
- How is civil rights an important part of disability history in the United States?

- Read discussion questions from slide once students are done categorizing timeline strips.  
Extension options:
  - Additional strips (20): Choice of 25 different strips spanning 1800s - present day. Choose additional strips to lengthen the lesson.
  - Timeline activity (10): After sorting items into categories and sharing categories with the class, have students attempt to put the strips in order of occurrence. Discuss why students picked their specific order, reveal actual order of occurrence.

# References

- "Civil Rights." Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/civil-rights#dataset-cacd>.
- "[Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Half-Length Portrait, Facing Front]." The Library of Congress, 1 Jan. 1964, [www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c26559/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c26559/)
- Hunt, Tara. "BE031622." Flickr, Yahoo!, 19 Jan. 2006, [www.flickr.com/photos/missrogue/88695404](http://www.flickr.com/photos/missrogue/88695404).
- March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Joachim Prinz 1963. Wikimedia Commons, 1963, [www.commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:March\\_on\\_Washington\\_for\\_Jobs\\_and\\_Freedom,\\_Martin\\_Luther\\_King,\\_Jr.\\_and\\_Joachim\\_Prinz\\_1963.jpg](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:March_on_Washington_for_Jobs_and_Freedom,_Martin_Luther_King,_Jr._and_Joachim_Prinz_1963.jpg)