

Exploring the History of the Disability Rights Movement in the USA

Appropriate for Grades 7-12

Time: Two 60 minute lessons

Rationale: This lesson is designed to give students some background information on the disability rights movement in the United States and help them understand that the fight for equal rights is far from over. Students have undoubtedly seen that many marginalized groups continue to fight for their rights, with people with disabilities being just one of those groups. It's important that those who are fighting for equal rights have allies to fight alongside them. Providing students a brief history of the movement will allow them to not only become friends and includers, but become aspiring allies of their friends and family members with disabilities.

Materials:

[Reading Passage](#) (11th grade reading level)

[Mystery Date Sheet](#)

[Blank Timeline Cards](#) (Optional)

[Google Slides Template](#) (Optional)

Materials and Recommended Modifications for Diverse Learners:




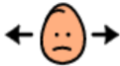
- [Journal Reflection Visual Supports](#)
- [Additional Methods of Reflection](#)

If you feel the reading passage is at too advanced a reading level for students to comprehend independently, consider the following modifications:

- 1) Read the text together as a class. Invite students to read it over once independently, then read together and discuss key points to ensure all students' comprehension.
- 2) Organize students into groups where one group has all students who would benefit from additional reading support. Invite all groups to read the passage either independently or as a group with some discussion. A teacher should join the group in need of support to facilitate the reading and discussion to ensure all students' comprehension.

Advanced Preparation: Print the timeline cards. It will be helpful to pre-read the events on the timeline due to the sensitive nature of some of the events. The other advanced preparation will be dependent on your grade level and how you plan to have your students complete the timeline activity. Read the lesson carefully to determine what material you will need printed and prepared.

Keywords/Phrases to Pre-teach

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|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| <p>Ableism</p>  | <p>The belief that a non-disabled life is somehow better or more valuable than a disabled life</p> | <p>Discrimination</p> | <p><u>Ableism</u> is discrimination against people with disabilities.</p> |
| <p>Movement</p>  | <p>A group or groups of people acting as one</p> | <p>Alliance</p> | <p>Many people joined the peace <u>movement</u> because they wanted the war to end.</p> |
| <p>Rights</p>  | <p>Something to which one has a just claim</p> | <p>Privilege</p> | <p>It is my <u>right</u> to vote.</p> |
| <p>Protest</p>  | <p>To express objection to or disagreement with in a planned, organized way</p> | <p>Object Challenge</p> | <p>Thousands of people <u>protested</u> the war/police brutality/racial injustice.</p> |

Lesson Guide

Begin the lesson by reading the passage written about the disability rights movement. Students can read this independently or with a partner*.

*See note about modifications for diverse learners at the top of this document.

After everyone has read the passage, take a few minutes to reflect on it as a whole group. Use the questions below to help guide your discussion.

- The beginning of the passage talks about rights and some documents that were created to protect human rights. What are the benefits of having these documents? What are some challenges that they have posed?
 - *The benefits of the documents are that they explicitly explain what human rights should be upheld and allow for individuals to seek justice if those human rights are violated.*
 - *The challenge with them is that they aren't always easy to uphold, because there are individuals who don't believe or respect them.*
- What political movements do you know of that were started in order to protect the human rights of a group of people?
 - *Abolitionist Movement, Women's Liberation Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter Movement, Disability Rights Movement*
- Have you ever felt like your own human rights have not been protected?
 - *Responses will be individual to this question. This question can be a powerful opportunity for students to open up and connect. Hearing their teachers take this opportunity to share a time that they did not feel their human rights were protected would allow students to feel safe being vulnerable in the classroom. Remember to validate students' responses and thank them for sharing and encourage classmates to do the same.*

The next activity is going to be a deeper look at some of the important events in the Disability Rights Movement in the United States. Make sure you have cut apart the timeline cards so you can hand each student their own card for their event. *There are many additional events that have impacted the disability rights movement. This set of timeline cards does not include all of those events. You can find additional events [here](#). If you'd like to add more events to your set, you can use [this template](#) to add more.*

Using the provided "Mystery Date" sheet, each student will choose a date to write their name under and learn more about. Once all students have chosen a date, you will provide them with a card for their date. Students will be responsible for researching their assigned event and sharing with the class. This is a good opportunity to partner with a librarian, information specialist, or technology instructor to help students select good resources and follow best practices for research.

Choose a method that fits best for your students to share what they have learned.

- Class Google slides deck
 - Have each student/partnership create one slide for their event. You can use [this template](#) to share with students. Compile the slides together to create one presentation for the class.
- Physical Timeline
 - Have students create a small poster outlining the details of their event. Display the posters as a timeline within the classroom.

*See note about modifications for diverse learners at the top of this document.

- Create a Movie Timeline
 - Have each student record a clip sharing about their event. They could use pictures of the event and record a voiceover with details about the event. Once their clip is complete, they can share it with a teacher to compile into one movie detailing events in the disability rights movement.

Journal Reflection:

What are the goals of the disability rights movement? What role can you play in the disability rights movement? Are there other equal rights movements you have heard about or been a part of?

Provide sentence starters if needed, for example-

The disability rights movement is important because...

I can help with the disability rights movement by...

Another equal rights movement I have heard about is...