

# America I AM

## The African American Imprint

Student Activity Sheets and Teacher's Lesson Plans—Grades 5-12



# The Slave Ship

(Grades 5-8)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; historical prints of slave ships (many of these are available on the Internet).

**Objectives:** Students will

- Review the history of the slave trade
- Read vocabulary words and definitions related to the slave ship
- Use vocabulary words to label the parts of the ship
- Discuss the spatial organization of the ship

**Procedure:** Find and display pictures of slave ships. Then open the lesson by asking students to explain what the slave trade was. Explain that, beginning in the 1400s, European trade with African nations, which formerly included gold, ivory, pepper, and other goods, now began to include a number of human beings. Over time, trade in people became far more important than trade in goods. Challenge students to explain why European nations wanted to enslave Africans. Elicit that there was a need for labor to clear wilderness areas and grow marketable crops in European countries' new colonies in the Western Hemisphere. Enslaved Africans were sold in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and North America. About three to five percent of African captives came to British North America.

Africans worked side by side with, and eventually replaced, white indentured servants and enslaved Indians. Neither whites nor Native Americans were available in large enough numbers to clear land and grow crops on large plantations. Indentured whites came to North America in relatively small numbers, and Indian populations were greatly reduced by war and disease. Also, thousands of Indians were sold as slaves to Caribbean plantations.

Distribute worksheets and guide students to complete them. Reinforce content by asking students how the captives were stowed and why. Captives were packed tightly in the crowded hold of the ship to maximize profits for the ship's owner, but at great cost of life. Ask students to explain why netting was necessary. Why did captives try to leap into the sea?

Prisoners sometimes found ways to break their chains, take up weapons such as pieces of wood or iron, and attack their captors. During slave mutinies, seamen took refuge behind the barricado and fired swivel guns at the Africans. Officers retrieved small arms from



*Captive Africans on the slave ship Wildfire in 1860*

the captain's quarters and used these to shoot at the Africans as well. The barricado was a thick wall that usually extended past the ship's railing to overhang the sea. The overhang prevented Africans from climbing around the side to attack the seamen from behind. Some students may know about the *Amistad*, the ship where captives staged a successful slave rebellion, and there may have been others not recorded in history.

**Imprint:** Perhaps the most important fact about the slave ship is what students cannot see in the diagram. Despite suffering and loss, Africans succeeded in bringing with them a treasury of culture. Together, Africans (and later African Americans), Europeans, and Native Americans created a new culture that would become American culture. African culture would powerfully influence the development of American culture over the coming centuries. Music, dance, foodways, story telling, worship practices, artistic vision, agricultural methods, work skills, and other African customs and knowledge shaped American life.

**Additional Activities:** Encourage students to read slave narratives, such as Olaudah Equiano's, that provide details about how Africans were captured, forced onto slave ships, and brought to the Americas. Students may also be interested in seeing a video of the 1997 feature film *Amistad*, in which the legality of slavery is weighed against the American ideal of individual rights.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 2:* Why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies, and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean.

# Who Profits from Slavery?

(Grades 7-9)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; copies of 1830 map of United States included in this package; and art supplies and glue to allow students to create and place pictographs on the map.

**Objectives:** Students will

- Review what a pictograph is
- Construct a series of pictographs
- Read about major products of the American colonies and states
- Place pictographs on a period map to reflect local and regional economies
- Discuss regional profits from slavery

**Procedure:** Begin by asking students what a pictograph is. Elicit that it is a small, symbolic picture of something that can be placed on a map or used in a chart. Distribute worksheets, maps, and art supplies to students. Have them make pictographs of the products listed in the introduction to Activity 1.

Next, ask students which regions of the United States profited from slavery. Some students may assert that the South profited, but others may argue that the North profited as well. To learn specifics, students will read the text on the worksheet. Based on the information in the text, students will begin placing and pasting down their pictographs. Because of the small size of New England states, students should feel free to treat them as a single region, rather trying to paste a number of pictographs into the tiny individual north-eastern states.

Initiate a discussion to reinforce content. Guide students to consider how and why the North's economy benefited from slavery. Much cotton, for example, went to New England mills where it was made into cloth. During the antebellum period, cotton became the nation's largest export by far. In fact, more than three-fourths of the cotton consumed by British mills came from the American South. New York businessmen marketed and shipped the cotton overseas.

New York banking interests also continued to support the slave trade. Slave ships built and outfitted in the U.S. continued sailing to Africa right up to the Civil War. But because it was illegal to import Africans into the U.S. after

1808, the ships often sold their human cargoes in South America or the Caribbean—often Rio de Janeiro or Havana. U.S. law prohibited this as piracy, with a penalty of death, but the law was virtually never enforced—until the government made an example of Captain Nathaniel Gordon, who was hanged in 1862. You can read the story in Soodalter’s *Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader*.

**Imprint:** Guide students to see a central effect: African Americans, as the major labor force of the South, had a powerful shaping influence on the economy of the entire nation. Slavery generated enormous wealth, and the entire nation benefited from it. For this reason, there were strong supporters of slavery, and anti-abolitionists, across the North as well as the South.

**Additional Activity:** Divide students into small groups to investigate how the South changed as it expanded westward. Have individual groups research: how the major slave-grown crops shifted over time; how the slave population changed; how slaves got to new frontier areas like Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas; and what sorts of work enslaved people did in cities, where there were no plantations.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 2:* How the values and institutions of European economic life took root in the colonies, and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas. *Social Studies III, People, Places, & Environments:* Create, interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs.

### Lesson Plan 1

## Slavery’s Influence on American Government

(Grades 9-12)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes, plus homework time or library time for research

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; copies of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States for reference.

**Objectives:** Students will

- Complete research to answer multiple-choice questions
- Discuss the historical facts they discover
- Articulate statements about how the founding fathers envisioned a democracy that included slavery

**Procedure:** Distribute worksheets. You may wish to give them out in advance, allowing students to research answers as homework.

Alternatively, divide questions into chunks, assigning them to teams of students. Send the teams to the school library to find the answers.

Review correct answers with students. Ask students if any of the answers surprised them. Some students may have been unaware that so many leaders of, first, the colonies and, second, the United States were slave owners. Challenge students to analyze what this meant for the structure and laws of the new nation.

As the discussion unfolds, you may want to encourage students to examine the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to see how slavery is reflected in their wording. The Declaration of Independence says, for example, “all men are created equal,” but clearly this did not apply to enslaved people. The Constitution does not mention slavery, but it spells out the compromise between the North and South to allow three-fifths of slaves to be counted for both taxation and representation in Congress. The Bill of Rights says no person can be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. Yet again this did not protect enslaved people. Rather, it protects the slave owner, because slaves were seen in law as property rather than people.

As students discuss the Constitution, you may want to remind them that the three-fifths clause applied to both the North and South, but was tremendously more important to the South. Slavery was dwindling in the North, while the South had a large and profitable slave population.

Ask students to theorize how the founding fathers reconciled their vision of a democracy with slavery. Write students’ statements on the chalkboard, and work with students to reduce and revise so as to end with one sentence about how the creators of the new republic accommodated the deep contradiction of slavery.

**Imprint:** Slavery contorted the founding fathers’ vision of democracy, and this contortion is evident in the early documents and policies of the new nation. But enslaved Africans rebelled against slavery from the beginning. From uprisings on slave ships to the early slave revolts in the colonies to the civil rights struggle of the twentieth century, African Americans would push America to realize the ideal of liberty in an authentic way.

**Additional Activity:** Assign small groups of students to research and report on the ways in which African Americans forced the nation to confront the incompatibility of slavery with the ideals of liberty: the slave revolt on the

*Amistad* and subsequent court case; slave uprisings in the colonies; early petitions for the abolition of slavery; individual slaves’ attempts to escape slavery.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 2:* How the values and institutions of European economic life took root in the colonies, and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas.

### Lesson Plan 2

## Enslaved People Knew How to Grow Rice

(Grades 5-8)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; early prints of rice agriculture

**Objectives:** Students will

- Choose words from a list to complete sentences in a reading passage about preparing rice fields
- Place sentences in order to show how enslaved people grew rice in America
- Discuss how black labor made landowners rich and helped build the foundation of the nation

**Procedure:** Distribute activity sheets and give students time to complete them. Provide pictures of rice cultivation, so the class will be able to interpret the worksheet visually. You may want, in particular, to print out two free Library of Congress images. Go to [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov), then to library catalogs, then to the Prints and Photographs division. Insert titles of prints into the search box:

- *Rice Culture on the Ogeechee*
- *Rice Culture on Cape Fear River*.

Click on the images to enlarge them, and choose a high-resolution version for printing.

Reinforce the worksheet by asking a volunteer to explain in his or her own words the process of growing rice. Point out pictures that illustrate or add information. Extend the discussion by asking students how salt and fresh water might have met and mixed as the tides rose and fell. Salt water was harmful to plants, but enslaved people from the rice-growing areas of Africa knew how to handle the danger. Fresh water tends to float on top of salt water, so workers flooded the fields as the tide came in, by lowering gates just enough to allow fresh water in and keep salt water out. When the fields needed to be drained, the workers opened the gates at low tide, to allow water to run out via deep, wide ditches.



Courtesy Library of Congress

*Ex-slave Johanna Lesley hulls rice with an African-style mortar and pestle.*

Some rice planters, like Henry Laurens of South Carolina, owned several large plantations and literally thousands of enslaved people. Laurens amassed enormous wealth by exporting the rice that came to be called Carolina Gold. At the same time, his workers labored long hours in intolerable conditions. The mortality rate was high, yet enough workers survived to maintain profits. Slavery gave Laurens enough wealth and leisure time to become involved in politics. He served as one of the presidents of the Continental Congresses.

**Imprint:** Rice exports were one of the pillars of the young American economy. Enslaved Africans not only carved plantations out of the wilderness, but also helped build the wealth of a new nation. Because of African workers, George Washington, Henry Laurens, Thomas Jefferson, and others had the education, wealth, and leisure to work out the details of founding a new nation. They also ensured that its Constitution and laws would protect

slavery. In a horrific irony, the fruits of enslaved people's labor kept them enslaved.

**Additional Activities:** Ask students to find pictures of African mortars and pestles as well as fanner baskets—the tools Africans made to separate the husks from the rice. Find a fanner basket or use another flat, shallow container to allow students to practice winnowing rice.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 2:* How the values and institutions of European economic life took root in the colonies, and how slavery reshaped European and African life in the Americas.

## Lesson Plan 2

# Graphing Economic Trends

(Grades 7-9)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; art supplies for making graphs; maps of West Africa and coastal South Carolina and Georgia

**Objectives:** Students will

- Interpret two sets of data about rice exports and prices
- Visually represent the data in a bar graph and a line graph
- Explain the meaning of the graphs in terms of economic wealth

**Procedure:** Begin by asking if any students know how rice is grown. Broaden student understanding by explaining rice culture in the colonies. Show students the Senegambia, the area of West Africa lying between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers. Africans from this area, as well as coastal areas, had long and deep experience in growing rice. Because of the value of this skill, American landowners from coastal South Carolina and Georgia asked slave ship captains to bring African rice farmers to the Charleston harbor. About 40% of enslaved Africans brought to rice growing areas of the U.S. in the 1700s came from rice areas of Africa. Challenge students to theorize about the similarity of the areas in Africa where workers came from and the areas in North America where they grew rice.

The low, swampy land where fresh and salt water met and the tides caused streams to rise and fall was a prime rice growing area. But American planters needed vast numbers of workers to complete a major engineering

feat—converting raw land into rice fields complete with canals and embankments so that the planted areas could be alternately flooded and drained. The work would impose horrific conditions, and whites would not do such dangerous work. Enslaved workers converted 150,000 acres of swampland into valuable agricultural land. In this massive effort, many workers died, but the landowners got rich.

Moreover, on these large plantations, black culture broadly influenced whites. White families were isolated, surrounded by hundreds of enslaved people. Black nurses raised white children, and white and black children played together. Only when whites were old enough to leave for boarding school did this childhood influence lessen. Black music and singing provided entertainment for the white family and its guests. A black cook provided the food they ate. Often, whites learned black dances and participated in African-style dance competitions. Black culture was pervasive and influential.

Take a look at the charts on the worksheet. Challenge students to see how the exports rose over time, along with the per-pound sales price of the product. Then have students represent this information visually by creating a bar graph of rice exports and a line graph of rising prices.

**Imprint:** Help students gain insight into the outcome, not only for planters, but also for the regional and national economy. Enslaved people built the agricultural foundation of the region and made their owners wealthy. Rice planters like Henry Laurens and Elias Ball had several plantations and thousands of slaves. They lived lives of leisure, purchased education for themselves and their family, and became involved in politics. This allowed them to shape the laws of their region and nation, assuring that slavery would be protected.

**Additional Activity:** Students may be interested in reading selections from Edward Ball's *Slaves in the Family*. Ball descended from wealthy rice planters in South Carolina, and in the book he researches his ancestors' lives. He also locates African American relatives descended from the Ball family. The book is illustrated with photos of Ball's ancestors, both white and black.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 2:* Assess the contribution of enslaved and free Africans to economic development in different regions of the American colonies. *Mathematics 10:* Construct, read, and interpret tables, charts, and graphs.

## South Carolina's Black Population

(Grades 9-12)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; art supplies to construct bar graph

**Objectives:** Students will

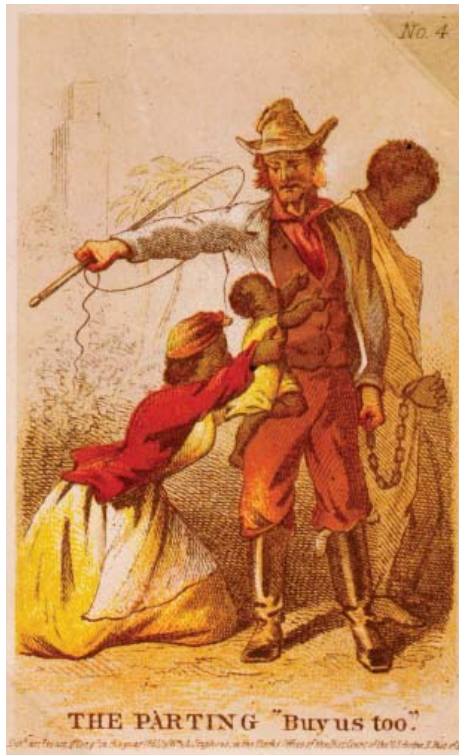
- Construct a double bar graph of black and white population growth in South Carolina
- Theorize about the effects of a black majority
- Identify statements about South Carolina's black majority as true or false

**Procedure:** After students read the text at the top of the activity sheet, challenge them to create a double bar graph to visually represent the growth of black and white population in South Carolina from 1790 through 1860. In comparing the two sets of bars, what can students conclude? Guide volunteers to state that both black and white population grew significantly, but black population grew more rapidly than white.

Ask students to theorize about the potential outcomes of a population in which enslaved people outnumbered free people. Students may say that the free people would fear slave rebellions, and would make harsh laws to control the enslaved people. This is what happened in South Carolina. In some cases, slave owners' fears were realized. The violent Stono revolt (1739) and the aborted Vesey revolt (1822) both occurred in South Carolina. At least 64 people died in the Stono rebellion. Plans for the Vesey revolt were discovered, and 35 people were hanged for conspiracy. Over time, slaves were so oppressed that some plotted rebellion, and this led to even harsher measures to control slaves.

Slave owners felt that free blacks were a dangerous influence on enslaved people, so the state passed a law that a slave could only be freed by an owner's successful petition of both houses of the South Carolina state legislature.

The black majority also meant strong influence from black culture. Remind students that whites on large plantations were isolated amidst large numbers of enslaved people. Black nurses cared for white children, and black and white children played together. Black singing and music entertained the white family and their guests. Often, whites watched black dances and even joined in the dancing as black fiddlers played. Black cooks prepared the dishes whites ate. Black culture permeated the lives of whites in South Carolina.



*This print shows the separation of a family in a sale of enslaved people.*

In addition to lowcountry rice planters, South Carolina had a later elite class—upcountry cotton planters. Cotton wore out the soil quickly, however, and beginning in the 1830s thousands of planters were leaving the state for new land in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas. Some took their slaves with them. Many slaves, especially women and children, were sold to traders who marched them to the new territories in long coffles.

Have students finish the worksheet by completing the true and false exercise. All the statements are true except #2 and #7. Ask students to explain why these statements cannot be true (South Carolina prohibited education for enslaved people, and therefore did not have a large population of highly educated African Americans. The state was also primarily agricultural and so did not have large numbers of manufacturing workers.)

**Imprint:** Through building rice plantations, African Americans established the economic foundation of the region. There was also a substantial cultural imprint. Rice culture was different from other agricultural work in that rice planters used the task system. Every worker had an assignment and was left alone to complete it. Although the work was long and demanding, and the widespread absenteeism of owners was generally negative, the isolation had one good outcome—black people in South Carolina were able to keep more of their African heritage alive than enslaved people in other regions. People maintained,

for example, a worship tradition including a circle dance and singing, called the Ring Shout. They retained their own speech, called Gullah. They also influenced foodways and architecture.

**Additional Activity:** Divide students into groups to learn more about the African skills and customs that enslaved people brought to America. Your students may be interested in the Ring Shout, methods of rice growing, foodways, Gullah speech, yard and grave decoration, and storytelling.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 2:* Trace the arrival of Africans in the European colonies in the 17th century and the rapid increase of slave importation in the 18th century. Assess the contribution of enslaved and free Africans to economic development in different regions of the American colonies. *Mathematics 10:* Construct and draw inferences from charts, tables, and graphs that summarize data from real-world situations.

## Lesson Plan 3

### American Democracy in the Making

(Grades 5-8)

**Time:** Homework or library time to complete activity sheet; 30-60 minutes in class

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; a copy of the U.S. Constitution with its amendments

**Objectives:** Students will

- Research voting rights in the United States
- Complete a chart about voting
- Compare and contrast voting rights in 1789 with today's voting rights

**Procedure:** As homework or library work, have students research voting rights in 1789 and in the present. Have students refer to the Amendments to the Constitution to determine which ones expanded voting rights for particular groups. In class, ask students how important voting rights are in a democracy. Elicit that voting is crucial to fair treatment for all, because only through voting can groups and individuals sway the law and policy making of the nation. Allow students to volunteer their research findings, as recorded on Activity 3.

In 1789, few people actually voted. Two states had not yet ratified the Constitution and so did not submit votes. New York had not decided who would serve as electors, and so did not submit votes, either. In several other states, the legislature and/or governor voted on behalf of their populations, so no individuals voted.

People voted in only four states, but most voters were white men who owned land. Some free black men voted, but many of these lost the right to vote in later years.

Take a moment to remind students that free black people were here from early times. Free black people came to North America with the Spanish explorers, and some of the first enslaved people to arrive (in the 1600s and early 1700s) gained their freedom over time.

Most women could not vote (a few who owned property voted for a time in New Jersey), because national women's suffrage did not come until 1920 with the 19th amendment to the Constitution. Young people under 21 did not get the right to vote until 1971 with the 26th amendment. White men without land generally got the right to vote as states granted universal white male suffrage in the first quarter of the 19th century.

African Americans got the right to vote with the 15th amendment to the Constitution. Many black men were able to vote until the turn of the century. By the 1910s, however, southern blacks were losing the vote because of literacy tests, poll taxes, and fear of retaliation from whites. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 ensured that black people across the South would have the right to vote.

Many Native Americans did not receive citizenship—with the right to vote—until 1924, and others were not able to vote in their states until the 1950s or even 1960s. Mexican Americans were granted citizenship in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican War. However, only people who owned property and could read and speak English could vote. White supremacy groups instilled fear to keep people from voting. Not until 1975 were all Mexican Americans able to vote.

Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Chinese Americans could not vote until the 1940s. Many Japanese Americans could not vote until the 1950s.

Today, there are still citizens who are barred from voting. Wherever polling places do not have proper ramps, disabled parking, or Braille ballots, people with disabilities cannot vote. In all but two states, people who have had felony convictions are permanently or temporarily prohibited from voting.

Guide students to see that democracy in 1789 was very limited, for extraordinarily few people had voting rights. Some limitations still exist today, but matters are much improved.

**Imprint:** Throughout African American history, black people have pushed hard for citizenship rights, especially voting rights. People who used protest methods to call attention to their lack of rights were sometimes the victims of violence, like Fannie Lou Hamer. When African Americans won a victory with the 1965 Voting Rights Act, they brought fuller citizenship to all ethnic groups across the country.

**Additional Activity:** Ask students to find out what resulted from enhanced voting rights in 1965. Did Congress change? Did state legislatures change? How did the nation's laws change? Have students share their findings in class.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 4:* The extension, restriction, and reorganization of political democracy after 1800. *Social Studies X, Civic Ideals and Practices:* Evaluate the degree to which public policies and citizen behaviors reflect or foster the stated ideals of a democratic republican form of government.

### Lesson Plan 3

## Black Men Help Fight the American Revolution

(Grades 7-9)

**Time:** Research time at home or in library; two class periods

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; examples of various types of news stories

**Objectives:** Each student will

- Review notes about African American military service in the American Revolution
- Identify examples of various types of news stories
- Write an article in a news genre

**Procedure:** After reviewing the worksheet in class, explain to students that their interests are likely to lead them toward four kinds of stories: the exposé, which uses careful investigation and compiled evidence to expose corruption; the feature story, which uses human interest content, story telling, and point of view, to add depth to a news story; the profile, which tells a story and gives background information about an individual; the breaking story, which provides news as it happens. List these story types on the chalkboard, distribute examples, and help students compare and contrast the stories' characteristics.

If students have not already learned how to write a basic news story, they can find guidance at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/news/index.htm>. Emphasize that getting the facts is the first priority for any news writer. A good

writer must then report the facts without bias. Discuss bias with students. How can a reader spot bias, and how can a reporter avoid it? Class members should begin researching their topics in the library or on the Internet right away. They will need to evaluate their sources and take good notes. As they write, they should remember that news stories are written very concisely, with active verbs, interesting quotes, and short paragraphs. They should avoid long-winded sentences with abstract words. The first paragraph is very important—it must capture the reader's interest and begin providing information.

Find out what students learned from the reporter's notes on the worksheet. Guide the class to see the complexity of black military service in the American Revolution. Across the American South, about 100,000 enslaved people ran away from their masters in the chaos created by the war. Some sought freedom without enlisting in either army. Some were found and taken back to their owners. Others served on the British or American side in hopes of earning their freedom. Free blacks served as well, perhaps in hopes that the new republic, if it survived, would offer freedom and equal treatment to all its people, including enslaved Africans.

Some black soldiers died in combat or of one of the diseases that ravaged army camps. At the end of the war, about 3,000 black Loyalists were taken to Nova Scotia with their families by the departing British army. The soldiers had been promised their freedom and a piece of good land. The land, however, was thin and rocky, and many families never received it. Starvation set in, and eventually a number of people moved to Sierra Leone in hopes of a better life.

Many black soldiers on the American side suffered greatly as well. They sickened, starved, and froze in camps like Valley Forge. They died in combat. Few enslaved men received the freedom they had been promised. Both the British and the Patriot sides defrauded black soldiers.

Some black soldiers had exciting as well as dangerous experiences. James Armistead spied on the British, who thought they had enlisted him to spy on the Americans. Colonel Tye, who fought for the British, commanded a group of men, led guerilla raids, took prisoners, and freed slaves. He died from tetanus after he was wounded in the wrist.

After your students have begun their research and chosen a news genre in which to write, allow them to share preliminary findings in class, get input from classmates, and proceed to final copy.

**Imprint:** African Americans helped fight for American independence, and helped make possible a new nation with ideals of democracy. When black soldiers fought for the British and liberated slaves through combat, they exposed the dark side of the Patriots' vision of freedom.

**Additional Activity:** Appoint an editorial staff, and allow students to put their articles together in a newspaper issue. Encourage the class to name the newspaper and create or find pictures, maps, and other visuals to illustrate it.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 3:* Demonstrate the fundamental contradictions between the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the realities of chattel slavery. Compare and explain the different roles and perspectives in the war [American Revolution] of men and women, including white settlers, free and enslaved African Americans, and Native Americans. *Language Arts 7:* Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.



*Selling a freedman to pay a fine, Monticello, Florida*

Courtesy Library of Congress

### Lesson Plan 3

## Is Lord Dunmore a War Criminal?

(Grades 9-12)

**Time:** 2-4 class periods

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; copies of Lord's Dunmore's Proclamation; furniture for a courtroom—a judge's desk, witness and jury chairs, and prosecution and defense tables.

**Objectives:** Students will

- Read Lord Dunmore's Proclamation
- Identify a crime he may have committed
- Conduct a trial to determine guilt

**Procedure:** Both the Continental Army and the British Army took advantage of black soldiers, breaking promises and defrauding many men. This activity will take a look at the specifics of Lord Dunmore's promises and the outcomes for black men and their families.

Begin the lesson by asking students what Lord Dunmore's Proclamation actually says. List the most important statements on the chalkboard. Which statement affects African Americans and their owners? What did the statement mean for each group, and why were people so passionate in their reactions?

Divide students into teams to research the immediate results of the document, as well as the long-term outcomes for black men who flocked to Lord Dunmore's regiment, often bringing their families. Take part of another class period to summarize findings. Discuss black families' experiences in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone. What happened to soldiers and families who were not taken on board ships departing for Nova Scotia? Where did they go?

After the students have discussed the facts of the story, move onto the trial experience. Appoint students to positions on the defense team, prosecution team, or jury. Name one student to portray Lord Dunmore, and another to serve as judge. Reserve other class members until the prosecution and defense teams determine whom they wish to call as witnesses. The remaining students will portray those historical characters, and if need be, may each portray more than one.

Remind students how critically important it is for them to know the history. They must investigate in detail not only Dunmore's role in the war, but also many of the events and people he affected. Warn students that, no matter what role they play, they may not ask or answer questions without strict adherence to historical truth. They may be called upon to show their sources at any time.

Reorganize the furniture in the room to simulate a courtroom. Allow students to conduct the trial over several class periods. Demand historical truth throughout the questioning and testimony. When the jury brings in the verdict, ask them to explain what led them to their decision.

Give students latitude for creativity, but make this a graded exercise with a written commentary on each student's contribution to the class experience.

**Imprint:** In responding to Lord Dunmore, enslaved Africans sent a message about the meaning of freedom. Patriots said they were fighting for freedom, but their concept of freedom included slavery for black men and women. Dunmore and British military commanders, on the other hand, used what was essentially a bait and switch tactic to gain enslaved Africans as soldiers for the Loyalist side. Amid the chaos and injustice, some black families gained freedom, but all called attention through their action to the contradictions of democracy with slavery.

**Additional Activity:** If there are enough class members, appoint one or two to be reporters, writing news stories about the trial. If you have a student who can draw well, ask him/her to be a sketch artist for the duration of the trial.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 3:* Compare and explain the different roles and perspectives in the war of men and women, including white settlers, free and enslaved African Americans, and Native Americans. Compare the reasons why many white men and women and most African American and Native Americans remained loyal to the British. *Theatre 2:* Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions.

#### Lesson Plan 4

## Visiting an Exhibit: America I AM: The African American Imprint

(All Grade Levels)

**Time:** 3-6 hours of the school day

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; note taking materials

**Objectives:** Each student will

- Select a historical figure as a subject
- Conduct historical research to learn more about the subject
- Find further information, especially contextual information, in the exhibit space
- Present information in a well structured essay

**Procedure:** Have each student select a subject from the list on the activity sheet. You may wish to allow students library time for research. They should continue the fact-finding during homework time away from school.

Set age-appropriate paper length and content for your students. Younger students may benefit from submitting a short essay, while many older students will be capable of producing a multi-media documentary with music, footage, and original creative material like poems or drawings.

Review students' note cards midway through the project and give each writer suggestions for improvement. In class, show students how to create footnotes. Provide examples, and then send students to the chalkboard to create their own footnotes for one or two sources.

This research assignment will benefit students even if your class cannot visit the exhibit. If you do take students to see the exhibit, make sure they have completed substantial research in advance. Encourage them to carry note-taking supplies and focus on contextual information. Back in class, ask students to share what they learned.

When students submit final projects, allow a few to read their papers or show their multi-media pieces to the class.

**Imprint:** Ask students to respond to imprint in their projects. How did the subject make a lasting impact?

**Additional Activity:** Give students a few minutes of class time to talk about their projects. What did they do that they were especially proud of? What would they change, if they could do their projects over again?

**National Standards:** *Social Studies VI: Power, Authority, & Governance:* how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance, so the learner can examine the rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to the general welfare. *Language Arts 8:* Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

#### Lesson Plan 5

## African Americans Begin to Leave the Rural South

(Grades 5-8)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets

**Objectives:** Students will

- Examine historical photos of rural and city life
- Compare and contrast settings in the photos
- Make observations about why black families moved from farms to urban areas

**Procedure:** Distribute activity sheets and ask students to examine the photos carefully. Point out that three of the pictures depict the life of the sharecropper. Encourage volunteers to describe what sharecropping is.

Elicit that sharecroppers lived on a landlord's land and raised crops. At harvest time, the sharecropper paid rent out of the money earned from the crops. In many southern areas, the crop was cotton.

Sharecropping was a harsh system in which the landlord was able to depend upon a fixed amount of rent every year, while the sharecropper did the work and took all the risk. Sometimes, when the weather was bad, or insects like the boll weevil attacked the plants, the farmer and his family had no wages at the end of the year, or actually owed money to the landlord.

Some landlords abused the system by paying the farmer in scrip, substitute money that could be spent only at the landlord's store, where prices were high. Scrip kept farming families poor and kept them from moving off the land.

After a series of bad farming years, with drought, flood, the boll weevil, and falling prices of cotton, African American sharecropping families moved away from the rural South in large numbers. Many had worked hard and lived near starvation for years.

Often, however, landowners and local government tried to keep black workers from leaving. Ticket agents at train stations tried to talk travelers out of their decisions. Sheriffs pulled black families off northbound trains and arrested labor agents who were recruiting blacks for jobs in the North. Towns banned black newspapers that urged sharecroppers to move to the cities. Families had to plan their departures carefully.

Photos on the activity sheet tell a visual story about why the families left and what awaited them in the cities. Ask students what they observe about living conditions for the families and individuals shown. Elicit that, in the first picture, the children's home has no electricity (see kerosene lamp, iron without a cord). The fireplace seems to be both the furnace and the place of cooking. The oilcloth tacked to the wall contains an alphabet and suggests the parents are teaching the children to read—perhaps because there is no school available. The walls were once covered with paper, probably newspaper, to keep out the wind, but this is now mostly worn away.

In another picture, a family is seen in a city apartment. There is a modern range, running



*Tintype of African American Civil War soldier. African Americans have fought in every American war.*

Courtesy Library of Congress

water, smooth wall covering, a radiator for heat, and an expensive doll carriage for the little girl. However, the space is very crowded. There is a bed in the kitchen, possessions are stored in boxes and bins under the range, and at least three people (see elbow at far left) are using this tiny room as living space.

The photo of cotton picking shows children as well as adults in the field. Many children, in fact, had to stay home from school at various times in the year, to help with farm tasks. What is not shown is even more important—farm families earned very little and had no medical insurance or other benefits. In the companion picture, a worker is putting together airplane parts. He is earning a definite wage he can count on, and this security is what sharecropping could not give farm families.

The school photos show the contrasts between rural and city schools for black children. In rural areas, black students often attended run down schools with older, dilapidated books and inadequate supplies. In cities, children had a better chance at a good school, in a substantial building, with adequate supplies and books. The children here are well dressed, too, suggesting that their families have good incomes.

Sharecropper families moved from the rural South to cities—especially cities in the North and West—to find better jobs with better pay, better homes, and better schools for their children. They also wanted the chance to vote, and safety from racial violence.

**Imprint:** As they moved to cities, especially cities in the North and West, black families took black culture with them, changing the cities significantly. African Americans created newspapers, formed sports teams, brought a rich tradition of music such as blues and jazz, founded new churches, and slowly found a political voice. By 1960, most American cities had large black populations. African Americans, once mainly a rural people, had become largely urban.

**Additional Activity:** Allow students computer time to find more images of African Americans in the rural South and the urban North. Guide class members to begin with the vast archives of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs website, but also to use the search engine to find other sources. Have students share findings in class and make observations about picture content.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 6:* Trace the migration of people from farm to city and their adjustment to urban life. Account for employment in different regions of the country as affected by gender, race, ethnicity, and skill. Analyze the role of new laws and the



*Morris Brown College baseball team, ca. 1899.*

federal judiciary in instituting racial inequality and in disfranchising various racial groups. *Economics 14:* Entrepreneurs and other sellers incur losses when buyers do not purchase the products they sell at prices high enough to cover the costs of production.

## Lesson Plan 5

# African Americans Move Into Cities

(Grades 7-9)

**Time:** 30-50 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets

**Objectives:** Students will

- Consider potentially correct ways of connecting sentence parts
- Test answers through research and discussion
- Finalize answers

**Procedure:** Distribute activity sheets and allow students to guess correct ways of connecting sentence parts. Break students into small groups and challenge them to test their guesses by consulting books and websites, in either the classroom or the school library.

Broaden student understanding through discussion. When African Americans began moving off the land in the South, they were responding to a series of devastating events—flood, drought, the boll weevil's destruction of crops, and falling cotton prices. Many families moved to cities in the South, where they felt less cultural shock and still gained many advantages. Rising manufacturing offered jobs, and during World War I, there were additional job opportunities. African Americans, once excluded from good jobs, were now more welcome.

Similar opportunities beckoned in northern cities, especially Chicago and New York. Black families were segregated into neighborhoods like Bronzeville and Harlem, but made them into centers of artistic production as well as havens of shared culture. Black neighborhoods also grew in cities like Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, and Los Angeles.

As they moved into these cities, African Americans reshaped them. They played black music like blues and jazz in new clubs, founded new churches including Muslim and Pentecostal denominations, published black newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and expanded black pride through sports teams and great athletes. The Negro Leagues, for example, played games for



Group image of participants at the 1929 NAACP convention.

large audiences throughout the time period (1890s-1950s) when Major League Baseball excluded black players.

Harlem and other black neighborhoods became artistic centers, where nightclubs featured superb black musicians, and black dances like the Shimmy, Black Bottom, Charleston, Lindy Hop, Jitterbug, and Tap. Writers like Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, and Lorraine Hansberry wrote new poetry, novels, and drama. Concert singers and dancers, actors, and visual artists produced new art. Among these were Marian Anderson, Katherine Dunham, Paul Robeson, Aaron Douglass, Augusta Savage, James Van Der Zee, and a host of others. Share period dance and music with your students through film. Two good examples are *The Spirit Moves: A History of Black Social Dance on Film, 1900-1986* (2008) and the documentary *The Story of Jazz (Masters of American Music)* (2002).

African Americans also began to find a strong political voice through gaining the right to vote and speaking through editorials in black newspapers. Black people were often excluded from defense jobs, until leader A. Philip Randolph threatened to lead a massive protest against job discrimination in Washington DC. Fearing for the U.S. image in other nations, the federal government agreed to end discriminatory hiring.

During World War II, the *Pittsburgh Courier* began the Double V Campaign for victory overseas against America's enemies and victory at home against segregation and discrimination. Other black papers joined the campaign. Women wore the Double V symbol in their clothing and hairstyles. Celebrities sympathized, and their statements were featured in print. Cities had brought people together in enough numbers to gain the tools to strengthen their voice.

After students have discussed enough of this history to verify answers, have the class finalize the worksheets and turn them in.

**Imprint:** Moving to cities in the South, North, and West, African Americans changed the culture of those cities through dramatic new contributions. Black men and women also consolidated a political voice and began to make economic changes.

**Additional Activity:** Encourage students to find pictures of black art and artists during the period. Have a small group report on the Negro Renaissance.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 6:* Trace the migration of people from farm to city and their adjustment to urban life. Trace patterns of immigrant settlement in different regions of the country and how new immigrants helped produce a composite American culture that transcended group boundaries.

## Lesson Plan 5

### Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

(Grades 9-12)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes; homework time for students to read *A Raisin in the Sun*.

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; copies of the play

**Objectives:** Students will

- Read Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*
- Answer study questions on Activity 5
- Discuss answers in class

**Procedure:** After students read the play, ask them about the context of the story. African Americans faced rigid housing discrimination in most cities until the 1960s. Black families could not move to other urban neighborhoods or the suburbs because of neighborhood covenants and the threat of violence. Guide students to look up the meaning of covenants—restrictions on whom owners may sell property to.



Courtesy Library of Congress

Students may also be interested in finding out how Lorraine Hansberry's family experienced housing discrimination. Hansberry grew up in Woodlawn on the south side of Chicago until the family moved into a white neighborhood and her father, a real estate broker, filed a lawsuit against a racial covenant that restricted him from purchasing a home there. He won his case, *Hansberry v. Lee*, in the Supreme Court, but his family faced a racist mob and experienced what Lorraine Hansberry called a "hellishly hostile white neighborhood." In their discussion of this situation, students should distinguish between the challenges of court battles and the reality of mob violence. Legal victories did not always translate to good living conditions.

Hansberry was a successful writer who was able to make her voice heard. *A Raisin in the Sun* opened on Broadway in 1959, running for 530 performances, and Hansberry became the first black playwright to win the New York Drama Critics award.

Shift the discussion to literary themes. What is Hansberry's central theme? How do her characters help her state the theme? Do any of the characters' names catch students' attention? Why, for example, might Hansberry have chosen the names Younger and Beneatha? What values are central to the play? How does Mama keep the focus on the most important value, and how does Walter grow?

**Imprint:** African American writers and artists used their art to illuminate black experiences with discrimination and racial violence. Their work helped broaden American art in many genres, and also called attention to social and economic injustice.

**Additional Activity:** Students may enjoy watching the 1961 film version of the play, with Sidney Poitier as Walter Lee, Claudia McNeil as Lena, Ruby Dee as Ruth, and Diana Sands as Beneatha.

**National Standards: Language Arts 2:** Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

### Lesson Plan 6

## African Americans Lose Civil Rights

(Grades 5-8)

**Time:** Two class periods, or one class period plus homework time

**Materials:** Student activity sheets; art supplies

**Objectives:** Students will

- Discuss citizenship gains at the end of Reconstruction
- List major injustices experienced by black people during the Jim Crow era
- Create a 1930s civil rights poster to stir members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to take action

**Procedure:** Ask students to review black gains during Reconstruction and black losses after President Hayes withdrew federal troops from the South in 1877. Hayes, a Republican, lost the popular vote when he ran for the presidency in 1876, but gained a one-vote edge in the Electoral College. The race was too close for comfort, and the parties squared off to fight for control of the office. Hayes, however, won the support of southern Democrats in a backroom deal in which he promised to end Reconstruction and withdraw

federal troops in exchange for their votes. The deal was sealed, and so was the fate of black people across the South.

White supremacy groups resurged, and large numbers of black people—who had voted, run for office, and exercised democratic rights for a decade—were beaten and lynched in large numbers. New and unconstitutional laws imposed poll taxes and literacy tests as gateways to voting, as well as a system of segregation. Courts supported these laws, and law enforcement looked the other way as mob violence forced black people into subservience. The system of segregation and discrimination took the name Jim Crow, after a stereotypical black character of the minstrel stage.

Send a student to the chalkboard to list what class members say they want Congress to do. They might consider voting rights legislation, an anti-lynching law, more federal troops sent to the South to oversee voting and stop racial violence, and other measures. Students might also request anti-segregation laws, an end to the discriminatory hiring that kept African Americans in menial jobs at extremely low pay, and more accessible education.

Once the list is complete, ask students each to choose one or two outcomes to focus on and create a slogan to gain attention for their requests. They should then plan drawings or find existing images they can use. When this preparation is completed, give students class or homework time to execute their designs in finished posters.

**Imprint:** During this nadir in race relations, African Americans endured ugly and sometimes fatal experiences. Yet they responded in positive ways. Leaders founded new organizations to fight against discrimination, like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the National Council of Negro Women. These organizations made a strong impact, gradually chipping away at the foundations of Jim Crow. Educator and spokesperson Booker T. Washington, often at odds with writer and leader W.E.B. Du Bois, tried to work within the system, supporting education and negotiation. Black families began to leave the rural South. Black arts protested the suffering of African Americans. All these efforts made a long-term impact on the culture and policies of the nation.

**Additional Activity:** Allow students class time to talk about the artistic and content decisions they made with their posters. How might these influence the lawmakers?

**National Standards:** *History, Era 6:* Analyze the arguments and methods by which various minority groups sought to acquire equal rights and opportunities guaranteed in the nation's charter documents. *Social Studies X, Civil Ideals and Practices:* Explain actions citizens can take to influence public policy decisions. *Visual Arts:* Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

## Lesson Plan 6

# Court Cases Challenge Laws

(Grades 7-9)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets

**Objectives:** Students will

- List dates of court decisions
- Summarize outcomes of court decisions
- Create a timeline of court decisions

**Procedure:** Guide students to discuss court cases. Through early court cases, many black citizenship rights were taken away, and through later court decisions unjust laws were struck down. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chose to fight unconstitutional laws over several decades. NAACP leaders made a decision to attack segregation systematically, first at the higher education level and then in public schools. To read more about this, see John Fleming's *The Lengthening Shadow of Slavery*. The legal assault, along with direct protest during the modern Civil Rights Movement, finally spelled the beginning of the end for segregation and racial discrimination in the United States.

*Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) was brought by Homer Plessy, a racially mixed Creole living in New Orleans. He wanted to challenge the racial segregation on trains, and was arrested for sitting in a white car. The Supreme Court decided the case against Plessy and allowed states to segregate public accommodations by claiming that they were “separate but equal.”

*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) was a consolidation of several cases brought by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to fight school segregation. The cases led to the Supreme Court's declaration that “separate but equal” was unconstitutional because in reality separate was hardly ever equal. The court required that schools be desegregated.

*Berea College v. Kentucky* (1908) led to a ruling against Berea College, a racially integrated school. Kentucky was able to enforce its law prohibiting schools from teaching both black and white students.

*Murray v. Maryland* (1935) was a case argued by Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall, who were NAACP litigators. University of Maryland School of Law had refused to admit Donald Gaines Murray because he was African American. The Maryland Court of Appeals ruled against the law school, requiring it to admit Murray.

*Smith v. Allwright* (1944) was a case brought by Lonnie E. Smith, a Texan. He had been prevented from voting in a Democratic primary in Texas. The Democratic Party of Texas required that all voters in its primaries be white, and Texas law allowed the party rule to stand. The Supreme Court ruled in Smith's favor, saying his rights had been violated, and the all-white primaries were ended.

*Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) concerned housing discrimination. A black family named Shelley purchased a house in St. Louis, but the house had a restrictive covenant that prohibited its sale to African Americans. A lower court ruled against the family, but the Supreme Court said the covenant violated the Shelley family's rights. Thurgood Marshall and Loren Miller argued the case.

*Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) was brought by Herman Marion Sweatt and the NAACP when he was refused admission to University of Texas School of Law because of his race. When he filed the lawsuit, the university set up a separate law school for him, with a small number of teachers and a small library. The Texas state constitution prohibited integrated education. Sweatt pursued the case, and the Supreme Court ruled in his favor, saying the new law school could not be equal to the main law school and Sweatt's chances at a good career in law were jeopardized.

*Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857) was brought by an enslaved man in St. Louis. Scott had been taken by his owner to both a free state and a free territory for extended periods, and Scott sued for his freedom. The Supreme Court ruled against Scott, saying that he was not a U.S. citizen and could not sue in court. The court added that black men and women were not and could never be citizens, whether or not they were enslaved. This ruling later

necessitated the 14th amendment to the Constitution. The court also electrified the nation by saying that slaveholders could take their slave property with them to any U.S. territory without losing ownership.

*Williams v. Mississippi* (1898) challenged the state's right to set up literacy tests and poll taxes that kept black people from voting. The Supreme Court upheld the state's right to impose these barriers to voting.

*Chambers v. Florida* (1940) was argued by Thurgood Marshall on behalf of four men convicted of murder. The Supreme Court ruled that the men's confessions had been coerced and their rights violated. Evidence showed that the men had been forced to confess.

*Cumming v. Board of Education of Richmond County* (1899) was a class action lawsuit brought by black taxpayers in Georgia, who were paying school taxes but whose children were prohibited from using the all-white high schools of their county. The Supreme Court said the Board of Education did not have the funds to educate everyone and had the right to give preference to white children.

*Muir v. Louisville, Park Theatrical Association* (1954) was filed when James Muir, a black citizen in Louisville, tried to purchase a ticket for a theatrical production in a city-owned park and was refused. The Supreme Court ruled in Muir's favor, saying that his rights were violated. This ruling effectively ended segregation in public accommodations.

When students have completed their worksheets, have each class member arrange the court cases along a timeline. Ask students what the timelines show, and elicit that a cluster of early court cases ruled against citizenship rights for African Americans, but later cases reaffirmed those citizenship rights. Over a century, the struggle for legal acknowledgement of black citizenship had come full circle.

**Imprint:** Despite the failure of Reconstruction and the power of Jim Crow, African American-initiated court cases slowly gained legal acknowledgement of black citizenship. With funding from the NAACP, lawyers like Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall were winning cases against unjust laws.

**Additional Activity:** Have students make small flags with the names of the court cases and then place the flags on a map of the United States. What can students conclude about the geographic distribution of the cases? Why did NAACP and other attorneys focus mostly on cases in the South? (Segregation was law in the South, but customary in the North.)

**National Standards:** *History, Era 6:* Analyze the role of new laws and the federal judiciary in instituting racial inequality and in disfranchising various racial groups. Analyze the arguments and methods by which various minority groups sought to acquire equal rights and opportunities guaranteed in the nation's charter documents. Explain the origins of the postwar Civil Rights Movement and the role of the NAACP in the legal assault on segregation.

## Lesson Plan 6

# The Three Most Important Events for African Americans

(Grades 9-12)

**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Materials:** Student activity sheets

**Objectives:** Students will

- Nominate events for a list of the three most important events for African Americans since 1900
- Discuss the importance of each nominated event
- Vote to select three finalist events

**Procedure:** Give students time to complete the worksheet. After students have written their answers, begin consolidating the events students chose in a list on the chalkboard. Allow volunteers to present arguments in support of particular events. Can students identify critically important outcomes flowing from key events? Conclude the discussion by allowing students to vote. Use the votes to determine the three most important events. List them on the chalkboard along with the most important reasons for each choice.

**Imprint and Additional Activity:** Ask students to identify the imprint of each of the events—the way each event changed the nation. After the imprints of the three leading events have been debated, summarize each imprint in a sentence on the chalkboard.

**National Standards:** *History, Era 9:* Explain the origins of the postwar Civil Rights Movement and the role of the NAACP in the legal assault on segregation. Evaluate the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of various African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans, as well as the disabled, in the quest for civil rights and equal opportunities.



Participants in the 1963 civil rights march on Washington, DC.



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In this 1864 print of the Emancipation Proclamation, there are vignettes of slavery and freedom, along with an image of rebuilding the South at the bottom.