

LESSON PLAN: Using First Amendment Rights to Further Equality and Freedom
By Kyle Hickman

<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand how First Amendment rights can be used to further the causes of equality and freedom• examine how specific individuals in history have used their first amendment rights to further their goals <p>STUDENT MATERIALS</p> <p>Handout A: Frederick Douglass's speech from July 5, 1852</p> <p>Handout B: Internet research guide for <i>Separate Is Not Equal</i> website</p> <p>Handout C: Two articles from the <i>Richmond Afro-American</i> in 1951</p> <p>Handout D: Guided questions for video clip from <i>The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow</i></p> <p>Handout E: Article from the <i>Chicago Tribune</i></p> <p>GRADE LEVEL / TIME</p> <p>One or two 50 minute high school classes</p>	<p>KEY QUESTION:</p> <p>How can people use their First Amendment rights to further the goals of equality and freedom for all?</p> <p>WARM-UP (5-10 minutes)</p> <p>Distribute Handout A: Frederick Douglass's speech from July 5, 1852 and have students read portions of the speech and answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why did Douglass choose to deliver his speech on July 5th and not July 4th?• Which First Amendment right does Douglass use to address issues of inequality?• According to Douglass, what rights are being denied to him? <p>ACTIVITY I (25-30 minutes)</p> <p>Distribute Handout B: Internet research guide for <i>Separate Is Not Equal</i> website and have students answer the questions as they explore the sight. When everyone is finished, conduct a large group discussion using the questions on the handout.</p> <p>ACTIVITY II (15-20 minutes)</p> <p>Distribute Handout C: Two articles from the <i>Richmond Afro-American</i> in 1951 and have students fill out a document analysis worksheet as they read (a good example can be found at: http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/).</p> <p>Conduct a large group discussion to answer the question: According to these newspaper articles, which First Amendment rights were used to combat inequality and segregation?</p> <p>ACTIVITY III (15-20 minutes)</p> <p>Distribute Handout D: Guided questions for video clip from <i>The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow</i>, which can be accessed at: http://www.teachersdomain.org/. When everyone is finished, conduct a large group discussion using the questions on the handout.</p> <p>ACTIVITY IV (15-20 minutes)</p> <p>Distribute Handout E: Article from the <i>Chicago Tribune</i> and have students fill out a document analysis worksheet as they read.</p> <p>Conduct a large group discussion to answer the questions: How were the issues that the student faced in her school similar and different from those that Barbara Johns and her classmates faced nearly 60 years earlier? Which First Amendment rights did the student exercise in her struggle to correct the wrongs she witnessed in her school?</p>
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What to the Slave is the Fourth of July? - Frederick Douglass, July 5, 1852

“Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today?

What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions! Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For who is there so cold, that a nation’s sympathy could not warm him? Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would not thankfully acknowledge such priceless benefits? Who so stolid and selfish, that would not give his voice to swell the hallelujahs of a nation’s jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man. In a case like that, the dumb might eloquently speak, and the “lame man leap as an hart.”

But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation whose crimes, lowering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrecoverable ruin! I can to-day take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people!”

“What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.”

Excerpt from <http://www.mit.edu/~thistle/v12/2/douglass.html>, retrieved online 1/27/2011

WEBQUEST: SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL: BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Go to this website: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/4-five/farmville-virginia-1.html>.

Five Communities Change the Nation: Research Sheet (adapted from website)

Brown v. Board of Education was one of five cases that the Supreme Court ruled on in its May 17, 1954, decision that declared school segregation illegal. Your task is to gather as much information as possible about the community that you have been assigned.

Directions: Answer the questions as you explore the website. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. Your community is Farmville, Virginia. What kind of a community did this case take place in?

2. The name of the court case was:
 - a. Who was/were the plaintiff(s)?

 - b. Who was/were the defendant(s)?

 - c. What was the complaint?

 - d. What lawyers tried the case?

 - e. What court heard the case? What was the decision?

3. What local community members and institutions were important to this case? Explain their importance. See what biographical information you can find about each person.



SCHOOL BOARD'S INACTION HIT

High School Pupils Stage Strike for New Building

By B.T. Gillespie

FARMVILLE, Va.--Aroused over the repeated refusal of the local School Board to give them a new school building with modern facilities, the entire student body of 450 pupils of the Robert R. Moton High School here went on strike this week.

The group promised not to return to classes until the School Board gives them a signed statement that a new building will be begun this summer. Moton High serves both Farmville and Prince Edward County.

The pupils charge that the present buildings are temporary, were erected to be used for only two years and that they now leak, cannot be heated properly, that the walls are nothing more than cardboard, the building is a fire hazard because of overcrowded conditions.

They further charge that they do not have anything to resemble a decent cafeteria, no showers for the athletic teams, nor do they have hot water or soap in the building with which to wash their hands.

Adding to the list of grievances, the spokesman said that two of the four water fountains in the main building are out of order.

Strike Orderly Thus Far

The walkout took place early Tuesday morning, after the pupils had attended an assembly in the small auditorium...large enough for only a fraction of the enrollment.

The strike has been orderly. The pupils say they have the support of their parents, at which the school officials have expressed great concern.

The present plant of the R.R. Moton School consists of one brick and three temporary frame structures, covered with tar paper.

These buildings, according to informed sources, were erected when building material was scarce, with the promise that they would only be used for two years, at which time a new building would be erected.

The pupils say that the buildings leak badly and several of the pupils become sick, because the buildings can not be heated properly.

Set Up Organization

This reporter entered the main building around 2:30 p.m. The only sign of life around the school was a few of the faculty members sitting gathered in small groups.

Principal Jones was non-committal. He said he preferred not to discuss the strike whatsoever.

In the basement of the First Baptist Church, where the committee selected by the student body to represent it had set up headquarters, the writer questioned the pupils at length. There was no particular person chairman of the group and they asked that no names be published.

Said one member of the group: "We are going to hold out for either a new building or admittance to the school now being used for the white pupils."

Patience Worn Thin

"We have been made promise after promise and our patience has worn thin. We are prepared to sit this out until the board gives us a signed statement that school construction will be begun this summer, and we want to see the deed for the land they have purchased for that purpose."

The group assured us that their parents were behind them and they were acting on their own and not at the suggestion of the faculty and principal.

Commenting on a conference they had with their superintendent, T.J. McIlwine, they quoted him as saying that he did not care if they didn't go back to classes--that he was only concerned about the \$100 per day it was costing the city while they were on strike.

The School Board, through the superintendent, charges that the walkout took place even while negotiations were going on for a site for a new building.

Citizens Back Pupils

According to their account, a new R.R. Moton School, costing \$800,000 with facilities to care for 700 pupils, was "to be built soon."

In describing the deplorable conditions of their school, the pupils, in contrast, pointed out the modern building for white pupils with modern facilities.

Citizens here are behind the pupils in their fight and say this is the first time in Farmville history that high school pupils have taken such a bold stand.

The steering committee, representing the student body, said, "We refuse to settle for a school any less modern than the present white school and we are young enough to wait a long time to resume our studies."

NAACP, P-TA Aroused

Lester Banks of the State NAACP told a meeting of the school's Parent-Teacher Association last Thursday night that even the guarantee of a new school for colored pupils would not guarantee equality with the white schools of the city.

"What a colored school would be given," Banks charged, "would not be one iota" of what would be given a white school. "If it were build brick for brick, cement for cement, the prestige could not equal that of a white school because of discrimination," he declared.

Members of the School Board, all white, had been invited to the P-TA meeting, but not a single one of them attended.

School authorities have announced the cancellation of all scheduled athletic contests until the strike of the pupils has been settled.

It is reported that Superintendent of Schools McLaine has instructed the principal to send letters to all parents and guardians requiring them to return the children to school.

Under Virginia laws parents and guardians can be prosecuted for failure of their children or wards under 16 years of age to attend school.

Under the law children under 16 who refuse to attend school are classed as "neglected children." The law does not allude to the conditions of the buildings as an excuse for failure to attend.

According to a spokesman for the pupils, promised to return to school, Monday, but to walk out again, unless assured ow a definite date for the beginning of a new school for them.



'NO TOMS CAN STOP US' Pupil Lashes Out at School Principal

FARMVILLE, Va.--The little girl with the sun kissed-colored skin stood quietly looking over citizens of Farmville packed into the church, with her bright eyes sharply focused on the gathering and then she began speaking in slow, deliberate tones:

"Don't let Mr. Charlie, Mr. Tommy, or Mr. Pervall, stop you from backing us. We are depending on you."

A thunderous ovation rang throughout the church. The 16-year-old girl stood firm, lines of determination set in the corners of her delicate mouth.

Talking About Ex-Principal

She was Barbara Johns, 11th grade pupil at the Robert R. Moton School, who was spokesman for the striking pupils.

Her remarks were directed against Joseph B. Pervall, once principal of the Moton High School, who had taken the floor after Spottswood Robinson, 3rd, NAACP lawyer, had instructed the striking pupils to return to class, telling them that a petition had been filed asking the ending of racial segregation in Prince Edward County schools.

At the conclusion of Mr. Robinson's remarks, Mr. Pervall had arisen and said:

"I was under the impression that the pupils were striking for a new building. You are pulling a heavy load, Mr.

Robinson, coming down here to a country town like Farmville and trying to take it over on a non-segregated basis."

The audience was temporarily stunned.

Banks Takes Up Cudgels

Oliver W. Hill, Richmond attorney also on the NAACP legal staff, rose to answer Mr. Pervall, but Mr. Robinson restrained him saying, "Let me answer him."

Before Mr. Robinson could say too much, W. Lester Banks, executive secretary, Virginia State Conference NAACP, took over.

"Let me take you back to last Thursday night (when the P-TA met)," Mr. Banks said, "when it was agreed that the only way to get constitutional rights was to do away with segregational schools."

"Mr. Pervall, I'm still talking to you," Mr. Banks reminded the ex-principal.

"At last week's meeting," Mr. Banks added, "the citizens voted 100 per cent that the NAACP intervene and if asked again tonight, I am sure the reaction would be the same."

And even as his words faded out, applause came from all corners.

Reassured on Integration

When the applause died down, Mr. Robinson resumed the floor and for reassurance as to the NAACP's stand asked the gathering, "Are non-segregated schools what you want?"

And again there was tremendous positive response.

"I don't think we have brought something novel and of a radical manner to Prince Edward County," Mr. Robinson said, "for what you overlook is that this is something the people had been ready for a long time ago."

Miss Johns simply put the wants of the striking children and what they protested against right into the laps of the grownups.

The high school junior stated that at Moton they have no showers, no gymnasium, only four drinking fountains, two of which are not working; four basins in the girls' restroom, two out of order; and an inadequate heating system.

"Back the pupils up in getting a non-segregated school," she pleaded to the parents.

When the girl finished, there were tears in some eyes, as these grownups looked at this courageous pupil, unafraid to speak her mind.

Pervall Explains Remarks

Mr. Pervall stood up and told the audience that he wanted them to have a fine school and that he was concerned about the interests and wants of the pupils.

He stated that he had not meant that the schools should not be integrated, but that he thought the whole purpose of the strike was for the acquisition of a new school building.

"You know I have the interest of the school at heart," he said, "for I was principal there for 13 years."

From Moton, Mr. Pervall went to Cumberland County, where he left a little over a year ago. He is now principal of a school in Blackstone, Va. He is a native Richmonder.

Pastor Takes Over

The last person to speak was the Rev. L.F. Griffin, pastor of the church. he began, "Mr. Pervall has a right to speak..." and continued:

"Anybody who would not back these children after they stepped out on a limb--is not a man. Anybody who won't fight against racial prejudice--is not a man."

"And to those of you who are here to take the news back to Mr. Charlie, take it--only carry the tale straight."

The 1000 persons that attended the meeting lifted their voices and in inspirationed tones the words of "America" filled the church. Outside, there was a blast of thunder and a spark of lightning as May cut capers with a thunderstorm.

And when the meeting was all over, the people of Little Farmville went home contented, knowing that there was

hope that there were better days ahead for their children of school age.

The returning pupils at the Moton High School, which sets in the fork of the road on Route 15, some 70 miles from Richmond and less than 60 from Lynchburg, felt that the two-week sacrifice they had made might be the beginning of a campaign that would put to an end an era of unequal and segregated schools.

VIDEO CLIP: from *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions giving as many details and examples as possible. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

1. How was the black community and black public schools in Farmville, Virginia characterized in the late 1940s and early 1950s?
2. According to John Watson, why could black students no longer get a quality education?
3. What were the conditions like at the black public school compared to the white public school?
4. According to Hodges Brown, where did teachers sometimes teach classes?
5. Which First Amendment right did John Lancaster say he and others used in an attempt to get better facilities?
6. For Barbara Johns, what motivated her to agitate for change? What method did Barbara Johns and her classmates use to press for change?
7. How did school officials try to stop the student protests?
8. Why was Barbara Johns sent away to live in Alabama?

chicagotribune.com

Letter from the heart lands teen in first lady's box for tonight's speech

[By Howard Witt](#)

Tribune correspondent

9:34 PM CST, February 24, 2009

HOUSTON—I met Ty'Sheoma Bethea, the teenage girl invited by President Barack Obama to sit beside the First Lady during his speech to Congress on Tuesday night, quite by accident a couple of weeks ago.

I was visiting the J.V. Martin Junior High School in Dillon, S.C., a decrepit facility where the roof leaks and winter classroom temperatures hover in the 50s, to learn about how one impoverished school district was hoping for some financial help from the stimulus bill then being debated in Congress.

I knocked on the door of a rusting mobile-classroom trailer where an 8th-grade social studies class was under way, and the teacher graciously allowed me to interrupt his lesson. When I asked the students whether they knew anything about Congress and the fiercely contested stimulus bill, Ty'Sheoma was one of the few students to raise her hand.

"All I know is that the Congress might not agree that we need help and they might deny the president the money he needs to help us," the 14-year-old explained.

Later that evening, after our exchange in her classroom, Ty'Sheoma decided to walk to the town library. She sat down in front of a computer and typed out a single-spaced letter which began, "Dear Congress of the United States."

In rough but passionate prose, the teenager beseeched the faceless representatives to help her school.

"People are starting to see my school as an hopeless, uneducated school which we are not," Ty'Sheoma wrote. "We finally want to prove to the world that we have an chance in life just like other schools and we can feel good about what we are doing because of the conditions we are in now we can not succeed in anything."

The next morning, Feb. 11, Ty'Sheoma gave her letter to Amanda Burnette, the principal of the school. Burnette promptly scanned it and e-mailed copies to South Carolina's representatives in Congress, as well as the White House. I featured Ty'Sheoma's letter in the story I wrote that night about the J.V.

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Martin school.

Obama was already personally familiar with the dire conditions at the school, which was built in 1896 and has been partially condemned. He visited J.V. Martin twice during the presidential campaign and mentioned it again during his first presidential news conference.

Ty'Sheoma's letter made its way to the president's desk, and last week, he invited the teenager and her mother to sit in First Lady Michelle Obama's mezzanine box in the House of Representatives to watch the president's first address to Congress.

Ty'sheoma smiled as the president read out some of her words from her letter.

"We are just students trying to become lawyers, doctors, congressmen like yourself and one day president, so we can make a change to not just the state of South Carolina but also the world," Obama said. "We are not quitters."

At that, the audience rose to give the teenager a standing ovation.

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Websites:

Frederick Douglass

The People Speak - Democracy is not a spectator sport

<http://www.history.com/shows/the-people-speak/videos/playlists/web-extras#the-meaning-of-july-4th-for-the-negro>

Barbara Johns

Smithsonian - Separate Is Not Equal: Brown v. Board of Education

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/4-five/farmville-virginia-1.html>

Massive Resistance Documents (Virginia Center for Digital History)

<http://www.vahistory.org/massive.resistance/documents.html> (<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/>)

PBS: The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_people_johns.html

Separate But Unequal: How a Student-Led Protest Helped Change the Nation

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1894713>

“Remembering Barbara Johns”

<http://www3.hsc.edu/news/archive/moton.html>

teachers' domain

<http://www.teachersdomain.org/>

Presented as part of a lesson plan demonstration by Kyle Hickman

Saturday, February 5, 2011

McCormick Foundation Civics Program Teacher Seminar: Freedom for All