



SPHERE Fostering Civil Discourse and Diverse Viewpoints for Every Classroom

Civil Rights Act of 1964: Quote, Meaning, Context, and Significance

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Learning Objectives

- Analyze the Civil Rights Act of 1964, understanding its historical context, key provisions, and significance in the fight against discrimination.
- Explore the use of language and rhetoric in historical documents.
- Use technology to create a conversation with others in the class.



Essential Questions

- How do we define who we are?
- What is culture and how do we express it?
- What topics/ideas are significant to your lives?
- What topics are relevant and necessary to human relationships?

Media

- Civil Rights Act of 1964 for students to skim and look through either online or via physical copies
- Pen or pencil
- The assignment:
 - If you are using the Google doc link, students will all need access to the Google document. Make duplicates of the quotes as needed based on class size.
 - If you would like students to do the assignment individually, the quotes will need to be passed out and cut up for discussion and reflection later. Copies as needed based on class size.

Class Example

Quote is located here.	
Meaning	Interpret the quote: This could mean looking up words that are not understood, looking for connotations, or summarizing or paraphrasing the quote given.
Context	Students will need to look up the history of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (a brief summary has been given in the lesson plan if you would like to share the information with students). Students should also look at the whole document to see what occurs before and after the quote to help figure out its full definition.
Significance	Why is this quote significant to the work as a whole? The time period in which it was written? To us today? This will require inferences on the part of the student.

Your Name

“All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.”

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

“No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

“It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.”

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"No person shall (a) withhold, deny, or attempt to withhold or deny, or deprive or attempt to deprive any person of any right or privilege secured by section 2000a or 2000a-1 of this title."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the 'Civil Rights Act of 1964.'"

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"No person should be put twice in jeopardy under the laws of the United States for the same act or omission. For this reason, an acquittal or conviction in a prosecution for a specific crime under the laws of the United States shall bar a proceeding for criminal contempt, which is based upon the same act or omission and which arises under the provisions of this Act."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"It shall be the function of the Service to provide assistance to communities and persons therein in resolving disputes, disagreements, or difficulties relating to discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin which impair the rights of persons in such communities under the Constitution or laws of the United States or which affect or may affect interstate commerce."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"Whenever an action has been commenced in any court of the United States seeking relief from the denial of equal protection of the laws under the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution on account of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, the Attorney General for or in the name of the United States may intervene in such action upon timely application if the Attorney General certifies that the case is of general public importance."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"No person shall . . . (b) intimidate, threaten, or coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person with the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by section 2000a or 2000a-1 of this title."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"The President shall, as soon as feasible after July 2, 1964, convene one or more conferences for the purpose of enabling the leaders of groups whose members will be affected by this subchapter to become familiar with the rights afforded and obligations imposed by its provisions, and for the purpose of making plans which will result in the fair and effective administration of this subchapter when all of its provisions become effective."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Your Name

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Meaning	
Context	
Significance	

Part I: Warm-Up: Reflecting on Civil Rights Quotes

Prepare by choosing one of the quotes below, reading it, and understanding how it is important to the civil rights movement. Be prepared to share your analysis with the class. Ask students to briefly sum up the civil rights movement and then introduce the quotes. Ask students to read and reflect individually on the meaning and significance of each quote. Encourage them to consider the emotions and motivations behind the words. They should first write in their notebooks and then take a few minutes to share their findings with the class.

- “We shall overcome.” (lyrics to a song from the civil rights movement)
- “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” (“I Have a Dream” speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- “Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.” (Alabama Governor George Wallace, 1963)
- “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” (Declaration of Independence)
- “Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” (“Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Part II: The Activity

DIRECTIONS IF USING GOOGLE DOC

- Each class should have a space and section created solely for them. Each student should claim a quote by putting their name where it says “Your Name.”
- Give each student time to look at their given quote, read it, and analyze it according to the meaning, contexts, and significance.
- Once students are finished, give them time to read and reflect on other quotes on the document before having a class discussion about the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

DIRECTIONS IF USING PAPER COPY

- Each student should be given one of the quotes to work with. A suggestion: Have two copies of each quote so that students can partner up after doing their own work with the quote.
- Give each student time to work on their own quote and then time to work with a partner to continue work on the quotes.
- Students should be put in groups of 3 to 4 to discuss the quotes before having a class discussion about the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Have a class discussion about the meaning, context, and significance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 using the quotes as jumping off places for the discussion.

Part III: Reflection

Have students get out their notebooks and answer any or all of the questions below:

- What was the overall impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?
- How has the language and rhetoric in the act contributed to its importance?

Closing the Lesson

These can be used at the end of class to bring the topics of today's lessons together:

- What is the significance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for all of us today?

Common Core State Standards

- **RI.9-10.1/RI.11-12.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RI.9-10.2/RI.11-12.2:** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.
- **W.9-10.1/W.11-12.1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **W.9-10.2/W.11-12.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately.
- **SL.9-10.1/SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- **L.9-10.4/L.11-12.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **RI.9-10.7/RI.11-12.7:** Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.