

# Mapping the Movement for Freedom

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## *Overview:*

This lesson will focus on the grassroots network created by SNCC and local people in 1964 to achieve the goal of voting, economic, and educational rights. The lesson aims to highlight the strategies used by local people to coordinate a statewide movement for freedom, assisted by college students from the North. The idea of movement galvanized by local people was a central tenet of the NEH course texts. Students will understand the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi was not one singular event, but a series of coordinated and overlapping efforts that collectively led to important changes at the local, state, and national levels. By researching a series of individuals and events, students will learn that change occurred in Mississippi because of the widespread movement of courageous individuals who faced tremendous risks in pursuit of freedom and equality. The content students will learn will come primarily from Mississippi's historical markers dedicated to civil rights trailblazers in Mississippi Throughout the NEH Freedom Summer: 60 Years Later Institute, historical markers were a focal point of our place-based learning. The markers help to establish vital community history and preserve the efforts of local people. Ideally, this will reinforce that history happens everywhere, including in their communities.

*Audience:* Grades 9-12

## *Objectives:*

- Students will work in small groups to analyze historical markers to understand how local history is preserved and shared. Students should research at least 10 events and individuals, although they are encouraged to include more as an extension activity. The required individuals and events include:
  - Unita Blackwell
  - CC Bryant
  - Council of Federated Organizations (COFO)
  - Medgar Evers
  - Fannie Lou Hamer
  - Dorie and Joyce Ladner
  - Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Convention
  - Amzie Moore
  - Natchez NAACP Headquarters
  - Rust College

- To understand the scale, students will map out locations throughout Mississippi where local people took a stand for civil rights. The students will use historical markers from the Mississippi Freedom Trail Markers. When reading each marker, students will need to identify:
  - who was involved
  - the city/county where the event happened
  - what strategy was used
  - the effect of the event on the movement for rights and freedom in Mississippi
- To show causation, students should select one historical marker event that preceded and indirectly/directly led to Freedom Summer (i.e. Jackson Municipal Library Sit-In or James Meredith's efforts to integrate the University of Mississippi) and one historical marker event that occurred as a result of Freedom Summer (i.e. Stokely Carmichael's Black Power Speech or the Natchez Night Riders)
- Finally, as a culminating activity, student groups can work together to write a historical marker dedicated to Freedom Summer following the template of the historical markers they analyzed during the lesson.

*Documents:*

**Primary Sources Used:**

- Excerpt of Bob Moses' Freedom Summer Announcement Speech, 1964 (featured in the Eyes on the Prize episode, "Mississippi-Is This America?"): <https://www.pbs.org/video/eyes-on-the-prize-mississippi-is-this-america-freedom-summer/>
- Fannie Lou Hamer/Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party "[Is This America?](#)" video clip.

**Secondary Sources Used:**

- Mississippi Historical Markers website/Civil Rights Markers in Mississippi website <https://www.mississippimarkers.com/civil-rights.html>
- Mississippi Civil Rights Freedom Trail: <https://civilrightstrail.com/state/mississippi/> <https://visitmississippi.org/civilrights/>

*Materials:*

- Mississippi County Map
- Mississippi Map to label with the locations of historical markers
- Graphic Organizer of choice for analyzing the historical markers
- Markers or colored pencils to label the map
- laptops/internet to research historical markers
- Mapping the Movement Historical Marker Activity assignment handout for students
- <https://www.mississippimarkers.com/civil-rights.html>

- Blank Historical Marker Template:  
<https://www.nps.gov/articles/plaques.htm>  
Google Slides version  
(<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CFTsgADA5W8TAbYuHMjReGdDnn03lBRTA2xrzGdstBU/edit?usp=sharing>)

*Preparation:*

- Watch the Bob Moses announcement and brainstorm in table groups: *Why is Bob Moses helping plan Freedom Summer and/or what event(s) led to this decision? Ask the student to make a prediction: What effect will this movement have on race relations in Mississippi?*
- Immediately after, play the Fannie Lou Hamer “Is This America?” clip. Ask students: *How does this video help us better understand the challenges occurring in Mississippi? What strategy of resistance is shown in this video? How is this different from the approach used by Bob Moses?*
- Share prior knowledge:
  1. Students will help generate a list of events before 1964 that might explain why Bob Moses helped organize Freedom Summer. Ask students: *How did you learn what you know about civil rights history in Mississippi: textbooks, movies, or documentaries?*
  2. Ask students how local communities share their local history. Where can they find out about local history in their communities?
- Present a map of places where civil rights-related events occurred (<https://civilrightstrail.com/state/mississippi/>). Click on one of the featured landmarks and highlight what a historical marker looks like.  
*Ask students: What kind of events should go on a historical marker? Have they ever noticed a historical marker in their communities?*

*Procedure:*

- Introduce the assignment to research the history of civil rights in Mississippi using the Freedom Trail historical markers. Preview the Mississippi Freedom Trail website and show students how to access information by reading the historical markers.
- Organize students into groups of 5. Provide the graphic organizer and a list of individuals and events they must include. Let students know they can also select additional events or individuals to research.
- Explain that students will label the events on a map of Mississippi counties.
- Independent research: Give students 20 minutes to conduct research for their group using links for the Mississippi Freedom Trail.
- Have students label the map to show the sites where the events happened and where historical markers are located.

- Ask students to show their historical thinking skills by selecting one historical marker that shows an event that happened before or led to Freedom Summer and one that shows an impact of Freedom Summer. (5 minutes)
- Check for understanding: Ask students “What events or individuals do you think had the greatest impact on this movement for civil rights in Mississippi.”
- Have students fill in a blank historical marker template with a tribute to Freedom Summer or the local people they learned about during this lesson.