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Dresden Middle School
Dresden, TN

Unit: Civil Rights Movement/Black History Month

Lesson Title: Martin Luther King Jr./Battle of Black Americans in Tennessee

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Era: 9 Post War United States (1945-1970)

Essential Question to Vital Theme: How was the black American looked upon and treated in Tennessee during this particular time period?

Lesson Time: 3 days out of unit

Curriculum Standards:

5.1.3 – Recognize personal, religious, and national celebrations of various American cultures (i.e., Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

5.5.7 – Interpret a primary reading sample

5.6.2 – Use tools of social science inquiry such as surveys, statistics, maps, and documents.

5.6.1 – Recognize people who contributed to reform in Tennessee and American society (Martin Luther King Jr.)

Technology used and how:

Computer – Used to locate and share the “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech delivered on April 3, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee by Martin Luther King Jr.

Smartboard and Projector – Used to display photos of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and other protests in Memphis, TN.

Overhead projector – Used to show the primary source documents of the investigators note concerning the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and a letter to the mayor concerning the possible appointment of a black American to the Board of John Gaston Hospital from an angry citizen.

Materials:

Overhead papers of original documents.

Photos of protests during the Civil Rights Movement of this era and region.

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Activity Description:

This lesson is being built on the prior knowledge and discussion of discrimination of black Americans in the South. This lesson will focus on Martin Luther King Jr.’s visits to Memphis in support of their efforts and his public appearances.

Day 1 of Lesson: We will begin by reviewing how black Americans were treated in the work place, social events, and neighborhoods throughout the South.

- * Students will get to read the letter to the Mayor of Memphis together on the overhead. Document found in Volunteer Voices Digital Collection of Civil Rights documents.
- * Students will get to SOAP this document.
 - S Subject – Civil Rights/Rights or respect of black Americans
 - O Occasion – Possible appointment of a black American to a hospital board.
 - A Audience – Mayor of Memphis
 - P Purpose – To inform the mayor of the writer’s dissatisfaction with this and the shared opinion of others in the community.
- * Students will then listen to King’s speech given on April 3, 1968 the day before his death. (I’ve Been to the Mountaintop), this would be found at American Rhetoric, Top 100 Speeches: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkivebeentothemountaintop.htm>
- * Students WILL NOT be told that he will be assassinated the next day. Students will be asked to write a paragraph telling what they thought King was trying to communicate to his audience. This will be read in class the following day. (This opens floor to class discussion and each student’s opinion on this matter.)

Day 2 of Lesson:

- * Students will begin class by reading their paragraph in class and answering questions to support their opinion.
- * Students will then read the investigators short report and view photos of the assassination site and photos of the funeral. Document is found in the Volunteer Voices Digital Collection. Photos and caption are found at the Cleveland Public Library web site. (www.cpl.org)
- * Students will then get to view photo of the march celebrating the first Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1986. Photo and story found at: <http://www.mtsu.edu/~vvesper/king.html#Words>

Day 3 of Lesson:

- * Students will again listen to King’s last speech and then have classroom discussion on whether or not they think he would have changed anything about the speech or did he end his life the way he would have wanted.

Assessment:

- * Students completion of the paragraph and their participation in class discussion.