

Lesson Title: White Citizen’s Council and Black Resistance

Suggested Length: Two 60-minute class periods

Lesson Background:

These lessons are intended to be a part of a unit on Reconstruction with the overarching question of the unit being whether Reconstruction was a success or failure. Earlier in the unit, the students explore the definition of Reconstruction, the goals of Reconstruction, the effects of Presidential Reconstruction, and the progress of Radical Reconstruction. After exploring these short-term successes, students will explore the extensive efforts made by groups in the South to impede and erase that progress, including the Ku Klux Klan. The lesson immediately before this two-lesson installment discusses the goals and actions of the KKK, providing a foundation for comparison when exploring the White Citizens’ Council. This is a great case test of the impacts of Reconstruction since the majority of the formation of social hierarchies in the Mississippi Delta took place after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. After comparing the actions of the KKK and White Citizens’ Council, students will explore resistance movements in the black community as a way of combating the myth of black passivity and celebrating black joy.

Day 1 – A Comparative Analysis of the White Citizen’s Council and the Ku Klux Klan in the Mississippi Delta

Essential Questions:

Where did the White Citizens’ Council form and how did their goals compare to those of the Ku Klux Klan?

In your opinion, which white supremacist organization posed a larger threat to the rights of people of color in the Mississippi Delta — the Ku Klux Klan or the Citizens Council? Explain!

Objectives:

Students will be able to explain the goal of the Citizens Council

Students will be able to compare the discriminatory practices of the Ku Klux Klan and the Citizens Council

Students will be able to critique a primary source document

Instructional Plan:

- *Do Now: What does discrimination look like? Please record your thoughts in your notebook, including specific examples where appropriate. Feel free to use our learning from yesterday to inform your response!*
 - *Think-Pair-Share: Turn to a partner and share your answer, as well as listening to theirs.*
 - *After sharing with a partner, the class will work together to develop a list of examples of discrimination*

- *Background of the White Citizens' Council: Students will take one slide of notes to provide some context on the formation of the White Citizens' Council, including the fact that their roots are in Indianola, Mississippi, that their goal is to assert white supremacy through diplomatic and legal avenues, and a quote representing their overall goal as an organization.*
- *Primary Source Document Analysis: The White Citizens Councils: Respectable Means for Unrespectable Ends by David Halberstam*
 - *Students will receive a digital copy of an article, which was printed in October of 1956. The article can be found here: <https://www.commentary.org/articles/david-halberstam/the-white-citizens-councilsrespectable-means-for-unrespectable-ends/>*
 - *NOTE: Article should be scaffolded according to grade level and lexile levels.*
 - *As students read, they will respond to the following reflection question.*
 - *What is the historical context of this article? Who is the author? What is their purpose in writing this article?*
 - *What is the goal of the Citizens Council according to the author?*
 - *Approximately how many members were in the Citizens Council in Mississippi in 1956 according to the author?*
 - *What direct actions has the Citizens Council during this time period?*
 - *Select one phrase from the article that best summarizes the author's message about the Citizens Council.*
 - *Select one word from the article that best summarized the author's message.*
 - *In what ways are the goals and actions of the Citizens Council similar to the goals of the Ku Klux Klan? In what ways do they differ? List at least one of each.*
 - *In your opinion, which white supremacist organization posed a larger threat to the rights of people of color in the Mississippi Delta — the Ku Klux Klan or the Citizens Council? Explain!*
 - *In your opinion, how credible is this article? Rate on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, and justify your answer.*
 - *Class will review the questions to ensure student comprehension.*
 - *Extra attention will be given to the question of similarities/differences and credibility of the article.*
 - *Every student will share their phrase and word that they selected.*
 - *Class will create a venn diagram of similarities and differences*
 - *PollEverywhere Vote: In your opinion, which white supremacist organization posed a larger threat to the rights of people of color in the Mississippi Delta — the Ku Klux Klan or the Citizens Council? Explain!*
 - *Students will vote in a live poll to express which group they feel threatened the rights of people of color more during this time.*
 - *NOTE: Teacher will emphasize that both threatened peoples' rights*
 - *Class will debate and argue for their respective sides*
 - *Slide of notes on effects of Citizens Council, including pertinent legislation and the downturn in black voter registration in the Mississippi Delta.*
- *Closure: Please respond to the two questions of the day, as well as rating your comprehension of today's lesson on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest*

Day 2 – Black Resistance to the Citizens Council

Essential Questions:

What key figures or organization formed within black community in the Mississippi Delta to actively resist the actions of the White Citizen's Council throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s? Provide two examples.

Did black resistance movements have enough governmental and societal support to successfully combat the discrimination of the Ku Klux Klan and the Citizens Council?

Objectives

Students will be able to match black resistance movements to discriminatory practices of the Ku Klux Klan and Citizens Council

Students will be able to investigate black resistance movements

Students will be able to argue whether Reconstruction was a long-term success or failure

Instructional Plan:

- *Do Now: Class will watch Fannie Lou Hamer's Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Speech from the 1964 DNC Convention (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqBzy3ATja0>)*
 - *Students will write down 3 emotions evoked by the testimony as they watch*
 - *Class will debrief; each student will share one emotion that they wrote down.*
- *Discussion of Fannie Lou Hamer and the lack of black passivity in light of actions by the Ku Klux Klan and Citizens Council*
- *Heroes of Black Resistance – In Their Own Words: Students will get to explore the actions of several key figures or movements that emerged in response to the discriminatory actions discussed over the past two days. The students will be provided with a list of names/organizations. They will select two, for which they will be asked to do background research, diagnose which discriminatory practices they were trying to combat, watch/listen to/read a speech of theirs, and identify three emotions. Students will be provided several options exclusively from the Mississippi Delta.*
 - *Medgar Evers: <https://loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/medgar-evers-and-jackson-movement.html>*
 - *Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party: https://www.crmvet.org/docs/640800_mfdp_speech.pdf*
 - *Mississippi Freedom Summer: https://www.crmvet.org/docs/64_map_ms_fs.pdf*
 - *Delta State Sit-In: <https://www.deltastate.edu/dei/voices-from-the-sit-in/>*
 - *Charles McLaurin: <https://snccdigital.org/people/charles-mclaurin/>*
 - *Freedom Schools: https://crdl.usq.edu/record/wsh_fsdc_2209?canvas=0&x=1269&y=1640&w=12167*
 - *Annie Divine: <http://repository.wustl.edu/concern/audios/ks65hd839>*

- Owen Brooks: http://libresearch.uncg.edu/unsung_heroes/participants/oBrooks.html
- *Class will create a list of strategies employed by the key figures/organizations*
- *Discussion: How effective do you feel these strategies would be in combating the discrimination of the Ku Klux Klan and the Citizens Council?*
- *Slide of notes on outcomes of various black resistance movements*
- *Journal: How do these black resistance movements affect our perception of the long-term outcomes of Reconstruction? Do they denote a failure of Reconstruction or a success of Reconstruction?*
 - *Debate to follow*
- **Closure: Please respond to the two questions of the day, as well as rating your comprehension of today's lesson on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest**