



1960s Social Protest Movement – A Sit In

Unit: 1945-1968

Lesson 7: Social Protest Movement

Time: approximately 2 periods (75 minutes)

Learning Goals: To raise awareness of human rights issues in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s.
To understand the long and short term impact of these human rights issues had on the communities themselves and the Canadian society as a whole.

Resources: markers, chart paper, access to computers for research, access to textbooks or other written materials for research

Handouts: 1960s Protest, a quiz

Minds On

Do a separation or privilege based activity to illustrate students being unjustly treated.

- e.g. Have a timed quiz.
- Dark haired girls have to answer all the questions, with pencil and using their left hand only.
- The rest of the girls have to answer all the questions, with a pencil only, but they can only use their right hand.
- Dark haired boys only have to answer three questions and can only use pen.

- The rest of the boys only have to answer one question (of their choosing) with any writing utensil of their choosing.
- The students who score the highest percentage right win a candy (so if you answer your one question right, you receive 100%, but if you have to answer 10 questions and you only get 5 right you only receive 50%)
- Debrief the exercise, with a focus on the unjust treatment of individuals, while expecting them all to achieve the same goal—doing well in a quiz.

Action

- Divide the class into three groups; each group will pick a community that was unjustly treated during the 1950s and 1960s. (You may want to divide up the “visible minorities” community into several groups depending on your class.)
- Each group will organize a protest to inform the class of specific issues that faced their community during the time period and how they want the issues resolved. Their protests will consist of the creation of posters, signs, banners, pamphlets, songs, slogans etc. To ensure all students participate actively you may want the groups, depending on their size, to divide up into subcommittees and assign specific topics or jobs to individuals.
- You will need to give the students access to computers or resources that will help them to determine what the specific issues and the impact these issues were having on the community.
- With the students, co-construct success criteria for the protest movement (e.g. whether or not the groups clearly presented their message, whether they had adequate facts to support their message, whether their protest was effective enough to have people want to join in the cause).
- On the day of the protest, students are to come to class dressed in 1960s style. Together as a class, students will march from the classroom through the school to the front doors on order to have their message heard. Once at the front door, each group will given a portion of time to conduct their protest, sharing songs, speeches, pamphlets etc, that inform their classmates about the unjust treatment they are receiving in Canada at the time and how they would like it resolved.
- You may want to invite other classes to your protest as well. It is a great way to promote history classes and peak the interest of other students.

Consolidation

- Students will assess the various groups using the success criterion that was co-constructed.
- You could have other classes also assess each group’s protest, using descriptive feedback.
- Exit Slip: In what ways did the protest movements in the 1960s served to change how these communities were treated in Canadian society?