



LEGACY TODAY

EDUCATOR RESOURCES: KING IN THE WILDERNESS: TELLING WHAT HAPPENED

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does the work and moral clarity of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. affect and influence our lives today?

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson students learn about the breadth and depth of Dr. King's legacy in our world today through the reflections of friends and leaders in the Civil Rights Movement. Students will apply the historical reading skills of sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration and broaden their skills of close reading strategies by using visual content. Students will analyze historical images, documentary film, and first-person interviews while following the written transcript. As a demonstration of their learning, students will have the option of writing a short essay in response to the assigned writing prompt or to create a visual representation of their learning from *King in the Wilderness*.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will reflect upon Dr. King's legacy by:

- Analyzing historical source material including photographs and documents
- Critically viewing documentary film and first-person interviews to inform their understanding of history
- Synthesizing new learning through developing questions for further historical inquiry
- Demonstrating their understanding of the lesson topic through a final exercise

MATERIALS

- Equipment for watching video segments
- Copies of handouts

ACTIVITIES

- 2 Do-Now: Opening Questions
- 2 A Close View: Analyzing Images
- 3 Analyzing Film as Text
- 4 Close View of Interview Threads
- 5 Read and Corroborate
- 5 Closing Discussion Questions
- 6 Homework or Extended Learning

HANDOUTS

- 7 Close View of the Film: Clip 1
- 8 Legacy Today: Interview Thread One
- 9 Legacy Today: Interview Thread Two



ACTIVITIES

1. Do-Now: Opening Questions

Teacher Note: To begin this lesson watch Clip 1: “Are They Poor? We Want Them Involved” (run time 2:47).

Have students discuss or respond in writing to these Opening Questions:

- In your own words describe the organizing strategy that Bernard Lafayette, Jr. recounted.
- Where do you see echoes of this strategy today?
- Using your prior knowledge, or ideas from this film clip, what challenges remain today in the struggle for equality? What is different?

2. A Close View: Analyzing Images

Teacher Note: A Close View mirrors a Close Read exercise in which students use visual analysis skills to “read” or analyze photographs as if they were employing literary analysis skills. For example, analyzing the decision of the photographer to frame a photograph in a specific way can be analogous to analyzing the point of view of an author, or to understanding the setting of a particular scene in a book.

Project or print and distribute the photographs under the “Images” on the Legacy page.

- 1 Aftermath of riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Washington D.C., April 8, 1968 (Courtesy Library of Congress)
- 2 Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and another staff member reacting to the news of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination, White House, Washington, D.C., April 4, 1968 (Courtesy LBJ Presidential Library)

DISCUSS QUESTIONS:

- Describe what you see in the photograph.
- What questions would you ask the photographer about these photos?
- How can we know that these images are accurate?
- What larger story do the photographs tell when viewed together?

3. Analyzing Film as Text

Watching a Clip from the Film *King in the Wilderness*: Contextualization

Teacher Note: The film clip in this exercise is a moving account of how Dr. King's life and death influenced the lives of those closest to him.

Distribute Handout One Note Catcher. Review Visual Analysis questions prior to viewing to help students watch the film clip with critical eyes

- 1 Watch Film Clip 2: "Legacy Today" (run time: 6:33)

Note Catcher Visual Analysis Questions

Handout One: "Legacy Today"

What did you see?

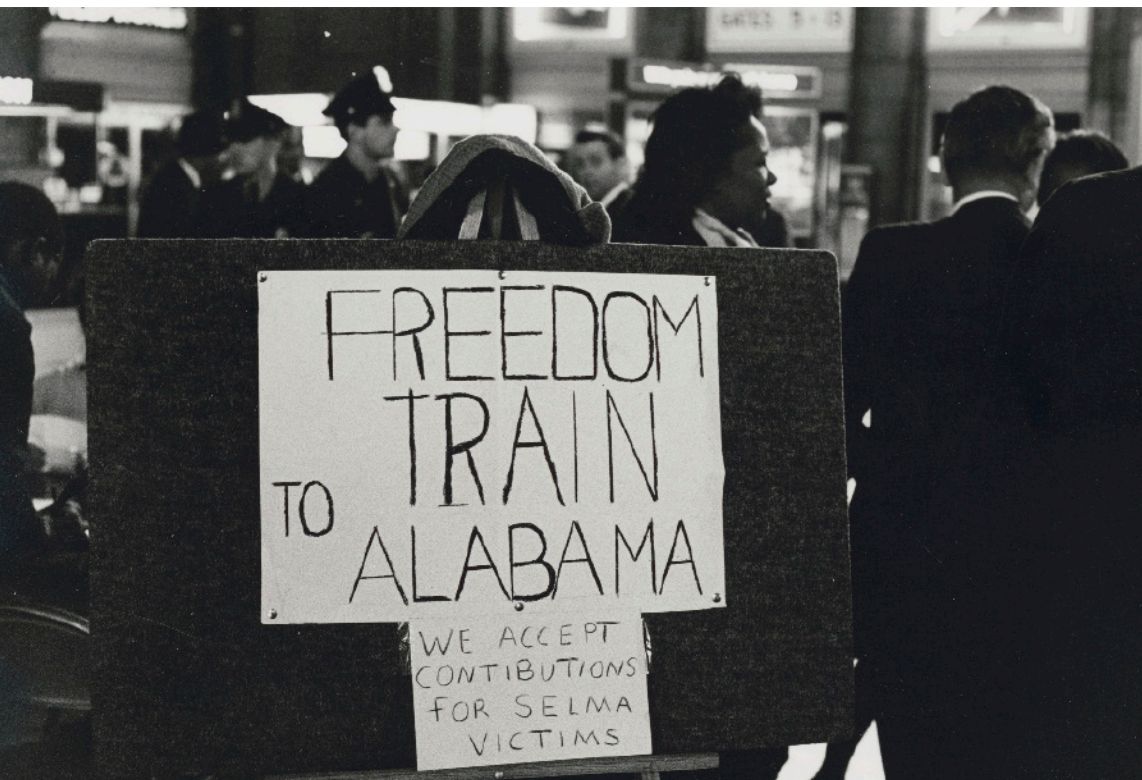
- What images or moments stand out from this film clip?

What did you learn?

- Reflect on Andrew Young's assessment of the fracturing that occurred within the Civil Rights Movement after Dr. King's assassination. Why do you think these changes occurred?
- What appeals are made by the interviewees to this current generation?

Why is it important?

- Respond to Rev. Jesse Jackson's statement, "He speaks to this generation clearly, as if he's in yesterday's morning paper. His strategies, his philosophy, his worldview remain real today." Do Dr. King's words and work speak to you today? How?



4. Close View of Interview Threads

Teacher Note: The filmmakers conducted 19 interviews to produce *King in the Wilderness*. Those complete interviews and biographical information about each interviewee are available at: www.kunhardtfilmfoundation.org/interview-archive. For each lesson, interview segments that were not used in the film, but which contain deeper information about aspects of each lesson topic, are edited together to create “interview threads.”

There are two threads of interview segments that teachers and/or students can choose from, or use together, to deepen their understanding of the legacy of Dr. King in our world today.

- Print and distribute the transcripts of the interview threads in Handouts Two and Three.
- Have students follow the transcripts and underline key phrases that stand out as they watch the interviews.
- When finished, have students write new historical questions sparked by what they read or heard for later investigation.
- Students will select a historical detail from the interviews, and conduct research to find a document that corroborates that detail.

The **Academic Notes Section** of the *King in the Wilderness* website also offers biographical information for each of the individual interview subjects.

WATCH THE INTERVIEW THREAD(S)

- 1 Thread One: “What Dr. King Accomplished.” (run time: 1:39)
Featuring Clifford Alexander, Joseph Califano.
- 2 Thread Two: “How We Honor Dr. King.” (run time: 8:49)
Featuring Marian Wright Edelman, Richard Fernandez, and Cleveland Sellers.

Ask the class: What do you learn about the legacy of Dr. King from these interviews that you might not learn anywhere else?



5. Read and Corroborate

Teacher Note: After viewing and reading the interview threads, have students choose one or more historical details shared by an interviewee and practice the process of corroboration -- or the process of researching and identifying a credible historical source that verifies the detail they selected from the interview.

What other sources can you use to help you better understand memories and recollections as historical resources?

HERE ARE SUGGESTED ARCHIVES TO USE TO FIND CORROBORATING EVIDENCE:

- 1 The King Center. (www.thekingcenter.org/archive)
- 2 Stanford University: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. (kinginstitute.stanford.edu)
- 3 Library of Congress. (www.loc.gov)

6. Closing Discussion

- Reflect on the depth and breadth of Dr. Martin Luther's King Jr's legacy in your own life, in your immediate community, or within your nation, and have students share any closing thoughts or questions.



7. Homework or Extended Learning: Legacy Writing Prompt

Clarence Jones states in *King in the Wilderness*: “From 1956 until April 4th, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. may have done more to achieve political, social, economic justice than any other person in the journey of American history.” Applying the new knowledge gained from *King in the Wilderness*, *The Interview Archive*, and other independent research, write an essay refuting or supporting Clarence Jones’ claim.

Artifact: As an alternative to a writing assignment, students can create a visual expression of how they understand the legacy of Dr. King. For example, students can create a piece of visual art, music, or other artistic expression.

Common Core State Standards

ANCHOR STANDARDS

Reading Literature and/or Information: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- RL/RI.X.7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- RL/RI.X.8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- RL/RI.X.9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL.X.1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.X.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- SL.X.3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- W.X.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- W.X.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CLOSE VIEW OF THE FILM

CLIP 2 - "LEGACY TODAY" NOTE CATCHER

Instructions:

As you are watching the film clip from *King in the Wilderness*, consider the following questions and record your answers.

What did you see?

- What images or moments stand out from this film clip?

What did you learn?

- Reflect on Andrew Young's assessment of the fracturing that occurred within the movement after Dr. King's assassination. Why do you think these changes occurred?
- What appeals are made by the interviewees to this current generation?

Why is it important?

- Respond to Rev. Jesse Jackson's statement, "He speaks to this generation clearly, as if he's in yesterday's morning paper. His strategies, his philosophy, his worldview remain real today." Do Dr. King's words and work speak to you today? How?

After watching this clip: What further questions do you have about this aspect of Dr. King's legacy?

LEGACY TODAY

INTERVIEW THREAD ONE

Directions: Underline key phrases and new details as you watch and listen to the interviews. When finished, select one or more historical details to investigate further.

CLIFFORD ALEXANDER, Chairman, U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission, 1965-1968

"To me it was how he stood on race, and he was unflinching. He didn't say there ain't no Booker T. in him, to be street about it. This is a man, you know, not [Frederick] Douglass either. Nobody is anybody but Martin if it's Martin. But you didn't get a sense that 'Well, what you ought to do is get trained to work out in the tobacco fields because you won't have the other opportunities. You're better off taking the little that they give you.'

"I don't think he wanted us to take anything other than all that we deserve, and I think I've never seen anything that he wrote or heard anything that he said that was less than that. He was gentle about it, he worked the Lord into it a fair amount, but he didn't say, 'Now, if things don't work out this way, do a little bit of what the devil tells you to do,' or 'accept your place in society.' Never that, and that's what radicalism in the best sense is about, that you're willing to take on the society, that you're willing to use the power that you've made. I think that in many ways as I say that, that radicalism is using the power that you have, which he accumulated a lot of, but not for his material self. But use that to help transform the society for the better. And he did use it to transform the society for the better."

JOSEPH CALIFANO, Special Assistant to President Lyndon Johnson, 1965-1968

"...People forget, you know, I say -- I always say, we're living in Lyndon Johnson's America. In some respects, you could say we're living in Lyndon Johnson's and Martin Luther King's America, because the one thing they both knew, the one thing Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King knew was that he couldn't have gotten the Voting Rights Act passed without King, that he couldn't have gotten the Civil Rights [Act] of '64 passed without King, and we never would have fair housing.

"Unfortunately, it was King's life that gave the opportunity for Johnson to finally get it passed. But think about that, what a partnership. Can you imagine two guys saying, 'Well, what did we do? We, we passed a law ending discrimination for anybody that uses federal funds, we passed a law to give everybody in this country the right to vote, especially including these Negroes who have been denied it for so many years, and we passed a law saying you can live wherever you got enough money to buy a house.' Pretty good tribute for those two guys."

LEGACY TODAY

INTERVIEW THREAD TWO

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, Mississippi Director, NAACP, 1965-1968

“So, he really was a prophet who spoke the truth about who we are and, and I cite often his, his concern that we are going to integrate into a burning house riddled by excessive militarism and materialism, and greed, and that when somebody who heard him that night, ‘cause he was very depressed at the end, I mean, he got nobody -- the country was going to hell. That when they asked him, you know, ‘Well what should we be doing?’ And he said, we, we, we, we all had to kind of become -- raise our voices and, and, and go to a different level of protest.

“And at the end, you look at his speech at the National Cathedral, when he said why America may go to hell, that was his last Sunday sermon, his title that he sent his mama, what he had preached at the cathedral, the, you know -- which was his last one before he went off to Memphis again about the Poor People’s Campaign. And he kept warning America that, you know, the . . . the [Biblical story of] poor man Lazarus and the rich man. That he didn’t go to hell because, you know, he was rich, he went to hell because he refused to see his brother and to respond to his brother. And that America was at risk of going to hell and nothing could be righter, and look at far toward hell we are in terms of where we’re spending now on our military when people are still hungry, that we’ve had some great progress in that area, where people are still jobless, where children still don’t have their basic housing needs met, where homelessness now -- and I have no doubt that if he were here today and we had made -- we have made a lot of progress, but we still have progress to make, he’d be sitting here leading a Poor People’s Campaign.

“But he was right, but he sort of told us that it was -- we had a values crisis. And that -- and I -- at the end a lot of his friends abandoned him because somehow, we’re not supposed to be caring about war, that’s not our civil rights issue, and I looked at all the folk who spoke out against him and thought he had no right to speak out against the war, when the folk were who dying in that war were disproportionately black folk and poor folk and Latino folk. But the loneliness and the -- and when -- what it must have felt like when he was so abandoned by so many -- and told to stay in your place. But I think that, you know, he laid a major foundation for all of us, and his speeches are as prescient today as they were then, we just have to -- we can figure out how to listen to him and follow him rather than just applauding.”

RICHARD FERNANDEZ, Church Activist, 1965-1968

“So, what I have written about Doctor King is, I think the marching orders are first, paying attention to his universalism, paying attention to the fact that we who are advocates on the left side, if I can say that, or on the progressive -- whatever the words are, that we need to get out of our little holes we’ve dug and we need to make common cause with people who’ve dug holes elsewhere. We need to re-institute the word ‘compromise’ as a good word in the American lexicon, and compromise means you don’t get everything you want. So, I’m one of those people who thinks the Democratic Party needs to open its door for people who may not believe in having abortions. It doesn’t mean that has to be their platform, but by God, you read them out of the party and your universalism just took a death blow in other issues. And the reverse is true of people on the other side. I think it’s -- so I’m big on King’s universalism, that that’s the way forward for a democracy that wants to be healthy.

“One of the quotes I always use is, ‘We should [be] far less concerned with the purity of our thoughts and much more concerned with the integrity of our compromises.’ There aren’t many people who believe that on the left or the right. They think purity of their thoughts and getting all that they want is more important than a compromise, and that to me is scary. I think that leads us down a road that is not good for many people, and it just gets worse and I worry about that.”

CLEVELAND SELLERS, Program Director Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), 1965-1968

"But I, I, you know, we're still committed and have been committed through the years. Our job was to pass along to the next generation that's going to pick up the torch, our experiences, our stories, and to let them know that Doctor King was a real person. We had leaders in our organization, Ella Baker, who had the same kinds of degrees and knowledge and experiences as Doctor King, so that wasn't any difference. Plus, we had the person who worked on the- on the Poor People's march with Doctor King was Marian Wright Edelman and she did a fantastic job, she was an SNCC'er. And so, we, we kept working on those things. And then we worked on, you know, making sure that people recognized Doctor King with the national holiday and just getting people to begin to appreciate and understand and at the same time bring him down from being that shining star that people had done. They had sterilized him. He didn't have any voice, he didn't have any, any -- you couldn't beat Doctor King because he was so exceptional.

"And what we tell young people is that you can be a Doctor King, a Malcolm X of whatever you want to be. You could be a Ralph Bunche [the first African American Nobel Peace Prize winner] or you could be a -- the [first African American] Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, or you can be an astronaut, Mae Jemison [the first African American woman to travel in space] or you could be [civil rights activist] Dorothy Height, you know, with the National Council of Negro Women. There were any number of things that we could do, all we had to do was believe in ourselves and go forward.

"So that's what the experiences were like in, in, in the relationship with Doctor King. I, I, I felt it to my heart, it felt like a part of my arm was cut off, a part of me was cut off. It, it, it hit me very deeply, his assassination. And then with my dear friend and brother Doctor -- I mean, [Ghanaian Prime Minister] Kwame Nkrumah -- I mean, Kwame [Stokely] Carmichael, it was the same kind of feeling. And it was for all of the veterans that I worked with and lived with and all those other kinds of things that we, we want to, you know, hold them in high esteem and say that, you know, we did what we had to do, we did what we could do. Did we get all the way? No, but did we complete some tasks? Yeah.

"We moved the movement from 1960 to, to even now, all the way along, the principles and the guidepost in SNCC are still driving people even today and those principles include the life and the history and the legacy of Doctor Martin Luther King, 'cause he made some ultimate sacrifices along the way in doing that."

