

ED 5626 - Social Studies Resource Toolkit Social Activism

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Table of Contents

TOOLKIT THEME	3
CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES	4
LESSON PLAN	5
BOOK SUMMARIES	8
ONLINE RESOURCES	9
CULMINATING ACTIVITY	15

Toolkit Theme

The theme of this toolkit is social activism. Although social activism can be seen throughout history, this toolkit looks primarily at modern examples of social activism as those examples will resonate with students and can provide opportunity for students to engage in existing and ongoing social activist movements. It is important to provide opportunities for young people to involve themselves in world issues and make a difference.

Art, protest, and social media are themes that arise frequently when exploring 21st century social activism; it is for this reason that these three themes are represented frequently throughout this toolkit. Art making is accessible as everyone can do it and it is a great way to further a message of social change. Additionally, analyzing art that inspires social change can be a fun way to learn about social movements. Protest is also highly accessible and students can learn about protest through the resources and activities in this toolkit and may become inspired to join a protest themselves. Lastly, social media plays an increasingly large part of student's lives. Teaching students how social media can be used to produce positive change may be a refreshing change to the negative ways social media is often framed in schools. If our students are going to use social media, let's teach them to be social media activists!

Curriculum Objectives

This toolkit was created based on the curriculum outcomes from the New Brunswick Grade 12 World Issues Curriculum which is linked below.

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/curric/SocialStudies/WorldIssues120.pdf>.

This toolkit mainly focuses on two of the general learning outcomes: interdependence and geopolitics. Below are the specific curriculum outcomes that pertain to this toolkit.

2.1 analyze issues resulting from interactions among individuals, groups, and societies;

2.2 analyze actions that support peace and sustainability; and

2.3 demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world.

3.3 evaluate causes, consequences, and solutions to violations of a group or individual's human rights; and

3.4 assess social justice initiatives, demonstrating responsible citizenship, from various institutions and agencies including governments, NGOs, and individuals.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: #SocialActivism

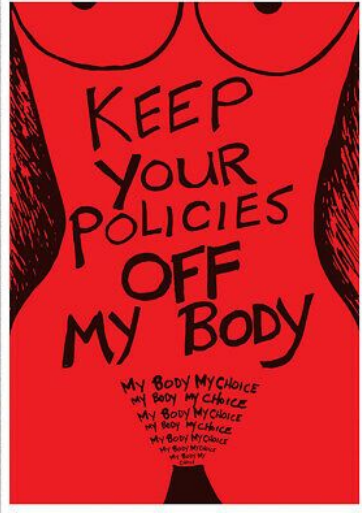
Grade Level: Grade 12

Objective: This lesson will teach students about what the impact social media has had on 21st century social activism. The specific curricular outcome comes from the New Brunswick World Issue 120.

SCO 3.4 assess social justice initiatives, demonstrating responsible citizenship, from various institutions and agencies including governments, NGOs, and individuals.

Materials:

- Laptop
- Projector/Smartboard
- Articles for students to read and share with the class regarding social media and activism:
 - The Role of Social Media in the Arab Uprisings
 - Occupy Wall Street: Social Media's Role in Social Change
 - How social media users have discussed sexual harassment since #MeToo went viral
- Cardboard
- Paper
- Paint
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencil crayons
- Magazines for collaging
- Examples of protest posters and signs (see examples below)



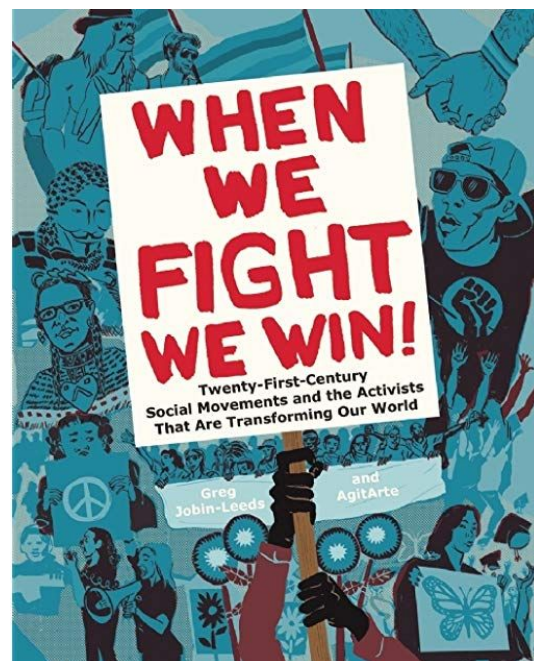
Procedures:

1. Divide the class into three groups. Have $\frac{1}{3}$ of the class read each of the three articles and discuss the article as a group.
2. Bring the class back together and have someone from each of the 3 groups summarize their article for the rest of the class.
3. Continue the class discussion about social media and its role in social activism. Have students think about how social media can help expand an audience, mobilize a protest, and attract the attention of mainstream media.
4. Show students posters and signage related to different social activist hashtags (see Materials for examples).
5. Allow students to create a poster or sign inspired by a social activist movement.
6. Encourage students to share their work on social media with a relevant hashtag. Some places to post their work include twitter, facebook, and instagram.

Book Summaries

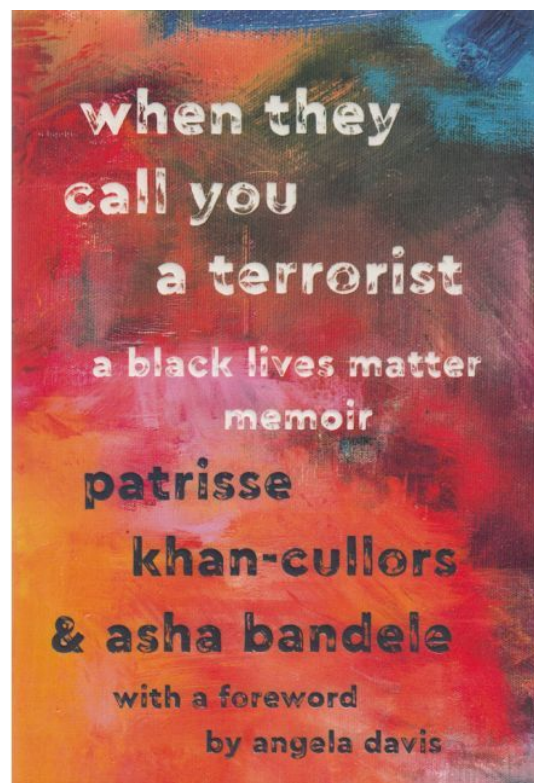
When We Fight We Win by Greg Jobin-Leeds

When We Fight We Win is a great resource for 21st century social activism. Its content spans many relevant and ongoing social issues including LGBTQ+ movement, immigrant rights, #BlackLivesMatter, the DREAM Act, the People's Climate March, the fight for a living wage, End the New Jim Crow, Occupy Wall Street, and more. This text is a combination of powerful images and interviews with modern social activists which act to highlight the stories surrounding modern social change movements as they fight to make a difference.



When They Call You a Terrorist: a Black Lives Matter Memoir by Asha Bandele and Patrisse Cullors

This book is co-written by Patrisse Cullors who is a founder of the Black Lives Matter Movement which was born following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin. This book explores Patrisse's personal story that led to her helping create the Black Lives Matter Movement. The text also explores the backlash she and her co-founders experienced along with way and the backlash that continues when supporters simply state the fact that black lives matter and that black lives are not expendable.



Online Resources

1. Waging Nonviolence

<https://wagingnonviolence.org>

Waging Nonviolence is a non-profit media platform that highlights social movements happening around the world. The site focuses on journalism and podcasts covering issues of nonviolent activism. This website is a good tool for teachers to find articles and podcasts on both modern and historical social activist movements to share with their classes. Additionally, students can use this website to learn about social movements and could be a helpful starting point for any number of research-based projects on a variety of topics related to nonviolent social activism. The site has many interesting articles that look at nonviolent activism through a modern lens and can be useful for lesson planning. For example, this particular article looks at how technology has impacted social activism in the 21st century and can be useful to teachers focusing on modern activism: [How technology is shaping creative activism in the 21st century.](#)

2. *A is for Activist* Book Reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK5Z03fVoI0>

A is for Activist is a picture book by Innosanto Nagara about activism. It explores language surrounding activism in alphabetical order. Because this is a read aloud of a picture book, it is easily understood and therefore highly accessible. However, this picture book still leaves room for students to decode images and make connections all while becoming more familiar with language that relates to activism. This read aloud video of the book would be a good tool to introduce a unit on social activism. While students are watching the video, they could write down words and images they are familiar with and words and images they are unfamiliar with. The class could also add to the list of words found in the text or expand on meanings of existing words and create a class dictionary of activism. Discussing the words and images that students are or are not familiar with and can lead to important discussion surrounding activism and protest as well as social issues like race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, and more.

3. *How to Make a Cardboard Box Disappear in 10 Steps*

<https://americanliteraryreview.com/2018/12/05/clint-smithmdash8203how-to-make-a-cardboard-box-disappear-in-10-steps/>

This link leads to a poem called *How to Make a Cardboard Box Disappear in 10 Steps* by Clint Smith. The poem highlights how activism and protest play into the black lives matter movement and how there is an ongoing need for action and solidarity. The poem implies that to make a cardboard box disappear you need to cut it into 6 pieces, make 6 protest signs out of the box, and attend 6 rallies. The rallies mentioned in the poem are for black victims whose deaths have impacted the black lives matter movement. One way to use this poem in the social studies classroom is through a quick write. Students could read this poem individually and respond via a quick write then you could discuss as a class what meaning they took away from the poem. It is important to note that it is not directly stated in the poem that to make the box disappear you make protest signs so this could be part of the discussion. However, students who do not understand this may take away different meanings that are also important. Additionally, students may not know who Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, Jordan Davis, Michael Brown, Eric Gardner, or Freddy Gray are (these are the 6 names mentioned in the poem). To combat this problem, students could research each individual in groups and share what they learned with the class. Another option would be to have information ready about each of these 6 people to share with the class after they have read the poem. During the class discussion, be sure to talk about the importance of the last two verses of the poem and how they imply that the killing of black people is an ongoing issue.

4. Wet'suwet'en Website <https://unistoten.camp/>

This link to the Wet'suwet'en website includes extensive information about the invasion that is taking place at Unist'ot'en camp in British Columbia. The website highlights the background of the campaign, the timeline of the campaign, calls to action, etc. The website itself also includes links to YouTube videos with further information. Students may not be aware of the devastating reality that is currently taking place in their own country. Often times when students think of social studies class they think about learning history and of situations in the past that seem far removed. This website is an incredible source to bring into a social studies class to show the unjust behaviours happening in our world today. This website also includes the social media accounts of the Wet'suwet'en people. This would be a great thing to bring to the attention of the students, with our ever growing social media focused lives, this is a great way to have the students follow along with current news and updates of the campaign. The students in the classroom could be split into groups to browse different aspects of the website. These students will then be the "experts" in that area of the website and can explain to their classmates what they found.

Possible subheadings to research for this activity may include: calls to action, background of the campaign, timeline of the campaign, who are the Wet'suwet'en people, etc. The class can take part in a carousel type activity where each group is given chart paper where they can write their key findings, they will place these papers up on a wall and present them to the other groups. The students will then have an opportunity to walk around the room and read the other papers to gather an understanding of the website and what it entails.

5. Photo prompts



- Climate strike



- Idle No More



- Montreal student strike



- Black Lives Matter



- LGBTQ+ march



- solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en pipeline protest

These images were retrieved from a simple google search and are just possible suggestions to use as photo prompts in the social studies classroom. It is important to show students that there are a number of different social activist movements and for teachers to understand that some movements will resonate with individual students more than others. For this reason, teachers should try to show a variety of examples of social activist movements (the ones included can be the ones you choose to use but feel free to find other images that work for your classroom). The idea of the photo prompt in the social studies classroom is to allow students to pull ideas out of these images. What do they see? Who might this image be speaking to or who might it be speaking about? Who is included in these photos? Whose thoughts, ideas or words are not heard? With these photos in mind, examples of some questions may be: Where are all of the LGBTQ+ people & communities in New Brunswick? What does their history look like? Who tells their stories? What about the intersections of race in social studies? Where do the women, non-binary people and individuals of colour sit in society today? Are their voices and opinions heard and accounted for? This activity is a great way to engage your students and get them thinking about the social world and the environments around them.

6. <http://education-charter.nb.westoba.ca/ngo.aspx>

This is a list of Non-Governmental Organizations in New Brunswick. Each NGO represents a social issue that can be important to highlight in the New Brunswick social studies classroom. These issues can range from empowerment, poverty, race, housing,

violence, history, culture, citizenship, equity issues, etc. One way to utilize this resource in the classroom is to have students research a community organization of their choosing (individually or in groups). Students will then be responsible to research what social issue their organization works to address. They could be asked to share their findings in anyway that they see fit. Some examples of forms this can take include a form of writing, a collage, a presentation, a painting, a video, etc. Another possibility for the social studies classroom would be to choose an organization that interests the class and take the students on a trip to visit. On their trip the students will be able to get a better understanding of what this organization does and how they look to better the community. Bringing this into a social studies classroom could be extremely beneficial for students to recognize that social activism can come from a more personal experience. More often than not, there are situations in our own backyards that are not talked about and this resource and possible activities that come from it are great ways to get exposure to those issues.

Culminating Activity

Title: Where do you stand?

Description:

Public art can be informative, inspiring and empowering for both artists and audiences. Community murals have the power to spark dialogue around important issues. This project encourages students to explore their own individual visions and showcase them in a communal space. In this project, students will make an individual piece of art that will reflect a social issue of their choice. This artwork can include a collage, painting, drawing, graphic design, street art, etc. Each of the individual pieces will represent a mini mural and will be combined to create a class gallery that represents different aspects of social activism. The students will create an individual write up for their own piece of work explaining why or how their mural is a form of social activism. They will include what their piece is about and why they chose to add the things they did. They will also include why they feel this mural would be important to a public space and where they think this mural should be shared in their community. The students will also be asked to share who their target audience for this piece may be and why they want to share their work with this audience.

Components:

Students will:

- Create a piece of art that speaks to them and their vision of social activism
- Combine their work with their classmates to create a class gallery that represents modern social activism
- Learn about different perspectives and issues relating to social activism through the different creations by students in their classroom
- Create a short write up about their piece and the meaning behind it
- Understand the importance of social activism and how public art can portray a powerful message