



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2009 Volume II: American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

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## Turning Hope into Reality

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.02.03, published September 2009

by Mary Caruso

Although my students are very excited about the election of President Obama, they have very little awareness of the Civil Rights struggle, the political process, and what they can do to make a difference. I plan to use my students' current interest and excitement surrounding Barack Obama to spark curiosity about the history of Civil Rights and motivate students to become involved in their communities.

My students are tenth through twelfth graders in an urban, non-traditional setting of 500-800 students. The students transfer to the school from the nineteen other high schools throughout the county-wide school district. This unit will be incorporated throughout the nine week course.

I plan to move students through a discussion of due process and equal protection rights, to a brief history of the Civil Rights Movement and the individuals involved, to general discussion about how citizens can and should participate in a democracy, and finally, to the actual planning and/or participating in a community activity. I will use Barack Obama's story and the stories of 1960's Civil Rights leaders to show continuity of the movement and to inspire and motivate the students to become involved in their communities.

(Developed for American Government and Civics, grades 9-12; recommended for American Government, Civics, and U.S. History, grades 9-12)

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