



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2021 Volume I: U. S. Social Movements through Biography

John Lewis: Examining the Past to Inform Understandings of the Present

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.01.08, published September 2021
by Stephen Straus

Students will study the Civil Rights Movement through the life of John Lewis by reading *March*, a graphic novel adaptation of Lewis's account of the Civil Rights Movement. Students will explore the local context of the Civil Rights Movement in Richmond, Virginia through primary sources that document the Richmond sit-in movement and its retrospective fifty years later. Students will make connections to Black Live Matters and other contemporary social movements as part of a broader analysis of social movements against institutional racism and systemic oppression that includes the Civil Rights Movement. They will examine primary sources focusing on the George Floyd protests in Richmond and retrospective accounts from Richmond locals published a year later. These social movements will allow students to explore the evolution of movements and their connection to other historical events. These materials will help students assess the complexity of memory and history as it relates to their own personal experiences. This unit is designed for middle school English Language Arts.

(Developed for English Language Arts, grade 7; recommended for English Language Arts, and Social Studies, grades 6-8)

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