



**Lesson:**  
**THE NATURE OF PROTEST**

**OVERVIEW:**

This lesson will focus on the nature of protest by examining the different avenues that people take to express their opinions and take action in response to seminal issues. The characteristics of civil disobedience will be explored, with a focus on non-violent and violent means of protest. Students will study the history of various protest movements in order to gain understanding of the mechanisms and the reasons for initiating change in society. The Civil Rights movement in the United States will be explored. Today's Youth Movement will be emphasized.

**SUBJECTS: History, Social Studies, English, American Democracy**

**GRADE LEVELS: 9-12**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will read and analyze an essay written by Henry David Thoreau.
2. Students will conduct a survey.
3. Students will conduct Internet research.
4. Students will conduct research on civil disobedience and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.
5. Students will discuss and explore mechanisms for creating societal change.
6. Students will examine different definitions and conceptions of activism.
7. Students will engage in reading and writing activities.
8. Students will participate in small group discussions regarding the nature of protest.
9. Students will examine issues of non-violence and violence in protest movements.
10. Students will examine the role of art and music in protest.

**MEDIA COMPONENTS: Bay Window: *Raising a Ruckus***

**TIME COMPONENTS:**

In order to most effectively implement the lesson activities it is suggested that the class watch the video in its entirety. The time allotment for each of the activities will vary according to the number of computers in the

classroom, the students' fluency with conducting Internet research, and the time spent in discussion of the issues surrounding globalization. As a general guideline each of the activities should take approximately two 50-minute class periods after watching the video.

**Bookmark the following sites:**

<http://members.nbc.com/betolove/CivilDisobediance.htm>  
<http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/>  
<http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/>  
<http://www.saltdal.vgs.no/prosjekt/slavrute/chapt11.htm>  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>  
<http://search.yahooligans.com/search/ligans?p=Rosa+Parks>  
<http://www.ghgcorp.com/hollaway/civil.htm>  
[http://www.yahooligans.com/Around\\_the\\_World/Countries/United\\_States/History/Civil\\_Rights\\_Movement/](http://www.yahooligans.com/Around_the_World/Countries/United_States/History/Civil_Rights_Movement/)  
<http://www.herald.com/herald/content/archive/extra/king/king.htm>  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/crt/crtmenu.htm>  
[www.thehungersite.com](http://www.thehungersite.com)  
<http://www.globalexchange.org/economy/>  
<http://ruckus.org/>  
[www.worldtrek.org](http://www.worldtrek.org)  
<http://www.freethechildren.org/>  
<http://www.acusd.edu/theo/ref-gandhi.html>  
[http://www.kids-right.org/civil\\_back.htm](http://www.kids-right.org/civil_back.htm)  
[http://www.kids-right.org/civil\\_back.htm](http://www.kids-right.org/civil_back.htm) <http://norfacad.pvt.k12.va.us/project/gandhi/India.htm>  
<http://www.artisanhands.com/diegoRivera.html>  
<http://www.trms.ga.net/~jtucker/students/artists/rivera/Ltjp.html>  
<http://www.warchild.org/projects/kwamashu.html>  
[http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html\\_pages/Protest.ArtP&P.html](http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html_pages/Protest.ArtP&P.html)  
<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/atracoes.php?id=20010117004&lang=en>

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES- SETTING THE STAGE

### Activity One: Defining Civil Disobedience

**In order to understand the film students would benefit by developing background knowledge regarding civil disobedience. The purpose of this activity is to gain an understanding of this concept.**

1. Read Thoreau's essay entitled "Civil Disobedience" as a class. It may be accessed at:  
<http://members.nbc.com/betolove/CivilDisobediance.htm>

2. Ask students to interpret Thoreau's meaning in the following quotations:

a) "It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience."

b) "If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth--certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine.

What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.”

Ask the students the following questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with Thoreau’s ideas?
  - Which of the quotes have more meaning for you, and why?
- (After watching the tape, you may want to revisit Thoreau’s quotes and ask the following question)
- In what ways do you think Thoreau’s ideas are relevant to the issues raised regarding corporate globalization in *Raising a Ruckus*?

### Activity Two: Attitude Survey

1. Review the following quote from the movie about the Boston Tea Party.

“It’s a huge standing tradition in American culture. The spark of the revolution was a large number of people painting their faces black and going out into the dark of night and destroying large amounts of valuable property that we call the Boston Tea Party.”

- Tim Ream

2. Read a brief overview of the history of the Boston tea Party at <http://www.dell.homestead.com/revwar/files/TEAPARTY.HTM>.
3. Discuss the relationships between illegal acts, immoral acts and civil disobedience. Ask the students to conduct a survey outside the classroom by asking five people the following questions:
  - Can breaking the law ever be justified in protest?
  - Were the people involved in the Boston Tea Party breaking the law?
  - If you thought a law was immoral, would you follow it?
  - Can you think of an example from history where people were justified in breaking the law?
  - In your opinion, is civil disobedience a viable way to express dissent?
  - In your opinion, what is the most effective way to effect change in society?
4. Share survey results with the entire class.
5. Categorize and discuss and survey results.
6. Ask each student to individually respond to each of the survey questions in writing.
7. Divide the class into pairs and ask them to share their responses.
8. Ask the students to volunteer their responses to each question in a large group discussion.

9. Ask the students to use writing journals to answer the following question:

- Would you ever feel justified in engaging in an act of civil disobedience? Why or why not?

### **LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

#### **Activity One: A Historical Lens/Civil Disobedience & The Civil Rights Movement in the United States**

*The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the relationship between the Civil Rights Movement and civil disobedience.*

1. As a class, visit the following Web sites which provide a brief overview of the American Civil rights movement at

<http://www.wmich.edu/politics/mlk/> and

<http://www.midsouth.rr.com/civilrights/>

2. Divide the class into small research groups to conduct further research regarding the history of the American Civil Rights Movement. They should focus their research efforts on answering the following question:

- What role did civil disobedience play in the United States Civil Rights Movement?

*Some good sites to begin initial research include:*

<http://www.saltdal.vgs.no/prosjekt/slavrute/chapt11.htm>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>

<http://search.yahooligans.com/search/ligans?p=Rosa+Parks>

<http://www.ghgcorp.com/hollaway/civil.htm>

[http://www.yahooligans.com/Around\\_the\\_World/Countries/United\\_States/History/Civil\\_Rights\\_Movement/](http://www.yahooligans.com/Around_the_World/Countries/United_States/History/Civil_Rights_Movement/)

<http://www.herald.com/herald/content/archive/extra/king/king.htm>

<http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/crt/crtmenu.htm>

3. Share small group answers with the entire class.

#### **Activity Two: What is Activism?**

*The purpose of this activity is to focus on the mechanisms available to people for creating societal change.*

1. Share and discuss the following quote from the video with the class:

“Look throughout history at the gains that we’ve made through activism, through some type of street protest movement. End to slavery, end to apartheid in South Africa, giving women the right to vote, the eight-hour day. These are gains that all of society has benefited from.” Juliette Beck

2. Brainstorm a list of historical gains that have been generated through protest movements.

3. Divide the class into two groups. Each group will be required to generate solutions to a problem. Ask the first group to focus on the problem of world hunger. Ask the second group to focus on world peace. Give

each group ten minutes to generate as many possible avenues that suggest fruitful solutions to their respective problems.

4. Analyze the group solutions in terms of the kinds of avenues they represent. (For example, do the solutions refer to legal, political, personal or moral avenues to affect change?)
5. As a class, decide which avenue is most effective for solving the problems of world hunger and world peace.
6. Continue the discussion by introducing the problem of corporate globalization. Assume that one conceives of corporate globalization as problematic. Brainstorm solutions. Analyze group solutions by category. Compare the avenues suggested for solving this problem to those suggested for solving the problems of world peace and world hunger. Ask the students to discuss the differences and/or similarities.
7. Create a class chart which compares the solutions suggested for ending world hunger, promoting world peace, and dealing with corporate globalization. Do students think that these issues affect each other? If so, how. Give examples.

### **Activity Three: Getting Involved**

*In this activity, students will explore the different ways that people can become involved in protesting and creating change in society.*

1. Review Celia Alario's quote from the video with the students:

“I was blessed to be instilled with this idea that one person can make a difference.”

Ask the students if they agree or disagree with this quote, and why.

2. Ask the students the following question:

- If you could choose one person who had the biggest impact on the changing the world for the better who would you choose?

List all the people that the students suggest. From that list, create categories which delineate where these people had their greatest impact (for example, medicine, world peace, etc.), and how (political, legal, personal, violent, non-violent).

3. Ask the students to choose who, in their opinion, would have the greatest impact on protesting corporate globalization:
  - a) A politician who successfully introduced bills which changed laws.
  - b) A writer whose book informed the world of how globalization was impacting human life.
  - c) A teacher who taught her class about injustices in global society and inspired their efforts to make change.
  - d) An activist who conducted training in how to effectively protest.
  - e) A person who participates in a street protest, or boycotts products.
4. Discuss students' opinions. Validate the different ways that exist to effectively promote change in society.
5. Ask the students who they thought were the most effective agents of change in *Raising a Ruckus*.

6. Share the following quote from Martin Luther King:

Help me, O God, to see that I'm just a symbol of a movement. . . .O God, help me to see that where I stand today, I stand because others helped me to stand there And because the forces of history projected me there. And this moment would have come in history Even if M. L. King had never been born.

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

7. Ask students to discuss King's meaning and relate King's quote to today's Youth Movement.

#### **Activity Four: Examining the Activists' Actions**

*The purpose of this activity is to complicate students' notions of what it means to be an activist, and encourage them to think about the value of different forms of protest.*

1. Brainstorm answers to the following questions with the class:
  - Who can be an activist? Can a teacher? A business person? A nurse? A politician? A parent?
  - What is the difference between an activist and someone who supports a cause?
  - What is the value of individual activism vs. group activism?
2. Visit The Hunger Site at [www.thehungersite.com](http://www.thehungersite.com). Ask the students to decide if they would consider this site a protest site.
3. Visit the Global Exchange at <http://www.globalexchange.org/economy/>. Ask students to describe the differences between this site and The Hunger Site. Focus on differences in mission and purpose.
4. Visit the site of The Ruckus Society at <http://ruckus.org/>. Ask the students to critically examine the difference between this site and the other sites in numbers 2 and 3 above.
5. Visit the site of The Odyssey World Trek for Service and Education at [www.worldtrek.org](http://www.worldtrek.org). Ask the students to critically examine the difference between this site and the other sites in numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 above.
6. Visit the Web site of Free the Children at <http://www.freethechildren.org/>. Ask the students to critically examine the difference between this site and the other sites in numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 above.
7. Ask students to vote as to which group, in their opinion, most effectively defines an activist role in changing the world.

#### **Activity Five: Violence in Protest Movements**

*The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to examine and evaluate the use of violent and non-violent means of protest. They will examine the philosophical orientation of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.*

1. Listen to the following quote from *Raising a Ruckus*

“In the grand scheme of things breaking a few windows is not a threat to the social order of an entire society, and yet sometimes that becomes the pretext for a kind of repression that affects all elements of dissent- even non-violent dissent.”

- Claybourne Carson

Ask students if they agree or disagree with Carlson's views.

Ask each student to freewrite a response to the following question:

- Is it ever okay to engage in violence when one is engaged in a protest?

Divide the class into pairs and have them share their responses for five minutes. Convene as a class and ask for student volunteers to share their responses. Discuss students' views on this issue.

2. Share the following quotes from Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King with the class.

a) "We are constantly being astonished at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt-of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence."

-M. K. Gandhi at <http://www.acusd.edu/theo/ref-gandhi.html>

b) "The nonviolent approach does not immediately change the heart of the oppressor. It first does something to the hearts and souls of those committed to it. It gives them self respect; it calls up resources of strength and courage that they did not think they had. Finally, it reaches the opponent and so stirs his conscience that reconciliation becomes a reality."

- Martin Luther King at [http://www.kids-right.org/civil\\_back.htm](http://www.kids-right.org/civil_back.htm)

3. Divide the class into small research groups to investigate both King's and Gandhi's views on non-violent protest. Two excellent sites to begin researching are: [http://www.kids-right.org/civil\\_back.htm](http://www.kids-right.org/civil_back.htm) and <http://norfacad.pvt.k12.va.us/project/gandhi/India.htm>.

4. Ask the students to discuss the violence depicted at protests in Seattle in the video *Raising a Ruckus*. Have the class focus on thinking of the circumstances which may lead to violence becoming a part of non-violent protests, and brainstorm a list of ways that this can potentially be avoided.

### Activity Six: Protest/A Simple Explanation

*The purpose of the following activity is for students to express their understanding of the conflicts that often characterize street protests.*

1. Ask the students to participate in the following imaginary scenario.

*Miss Gnatto teaches eleventh graders history. She has done a lot of work in her community with student activist groups. She recently received a letter from the parent of one of her students, and decided to ask her class for help in answering it. Pretend that you are one of Ms. Gnatto's students, and answer this parent's request by writing a letter of your own.*

*Dear Ms. Gnatto:*

*I am having a hard time explaining something to my son in fifth grade, and I was wondering if you might be able to help me. He saw a show on television called Raising a Ruckus, and he was really upset about the conflicts between the police and the protesters. He asked me why people were overturning newsstands and why the police had sticks. In school he learned to go to the police if he was lost, or needed help. We also teach him not to destroy property. He knows that a teenager down the street had to pay for the damage he did to someone's car with shaving cream on Halloween. How*

*can I explain what happened in this video to him in ways that he will understand? Thanks for any help you might give me.*

*Signed,*

*A concerned parent*

2. Ask for student volunteers to share their letters. Discuss the explanations suggested as a class.

### **Activity Seven: Art & Music as Protest**

*The purpose of this activity is for students to examine how art and music help define and unify a movement, and also how they may function as symbols of protest. Varied examples throughout history will be used to illustrate the impact of art and music.*

1. Ask the students to think of examples of powerful images that have defined various protests throughout history (i.e. Diego Rivera's murals, Tienemen Square, We Shall Overcome, Kent State photograph).

2. Ask the students to find a song that best captures the essence of today's Youth Movement.

3. Brainstorm answers to the following questions:

- Why are symbols important to various protest movements?
- How did the Ruckus society make use of art and music in their activities as a tool of protest?

4. Divide the class into small research groups. Each group is responsible for researching a particular person or group and describing how it represents a form of protest.

#### **Group One: Diego Rivera**

<http://www.artisanhands.com/diegoRivera.html>

<http://www.trms.ga.net/~jtucker/students/artists/rivera/Ltjp.html>

#### **Group Two: War Child**

<http://www.warchild.org/projects/kwamashu.html>

#### **Group Three: Art for Protest and Persuasion**

[http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html\\_pages/Protest.ArtP&P.html](http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/ChicanArte/html_pages/Protest.ArtP&P.html)

#### **Group Four: World Social Forum**

<http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/atracoes.php3?id=20010117004&lang=en>

5. Ask each group to choose an issue and create an artistic representation of protest. They can use a variety of media and can take any suitable form.

## **Activity Eight: Final Reflections**

1. Share the following quote with the class.

“I think as organizers you’re so inclined to be non-violent because you’re getting answers. You know people get violent when they don’t know what’s going on, when they’re pissed off and they have nowhere to go. And I see our youth as they are getting political, becoming more peaceful, because they’re starting to organize the people, and talking to people, and getting the answers and that makes sense so it’s not so infuriating you know? You know what you’re fighting against so that you can work against it.”

- Malachi Larrabee-Garcia

2. Ask the students to discuss their response to Malachi’s statement in small groups.
3. Have each small group create a position statement that represents their feelings about the nature of protest.

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

### **Activity One**

1. Read the following article about suffragette Lady Constance Lytton and how she practiced civil disobedience at [http://www.kids-right.org/p\\_lytton.htm](http://www.kids-right.org/p_lytton.htm).
2. Write an poem or an essay comparing her experiences to that of protesters involved in the Youth Movement.

### **Activity Two**

1. Listen to the speeches of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and compare their ideas regarding violence and civil rights at <http://www.webcorp.com/civilrights/voices.htm>.
2. Create a presentation that supports each of their opinions.
3. Describe your opinion of their ideas.