Teaching the Movement 2014
The State of Civil Rights Education in the United States

MEDIA AND GENERAL INQUIRIES
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About the Report
This report was prepared by the Southern Poverty Law Center under the guidance of Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello. The principal researcher and writer was Kate Shuster, Ph.D. The report was reviewed by Hasan Jeffries, Ph.D. and Jeremy Stern, Ph.D. It was edited by Maureen Costello, Alice Pettway, Adrienne Van der Valk and Monita Bell and designed by Scott Phillips and Sunny Paulk.

About the Southern Poverty Law Center
The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the Center works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality.

About Teaching Tolerance
Founded in 1991, Teaching Tolerance is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation’s children.

The program provides free educational materials to educators for use by millions of students. Teaching Tolerance magazine is sent to 410,000 educators, reaching nearly every school in the country. Tens of thousands of educators use the program’s film kits and more than 6,000 schools participate in the annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day program.

Teaching Tolerance teaching materials have won two Oscars, an Emmy and scores of honors from the Association of Educational Publishers, including two Golden Lamp Awards, the industry’s highest honor.

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Foreword

BY JULIAN BOND

In the three years since the Southern Poverty Law Center first reported on the state of civil rights education, the nation dedicated a memorial to Martin Luther King Jr., and commemorated the 50th anniversaries of James Meredith’s admission to Old Miss, the killing of Medgar Evers and the Birmingham Children’s March. Despite this attention, the bad news is that ignorance remains the operative word when it comes to the civil rights movement and much of African-American history.

We saw this when the cast of the Real Housewives of Atlanta visited a church in Savannah where holes had been bored in the floor to provide ventilation on the Underground Railroad. Porsha Stewart, granddaughter of civil rights leader Hosea Williams, quickly piped up to explain.

“Well, there has to be an opening for a railroad at some point,” she said. “Because somebody’s driving the train. It’s not electric like what we have now.”

The civil rights illiteracy of the American people is without dispute. The reasons are many. One, as this Teaching Tolerance study suggests, is the failure of our educational system.

When I taught at Harvard University some years ago, worried that I would be speaking down to my students, I devised a simple test of their knowledge of the civil rights movement and its major figures. Not one student could identify Alabama Governor George Wallace, whom one student described as “a television commentator who covered the Vietnam War.”

They knew Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. Beyond that, ignorance.

We know that racial animosity exists throughout the land. A Cheerios television ad featuring an interracial family produced such a racist response the sponsor had to withdraw the comments section.

In real life, a Washington Post columnist said the interracial family of New York’s new mayor elicited “a gag reflex” from “people with traditional views.”

The star of a popular reality series about a successful Southern family was temporarily taken off TV when the family patriarch expressed the view that, until the civil rights movement stirred them up, blacks were happy and content, singing in the cotton fields. The show was reinstated after an avalanche of support from viewers.

President Obama has been the butt of racist claims, caricatures and criticism since he was elected.

Racist attacks against the President; racial illiteracy among the population.

Some of us remember a song from the musical, South Pacific:

“You’ve got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade,
You’ve got to be carefully taught.

You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late,
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate,
You’ve got to be carefully taught.”

This report strives to insure we are carefully and correctly taught, not to hate, but to understand and know each other.

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WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE?

“The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time,” baseball’s first black major leaguer once said. Really, it is the most important issue of every time. Not only is citizenship in a democracy a status one inherits or receives, it is a history each must carry forward to shape the future, a right that withers without constant vigilance and renewal.

Few understood this better than Jackie Robinson, the son of Georgia sharecroppers who, after lettering in four sports at U.C.L.A. and a court-martial trial prompted by his refusal to sit in the back of an army bus, stepped onto the field as a Brooklyn Dodger in April 1947 as a symbol of African Americans’ centuries-old quest to be regarded as citizens of equal rank with an equal opportunity to test their talents. At the time, the America Robinson lived in was largely defined by a stark and vicious color line, on the books and in the streets. Still, there was number 42, with his quiet but assertive play (hitting when he would be pitched to; stealing bases when he wouldn’t), teaching opposing players, ardent fans and the country as a whole how to rise above as a citizen of baseball and of the United States under the most trying circumstances.

“In order for America to be 100 percent strong – economically, defensively, and morally,” Robinson said, “we cannot afford the waste of having second- and third-class citizens.” The mission he had undertaken, what for decades members of the civil rights movement signed up for, was not simply an African-American or regional concern, but a model of resistance worthy of the nation’s founding ideals, too long subsumed. “Negroes aren’t seeking anything which is not good for the nation as well as ourselves,” Robinson explained. He was a true American hero.

Yet, despite the fact that his is the only number retired by every professional baseball team, Jackie Robinson is, at present, required teaching in only nine U.S. states, which, when it comes to preparing students in history, are in charge of what is and what is not covered. As surprising a fact as this is, Robinson fares better than other game-changing pioneers of the civil rights movement, including James Meredith, required teaching in seven states; Ruby Bridges, in two; and Charlayne Hunter Gault, in one. What, you ask, do they have in common? Like number 42, they understood the struggle for citizenship to be the struggle of their time, except the fields they broke into were public schools, each of them braving the cold stares—and worse—of hate in order to receive the best possible education in their communities. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Supreme Court’s historic Brown v. Board of Ed. decision ending segregation in American public schools. They are among those who forced its enforcement with their feet, hands and minds.

The movement they embodied wasn’t one or two or a dozen famous faces in the crowd, however; it involved generation after generation of faces, most of them anonymous but equally resilient, doing all they could to ‘make a way out of no way,’ as we say in the tradition. Yet how many in our schools today can even identify the contours of their struggle, the forces that opposed them, the strategies and tactics they developed, and the countless ways in which their movement was and remains connected to the struggles of people for liberation around the world?

Two years ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance project sounded the alarm over the pervasive neglect of this history with its one-of-a-kind report card measuring state education standards. In that initial study, 35 states received a failing grade of F. Now, the SPLC has done it again, with improved benchmarking and greater state involvement. Yet, while there has been noteworthy progress since 2011, there are still 20 F’s out there, with twelve states requiring no teaching of the civil rights movement at all. To be commended are the three A’s in the group – Georgia, Louisiana and South Carolina – as well as California, which jumped from F to B under the SPLC’s updated evaluation system. Remarkably, however, when you add up all the A’s and B’s, seven out of 11 are former Confederate states, only reinforcing the dangerous misperception that black history is regional or only necessary where large pockets of African Americans reside.
Even more disturbing to me: Fewer than half of U.S. states today include in their major curriculum documents any information on Jim Crow laws, which, for a century, divided citizens by color according to the paradoxical formula, “separate but equal.” If students don’t understand these laws, or how they impacted the course of history, how will they ever be able to grasp the century of delay following emancipation that Dr. King pivoted from in the spontaneous “Dream” section of his iconic speech at the March on Washington in 1963? Or what the lawyers in Brown were up against? Or why the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 were and remain necessary manifestations of the 14th Amendment’s guarantee of “equal protection of the laws”?

All of us are aware of the pressures our teachers and children are under to keep pace with the world’s students in science and math, but without a steep grounding in our history, what will rising generations have to pivot from? What will inspire them to remake their world with the confidence that comes from knowing it has been done before? Sensitive to these competing pressures as it works to study and promote the teaching of the civil rights movement, the SPLC is committed to working with all 50 states to empower teachers with robust curriculum and supporting resources, two measures new to the survey this time around. In response, states have also increased their efforts to present a fuller picture of where they are in order to understand where and how they can make progress. That’s what report cards are all about.

As for the naysayers, if working on my recent PBS series, The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross (2013), covering the full 500-year sweep of African-American history, has taught me anything, it is that black history, as such, should not be relegated to one week or month in the calendar but taught as it was lived within the larger American story.

Want to have a meaningful “conversation about race”? That conversation, to be effective and to last, to become part of the fabric of the national American narrative, must start in elementary school, and continue all the way through graduation from high school. It must do this in the same way that the story of the Mayflower, the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the “City Upon a Hill” and the key, shaping stories and myths about ourselves were formulated for us through the school curriculum. Teaching naturalizes history; the content that is taught in our schools makes knowledge second nature. And until the contributions of African Americans become second-nature to all American school children, desperate calls for one more “conversation about race” are destined to repeat themselves—in an endless cycle—following the next race-based hate crime. The only way for the citizens of a nation to know and understand their history is to know the whole story, not just the chapters that reinforce uncontested assumptions while carving out counter-narratives as set-asides and add-ons only if there is time.

Want to honor the people who gave their lives and risked so much during the movement? Ask your school leaders to improve their design for teaching the history of the civil rights movement and for interweaving the sweep of African-American history into your child’s social studies curriculum. It must be taught. It must be nurtured. It must be sustained.

As Colin Powell reminded us after the passing of Nelson Mandela last December, the civil rights movement in the United States, as in South Africa, freed both black and white citizens from the forces of oppression and paved the way for others around the world. Now that Madiba, too, is gone, like Jackie Robinson, like Dr. King, and all the other freedom fighters before them, it is not enough to mourn their loss and say there is no way to fill the void. We must prepare the way by teaching our children what the movement for freedom, for equal opportunity, and for multicultural democracy was and how it remains connected to their aspirations for a better future. “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background or his religion,” Mandela taught us. “People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is an Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and founding director of The Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University.
The Civil Rights Movement: Why Now?

“Often cast in a ‘Montgomery to Memphis’ frame that parallels the public life of Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights Movement has taken on an air of inevitability in the popular imagination. Images and film footage have frozen the movement in time as an era when people risked their lives to end the crippling system of segregation in the South, and to secure the rights and privileges fundamental to American citizenship. For many young people, it looms as a shining moment in the distant past, with little relevance to contemporary issues concerning race, democracy, and social justice.”


The civil rights movement is one of the defining events in American history, during which Americans fought to make real the ideals of justice and equality embedded in our founding documents. When students learn about the movement, they learn what it means to be active American citizens. They learn how to recognize injustice. They learn about the transformative role played by thousands of ordinary individuals, as well as the importance of organization for collective change. They see that people can come together to stand against oppression.

We are concerned that the movement, when it is given classroom time, is reduced to lessons about a handful of heroic figures and the four words “I have a dream.” Students need to know that the movement was much bigger than its most notable leaders, and that millions of people mustered the courage to join the struggle, very often risking their lives in the process. They need to know that the dream to which Dr. King gave voice has not yet been fully realized, despite the election of an African-American president. They need to know that as long as race is a barrier to access and opportunity, and as long as poverty is commonplace for people of color, the dream has not been achieved.

We are also concerned about the historical narrative promoted by some pundits and political figures who would deny the nation’s legacy of institutionalized oppression. There is tremendous pressure from the political right to teach a wholly false history that ignores the nation’s blemishes and misrepresents struggles for social justice. In this revisionist version, the framers worked tirelessly to end slavery, the nation was perfect at birth, and states’ rights—not slavery—was the motivation behind Southern secession. Together, these interpretations deny the everyday reality of millions of today’s students—that the nation is not yet perfect and that racism and injustice still exist. This narrative also ignores the agency of people of color and denies the need for group action to promote social justice.

Beyond being false, these narratives are no longer persuasive to many of our students. Teaching the civil rights movement is essential to ensuring that American history is relevant to students in an increasingly diverse nation. Terrie Epstein’s research has shown that students enter classrooms with preexisting worldviews that differ, often dramatically, depending on race, ethnicity, class and other demographic factors. Students whose real-life experience suggests that history is being “white-washed” are unlikely to accept lessons to the contrary. These worldviews are very difficult to dislodge, especially when the standard narrative used to teach the civil rights movement is simplistic or distorted.

Students deserve to learn that individuals, acting collectively, can move powerful institutions to change.
What we know about civil rights movement instruction is not promising. We know that textbooks and core materials too often strip out context and richness to present a limited account of the movement. We know that no comprehensive content standards exist for teaching about the movement. We know that even the most experienced teachers of U.S. history tend to rush to the finish line once their courses pass World War II. In 2011, when we examined state requirements, we were shocked to learn that 16 states did not require any instruction at all about the civil rights movement. This year, we decided to dig deeper—in addition to identifying areas for improvement, we sought models for the rest of the nation.

This report continues our call for change. The United States has a civic and moral imperative to ensure that all children learn about the history of the civil rights movement. As Jeremy Stern notes, “Today’s students need to actively learn what older generations either lived through or experienced as a strong part of their cultural surroundings: Even basic knowledge of the civil rights movement cannot be taken for granted among today’s children.” As the movement recedes from recent memory into history, it is more important than ever to assess the state of learning and teaching about these quintessential American events.

For a decade, we have been in the midst of anniversaries, commemorations and memorials of the civil rights movement. As movement figures die or withdraw from the public sphere, the struggle for civil rights will recede from active memory into historical memory. While there has never been a unified understanding of the movement, the disappearance of key actors brings risks that its lessons will be simplified and ultimately lost to students and society.

In many ways, the civil rights movement has been separated from a “movement” for quite some time. Popular narratives create the impression that a small group of charismatic leaders, particularly Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., were primarily responsible for civil rights gains. Parks is justly venerated for her activism in triggering the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Yet too many depictions of her portray a lone woman who was simply tired and did not want to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. In reality, she was a trained participant in a well-organized social movement.

The reduction of the movement into simple fables obscures the broad social, institutional and personal sacrifices of the people who engaged in the struggle. The King-and-Parks-centered narrative limits what we teach students about the range of possible political action. Students deserve to learn that individuals, acting collectively, can make powerful institutions change.

We should be just as concerned that the civil rights movement will be recast in a conciliatory frame. “[T]here is a powerful tendency in the United States to depoliticize traditions for the sake of ‘reconciliation,’” writes historian Michael Kammen. “Memory is more likely to be activated by contestation, and amnesia is more likely to be induced by the desire for reconciliation.” Kammen observes that King’s image has been depoliticized, turning him in the eyes of the public from a radical antipoverty activist into a charismatic integrationist. Small wonder, then, that it is now commonplace for some politicians and media figures to use King’s words about a color-blind society as a wedge against expanded opportunities for people of color while drawing a curtain across contemporary injustices.

Teachers and textbooks routinely avoid conflict and controversial issues while creating what Terrie Epstein has called “sanitized versions” of important national events—slavery without enslavers, struggles for civil rights without racism and resistance—all culminating in a national triumph of good over evil. “As a consequence of teaching a disingenuous national history,” writes Epstein, “millions of young people leave the public schools knowing a nationalistic perspective but not believing it, while those who accept it have no framework for understanding racism and other forms of inequality today.”

Even as we face these pitfalls, we must do the best we can to teach the civil rights movement just as we teach other parts of American history. It is clear from our review that the civil rights movement is seen mainly as African-American or regional history. This view is profoundly misguided. Understanding the movement is essential to understanding American history. When students learn about the movement, they study more than a series of dates, names and actions. They learn about what it means to be American and come to appreciate the importance and difficulty of struggling against tyranny. We teach the civil rights movement to show that injustice can be overcome.
### Nine Notable State Resource Guides

1. **ALABAMA** The Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) indexes more than 200 resources for teaching the civil rights movement. The site ([alex.state.al.us/plans.php](http://alex.state.al.us/plans.php)) features many teacher-designed materials and materials from outside providers. These include dozens of lesson plans and podcasts as well as informational resources and activities provided by sponsoring partners. Teachers can create a personal workspace for storing and sharing lesson plans.

2. **LOUISIANA** The high school civil rights unit in Louisiana’s Comprehensive Curriculum ([www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/academic-curriculum/curriculum---social-studies-high-school-world-history-unit-9.doc?sfvrsn=2](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/academic-curriculum/curriculum---social-studies-high-school-world-history-unit-9.doc?sfvrsn=2)) is an outstanding resource for secondary teachers working to teach the movement. Multiple units link time-tested teaching strategies to movement ideas, figures and events. The lessons reach well beyond the traditional movement narrative, from the murder of Emmett Till to Watts and beyond. Throughout, the curriculum directs teachers to valuable resources available online, including many original historical documents.

3. **SOUTH CAROLINA** South Carolina’s Social Studies Support Document ([ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/61](http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/61)) should be required reading for anyone teaching the civil rights movement. In 1994, the South Carolina Department of Education published *African Americans and the Palmetto State* ([ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/61/documents/aapalmettostate.pdf](http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/61/documents/aapalmettostate.pdf)). At more than 250 pages, this book (available for free on the DOE’s website) is an extraordinary resource for teachers. Its coverage of the civil rights movement in South Carolina is well-constructed and engaging.

4. **GEORGIA** Georgia’s resources ([www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/Social-Studies.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/Social-Studies.aspx)) include “Share the Journey” packets for grades K-12. They are clearly linked to the Common Core, guiding teachers through detailed units. While they focus on the events of 1963, the “Share the Journey” lessons expand from the March on Washington to cover a broad view of the civil rights movement. They treat resistance to the movement in detail, particularly above the fifth grade. Two lessons use especially innovative connections to world history.

5. **MARYLAND** The Maryland State Department of Education’s partnership with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture has produced lessons across grade levels that are aligned with museum content. Some of the lessons are collected online ([www.msde.maryland.gov/msde/divisions/instruction/rfl_museum_md.htm](http://www.msde.maryland.gov/msde/divisions/instruction/rfl_museum_md.htm)). Several are movement-related. The lessons as a whole are excellent—most teachers could immediately use them in their classrooms.

6. **VIRGINIA** Virginia’s History and Social Science Enhanced Scope and Sequence (ESS) Sample Lesson Plans ([www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/history_socialscience/2008/lesson_plans/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/history_socialscience/2008/lesson_plans/index.shtml)) contain many useful lessons for teaching the movement. Additional resources are linked from the state’s History and Social Science Instruction Web page ([www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/resources.shtml#civilrights](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/history/resources.shtml#civilrights)). The resources include a variety of audio, video, print resources and lesson plans selected by the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Division of Legislative Services that help explain the civil rights movement as well as Virginia’s role in the movement and the impact of massive resistance in communities across the state.

7. **PENNSYLVANIA** Pennsylvania’s Standards Aligned System website ([www.pdesas.org](http://www.pdesas.org)) does an excellent job of clearly linking resources and supporting
materials to the state’s content standards. The site points teachers to many resources related to the civil rights movement. Even when those resources are outside the Pennsylvania site (for example, on a third-party provider like Thinkfinity), the SAS site clearly links resources to state standards and provides a summary of activities, allowing teachers to choose quickly among resources that might be useful to their specific lessons or student populations. The linked resources, in general, are high-quality. Many use original historical documents and encourage teachers to use those documents thoughtfully in the classroom.

8. NORTH CAROLINA North Carolina’s new K-12 Social Studies Unpacking Document (www.ncpublic-schools.org/acre/standards/support-tools/#unsocial) is an innovation in the construction of state curriculum frameworks. The document’s embedded hyperlinks lead teachers to an exceptionally rich and well-curated set of online resources for teaching the civil rights movement. They have an admirable emphasis on original historical documents, most linked to lesson plans and resources that teachers could easily adopt in their classrooms. The state’s sample unit for teaching the civil rights movement in eighth grade (ssnces.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Civil+Rights+Movement+Sample+Unit) is a good example for teachers in the middle grades. Finally, they offer a collection of suggested activities for students during and after field trips to civil rights museums (ssnces.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Civil+Rights+Movement+Museum+Activities). While not all teachers will have access to similar museums, these activities could be models for other local exhibits or repurposed for virtual museum tours now widely available online.

9. UTAH As part of the anniversary of the March on Washington, Utah has created some additional resources, including a timeline of events from 1954 into the 1970s, with links to specific events during each of those years (www.uen.org/core/socialstudies/civil). This is a rich and well-constructed resource for teachers that curates outside content in a dynamic environment. It is matched by the civil rights resources linked at the Utah Education Network’s “Themepark” (www.uen.org/themepark/liberty/civil-rights.shtml), where coverage expands far beyond the standard movement narrative and resources. In addition, Utah’s State Office of Education now offers an online course for teachers about the civil rights movement as part of an effort to provide substantial professional-development opportunities on this crucial time in U.S. history. The course covers major figures, events and groups in the struggle, including the activities of black and white Americans. This two-credit, eight-week course is unique in its breadth and ambition.
### TABLE 7

**Best of the Web: Online Resources for Teaching the Movement**

- **The National Archives** offers outstanding resources for teaching with original historical documents. The Teaching With Documents site ([www.archives.gov/education/lessons](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons)) includes many lessons aligned with original historical sources related to the civil rights movement. The Docs Teach site ([docs.teach.org](http://docs.teach.org)) offers an interactive tool for teachers to build their own activities using documents and timelines.

- **The Stanford History Education Group** collects inquiry-focused lessons to teach many eras of American and world history, including the civil rights movement. The Reading Like a Historian curriculum ([sheg.stanford.edu/rlh](http://sheg.stanford.edu/rlh)) is especially good for using original historical documents.

- **The Library of Congress** provides quality lessons and materials for teaching the civil rights movement. The site ([www.loc.gov/teachers](http://www.loc.gov/teachers)) is now searchable using the Common Core as well as state content standards by grade level, making them immediately accessible for any teacher. The Voices of the Civil Rights Movement project archives many oral histories ([www.loc.gov/exhibits/civilrights](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civilrights)).

- **Civil Rights Teaching** is a project of Teaching for Change. The resources section of their website ([civilrightsteaching.org](http://civilrightsteaching.org)) offers a number of high-quality lessons spanning grades and subject material. The site is designed to support the book *Putting the Movement Back Into Civil Rights Teaching*, but stands alone as a resource for teachers.

- **PBS Learning Media** helps teachers to find many excellent resources and lessons. They are searchable by Common Core standards and other criteria ([www.pbslearningmedia.org](http://www.pbslearningmedia.org)). There is an extensive collection of civil rights material. One page in particular ([www.pbs.org/teachers/thismonth/civilrights/index1.html](http://www.pbs.org/teachers/thismonth/civilrights/index1.html)) organizes lessons, resources and activities dealing with the civil rights movement in American literature.

- **The National Park Service** maintains several historic sites and offers information on places related to the civil rights movement that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places ([www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/)). Lessons and resources are offered as part of its Teaching with Historic Places program ([www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/feb00.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/feb00.htm)).
APPENDIX B Methodology

The methods we employed to grade the states in 2014 differ in two major ways from the 2011 report. First, we moved away from a “checklist” approach to the content standards and considered additional aspects of states’ major documents. Second, we also considered states’ supporting resources. As Table 2 (page 15) shows, major documents counted for 60 percent of a state’s score, with supporting resources counting for 40 percent.

THE MAJOR DOCUMENTS
Our examination of the major documents rated states in four areas: content, sequence, depth, and connections. The score in these areas made up 60 percent of a state’s final grade.

CONTENT
Our content analysis proceeded in two stages. First, we assigned scores to each state by comparing its standards and frameworks to the standardized rubric of content expectations developed for the 2011 report. (See page 133.) Next, we looked at aggregate levels of detail required overall in major documents across all states. The rubric allowed us to compare states to each other fairly, while the secondary analysis gave us a sense of both the breadth and the “middle” of state expectations regarding the civil rights movement.

Events and major figures in the civil rights movement were predominantly Southern, so it was important for this study to create a fair rubric that would not benefit states based solely on their geography. Most states, along with the District of Columbia, require a class or unit on state history. Students in Southern states might, in theory, be required to learn more about the civil rights movement than students in Western states. This study controls for that imbalance as much as possible.

The rubric in Table 18 was developed through closely reading a dozen of the most widely used American history textbooks over a variety of grade levels and in consultation with historians in the field. It evaluates states based on their required coverage of essential content as well as their integration of the civil rights movement into a larger instructional approach. We tried, with this rubric, to set out an approachable span of core knowledge that a competent citizen needs to gain a reasonably full understanding of the civil rights movement. It is neither complete nor exhaustive; rather, it represents an attempt to synthesize essential

About the Content Rubric

The greatest focus of this rubric is on specific content that students should know. We divided this content into six categories: leaders, groups, events, history (causes), opposition and tactics. States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 based on their content score, where 80 percent earned a score of 4, 60 percent a score of 3, 40 percent a score of 2, 20 percent a score of 1 and less than 20 percent a zero. Considered as part of our weighted rubric, essential content contributed to 15 percent of a state’s overall score.

Of necessity, the rubric is incomplete. In particular, it reflects a regional version of the civil rights movement which, while consistent with textbook and state versions of events, is increasingly at odds with more nuanced portrayals of the movement in modern scholarship. There is no dispute among historians that key activists and events happened outside the South. The rubric attempts to capture some of this by allowing states the freedom to name their own influential leaders, but the events category remains a hybrid of national and Southern tipping points.

Using the rubric, state standards and frameworks were read and assigned a value of 1 for each specific component included. For example, in the category dealing with movement leaders, states were given a 1 if they mentioned that students should learn about Martin Luther King Jr. and another 1 if they mentioned Rosa Parks. Thus a full list of movement leaders required by the states, collectively, was developed. States were coded a 0 or 1 for each leader depending on whether they required study of that leader. States received a score in each of the rubric’s categories. For example, in the leaders category, states were assigned a score based on the percentage of eight leaders they identified to be studied. If states identified six of the recommended eight, the raw score for leaders was 75 percent. The other categories (groups, events, history, opposition, tactics) were scored similarly, according to the items and accompanying weights in the rubric. Full coding for each state is found in Appendix A.
information while appreciating the time constraints faced by teachers.

SEQUENCE
We looked at sequencing at three levels. First, we wanted to see if states talked about the movement as something that expanded beyond the common “Memphis to Montgomery” timeline. The civil rights movement is both wider and longer than textbooks and standards often lead us to believe. Many state documents reflected this reach. Some states reached backward, linking the movement to the Great Migration and pioneers like W. E. B. Du Bois. Other states looked forward, discussing the “long hot summers” of the 1970s.

Second, we examined sequencing in the context of the arc of American history. We were interested to see if, and how, states made an effort to make sense of the civil rights movement in its broader historical context. States did this differently. Some states depicted the movement as part of a larger struggle for minority enfranchisement. Others framed the movement in terms of the tension between state and federal rights. Some made no effort here, listing the movement as one of many events occurring after World War II.

Finally, we looked at sequencing across grade levels to see when states introduced the civil rights movement and how the ideas progressed as students matured. States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 in this area. A score of 4 meant that a state was exceptional in one or more areas in addition to covering the others. Sequencing accounted for 15 percent of a state’s final grade.

DEPTH
For depth, the report assessed the way states’ major documents discussed three aspects of the civil rights movement. First, we wanted to know if the causes of the civil rights movement were clearly presented. Second, we were curious if the major documents were clear about the nature of resistance to the movement. This allowed us to include specific state reactions as well as other concepts like the Dixiecrats and Massive Resistance not captured in the content score. Finally, we looked at whether documents encouraged students to learn about conflicts within the civil rights movement. This meant going beyond including figures like Stokely Carmichael or Malcolm X in a list of “important figures.” States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 in this area. A score of 4 meant that a state was exceptional in one or more areas in addition to covering the others. Depth accounted for 15 percent of a state’s final grade.

CONNECTIONS
In the 2011 report, 15 percent of a state’s grade was based on the way its standards connected the civil rights movement to the broader context of students’ lived experience. This report has increased the emphasis. We graded connections made in the major documents in three ways. First, we looked at whether states connected the civil rights movement to present-day events. Second, we evaluated the connections made to civic education. Some states explicitly discuss the lessons of active citizenship that can be drawn from the civil rights movement; others embed discussion of key movement events and ideas in their civics and government standards. Others made no connections, leaving it up to teachers to connect the dots for their students. Finally, we looked at whether states made connections between the civil rights movement and other movements in the 21st century. For this area, it was not enough to simply mention the civil rights movement in a list of other struggles. Outstanding states made connections explicit or encouraged students to compare tactics, ideas and strategies. States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 in this area. A score of 4 meant that a state was exceptional in one or more areas in addition to covering the others. Connections accounted for 15 percent of a state’s final grade.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES
Our examination of supporting resources rated states in three areas. We looked at whether these resources were comprehensive, if they promoted historical thinking and how they were presented. The score in these areas accounted for 40 percent of a state’s final grade.

COMPREHENSIVE
State resources that were comprehensive crossed grade levels to reach students at different ages. They covered many aspects of the movement, reaching beyond the aspects covered in the major documents. Finally, comprehensive resources included several lesson and unit plans. States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 in this area. States that received a score of 4 had resources that reached beyond the norm, making the civil rights movement relevant to the state’s

* Our content rubric is necessarily limited. It tries to balance what is most likely being taught in the classroom with what should be taught in the classroom. Of necessity, this means that it still represents a much narrower understanding of the movement than that of professional movement historians.
Rubric Evaluating the Major Documents’ Coverage of the Civil Rights Movement

**Identify important leaders, groups and events in the civil rights movement. (60 percent)**

- Students should learn that the civil rights movement was a movement composed of many individuals and was not the initiative of any single person or small group of people. All students should learn about Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, but students should learn about at least six additional figures in the civil rights movement.

- Students should be able to identify major groups involved in the civil rights movement. These groups include CORE, SCLC and SNCC. Students should be able to explain the mission and accomplishments of each group as well as trace the relationships among groups.

- Students should be able to identify key events in the civil rights movement and place them in the correct chronology. These events include: *Brown v. Board of Education*, Little Rock, Freedom Rides, Montgomery Bus Boycott, 24th Amendment, Birmingham bombings and protests, March on Washington, 1964 Civil Rights Act, Freedom Summer, Selma-to-Montgomery March, 1965 Voting Rights Act, Watts and other uprisings, 1968 Civil Rights Act and assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. They should be able to identify the causes and consequences of these events, linking key figures and organizations to each event.

**Recognize the historical causes of the movement and opposition to its success. (20 percent)**

- Students should be able to trace the roots of the civil rights movement to slavery and disenfranchisement through the Civil War and Reconstruction. They should learn about Jim Crow laws, poll taxes and literacy tests. They should understand the complex causes of President Harry S. Truman’s decision to desegregate the U.S. military, including A. Philip Randolph’s role.

- Students should identify opposition to the civil rights movement’s success. They should learn the difference between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation and examine the extra-judicial enforcement of segregation through diverse tactics such as the formation of the White Citizens’ Councils and the Ku Klux Klan. Students should be able to identify key figures and groups opposing the extension of civil rights, including Bull Connor and one of the major opposing Southern governors (Orval Faubus, George Wallace or Ross Barnett).

**Identify movement tactics and explain differences of opinion about those tactics. (20 percent)**

Students should be able to explain the advantages and disadvantages of nonviolent resistance. They should trace its intellectual roots to Gandhi and Thoreau, discussing the role of civil disobedience in a democratic society. They should identify and compare tactics and ideas such as boycotts, sit-ins, marches, voter registration and Black Power, used at different times during the struggle for civil rights.
population. This item accounted for 13 percent of a state's final grade.

PROMOTION OF HISTORICAL THINKING
As in all study of history, the use of original historical documents is essential to develop a rich understanding of an era. When we examined state resources with this lens, we were looking at three dimensions. First, at the most basic level, we considered whether state resources promoted the use of original historical documents. Second, looking beyond promotion, we considered whether the resources were constructed to help teachers use original historical documents. Finally, we wanted to see whether the resources went beyond the traditional narrative about the civil rights movement. States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 in this area. States that scored a 4 had resources that promoted the thoughtful use of historical documents beyond the basics (i.e., “I Have a Dream” and “Letter From Birmingham Jail”). This item accounted for 13 percent of a state's final grade.

ACCESS AND PRESENTATION
It was not enough for a state to have outstanding resources. Teachers are pressed for time to find materials to add value to their instruction, so resources must be easy to browse and use. We assessed state resources in three ways here. First, materials should be easy to access online. Second, they should be clearly organized by grade and topic. Third, we wanted to see if materials were presented in a way that makes them easy to use. States were assigned a score of 0 to 4 in this area. States that scored a 4 had materials that were consistent in quality, employing best practices in lesson planning and unit design. This item accounted for 13 percent of a state's final grade.
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