Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Historical Inquiry - Civil Rights Unit**

*Civil Rights Movement Assessment*

|  |
| --- |
| **Guiding Question***Does LBJ deserve to be called the “Civil Rights President?”* |

**Document A- Lyndon B. Johnson’s Remarks upon Signing the Civil Rights Bill**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. What are the main ideas LBJ conveys in this speech? |
| 2. Would you consider this to be a trustworthy source when considering how to remember Lyndon B. Johnson? Why or why not? |
| 3. Claim #1: *Does LBJ deserve to be called the “Civil Rights President?”* |

**Document B- Adam Serwer- “Lyndon Johnson Was a Civil Rights Hero. But Also a Racist.”**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Based on this document, what argument can be made against LBJ being named the “Civil Rights President?”
 |
| 1. **When was this document written?** Is it fair to judge people from the past based on our present society’s values? Why or why not?
 |
| 1. How does this document compare to the information in document A? Does it change the way you think about LBJ?
 |
| 1. Hypothesis #2- *Does LBJ deserve to be called the “Civil Rights President?”*
 |

**Document C- Lies My Teacher Told Me, By James Loewen**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. What is the purpose of this document? (Read background information)
 |
| 1. What does the author say the problem is with the way that textbooks ‘remember’ events like the Civil Rights Movement?
 |
| 1. How does this document compare to the information in documents A and B? Does it change the way you think about the title, “Civil Rights President?” How?
 |
| 1. Final claim- *Does LBJ deserve to be called the “Civil Rights President?”*
 |

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Civil Rights Memorial**

**Directions**: You have been selected to serve on the Civil Rights Memorial Committee in Danbury, CT. The city of Danbury has decided to honor civil rights progress from the past, and the mayor has asked the committee to determine the best way to commemorate the Civil Rights Movement. Based on the documents you have read and your understanding of the civil rights movement, **write a response to the mayor explaining what you think should be on the monument, and draw what you think the actual monument should look like below.**



**Memorial Rationale**

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**Rubric:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expectations | Exceeds (A) | Meets (B) | Approaches (C) | Doesn’t meet (D-F) |
| How will you be graded? | - Writing clearly and persuasively justifies who and what appears on the monument.- Symbols and/or people on the monument are relevant and nuanced- Entire space on memorial is utilized, color is used and effort is strong. | - Writing justifies who and what appears on the monument.- Symbols and/or people on the monument are relevant - Entire space on memorial is utilized, color is used and effort is apparent. | - Writing explains who and what appears on the monument.- Symbols and/or people on the monument are mostly relevant, bot not original - Most of the space on memorial is utilized, color is used and effort is fair. | -Writing does not provide a rationale or is incomplete.- Symbols and/or people are vague or irrelevant.- Part of the space on memorial is utilized, color is not, used and effort is lacking. |

**Document A**

[PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES](https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches) | LYNDON B. JOHNSON PRESIDENCY

## July 2, 1964: Remarks upon Signing the Civil Rights Bill

My fellow Americans:
I am about to sign into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I want to take this occasion to talk to you about what that law means to every American.

Americans of every race and color have died in battle to protect our freedom.

Americans of every race and color have worked to build a nation of widening opportunities. Now our generation of Americans has been called on to continue the unending search for justice within our own borders.

We believe that all men are created equal. Yet many are denied equal treatment.
We believe that all men have certain unalienable rights. Yet many Americans do not enjoy those rights.

We believe that all men are entitled to the blessings of liberty. Yet millions are being deprived of those blessings—not because of their own failures, but because of the color of their skin.

The reasons are deeply imbedded in history and tradition and the nature of man. We can understand—without rancor or hatred—how this all happened.

But it cannot continue. Our Constitution, the foundation of our Republic, forbids it. The principles of our freedom forbid it. Morality forbids it. And the law I will sign tonight forbids it.

That law is the product of months of the most careful debate and discussion. It was proposed more than one year ago by our late and beloved President John F. Kennedy. It received the bipartisan support of more than two-thirds of the Members of both the House and the Senate. An overwhelming majority of Republicans as well as Democrats voted for it.

It has received the thoughtful support of tens of thousands of civic and religious leaders in all parts of this Nation. And it is supported by the great majority of the American people.

The purpose of the law is simple.
It does not restrict the freedom of any American, so long as he respects the rights of others…

Let us close the springs of racial poison. Let us pray for wise and understanding hearts. Let us lay aside irrelevant differences and make our Nation whole. Let us hasten that day when our unmeasured strength and our unbounded spirit will be free to do the great works ordained for this Nation by the just and wise God who is the Father of us all.

Thank you and good night.

**Document B**

Source: “Lyndon Johnson Was a Civil Rights Hero. But Also a Racist.” By Adam Serwer. MSNBC 2009 <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/lyndon-johnson-civil-rights-racism>

*Teacher’s note: Readers may find some language included to be offensive.* **[Reading offensive language aloud in class is not allowed]**

Lyndon Johnson said the word “n\*\*\*\*\*” a lot.

In Senate cloakrooms and staff meetings, Johnson was practically a connoisseur of the word. [According to Johnson biographer Robert Caro](http://www.amazon.com/Master-Of-The-Senate-Johnson/dp/0394720954), Johnson would calibrate his pronunciations by region, using “nigra” with some southern legislators and “negra” with others. Discussing civil rights legislation with men like Mississippi Democrat James Eastland, who committed most of his life to defending white supremacy, he’d simply call it “the n\*\*\*\*\* bill.”

The Civil Rights Act made it possible for Johnson to smash Jim Crow. The Voting Rights Act made the U.S. government accountable to its black citizens and a true democracy for the first time. Johnson lifted racist immigration restrictions designed to preserve a white majority – and by extension white supremacy. He forced FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, then more concerned with “communists” and civil rights activists, to turn his attention to crushing the Ku Klux Klan. Though [the Fair Housing Act](http://www.propublica.org/article/living-apart-how-the-government-betrayed-a-landmark-civil-rights-law)never fulfilled its promise to end residential segregation, it was another part of a massive effort to live up to the ideals America’s founders only halfheartedly believed in – a record surpassed only by Abraham Lincoln.

So it would be tempting, on the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, as Johnson is being celebrated by no less than four living presidents, to dismiss Johnson’s racism as mere [code-switching](http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2013/04/08/176064688/how-code-switching-explains-the-world) – a clever ploy from an uncompromising racial egalitarian whose idealism was matched only by his political ruthlessness.

But that wouldn’t be true. Johnson was a man of his time, and bore those flaws as surely as he sought to lead the country past them. For two decades in Congress he was a reliable member of the Southern bloc, helping to stonewall civil rights legislation. As Caro recalls, Johnson spent the late 1940s railing against the “hordes of barbaric yellow dwarves” in East Asia. Buying into the stereotype that blacks were afraid of snakes (who isn’t afraid of snakes?) he’d drive to gas stations with one in his trunk and try to trick black attendants into opening it. Once, Caro writes, the stunt nearly ended with him being beaten with a tire iron.

**Document C**

Source: Lies My Teacher Told Me, By James Loewen

*Background: This excerpt from Loewen’s book Lies My Teacher Told Me, is from the chapter “Watching Big Brother.” In this chapter, Loewen explains how history textbooks tend to glamorize the government’s role in creating positive change.*

Not only do textbooks fail to blame the federal government for its opposition to the civil rights movement, many actually credit the government, almost single-handedly, for the advances made during the period. In so doing, text- books follow what we might call the Hollywood approach to civil rights. To date Hollywood's main feature film on the movement is Alan Parker's *Mississippi Burning.* In that movie, the three civil rights workers get killed in the first five minutes; for the rest of its two hours the movie portrays not a single civil rights worker or black Mississippian over the age of twelve with whom the viewer could possibly identify… In reality… supporters of the civil rights movement… pressured Congress and the executive branch of the federal government to force the FBI to open a Mississippi office and make bringing the murderers to justice a priority. Meanwhile, Hoover tapped Schwerner's father's telephone to see if he might be a communist! Everyone in eastern Mississippi knew for weeks who had committed the murder and that the Neshoba County deputy sheriff was involved. No innovative police work was required; the FBI finally apprehended the conspirators after bribing one of them with $30,000 to testify against the others.

American history textbooks offer a Parkerlike analysis of the entire civil rights movement. Like the arrests of the Mississippi Klansmen, advances in civil rights are simply the result of good government. Federal initiative in itself "explains" such milestones as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. John F. Kennedy proposed them, Lyndon Baines Johnson passed them through Congress, and thus we have them today. Or, in the immortal passive voice of *American History,* "Another civil rights measure, the Voting Rights Act, was passed." Several textbooks even reverse the time order, putting the bills first, the civil rights movement later. Only *American Adventures* and *Discovering American History* show the basic dynamics of the civil rights movement: African Americans, often with white allies, challenged an unjust law or practice in a nonviolent way, which then incited whites to respond barbarically to defend "civilization," in turn appalling the nation and convincing some people to change the law or practice. Only the same two books celebrate the courage of the civil rights volunteers…

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| Extension Card**Consider the following:*** How should LBJ’s racism be considered when writing the plaque? Should we be able to judge his behavior based on our present day values?
* Consider the fact that the government tends to take more credit than it sometimes should for advances in civil rights. How might this impact the way you write the plaque?
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| Scaffold Card **Consider the following:*** What things did LBJ do for civil rights when he was president?
* Look back at each hypothesis you wrote. What evidence did you use to come to your conclusions? How can you use that evidence to help you write the memorial plaque?
 |