



Bloody Sunday: Lesson Plan

Topic	
<p>Bloody Sunday took place on March 7, 1965, when about 600 demonstrators attempted to march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capitol in Montgomery. They were protesting the recent death of protester Jimmie Lee Jackson and rampant voter suppression in Alabama. Authorities halted the march by beating and tear-gassing peaceful protesters. Bloody Sunday roused national outrage about voter suppression in the South and increased support for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.</p>	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. History• Civics• Government	30 - 45 min
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/bloody-sunday-march-7-1965-marching-for-the-right-to-vote/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain what Bloody Sunday was.• Discuss the events that led to Bloody Sunday.• Discuss the effects of Bloody Sunday.	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Martin Luther King Jr., Jimmie Lee Jackson, tear gas	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet, Student Internet Access	
Before you watch	



Show students [this video](#) of Bloody Sunday (0:00 - 3:33). Take a few minutes to discuss their reactions and answer any preliminary questions.

While you watch

Answer questions 1 - 3 on the Worksheet.

After you watch/discussion questions

1. Why was it especially poignant that the footage of Bloody Sunday interrupted a movie about the Nazis? Why did this juxtaposition prompt outrage from many Americans at the situation in Selma?
2. Why do you think protesters did not fight back against the state troopers?
3. Why was it important to African Americans that they gain the right to vote? Why did Alabama law enforcement try so hard to suppress that right?

Activity Ideas

- The Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of Bloody Sunday, is named after a former Confederate general and member of the Ku Klux Klan. For years, there has been a debate about whether to rename it: some believe that the name is an important acknowledgment of the racial hatred in America's history. Others argue that it is time we stop honoring KKK members and Confederate leaders through memorials. Have students research the debate, including the 2015 and 2020 movements to rename it. Have them write a short response explaining different perspectives and discussing how the debate has evolved over the past few years.
- The Selma march, and the protesters' refusal to use violence in response to the brutality of Alabama state troopers, is only one example of peaceful demonstrations during the civil rights movement. Choose another protest and answer the Worksheet questions about it. Some potential protests are the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 1963 Birmingham Campaign, and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Sources/places to learn more

1. History.com Editors. "Selma to Montgomery March." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 28 Jan. 2010, www.history.com/topics/black-history/selma-montgomery-march.
2. Kindig, Jessie. "Bloody Sunday Protest March, Selma, Alabama, March 7, 1965 ." *Black Past*, 22 Aug. 2019,



www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/bloody-sunday-selma-alabama-march-7-1965/.

3. Klein, Christopher. "How Selma's 'Bloody Sunday' Became a Turning Point in the Civil Rights Movement." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 6 Mar. 2015,
www.history.com/news/selma-bloody-sunday-attack-civil-rights-movement.
4. "Selma to Montgomery March." *The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute*, 27 June 2018,
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/selma-montgomery-march>.