

“GLORY” AND THE CONTINUING CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Est. Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, General Music, SEL

Age Range: All Ages


See the full lesson [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



How does the song “Glory” by Common and John Legend reflect the Civil Rights Movement and the times we are living in today?

In this lesson, you will:

- Learn about the Selma Civil Rights March
 - Understand the motivations behind the song “Glory”
 - Reflect upon the similarities between the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter movements
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Released in 2014, the movie *Selma* documents the landmark political marches from Selma, Alabama, to the state's capital, Montgomery, which occurred in 1965.

This event was pivotal in the American Civil Rights Movement and directly led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prohibited racial discrimination in voting.



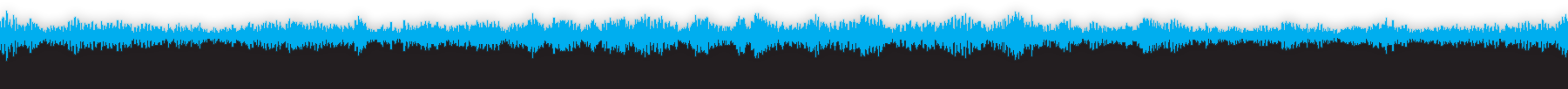


SELMA 1965

To learn more about the historic Civil Rights March on Selma, watch [this video](#).



Consider or ask a friend:


- Why were these people marching? What happened the first time they tried to march?
 - Civil Rights Activists first attempted to march on March 7, 1965. Based on what you saw in the video, who prevented these people from peacefully marching? How did they stop the marchers?
 - A second march was attempted on March 9th, which resulted in Dr. King and the marchers being turned back after kneeling in prayer. Who prevented them from completing the march? Why do you think they decided to bow in prayer as a response?
 - The third time they attempted to march on March 21st, the activists were protected by federal troops and arrived in Montgomery four days later. Who were the federal troops protecting the marchers from?
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Jimmie Lee Jackson

The Selma to Montgomery marches were organized in response to the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson.


Jackson was a deacon and activist. During a peaceful protest march in 1965, Jackson, other activists, and journalists covering the event were beaten by police officers.





Jackson and his mother attempted to flee to a nearby cafe. They were followed by state trooper James Bonard Fowler, who shot Jackson twice. Shortly before dying in the hospital, Jackson was served an arrest warrant.


The police officer, James Bonard Fowler, was indicted 42 years later and was sentenced to six months in prison.



Amelia Boynton Robinson

During the first attempt to march to Selma, activist Amelia Boynton Robinson was beaten unconscious by police officers, and had throat burns due to tear gas.





A photograph of Robinson laying unconscious galvanized Americans on the issue of civil rights, and helped lead to the Voting Rights Act. Robinson was invited as a guest of honor when the Voting Rights Act was signed into law.

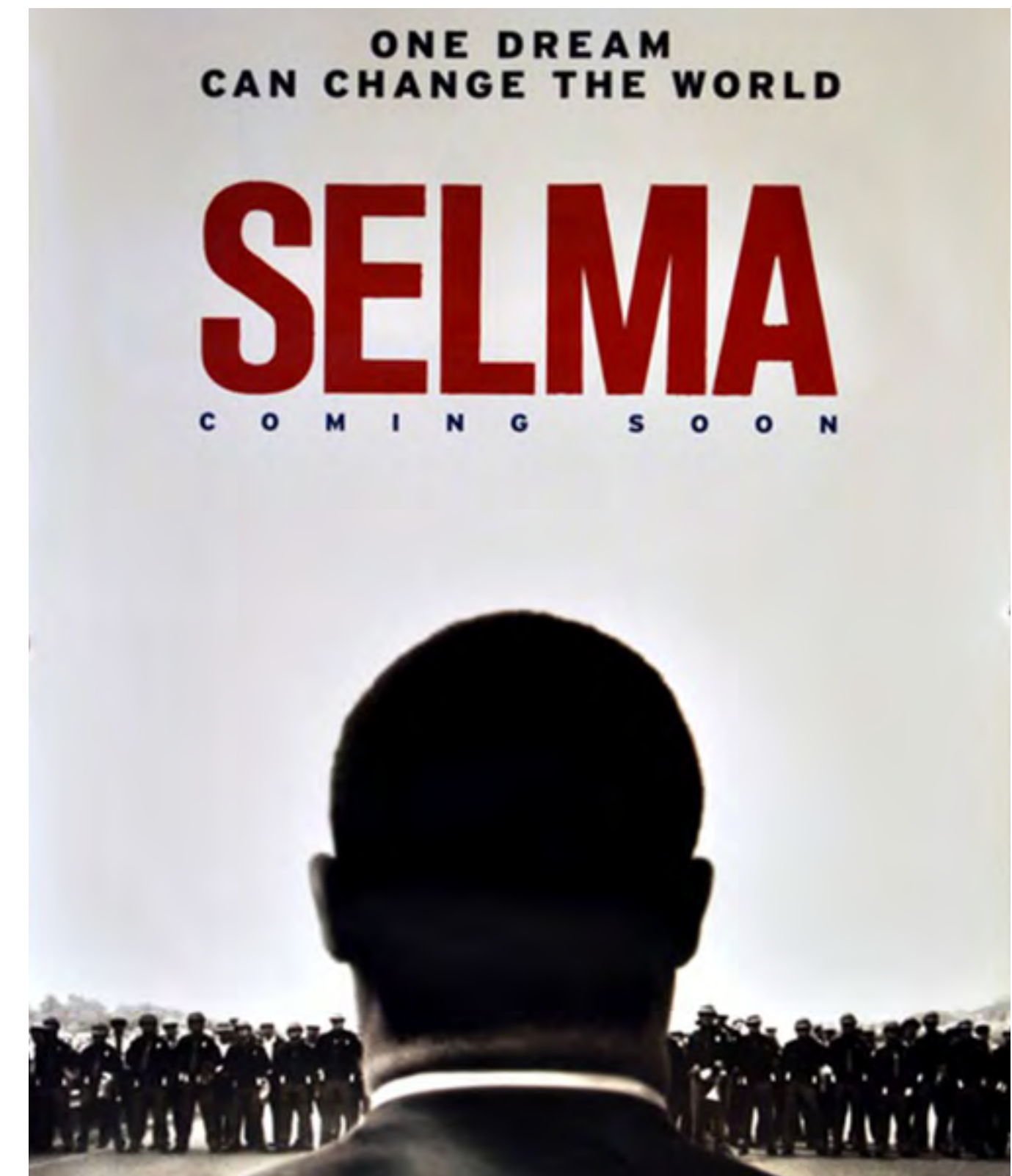
No police officers were indicted for beating Amelia Boynton Robinson.



The movie *Selma* helped younger generations understand this historic march.

The film's director, Ava DuVernay, states:

“With *Selma* we were hoping to illuminate the nuance of [Dr. King's] approach, his theory, his humanity. To take him down off that pedestal and break that marble open and really understand that he was an ordinary man who did great things.”



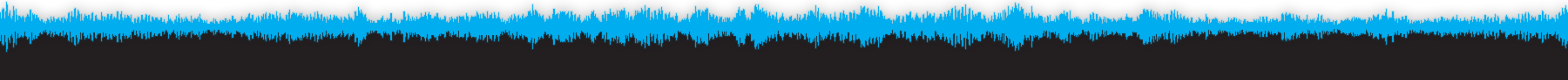


GLORY

Musician Common was asked to compose a song for the film Selma. He enlisted the help of John Legend. Watch [this video](#) and think about how the Civil Rights Movement is portrayed through the music, tone, and lyrics of “Glory”.



Consider or ask a friend:

- Do you think that this song represents the Selma March of 1965?
 - Does this song also feel important today? If so, in what ways?
 - How did the imagery in the video affect the tone of this song?
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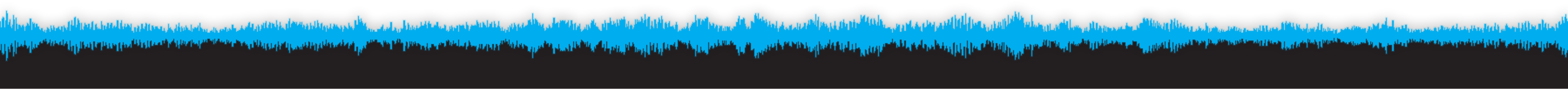
Though the movie *Selma* is about events that happened over 50 years ago, the ideas that Dr. King and the Marchers peacefully protested for are still important to us today.


Watch [this video](#) in which the founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, Alicia Garza, explains what the movement is and is not about.






Consider or ask a friend:

- How does founder Alicia Garza describe the Black Lives Matter Movement's position on the police?
 - What types of change does Alicia Garza say that Black Lives Matter hopes to bring about for people of color?
 - How does Alicia Garza say that we can affect change for a better future?
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The Black Lives Matter Movement began in 2013, but these ideas were being promoted by Dr. Martin Luther King over 50 years ago. **Watch Dr. King speak** to a huge crowd in Montgomery at the conclusion of the Selma March.





Consider or ask a friend:

- How are Dr. King's words similar to those of Alicia Garza?
 - Why do you think Black Lives Matter is important today?
 - In your opinion, why is it taking so long to see these important changes happen in our American Culture?
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The words of people who are cultural leaders and those who are trying to affect change are important.

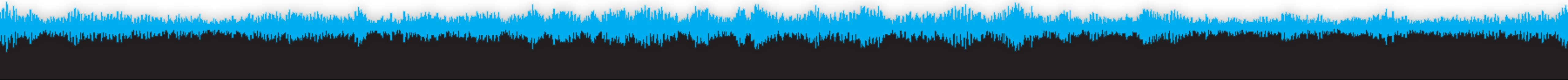
Compare the words of Dr. King, Alicia Garza, and John Legend and Common using **this document**.

Create a Text Map to highlight the connections that you find in these primary source documents by following the directions.





Consider or ask a friend:

- What similarities did you notice when you created your text map?
 - Which words did you see in all three documents?
 - How are these three documents similar? How are they different?
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SUMMARY

- The Selma Civil Rights March took place in 1965, in response to the killing of an unarmed black man by a police officer
- The Black Lives Matter Movement was organized after the man who killed Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager, was acquitted of murder
- The Civil Rights Marches ultimately led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed acts of discrimination against voters

SUMMARY

- The song “Glory” was composed for the 2014 movie Selma, which documented the historic Civil Rights March
- The Civil Rights Movement, which began in the 1960’s, is still alive today. The Black Lives Matter movement seeks an end to police violence, and a positive and equal world for people of color



BE CREATIVE

Make a Poster: Use the words that you highlighted and the connections that you made in your Text Map to create a colorful poster that demonstrates your understanding of this lesson.

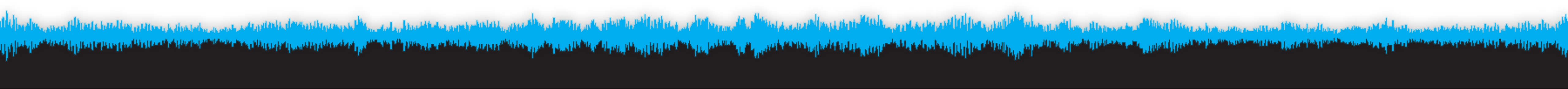


BE CREATIVE

Do some research on the protests that occurred in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

Then create two journal entries: Imagine that you participated in the Selma Civil Rights March. Write a journal entry from your perspective as a marcher. Then write a journal entry from the perspective of someone who is marching to protest the killing of George Floyd in 2020.

Compare and contrast the ways the police have responded in both of the events.



BE CURIOUS

Explore other TeachRock Lessons that relate to this topic:

- **“Alright” and the History of Black Protest Songs**
- **The Music of the Civil Rights Movement**
- **#BlackLivesMatter: Music in a Movement**



CONNECT

Share with us! Either you or an adult in your life can share your poster, your journal entries, or your documentary with TeachRock on **Instagram** or **Facebook**, email to **info@teachrock.org**, or Tweet it to **@TeachRock**



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