

THE STONEWALL RIOTS IN THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

Est. Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: History/Social Studies

Age Range: Elementary & Middle School

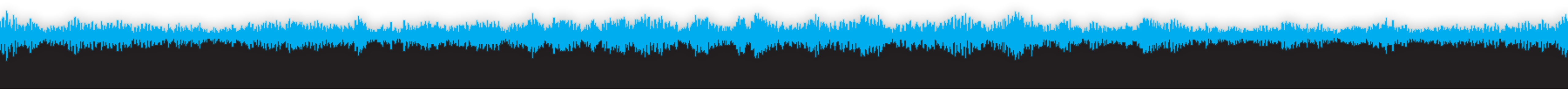
See the full lesson [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



What were the Stonewall Riots, and why were they an important moment in the fight for equality in the United States?

In this lesson, you will:

- Recognize the historical significance of the Stonewall Inn
 - Trace the circumstances that led to the Stonewall Riots, and their lasting effects
 - Connect the Stonewall Riots with the Women's Rights and Civil Rights Movements
 - Investigate the historic importance of the Seneca Falls Conference and the Selma to Montgomery March
 - Listen to Sylvester's "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)" and consider its connection to the Gay Liberation Movement
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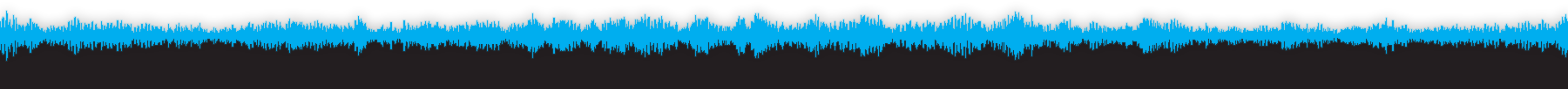



SENECA FALLS, SELMA, STONEWALL

Watch [this clip](#) of President Barack Obama's second inaugural address.



Consider or ask a friend:

- What is an inaugural address?
 - Based on what you saw in the clip, why might have this speech been historically important?
 - In the speech, President Obama lists “Seneca Falls,” “Selma,” and “Stonewall” as moments in the fight toward freedom and equality. Do you know what occurred at Seneca Falls, Selma, and Stonewall?
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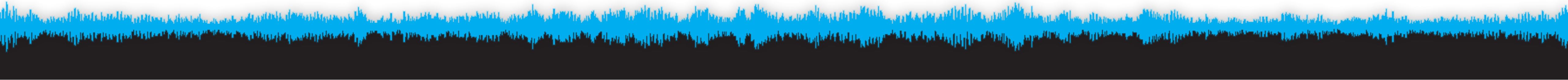
In the following slides, you will see images from the Seneca Falls Convention, the Selma-Montgomery Marches, and a march following the Stonewall Riots.

Can you determine what happened at Seneca Falls, Selma, and Stonewall by just looking at images?





Some things to pay attention to in each image:

- What is the event being represented in the image?
 - Who are the people featured in this photograph?
 - How does the clothing worn by these people help you to identify the time period of each photo?
 - What written messages do you see in the image? Are there any words you don't know yet?
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Seneca Falls Convention




Selma to Montgomery Marches



Gay Rights Protesters





On a piece of paper, write down what you think might have been important about the Seneca Falls Convention, the Selma to Montgomery Marches, and the Gay Liberation Movement.

Then consider how each event might have been similar and different.





Seneca Falls Convention

The Seneca Falls Convention occurred in 1848, and was the first Woman's Rights convention in U.S. history. The people present demanded women receive equal rights to vote, be educated, and participate in society. It is important to note that often Black women were not considered in these demands.

Women activists continued to fight for the right to vote after the convention. In 1917, 16 women were arrested for obstructing traffic during a protest. They were sent to jail, where their brutal treatment by guards created a national outcry.

Three years later, in 1920, the 19th Amendment was written into The Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote.





Selma to Montgomery Marches

In March 1965, over 3,500 Civil Rights activists joined Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., on a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama to demand voting rights for African Americans.

It was the third attempt to march peacefully in protest - the first two were violently stopped by the police.

Five months later, the Voting Rights Act was signed into law, prohibiting racial discrimination in voting.






Stonewall

Throughout American history LGBTQ+ people did not receive the same rights as other Americans.

Being “outed” as LGBTQ+ often meant losing your job, being persecuted by the police, or being continually harassed and made fun of. This still happens in many places in the United States today.





Stonewall

The Stonewall Inn in New York City was one of the places considered “safe” for LGBTQ+ people to be together.

But it was still regularly invaded by the New York City Police Department, which often harassed the people at The Stonewall Inn.



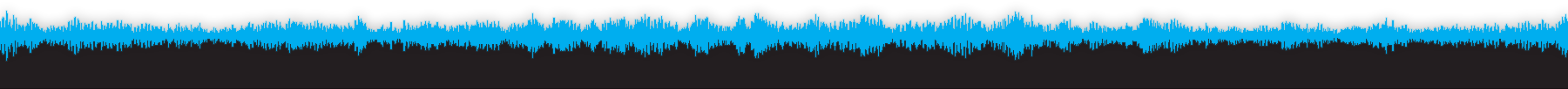


STONEWALL

Watch [this video](#) on how the Stonewall Inn became a site for a rebellion in 1969.



Consider or ask a friend:

- David Carter mentions that the Stonewall Inn was frequented by “street kids” and “gay runaways.” Why do you think LGBTQ+ young people ran away from home? Why might they be homeless?
 - According to the clip, what set off the riot at the Stonewall Inn?
 - What might David Carter mean when he says the police raid that night “touched something in the collective unconscious”?
 - What do you think Mark Segal means when he says the police officers “became society” that night? Why were police officers locked inside the Stonewall Inn?
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The Stonewall Riots set off the Gay Liberation movement, which demanded that LGBTQ+ people have the right to live openly without persecution, and with the same rights as other citizens.




For many activists, Disco became the soundtrack to the Gay Liberation movement. Particularly the music of Sylvester.

Watch an excerpt of [this video](#) on the meaning Sylvester's music had for LGBTQ+ following the Stonewall Riots.





Consider or ask a friend:

- According to the clip, why was it important to mix political activity with music and dance?
 - What about the song “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)” might make it an anthem for LGBTQ+ activists?
 - How might Sylvester’s self-presentation be seen as empowering?
 - What might the message be to the line “you make me feel mighty real?”
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SUMMARY

- In American society, LGBTQ+ people continue to face persecution from the police and government, and are often not protected from harassment by fellow citizens
- Similar to the Seneca Falls and Selma-Montgomery marches, the Stonewall Riots were an event that awakened many people to the persecution a marginalized group in America faces
- Musical artists like Sylvester played a pivotal role in empowering and inspiring LGBTQ+ activists after Stonewall

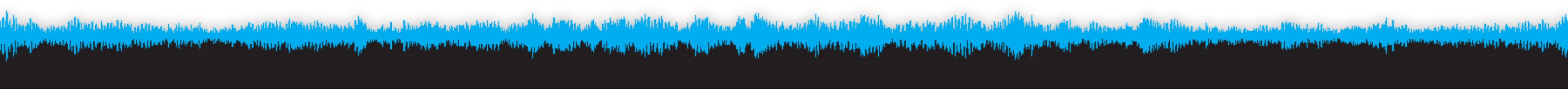
BE CREATIVE

- Who are some important people where you live who deserve to be recognized with a monument? Choose an important person in your city or town's history and write a letter to your elected representatives arguing why that person should be recognized.
- Imagine that you are a reporter sharing the news about one of these historic events. Write an imaginary news article, including facts about the event and documenting your reactions.



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