

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Learning Goals

MISSION US: “No Turning Back”

“No Turning Back” provides rich content, context, and learning experiences to students. In addition to supporting the standards listed in the National Standards Alignment document, the game has also been constructed to help students achieve the following learning goals:

MISSION US OVERALL LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Learn the story of America and the ways Americans struggled to realize the ideals of liberty and equality.
- Understand the role of ordinary men and women—including young people—in history.
- Develop historical thinking skills that increase historical understanding and critical perception.

“NO TURNING BACK” LEARNING GOALS

Set in Mississippi of the early 1960s, “No Turning Back” presents daily life under de jure segregation and voter intimidation in the South. African Americans in the South lived under a system of white supremacy known as “Jim Crow.” This system, based on law as well as custom, limited access to education, jobs, healthcare, severely restricted voting and access to legal and political systems, and used violent terrorism to intimidate Black Southerners. In the North, Black people lived with de facto segregation and economic discrimination, which limited their opportunities in housing, jobs, higher education, and healthcare. Despite these challenges, even under Jim Crow, African Americans created diverse and vibrant communities with strong churches, businesses, schools, and social organizations that provided social and emotional support and became the institutional base for ultimately challenging white supremacy.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a local grassroots struggle emerged across the South, in many cases led by young people who engaged in mass protest and organized Black communities using canvassing for voter registration, Citizenship School classes, and mass meetings to challenge the Jim Crow system. Their protests both built upon and accelerated the national Black freedom struggle that African American individuals and organizations had pursued since the Civil War.

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Amid the constant threat of economic retaliation and violence against anyone who challenged the racial status quo, civil rights activists and ordinary citizens developed strategies and campaigns to attain first class citizenship initially through opposing segregation and fighting for voting rights, but also seeking full human rights and economic opportunity. The movement brought about significant social, legal and cultural changes in the country, but did not end racial inequality or injustice.

Historical Thinking Skills:

Students will be able to use the game to develop the following historical thinking skills:

- *Turning Points* (events and decisions with significant impact)
- *Using the Past* (civil rights struggles, now and then)
- *Through their Eyes* (lived experience of Jim Crow and civil rights activism)

Historical thinking involves the ability to understand how past events have multiple causes and effects and explain the relationships among historical events. Historical thinking also requires the capacity to recognize how people in the past viewed their world and how those worldviews influenced their choices. In MISSION 7, students in the role of Verna Baker will experience the challenges of daily life under Jim Crow and encounter a range of responses from individuals, community leaders, and organizations to the racial injustices. The player takes part in the process of organizing a mass movement for voting rights.

By playing the game and completing the accompanying lessons, students will develop skills in: “using the past” to understand racial injustice then and now; understand the past “through the eyes” of those who took action to organize a movement to confront injustice; and analyze “cause and effect” and “turning points” in history. Specifically, students should be able to:

- Identify how the history of white supremacy, racial discrimination, Jim Crow laws, economic inequality, and violence against African Americans, in the 1960s impacted the daily lives of African Americans and shaped the Civil Rights Movement.
- Understand that Civil Rights Movement participants faced organized forms of terror, intimidation, and both physical and economic coercion to restrict their movements and actions.

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- Recognize that thousands of ordinary people, including young adults, teenagers, and children, played critical roles in the Civil Rights Movement.

| Historical Understandings | Key Related Vocabulary and Mission Events |
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| <p>African American struggles for equality predated the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and continue to the present.</p> <p>African American men and women served in the U.S. military during World War II and many returned to civilian life determined to challenge discrimination and legal segregation at home.</p> <p>By the 1940s and into the 1960s, changes in southern agriculture and opportunities in war industries encouraged a "Second Great Migration" of African Americans out of the rural South to northern and western cities.</p> | <p>Verna's grandparents were involved with the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).</p> <p>Verna's father, Robert's father, and Greenwood residents Mr. Lewis and Mr. Robinson (the pharmacist) were in the military in World War II.</p> <p>Robert's family migrated to Chicago after World War II.</p> <p>Vocabulary: UNIA, Double-V Campaign, migration, Negro</p> |
| <p>Jim Crow laws and customs restricted Black residents' access to schools, health care, restaurants, movie theaters and other public spaces.</p> | <p>Verna's grandfather could not go to the closest hospital. Schools in Mississippi are still segregated and unequal notwithstanding the Brown v Board of Ed. decision. Verna's experiences while walking and shopping in Greenwood with her cousin Addie.</p> <p>Vocabulary: segregation, integration, Jim Crow</p> |

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| <p>Even under Jim Crow, African Americans created diverse and vibrant communities with strong churches, businesses, newspapers and social organizations that provided social, cultural, and emotional support.</p> | <p>Verna's grandparents helped set up a school bus service. In Greenwood, Verna meets small business owners, active church members, and NAACP members. She can purchase Black periodicals. The NAACP meeting she attends is at a Black Elks Lodge.</p> <p>Vocabulary: diaspora, <i>Chicago Defender</i>, blues, gospel music, NAACP, Medgar Evers</p> |
| <p>Southern African Americans faced legal discrimination, were denied the right to vote and received no protection from or recourse to the police or court system. In Mississippi during this time, African Americans who tried to stand up for their economic or political rights were subject to arrest, beating and other physical violence, humiliation, loss of jobs and ability to gain work for the whole family, loss of public assistance (such as food), loss of land, animals, or other property, and even murder.</p> | <p>Emmett Till was lynched, but even with national publicity, two of the people responsible were acquitted. Rev. Starling suffers the loss of his taxi business for signing a petition to integrate the local public high school after the <i>Brown</i> decision. Fannie Lou Hamer is driven off her land and attacked for attempting to register. Wendell McNeal (based on a real 14-year-old boy, Welton McSwine, Jr.) is arrested and beaten without justification. Medgar Evers and three Freedom Summer volunteers are lynched for their involvement in voting rights work.</p> <p>Vocabulary: white supremacy, lynchings, Emmett Till</p> |

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| <p>In 1960, student-led activism emerged across the South with sit-ins, stand-ins, boycotts, and other organized nonviolent breaches of segregation norms.</p> <p>By spring 1961, the nationally organized Freedom Rides became headline news across the country, dramatizing the federal government's reluctance to enforce non-discrimination rulings for interstate commerce. Black activists and their white allies were willing to directly challenge racist policies by risking their bodies and lives.</p> | <p>Verna and Robert follow news about the student-led sit-ins and the Freedom Rides.</p> <p>At the Chalmers' dinner Verna overhears white reactions to the Freedom Riders.</p> <p>Verna reads article clippings from the <i>Chicago Defender</i>.</p> <p>Vocabulary: boycotts, civil rights, Freedom Riders, human rights, sit-ins</p> |
| <p>The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC's) mostly college-aged activists arrived in the Mississippi Delta and used grassroots organizing to challenge white supremacy through voter registration work, building leadership among "ordinary people." Many Mississippians lived in fear for their livelihood and safety and were hesitant to join or even to be seen with SNCC activists. Nevertheless, SNCC organizers did not leave and continued to focus on voter registration in Greenwood and in surrounding areas where literacy tests, the power of white supremacist registrars, and harassment meant few African Americans had been allowed to register to vote.</p> | <p>Verna meets and works with Sam Block.</p> <p>Uncle Curtis and Aunt Mable are reluctant to become involved with the Civil Rights Movement for fear of losing their jobs or church.</p> <p>Verna canvasses Greenwood residents about their willingness to come to a SNCC-run citizenship class.</p> <p>Vocabulary: SNCC, mass meeting, canvassing, literacy test</p> |

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| <p>Civil Rights Movement activists and participants faced strong resistance from white individuals and organizations, including some that received funding from the state government. The resistance took a wide range of forms including threats of intimidation, job loss, eviction from homes, and violent attacks.</p> | <p>Verna's aunt and uncle fear for their jobs and livelihood. Verna overhears whites opposing integration and voting rights. Verna's friend Wendell is beaten by police. A SNCC-led group going to register to vote is followed by white men in a car without license plates. The businesses next to the SNCC office are set on fire.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Citizens' Councils, KKK, Klan, white supremacists</p> |
| <p>In retaliation for SNCC's civil rights organizing, white officials suspended most eligibility for the government food commodities program in Leflore County, Mississippi, removing a subsistence food benefit that many sharecroppers were reliant on to survive the winter. In response, SNCC established their own welfare system with donations of food and clothing from northern supporters (individuals, churches, and other organizations) and made explicit the connection between the right to food for survival and voting rights. This campaign also demonstrated SNCC's national scope.</p> | <p>Robert is part of the effort to collect food and clothing and bring it to Greenwood.</p> <p>Verna and Robert help distribute food and clothing.</p> <p>Vocabulary: food surplus, commodities</p> |