

Stepping into the Picture of the Selma to Montgomery March

By Renee Semik

Introduction:

This lesson uses the “Stepping into the Picture” teaching strategy to help students learn about the events that occurred before, during, and after the Selma to Montgomery March for voting rights. The idea of “Stepping into the Picture” is to use primary sources to allow the story of an event to be told through words, photos, and actions of actors/actresses from the classroom. At pivotal moments in the story, the screen displaying images and words freezes in time while students act out what is happening or is about to happen. This activity can take place in a classroom or a small theater. Students must act out the story that did happen, not create alternative history.

Note to the teacher: Allow for students to analyze texts, photos, and videos to create the prop list, movements, and other additions to the presentation. You have to have a willingness to allow for creativity and creative chaos in your classroom, or this lesson idea may drive you nuts.

Grades: 9-12 (Most appropriate for 11-12)

CA State Standards: 11.10

Essential Question:

Was the Selma to Montgomery March a success?

Sub Questions:

- 1) How did the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson and Reverend Jim Reeb lead to one of the final large-scale marches of the civil rights movement?
- 2) How can people positively channel grief and anger into constructive action?

Materials Needed:

- Stepping into the Picture Script
- Pictures Powerpoint
- Props, if applicable, as accompaniments to the activity. Handout E contains a suggested list.
- Computer and LCD setup to play the Powerpoint

Handouts:

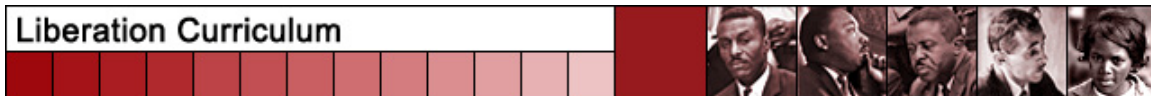
A: [Selma to Montgomery Timeline](#)

B: [Pictures Powerpoint](#)

C: [Selma to Montgomery Script](#)

D: [Works Cited for Script](#)

E: [Suggested Prop List](#)



Activity/Instructions:

Day One:

1. Distribute the script for students to read silently in class.
2. View the powerpoint with the pictures for the performance together in class.
3. Read aloud through the script together.
4. Choose narrators, actors, and one student to advance the photo slides.
5. Discuss prop inclusion. Ask students: What props/materials do we need? What do we have access to that will help make the performance engaging? Use the prop list included to brainstorm ideas.

Day Two:

1. Run through the entire presentation aloud in class for the first time, allowing students to act out parts and “step into the picture.”
Note to the teacher: Each performance/presentation may be different depending on the energy of the actors as nothing they act out is scripted. Allow students creativity in the activity as long as they are on task.

Homework: Ask students to bring in props for the practice/rehearsal the next day.

Day Three:

1. Motivate/prepare students to perform for an audience of parents, teachers, or other history classes.
2. Practice the performance.

Homework: Ask students to write a 5 page essay answering the essential question and sub-questions based on their understanding of the Selma to Montgomery March, using knowledge gained from the script, presentation, and performance practices.

Day Four:

1. **Culminating Assessment:** Students put on a final performance for an audience of your/their choosing.