

**LESSON**

# Enacting Freedom Dreams: Culminating Lesson

## Overview

### About This Lesson

In this lesson, students explore the concept of a “freedom dream,” coined by historian Robin D. G. Kelley to describe the power of imagination as a tool for individual and collective liberation. Students will create their own working definition of “freedom dreaming,” dissect the prompt for the final project, and journal initial ideas.

### Essential Question

- How can I make real the ideals of freedom and democracy?

### Guiding Questions

- How are young people today working to make real the ideals of freedom and democracy?
- What kind of civic actor do I want to be?

### Learning Objectives

- Students analyze how young people pursue their freedom dreams today, and the lessons they might apply to their own civic participation.

### What’s Included

This lesson uses the following texts and materials. Access materials in this [Google Folder](#).

- **Handout:** Freedom Dreams Graphic Organizer

## Lesson Plan

### Activities

#### 1. Discuss Personal Freedom Dreams

Project the chart below for your students, or write it on the board. Ask students to pick two prompts to respond to in their journals, one from Side A and one from Side B.

Side A	Side B
What do you feel is unfair about the world?	What could make the community you live in better?

What current events or issues make you angry, sad, or confused?	If you had unlimited money to support a cause, what cause would you support?
Have you ever experienced injustice? What happened?	What issues came up in your study of history that moved you the most? Are there contemporary examples of those issues?

Have students discuss their responses with a partner in a [Think, Pair, Share](#) or in their table groups.

Then, have students return to the definition of a “freedom dream” they created in the last lesson and write a journal reflection responding to the following prompt:

What is a freedom dream you have, for your community, nation, or the world?  
What steps will you and others have to take to make it a reality?

Ask volunteers to share.

## 2. Complete a Freedom Dream Graphic Organizer

In the next activity, students will explore examples of youth-led civic actions to uncover how young people today are pursuing their “freedom dreams.”

Break the class into small groups of between three to five students. Using the [jigsaw strategy](#), give each student one of the following examples of youth-led civic actions. (We recommend the following documents, but you can also create your own list of articles.)

- [How One Student Is Removing His School's Ties to the Eugenics Movement](#) (*a sophomore petitioned for his school name to change to represent his community and identity*)
- [Acknowledging the Past to Shape the Present](#) (*students formed a nonprofit and created a memorial garden in honor of Ell Persons, an African American who was lynched in their town 100 years prior*)
- [How the Parkland Students Pulled off a Massive National Protest in Only 5 Weeks](#) (*students organizing and using their voice*)
- [Bullying at School](#) (*two high school students stand up for a classmate who was bullied for the color of his shirt*)

As students are reading and discussing with their “expert groups,” have them fill out a row in the **Freedom Dreams Graphic Organizer** (that they used in Lesson 2) for the article they explored today.

## 3. Students Reflect on the Civic Actor They Want to Be

When ready, have students switch into teaching groups and teach one another about the article they read. Students should discuss answers to the following questions as they teach one another about their assigned article:

- What was the freedom dream these young people were pursuing? Why was it important to them?
- What tools or strategies did they use to make their dream a reality?
- How did they respond to success and failure?

Finally, ask students to apply what they learned in class today to consider the lessons it holds for their own civic participation. In a full class discussion, discuss the following questions:

- What are some lessons or takeaways you learned from exploring the freedom dreams of young people today?
- How might the stories you explored in class today shape your understanding of what it means to “choose to participate”? In what ways might you participate in the communities around you?

Ask students to take notes on the conversation. Then, have them submit a written reflection in response to the prompts above in an [Exit Card](#).