

MORE COMIC BOOKS FOR FREEDOM: Teaching with SNCC Voter Education Materials

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

This activity is inspired by the [Brain Share strategy](#) presented by [Learning for Justice](#) and [Street Law's outline of the Each One-Teach One strategy](#). Here, students will work in small groups to create a simple "poster lesson" -- using just chart paper and markers -- for their peers based on their reading of one of the comic books created by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Lowndes County, Alabama during 1965-1966. Like the previous activity, this one assumes students have read and discussed *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*, which can provide a shared context as they read the SNCC comics, as well as a basis for comparison and contrast of the different comic books.

As a quick introduction, or as homework in anticipation of the activity, have students [read this short web page](#) about how SNCC came to create a series of comic books as part of their voter education efforts in Lowndes County in 1965-66. If you want to help your students dig into the context of the SNCC comic books a little more deeply, you can show a segment from an [oral history interview with Courtland Cox](#) that's available on that page or from the Library of Congress. He talks about the level of threat and violence in Lowndes County from minute 44:23-56:57. For help mining this deeply compelling interview, see the [transcripts that are available here](#) and include occasional time stamps.

There is a comic book outlining the responsibilities of each of the following local officials: sheriff, [tax collector](#) (link is included here because the one on the SNCC Digital Gateway page is a duplicate of sheriff), tax assessor, Board of Education members, and coroner. The cover of each comic features the candidate(s) from the Black community running for that position.

The directions on the student handout can guide the rest of the lesson using this activity. You can choose to either have students view each others' work through a gallery walk, or you can have each group present to the rest of the class. Either way, once students have seen or heard about all of the comics, give them some time to work independently to answer the reflection questions at the bottom of the handout. These questions can also provide a basis for a whole-class debriefing discussion of the SNCC comic books and how they compare with *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*. Students may also have their own, additional questions for discussion. A debrief should definitely provide space for these as well.

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Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story may have been one of the first comic books created as an organizing and popular education tool, but it definitely wasn't the last. Less than 10 years later, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organizers in Lowndes County, Alabama created comic books to help in their voter education work. Specifically, these comic books named candidates for and explained the job description (including the power and authority) of different elected officials in local government.

DIRECTIONS:

Working with your groupmates, use the chart paper and markers to create an illustrated "poster lesson" for your classmates about the comic book assigned to you. The poster should give them a **snapshot of the job or office being described** AND **highlight what you think was SNCC's most important message about that role** to voters.

The poster should **show** your classmates enough that they can learn the main ideas of the comic, but you should be prepared to **tell** them more about it, too.

Use these questions to get started on creating your poster lesson.

- What are the main responsibilities of this official?
- What kinds of decisions does he/she have the authority to make?
- Why do you think this official's job would be important for the people who lived in Lowndes County? How could he/she affect people's lives?
- What piece of information in the comic book did you think was the most important thing SNCC told voters about this official?
- What piece of information in the comic book stood out to you the most? What surprised you?

When you're finished, hang your poster up. Your teacher may ask you to do a gallery walk to browse the other posters, or they may ask you to present yours to the rest of the class and then listen to the other groups present.

Once you've had a chance to see or hear about the other posters, note **your own reflections** about the following.

1. Which local office did you think would have the biggest impact on the lives of Black people in Lowndes County, Alabama? Explain your answer.
2. What part of the comic book did you think was the most effective/helpful educational or organizing tool that SNCC used?
3. Besides the fancier production of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*, note two differences you noticed between the SNCC comic and FOR's 1957 publication. Note two things you noticed that were similar between the two comics.



Page one of the comic book created by SNCC and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization outlining the role of the sheriff; it was part of the groups' political education work leading up to local elections in 1966 and featured candidate Mr. Sidney Logan on the cover.

(Source/image credit: <https://snccdigital.org/events/snccs-voter-education-efforts-in-lowndes/> and https://www.crmvet.org/docs/lcfo_sheriff.pdf)