

STANDING UP BY SIT-INS 1960 SITTING DOWN

Background:

A major aspect of the 1960 Sit-In Movement is that it was led by young African Americans. This generation grew up closely watching the gains made by their elders during the 1950s—like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and *Brown v Board of Education*—but were left perplexed and dismayed by how little had changed. African Americans were still subject to the daily grinding and dehumanizing effects of a discriminatory social structure.

Schools in particular remained segregated and unequal. Young African Americans navigated the same Jim Crow rules that previous generations had endured. The new generation of 1960 had had enough and chose to risk everything to act against the status quo.

The resulting student leaders would impact virtually every aspect of the US Civil Rights movement from that point on. Civil Rights luminaries like Diane Nash, John Lewis, Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, David Richmond, Ezell Blair, Stokely Carmichael and many others were students in 1960 and would loom large in the sit-ins, SNCC (the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), the Freedom Rides, and beyond.

It is also notable that the movement's organizers and participants adhered to a strategy of non-violence while the same certainly could not be said of those who opposed them. Protesters faced physical abuse and the threat of death from the general public and government authorities.

About the eLearning:



Standing Up by Sitting Down is an interpretation of the exhibit by the same name at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. The eLearning follows the movement sequentially and highlights key personalities like the A&T Four, Diane Nash and Ella Baker. Screen elements elicit your students' viewpoints along the way culminating in a printable summary that can be used as a classroom assignment.

Incorporating the eLearning activity into a Lesson Plan:

The eLearning can be assigned as homework or conducted as classroom activity using a projector.

Throughout the eLearning, students are asked to rate "Museum Chatter" quotes by indicating they "Agree", "Disagree", or "Don't like" each statement. The quotes are identified only by the initials of the speaker. Individual student "Museum Chatter" selections are collated by the eLearning and presented as a printable screen near the end of the activity. The screen can be printed on paper or saved as a pdf (depending on the device and software available).

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MUSEUM CHATTER

JM: "Segregation makes me feel that I'm unwanted, I don't want my children exposed to it."



Agree



Disagree



Don't Like

"Museum Chatter" quotes are, in fact, from participants, observers and opponents of the sit-in movement and date mostly from 1960. The speakers' identities are revealed in the printable summary screen.

In addition to the "Museum Chatter" responses, students select a "1960 Occupation" at the beginning of the eLearning. Sometime during the eLearning activity, each student will be asked an open-ended question about the sit-in key player who shares their selected occupation. The student's short response (4-5 sentences) is saved by the eLearning and presented with the Museum Chatter selections within the printable summary screen.

The most important part to bringing Standing Up by Sitting Down to life is to conduct a classroom or small group debrief activity that covers topic areas like these:

What surprised you about the world of 1960?

What was daily life like for African Americans in Greensboro in 1960?

What "Museum Chatter" statement did you like the best? Why?

What "Museum Chatter" statement bothered you the most? Why?

Who chose the role of college student (server, store manager, dishwasher)? What did you write about that role?

The students in the sit-in movement were dedicated to non-violent protest while the opponents of integration often used violence against the protestors. Why would the organizers choose to remain non-violent, endure violence and arrest? How did non-violence get them closer to the goal of integrating public facilities like the lunch counters?



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Welcome to 1960.
Select a Career!



Today, you're going to learn about the 1960 Sit-In Movement.
You're also going to help tell the story.

First, let's get a feel for: this moment in history, living in the USA and living in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Here are some typical occupations, pick one!



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BIBLIOGRAPHY

The core experience of **Standing Up by Sitting Down Student Sit-ins 1960** is based upon the interactive exhibit by the same name at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

Additional resources:

Text source:

“Sitting for Equal Service” by Melody Herr

Documentaries:

Civil Rights Across Generations (KTCA)

Freedom Riders: American Experience

The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross: Rise! (1940-1968)

[Franklin McCain Interviewed by granddaughter Taylor McCain](#)

Others:

[Civil Rights Greensboro](#) (Participant interviews)

Crisis Magazine May 1960

[Integration Report 1960](#)

Jet and Life Magazines from 1960

[The Friendship Nine](#)

[Remembering the Winston-Salem Sit-in](#)



ABOUT THE NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM

Noted as one of the nation’s premier heritage and cultural museums, the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn., is steadfast in its mission to share the culture and lessons from the American Civil Rights Movement and explore how this significant era continues to shape equality and freedom globally.

Established in 1991, the National Civil Rights Museum is located at the former Lorraine Motel, where civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968. Through interactive exhibits, historic collections, dynamic speakers and special events, the museum offers visitors a chance to walk through history and learn more about a tumultuous and inspiring period of change. To accommodate public demand for further educational opportunities, the museum underwent a \$27.5 million renovation in 2013 and 2014, adding more than 40 new films, oral histories and interactive media to the site’s already robust galleries. This eLearning was underwritten through the generosity of Verizon.