

## African American Activists: Ida B. Wells, Rosa Parks, and Fannie Lou Hammer

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### Description:

Students will learn about Ida B Wells, Rosa Parks, and Fannie Lou Hammer; all female African American activists who fought for justice and equality in different time periods throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students will research, evaluate and collaborate as they uncover the core beliefs and ideals of these activists, question what changed and what stayed the same throughout their reform movements and finally, determine the impact of their work.

### Objectives:

Students will be able to answer these questions:

- How did African American women work to change American society and what was their impact?
- What core beliefs and ideals changed and stayed the same for African American women activists fighting for reform in America?

**Grade Level:** 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** Approximately two 45/50-minute class periods with One evening of student homework

### Materials:

- One-one computer access for student research
- Copies of the Activist Research Graphic Organizer (one for each student)
- Copies of the Compare and Contrast Analysis Chart (one for each student)

### Procedures:

#### Before class:

Students will be studying the work and legacies of three important American activists: **Ida B. Wells (later Ida B. Wells-Barnett), Rosa Parks, and Fannie Lou Hammer**. Before students arrive to class either print the women's names and cut them out (one name for each student, try to make it as even as possible) OR simply determine who will study which person and plan out future groups. Over the course of the activity, the students will work in groups of three and teach each other about the accomplishments of these three activists.

1. Open the discussion with a 3-minute quick write: "When you think of people in history who have fought for freedom, equality, or human rights, who do you think of and why?"
2. After the students have had time to answer the question, share out responses and see how many women are mentioned, let alone African American women. Discuss why it might be that African American women activists have been undervalued or overshadowed in history.
3. Tell the students that, as a class, they are going to take a closer look at important African American women activists and ultimately determine what changed and stayed the same throughout their years of activism. Assign students the person they will be researching (or have them draw a name) and give them each the Activist Research Graphic Organizer. Draw their

attention to the last page where they will need to keep track of the primary and secondary sources they access.

Teach them best practices for researching:

- How to do a quality Google search (Google Scholar, too)
- How to access your library's research databases
- How to use University websites and archival websites
- How to spot a trustworthy source/author

You may include links to pages to them get started (i.e. Library of Congress, National Archives, National Women's History Museum, or other content based or archival sites.)

**Optional extension for students:** For this activity a formal work cited page is not required but consider having the students develop a bibliography or an annotated bibliography.

4. As the students work independently on their research, circle the room helping and answering questions. Whatever research the students do not complete will be either homework, or you can allow them to continue their research in the next class period.
5. After the research assignment is complete, ask all of the students assigned the same activist, (for example, all the Rosa Parks students) to get together and break into small groups of three. The students should compare their research, ask each other questions and clarify their understanding of their assigned activist. You may choose whether or not to sign off on or highlight the sources they had written down before they started working in these groups. (15 minutes)
6. Next, divide the students into groups of three (predetermined by the teacher is recommended) with all three activists represented. Each person should spend about 5 minutes teaching the group about who their activist is and her accomplishments as recorded through their research. When students are not presenting they should be asking questions and taking notes in their notebook. (15-20 minutes)
7. After each group shares and learns about the different activists, pass out the compare and contrast chart (one per student). Ask students to brainstorm the similarities and differences between the core beliefs, ideals and mission of each woman. Task the students to analyze and understand the challenges each woman faced in her own time. Once they have a quality compare/contrast analysis, students should notify the teacher and with approval they can begin work on the final major questions on the back. (30 minutes)
  - a. What has changed & what has stayed the same in the work of these activists from the Progressive era (Wells) to the 1960s (Hammer)? Use specific examples to support your response.
  - b. Is their work complete? If they were alive and young today, do you think they would be activists? How & why?
8. As an exit activity or at the beginning of the next class period, ask each group to share out their conclusions to the last two questions and their biggest realizations after doing the compare/contrast analysis. What did they find inspiring or surprising about these activists? Why do they think their lives and work are less celebrated or understated in history?

**Optional extension for the teacher:** Give each student a printed picture of a statue (or picture) of their activist and have them transcribe the placard they wrote about them in their research underneath it. Display these statues/placards in the hallway as a form of public history for your school community.

## **Standards**

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.