



AMERICAN
LITERATURE

Dr. King's road to a Birmingham jail

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for American Literature

Target audience – American literature learners

Time required – 15 minutes

Activity

Explore the events leading up to and beyond Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

English Standards

CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.9. Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (for example, Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, and King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"), including how they address related themes and concepts.

CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.8. Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (for example, in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will analyze the impact of Dr. King on the Civil Rights Movement.
- Students will understand how historic events led to the Civil Rights Movement.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/litGeoInquiry12>

? Ask

What happened before Dr. King was born?

- Read aloud: "Between 1525 and 1866, in the entire history of the slave trade to the New World, according to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, 12.5 million Africans were shipped to the New World. 10.7 million survived the dreaded Middle Passage, disembarking in North America, the Caribbean, and South America." (Source: PBS)
- Click the link above to launch the map.
- Examine the slave states and the percentage of the population that were enslaved.
- ? What states have the greatest enslaved populations in 1850? [*Mississippi and South Carolina*]

! Acquire

Why the South?

- Read aloud, "Plantations were large farms that grew crops that could be sold easily for cash. These large farms were common world-wide and often relied on slave labor. They were located near common trade routes."
- With the Details button pressed, click the button, Content.
- ? What percentage of the population was enslaved in the darkest shaded states? [*Greater than 50 percent*]
- ? In the 1850 data, do you see a connection between enslaved populations and plantations? Where might those plantations be located based on this data?

What did not change after slavery was abolished?

- Turn off the layer, Civil War States - 1850.
- Turn on each Jim Crow Laws layer in turn to explore the data.
- Read aloud, "After the Civil War and until 1965, Jim Crow laws, named after a song character, enforced segregation in many states. These state laws denied people of color or race basic rights; separate and unequal access to services. Dr. King was born in 1929 as the depression was heating up and Jim Crow laws were enforced. We're going to focus on Jim Crow laws in the states where he spent most of his life."
- ? What southern states had segregated schools? [*All on the map.*]
- ? What states did not segregate circuses, hospitals, or mental hospitals? [*Circuses: Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; Hospitals: Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; Mental hospitals: Florida*]

Analyze

Where did the Civil Rights Movement take place?

- Turn off the Jim Crow Laws layers.
- Read aloud: "Martin Luther King Jr., in all his many actions, was committed to equality for all humans."
- Turn on the layer, Civil Rights Events In Dr. King's Lifetime.
- ? In which states was he most involved with events? [*Alabama, Georgia, Washington, D.C., and New York*]
- Click the button, Bookmarks. Select Dr. King's Lifetime

Act

When did things really begin to change?

- Turn on the Dr. King's Lifetime layer.
- Click Play to view his life as it happened across the map.
- ? How many different US presidents did he interact with? [*Four: Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson*]
- Pull the time slider to 1964-1969.
- Open the data table and scroll through the events in that period.
- ? How many significant legislative and historic events occurred in that short period? [*Two including The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and The Voting Rights Act of 1965*]

USE THE TIME SLIDER

- A time-enabled map layer must be visible.
- Click the lower slider button and stretch it to the end time period that you wish to view.
- Click the Play button (right arrow).
- Click the Configure button (the wrench icon) to change the slider's speed.

VIEW A TABLE

- Tables are only available for certain map layers.
- In the Contents pane, point to a layer and click the Show Table icon that appears under the layer name.
- Click the field name and choose Sort Ascending or Sort Descending.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Explore segregated neighborhoods in the following Washington, D.C., story map: <http://esriurl.com/Geo3201>.

TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in the following letter.

- [Letter from Birmingham Jail, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#)