



## Title: One Person CAN Make a Difference

**Background:** When the African American students at Moton High School in Virginia took a stand and organized a peaceful protest to call attention to the poor conditions at their school and the inequities between schools for African Americans and Whites, they became a part of the group of cases that is now known as *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The protest and subsequent lawsuit, organized solely by high school students in conjunction with help from the NAACP, illustrates how the actions of one person can make a difference. It also give students an example of how young people worked together to make a major change in the American educational system by being actively involved in the political and social issues that were affecting them.

**Grade Levels:** Grades 6-8

**Subject Areas:** Social Studies, Language Arts, Debate

### Learning Objectives:

#### Students will:

1. State their opinions in class discussion and presentations and support these opinions with reasons, facts, and examples.
2. Use notetaking skills to record data and factual information about the Moton High School student protest from a number of media and reference resources.
3. Participate in class discussion and brainstorming activities related to the Moton High School student protest as well as identifying school and community issues they could take a stand about and address.
4. Complete group projects and action plans for making changes in the school or community and follow specified group work guidelines and objectives while doing so.
5. Utilize thinking and problem solving skills to create group projects for presentation to classmates
6. Work in small groups to create public awareness campaigns, action plans, and group presentations.
7. Make group presentations of their projects according to established presentation guidelines.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of their projects in creating public awareness and establishing appropriate action plans for affecting change.

### Relevant National Standards:

This lesson correlates to the national McREL standards located online at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks>

### United States History

Standard 29: Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

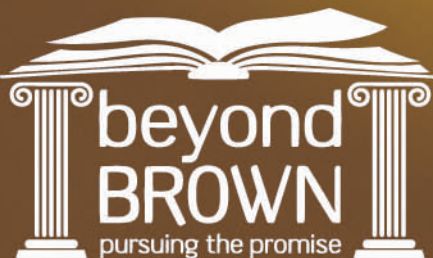
### Civics

Standard 11: Understand the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

Standard 13: Understand the character of American political and social conflict and factors that tend to prevent or lower its intensity

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### **Language Arts**

Writing

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Reading

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

### **Listening and Speaking**

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

### **Viewing**

Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

### **Thinking and Reasoning**

Standard 1: Understand and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument

Standard 5: Applies basic trouble-shooting and problem-solving techniques

### **Working with Others**

Standard 1: Contribute to the overall effort of a group

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills

### **Estimated Time:**

Approximately three to four 45-minute class periods (one period to complete Part 1 and 2-3 periods to complete Part 2)

**NOTE:** Additional time may be required for all groups to share their projects with their classmates, depending on the amount of time the teacher allows for each group presentation.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Anticipation Guide (provided with plan)
- television and vcr for viewing the film
- computers with Internet access or other library resource materials
- Project Planning Guide (provided with plan)
- computers with word processing and desktop publishing capability (optional)
- assorted art supplies such as poster board, paints, markers, stencils, glue, scissors

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### Procedures:

#### Part 1:

1. Create student interest in the lesson by placing the Anticipation Guide face down on students' desks before they enter the classroom. Instruct them not to turn their papers over until directed.
2. When all students are seated, direct them to turn their papers over and review the directions for completing the guide. Give students approximately 5 minutes to complete the activity.
3. Once students are finished, facilitate a short discussion of each item on the Anticipation Guide. Encourage students to share as many ideas and opinions as possible as each item is discussed.
4. Close the discussion by explaining to students that they will be hearing the story of Barbara Jones and the other students of Moton High School and how their actions made a difference not only in their own school, but in all schools nationwide.
5. View the first 9:15 minutes of the film "Beyond Brown: Pursuing the Promise". Ask students to use the back of their anticipation guide to take notes about why the students were upset, specific things they did to try to improve the situation, and the overall result of their efforts by answering who, what, when, why, where, and how.  
Other interesting information, thoughts, and ideas can be recorded in the "other" section.
6. When viewing is completed, discuss the facts of the Moton High School case using students' notes. In addition, refer to the various Moton web sites referenced in the Related Resources section to provide additional printed information, pictures, and details about the story. Use the following types of questions as you review the role of Moton students in the *Brown* case:
  - What role did the students play in calling attention to conditions at the school?
  - What actions did the students take to organize themselves into a unified group in order to fight for what they believed in?
  - How did students manage to get the NAACP interested in their case?
  - Which students were instrumental in the organization and development of the Moton High School case?
  - What risks were these students willing to take in order to improve their educational facilities and opportunities?
  - The students of Moton High School chose political activism and peaceful protest as the means for getting their point across and working for change. Why do you think the students chose not to use violent forms of protest to bring attention to their issues?
  - What are some examples of various types of peaceful protest that can be used to call attention to a particular issue? Which of these techniques were used by the Moton High School students?
  - What can/did you learn from the actions of the Moton High School students and what they ultimately achieved as a result of these actions?
  - What responsibility does each person have when it comes to being politically active and involved?
7. Close the discussion by reminding students that because of the Moton High School students, among others, the idea of "separate but equal" was deemed unconstitutional, and as a result, American schools began the process of desegregation. Remind the class of the significance of the actions of the Moton High School students and how the case helped to change the American educational system.

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### **Procedures:**

#### **Part 2:**

**8.** Now that students have some background knowledge about the significance of activism, even by students, have them use a scratch paper to record the answers to the following questions:

- If I could make an impact or change one thing about my school it would be...
- If I could make an impact or change one thing about my community it would be...

**9.** When all students have had 1-2 minutes to respond, work as a class to brainstorm two lists. Call one "School Issues" and the other "Community Issues". Use the ideas recorded by students along with those generated by the brainstorming session to list as many items as possible for each category. Spend 5-10 minutes generating the lists.

**10.** Next, explain to students that as part of learning about the importance of activism and what it takes to create awareness and work together as a team, they will be assigned to groups that must work together to create a public awareness campaign and an action plan for calling attention to the problem and ways to correct the problem. Spend a few moments discussing:

- skills and techniques for working as a team
- appropriate ways to call attention to a problem/concern
- steps for creating an action plan to improve or correct the problem/concern
- appropriate ways to implement the action plan and cause change

**11.** Using the attached Project Planning Guide, have students work in groups of 4 to choose their issue, call attention to the problem, develop an action plan, and take the steps needed to implement the action plan.

**12.** Provide students with at least one class period to complete the Project Planning Guide.

**13.** To complete the lesson, have each group share its action plan and explain why they feel strongly about the issue. If time permits, allow debate and discussion of the issue between the group and the class. Post action plans and/or public awareness projects around the classroom or school for others to see and discuss.

**14.** As a final activity, have each student write a 1-2 paragraph response that addresses the following:

- By focusing on a school or community issue and working with my group to develop a public awareness campaign and action plan, I learned....

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### Evaluation Ideas:

1. Students could receive participation grades for involvement in class discussion and on task work skills during group projects
2. Groups could use self-evaluation checklists to describe the role of each group member in the group and evaluate the effectiveness of each person throughout the project. Criteria to be judged could include on task work time, completion of assigned portions of the project on time, quality of the work completed in relation to the rest of the project, speaking and presentation skills used during group presentation/discussion of the project.
3. Students could receive a completion grade for answering the open ended question from Part 2, Step 14.

### Extension Activities:

1. After all group presentations have been completed, have the class choose the best project and presentation related to a school issue and work to make changes in the school that pertain to that issue. Do this by inviting the principal and key decision makers into the classroom to see the presentation and field student questions and comments.
2. Using a medium such as the school newspaper or daily news program, invite the "press" into the classroom to interview students and present their ideas and points of view in special articles or stories in the newspaper or on the news broadcast.

### Online Resources:

#### Longwood University

Read the story "What Happened in Prince Edward County?" to learn the details of the Moton High School students' involvement in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Find this at: <http://web.lwc.edu/news/bvb/princeedward.htm>

#### In Pursuit of Freedom and Equity: *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*

Read an overview of the background and events that prompted the Moton High School students to protest and become a part of the *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit at <http://www.brownvboard.org/research/handbook/combined/davis.htm>

#### Beyond Brown: Pursuing the Promise

See pictures of the Moton High School students and school along with other photos related to the *Brown v. Board of Education* case at:

<http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/history/photos.html>

Learn the details of the protest and subsequent role of the Moton High School students in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case by seeing the Full History at: <http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/history/fullhistory.html>

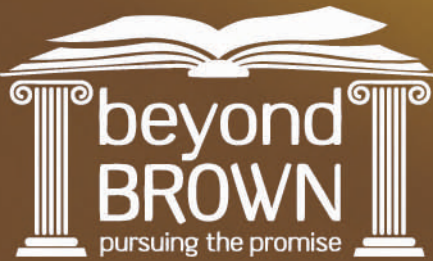
See a comparison of "separate but equal" African American and white schools from the 1950's at: <http://www.pbs.org/beyondbrown/foreducators/>

### About the Author:

Lisa Prosocki is an independent educational consultant who taught middle school and high school English, social studies, reading, and technology courses for twelve years. Prosocki has worked extensively with PBS authoring and editing many lesson plans for various PBS programs and Teacher-Source. In addition to conducting workshops for teachers at various state and national meetings, Prosocki also works with many corporate clients creating training programs and materials, facilitating leadership and operations workshops, and providing instructional support for new program rollouts. Prosocki has authored one book and also serves as an editor for other writers of instructional materials.

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**Plan 3**

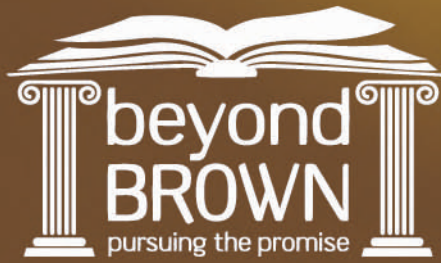
**Anticipation Guide**

**Directions:** Read each statement below carefully. Think about whether you agree or disagree with the statement and place an X in the appropriate column. In the last column, list reasons, examples, and facts to support your opinion. Be prepared to share your ideas in class discussion.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Reasons, examples and facts
The actions of one person can make a difference.			
Students should be involved in the decision making process at their schools.			
People should stand up for what they believe, no matter what the cost or consequence.			
Each person has a responsibility to be informed and make decisions about things that affect them and their community.			
If you are not willing to work to make changes to correct situations that are bothersome to you, then you should not complain about the situation.			

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**Notetaking Sheet**

**WHO:**

**WHAT:**

**WHEN:**

**WHERE:**

**WHY:**

**HOW:**

**OTHER:**

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**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Plan 3  
Project Planning Guide**

**Directions:** Complete the steps in each section below as you work as a team to create public awareness about the school or community issue of your choice. Be prepared to answer questions about your opinions and your action plan as you share your project with your classmates.

**Step 1: Identifying an Issue**

As a class we brainstormed a list of topics related to school and community issues that were of concern to students in the class. Using this list as a starting point, work as a group to identify ONE issue you would like to focus on for your project. It should be related specifically to the school or community.

Issue chosen by the group: \_\_\_\_\_

In the space below, work as a group to write a paragraph that explains why this issue is of concern to you:

This issues concerns us because....

When you have finished Step 1, present this to your teacher so he/she can review what your group has chosen to work on for the project. The teacher's signature indicates approval of Step 1.

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2: Creating Public Awareness About the Problem**

Part of affecting change is creating public awareness about your issue. It could be that others would be interested in supporting your point of view, but haven't because they were unaware of the situation.

This part of the project is where you will be able to use your creative side in addition to doing research to find reasons, facts, and examples to support your point of view. Complete the steps below to create your public awareness campaign.

- Decide on an interesting way to call attention to your issue. Consider ways to reach lots of people including Public Service Announcements (radio or tv), billboards, posters, bumper stickers, letters to the editor, etc. In the space below, record 2 ways to communicate your ideas about the issue to the public.

1.

2.

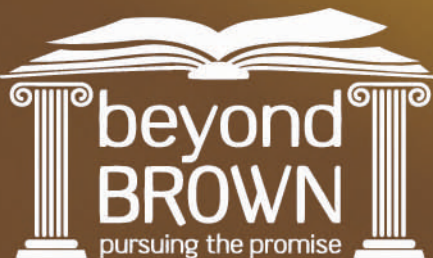
- Create the items for your public awareness campaign. This means you need to actually produce the items listed in the step above. When making these items, it is important to use opinions backed up by reasons, facts, and examples to support your point of view. You will probably need to conduct some research to collect your support data. This could be done using the Internet and library resources, by taking a survey, by interviewing people, etc. It is crucial that the items you create for the public service campaign be of high quality. Finally, you may want to develop some sort of appropriate symbol or slogan that people can associate with your ideas.

When you have finished Step 2, present your public awareness campaign to your teacher so he/she can review what your group has created. The teacher's signature indicates approval of Step 2.

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Group Members:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 3: Developing an Action Plan for Addressing the Problem**

Now that you have ways of calling attention to your issue, you must have a plan for what should be done to address the problem. Answer the questions below to help you develop your plan of action.

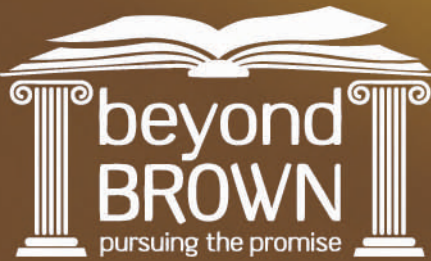
1. What changes should be made to address the problem/issue you are supporting? Be specific and write your answers below.
  
2. Who will be responsible for making these changes and seeing that they are carried out?
  
3. How much will it cost to make these changes, and where will the money come from?
  
4. When will these changes be made? Immediately? Over time?
  
5. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of these changes and whether or not they are helpful in solving the problems you've identified?
  
6. How will you convince people to support your point of view? Exactly what will you do to get people interested in your cause? (Besides using the items created in Step 2, what other things can you do to get people involved and interested?)

When you have finished Step 3, present this page to your teacher so he/she can review the action plan and discuss how you could use it when you make your presentation to the class. The teacher's signature indicates approval of Step 3.

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Step 4: Attempt to Implement the Action Plan**

Using your classmates and the classroom opportunity to present your project, implement all or part of your action plan the way you described doing so with your teacher at the end of Step 3. Before making your group presentation, make some decisions about:

- What role each person in the group will play in the presentation. Everyone should have something specific to do.
- What materials you need to prepare in order to present to the group. If you need special equipment (a television, vcr, CD player, cassette recorder, etc.) list it below and make your teacher aware of this.

Equipment needed:

- Anticipate some of the arguments your classmates might have against your point of view, and, as a group, discuss how you will counter these arguments in class discussion. Record possible ideas on the chart below.

Potential Argument

Our Counterargument

**Step 5: Evaluate the Success of the Project**

Using the prompts below, write a short paragraph to answer each question.

- The things my group and I did well in creating and presenting this project were:
  
- The areas where my group and I could have improved our project and presentation were:
  
- I felt my group was (choose one) \_\_\_successful \_\_\_unsuccessful in presenting our point of view and convincing others to take actions that would cause a change. We were (choose one) \_\_\_successful \_\_\_unsuccessful because....

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