



Lesson Title: The Power of One

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Am I Heard?

I HAVE:

One hour

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Group discussion
- ✓ Brief lecture
- ✓ Inspirational video
- ✓ Individual project

MATERIALS:

- Individual Actions handout
- Agents of Change list
- Video (projector or smartboard and laptop)

STEP-BY-STEP:

Warm up by presenting students with the enclosed list of civic actions for their consideration. This can be done in a variety of ways: displayed on a smartboard, distributed on paper, printed individually for physical arrangement on a large t chart, etc. When students are ready, discuss the list. Comment on the legality, ease, and potential of each.

Then introduce students to the text of the First Amendment:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Ask them to identify the Five Freedoms.

Return to the list of actions and identify those items that would not be acceptable under the freedom of petition. This will likely verify student background knowledge of the law. Allow students to make any last additions to the list at this time, and, as a class, consider which actions would be most appropriate for their own age group, skill set, and circumstances.

Remind students that, although they will be asked to suggest other things that are important to them, the focus of the unit is on the design of Pennsylvania's voting districts. Watch the video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgU7kdpOKeg&t=4s>) introducing Amanda Holt. Ask students if she seems particularly powerful, aggressive, experienced, distinctive, or intimidating. The conclusion should be drawn that she is an ordinary person who is capable of extraordinary things. Distribute the following reflection questions and sources as an individual or group assignment:

1. What training or education does Amanda Holt have?
2. What does she do for a living? Do you think this is important?
3. How did she use her right to petition?
4. What were the results of her actions?

Homework: Have students identify and research an "Agent of Change," somebody who using various forms of civic engagement/activism led to real, systemic change for a policy they believed would make their community/country better. Assign a short paper where they discuss their impact and their methods.



Agents of Change

For “ordinary” examples:

Several stories of student-led movements featured on playlist at

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB7FI_GiGMAYXegx-HhgOkFRPwjQkoCsT

- Katie Fahey – founder of grassroots organization Voters Not Politicians
- Teen's Sister Inspires Her to Push for Food Allergy Bill (<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/teen-rhode-island-food-allergy-bill-passed-sister/story?id=18763480>)
- These teens saw how poor mental health hurt their peers. So they got a law passed. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/these-teens-saw-how-poor-mental-health-hurt-their-peers-so-they-got-a-law-passed/2018/04/23/1c87b0d8-3dc4-11e8-8d53-eba0ed2371cc_story.html?utm_term=.a0eb50a91358
- You'll be able to text 911 in Virginia, thanks to these teenagers https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/youll-be-able-to-text-911-in-virginia-thanks-to-these-teenagers/2018/04/23/02bab492-470c-11e8-9072-f6d4bc32f223_story.html?utm_term=.a553de6df911
- Candace Lightner – helped get new anti-drunk driving legislation
- Betty Carries – woman wins ban on smoking (<https://newspaperarchive.com/scottsdale-progress-may-26-1973-p-1/>)
- Greensboro Four – 4 college students who began a series of non-violent protests <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9NjHd8n1GM>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Rmjt0kJFOA>
- Claudette Colvin – 15-year-old who refused to give up seat on bus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3NvXzFOb6w>

More well-known “change agents”:

- Cesar Chavez -- co-founded the National Farm Workers Association
- Rosa Parks – pivotal role in Montgomery Bus Boycott
- William F. Buckley – founder of Young Americans for Freedom, an influential organization of college students
- Rachel Carson – advanced environmental movement
- John L. Lewis – driving force behind the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which established the United Steel Workers of America and helped organize millions of other industrial workers in the 1930s
- Susan B. Anthony – played a pivotal role in the women's suffrage movement
- Booker T. Washington – dominant role in black politics who built a nationwide network of supporters in many black communities
- Howard Jarvis – responsible for passage of California's Proposition 13 in 1978 (anti-tax bill)
- Clara Barton – organizer of relief work
- Wayne Wheeler – instrumental in passage of 18th Amendment
- Frederick Douglass – leader of abolitionist movement



Draw the Lines

Expressing Your First Amendment Rights

Name: _____ Date: _____

If we want our elected leaders to do something, how can we pressure them to do it? Which of these are acceptable expressions of your First Amendment rights, and which aren't? Use your own judgment and grade each action, writing Yes or No.

Post your thoughts/ideas to social media _____

Call a representative's office _____

Picket a representative's home _____

Write a letter or email to a government official _____

Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper _____

Call a representative's home _____

Use a letter or email to threaten an official _____

Spray-paint messages on a government building _____

Pass out flyers in a public place _____

Start a blog, website, or YouTube channel _____

Obtain a permit and conduct a protest or rally _____

Harass/bully someone you disagree with on social media _____

Do a fundraiser and donate the money to a cause _____

Picket a representative's office _____

Conduct a survey and publish the results _____

Run for office and change things yourself _____

Burn public buildings as a protest _____

Join an interest group to fight for a cause _____

Crank up protest songs from a car at late at night _____

Stage a walk-out or a sit-in _____