

What's Next: African American Civil Rights

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will look forward to see what progress still needs to be made in the struggle for civil rights and think about what it will take for full inclusion of and justice for African-Americans.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. African American Civil Rights
2. Planning for the Future

"What we're seeing now is that black people across the world are learning from each other's strategies of liberation and we're replicating that and we're building from it."

Maria Hernandez, Black Lives Matter – Chicago



BEFORE YOU START

How can we plan for the future of African American Civil Rights using our problem solving, communication and agility skills?

1. African American Civil Rights

As you've read through this challenge, the brutal realities of slavery and racial discrimination has led to generations of civil rights struggles for African Americans. The fight for civil rights has been waged in workshops and on plantations; on Civil War battlefields; and later in courtrooms, on the streets, and through the daily lives of many Americans.

Let's take a moment to consider how the skills of problem solving and agility connect with the fight for African American civil rights.

Leaders, activists, and other individuals facing inequality and discrimination have used **problem solving skills** like critical thinking to solve problems during every step of the struggle for progress. During the civil rights movement, critical thinking was essential for providing evidence to overcome unfair discrimination laws and to demand equal opportunities and fair treatment. Critical thinking also played a key role as people carefully chose the strategies and types of communication that would best fit their circumstances.

The struggle for civil rights demanded a high degree of persistence and **agility** from those involved. Over the

course of only a century, black Americans in the South experienced slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and the hope that came with the civil rights movement. The racism embedded in society and culture was ever present, but its form changed over time—from slavery to segregation, for example. Agility helped people adapt to changing circumstances, figure out how to survive, and find new ways to work for change.

2. Planning for the Future

The two events we discussed at the beginning of this challenge—the election of a black president and the rise of Black Lives Matter—illustrate the achievements of the civil rights movement but also the need for continued progress. Engagement in civil rights is a legacy, an essential part of American heritage that must be carried forward into the future. There is plenty of work still to do dealing with intergenerational poverty, police and criminal justice reform, racism that intersects with the oppression of other groups, and many other areas of systemic racism.

Today, many people are looking critically at the criminal justice system, places of business, professions, and education systems to see how they either support or hinder civil rights in the United States. As we've seen this week, communication, agility, and problem solving are some of their most critical tools.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you reviewed how the skills of problem solving, agility, and communication have been critical to the struggle for **African American Civil Rights**. When **planning for the future**, activists will continue to use these skills as they seek an end to racial discrimination in all areas of American life.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.