



## Freedom Summer

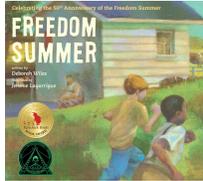
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[C3 Framework](#) Key term:

**Human rights:** Rights or freedoms possessed by all people by virtue of their being human.



### SYNOPSIS

An African-American kid and a white kid are best friends. However, they cannot go to the same swimming pool or store together. When new town laws permit African-American people to swim in the town pool, the boys get their hopes up, only to have them crushed when the county dump truck fills the pool with asphalt. This is a story about the resistance of Mississippi residents to the Civil Right Act. It is also a story of friendship and empathy.

### DISCUSSION

**Distribute** copies of the [Civil Rights Act](#). **Say:** *The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination and segregation based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. However, opponents of equality threatened African American citizens through beating and lynching, to keep them away from exercising their rights to vote and to access integrated public areas. They warned white people against entering shops where white and black people mix. African Americans protested against the lack of implementation of the law. In reality, local communities did not work towards integration.*

### GROUP ACTIVITY

**Show** the 3-minute video, [What Was “Freedom Summer”?](#) Available at the PBS LearningMedia website. **Say:** In the summer of 1964, thousands of civil rights activists came to Mississippi to support the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which invited whites and blacks, to run its candidates for the Senate and Congressional

*elections. The party did not gain seats at the Democratic National Convention and did not have representatives in the Congress. However, it attracted sufficient attention of politicians to lead the way to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. **Write:** America’s Civil Rights 1857—1992. **Say:** Both regarding the sequence of events and civic actions, Freedom Summer had a central role in promoting the rights of African Americans. In this activity, you will work with two sources: a [Civil Rights Timeline](#) and [primary source documents](#) available on the website of the National Museum of American History. Review both sources and write one paragraph in response to the following question: What was the important role of Freedom Summer in the sequence of events that led to establishing equal rights for African American citizens? Allow students to focus on one domain (e.g., education, politics, social sector).*

### CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

**Say:** *In the summer of 1964, Brandenburg, a Ku Klux Klan leader invited a reporter at a television station to cover a KKK rally, which included hate speeches. Brandenburg was charged by the state of Ohio for advocating for violence. He was sentenced to one to ten years in prison and a \$1,000 fine. Subsequent appeals were rejected. Brandenburg then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1969. The U.S. Supreme court held that a government could not constitutionally punish abstract advocacy for violence. The judge contended that the government could punish negative actions but not negative thoughts or ideas. **Ask:** Comment on this case. Do you agree with the ruling? How do you think this ruling affected racial tensions?*

### FUN ACTIVITY

**Say:** *Imagine you are working for a television broadcasting company during the summer of 1964. In groups, prepare a 2-minute video clip covering one of the summer events.*