

American Literature
Freedom's Main Line
Projects

Directions: As a group select one of the following projects concerning issues raised in Chapter 3: *Freedom's Main Line*

1. Use the Internet to research the concept of nonviolent resistance. What are some synonyms for the term? How did Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela use nonviolent resistance? Create a time line on which you locate and illustrate major events in the history of this form of peaceful protest.
2. Movements for social change often use theme songs or anthems to unite participants and express their goals. Choose a familiar tune — or compose a new one — and write the lyrics to a theme song for the Louisville ride-ins. Create a handout that includes lyrics, music and a brief synopsis of the protest. Perform your song for the class.
3. Interview an official with the public transportation system in your town or city. What services does the system provide? What areas of the city does the service reach, and what is the demographic profile of the riders? Was the system ever segregated? If so, how and why did that change? What problems is the system currently facing? What does this information tell you about your community? Design a poster reflecting what you learned from the interview.
4. Using the stories that you have read, combined with Internet research, create a 30-minute Readers' Theatre presentation highlighting the role of transportation in the civil rights struggle. Ideas might include the Middle Passage, the Underground Railroad, Plessy v. Ferguson, the Pullman Porters' strike, the Louisville ride-ins, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Freedom Riders. Find or create simple, historically appropriate costumes for each character. Present your readings to other classes in your school.
5. You have been asked to design a mural entitled "Journey to Justice" for the new National Museum of Transportation. In teams of three or four, research people who were "movers" for equal access to transportation, such as Elizabeth Jennings, the Fox Brothers, Rosa Parks, John Lewis and others. Incorporate historical and contemporary images into your design. Hold a design fair to exhibit and explain the teams' mural proposals. Present your designs to local transportation officials for possible display or execution at public facilities such as train stations, bus shelters or libraries.