



## Voices of Social Justice

Compiled by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

**Target Grade Level:** Grades 6-12 United States history classes. Although the four activities can all be completed by students in grades 6-12, Activity 2 is recommended specifically for grades 6-8 and Activity 3 for grades 9-12.

### Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be better able to:

- **deepen** their understanding of the themes addressed on the tour
- **consider** the diverse and meaningful ways that individuals, including students, can use their voices to promote social justice
- **gain** a greater understanding of how it feels to be active citizens promoting social justice
- **brainstorm** ways to be active citizens in their communities

### Materials

- Student Worksheets on pages 3-15
- A projector and access to the internet to project images from [www.npg.si.edu](http://www.npg.si.edu) (optional)

### Lesson Procedures

#### Introduction

1. Remind students of their visit to the National Portrait Gallery.
2. Explain that this lesson will expand on the conversations from that tour and give students an opportunity to learn about various ways that individuals, including students, can use their voices to raise awareness about social issues.
  1. The activities build upon each other, so doing them in order is recommended, but it is not necessary.
  2. Educators are encouraged to adjust these activities as needed.

#### Activity 1 - Definitions (recommended for all grades)

1. Pass out the **Definitions** Worksheet on [page 3](#). Have students complete it with a partner.

#### Activity 2 - Matching (recommended for grades 6-8)

1. Pass out the **Matching** Worksheet on [page 4](#) and the accompanying “**Guide to Sitters**” on [pages 5-9](#). Your students can remain working in pairs or work independently.
  1. After reading about the 13 sitters (a sitter is the person depicted in a portrait), students will match each sitter to the corresponding method that the individual employed to create social change.
  2. **ANSWERS:** Paul Robeson = D; Danny Lyon = L; Susan B. Anthony = A; Daniel Inouye = C; Eunice Kennedy Shriver = K; César Chávez = I; Russell Means = J; Marian Anderson = B; Frederick Douglass = G; Alice Paul = H; María Hinojosa = E; Roger Shimomura = F; Jesse Owens = M

2. Discuss how many of your students already have some of these talents. Perhaps they are , musicians, artists, speakers, and writers.

### **Activity 3 - Student Activists (recommended for grades 9-12)**

1. Pass out the four **Student Activist** Worksheets on pages 10-13.
2. Have your students complete these worksheets in groups of four.
3. If possible, project the image of John R. Lewis for your class to see. It is accessible at [https://npg.si.edu/object/npg\\_NPG.95.16](https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.95.16).

### **Activity 4 - Be an Activist**

1. Pass out the **Be an Activist** Worksheets on pages 14-15.
2. Your students can complete these independently, with partners, or as a class.
3. If possible, project the self-portrait of Danny Lyon, the photographer who took the photo from Activity 3, for your class to see. It is accessible at [https://npg.si.edu/object/npg\\_NPG.94.256](https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.94.256).
4. Talk about Lyon as an example of a student who used his photographic talent to document other students' peaceful protests. He shared his images with the world.
5. Have a class discussion about the ways in which your students foresee using their unique talents to raise awareness about issues that are important to them.
6. Have your students refer back to the Definitions Worksheet on page 3, to see if there are instances in their personal lives where they have seen situations of injustice.
  1. If there are any causes that numerous students identified, consider supporting your students to translate their class discussion into action.
  2. Have your students work together to devise a strategy, using their unique talents identified in the Be an Activist Worksheet to raise awareness among classmates, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members about the issue that they want to address.

**ACTIVITY 1: DEFINITIONS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Working with a partner, define the following terms.**

Justice:

Injustice:

Civil rights:

Protest:

Social justice:

**II. Give an example, either from the news or your personal lives, of where you have encountered situations relating to these words.**

Justice:

Injustice:

Civil rights:

Protest:

Social justice:

**III. What are some ways that individuals can raise awareness about injustices that they see?**

**ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

There are many ways individuals stand up for Civil Rights and work to promote equality and equity for all. Use the five-page “Guide to Sitters” to learn about the thirteen individuals listed below. Then write the appropriate letter next to each sitter that corresponds to the method he or she used to create social change.

___	Paul Robeson (1898-1976)	<b>A</b>	<b>Giving speeches</b> across the US in the late 1800s to improve women’s rights, including seeking the right to vote
___	Danny Lyon (born 1942)	<b>B</b>	<b>Singing</b> around the world, even though she was often not allowed to sing in the US during segregation
___	Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)	<b>C</b>	<b>Representing</b> citizens of Hawaii in the US Congress and <b>servicing</b> with valor in the US military during World War II
___	Jesse Owens (1913-1980)	<b>D</b>	<b>Acting and singing</b> in numerous plays and movies and <b>speaking out</b> against racial and economic injustice
___	Daniel Inouye (1924-2012)	<b>E</b>	<b>Speaking</b> as a radio journalist, representing the Latinx voice
___	Eunice Kennedy Shriver (1921-2009)	<b>F</b>	<b>Painting</b> self-portraits that highlight challenges that Asian Americans face
___	César Chávez (1927-1993)	<b>G</b>	<b>Writing</b> books and <b>giving speeches</b> about his experience as an enslaved individual
___	Russell Means (1939-2012)	<b>H</b>	<b>Picketing</b> and using other means of civil disobedience that led to the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote
___	Marian Anderson (1897-1993)	<b>I</b>	<b>Organizing</b> a union of agricultural workers and <b>encouraging boycotts</b> and strikes to raise awareness of important issues
___	Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)	<b>J</b>	<b>Participating</b> in the American Indian Movement and <b>acting</b> in many films
___	Alice Paul (1885-1977)	<b>K</b>	<b>Creating</b> the Special Olympics to provide athletic opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities
___	María Hinojosa (born 1961)	<b>L</b>	<b>Photographing</b> important events in the Civil Rights Movement that were published in newspapers throughout the US
___	Roger Shimomura (born 1939)	<b>M</b>	<b>Sprinting</b> to four Olympic golds and breaking numerous Olympic and World Records at the 1936 Olympics in Hitler’s Nazi Germany

## ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING, GUIDE TO SITTERS



### PAUL ROBESON

Paul Robeson united great talent with a commitment to justice in a career that won him recognition and respect throughout the world. Educated at Rutgers University—where he was class valedictorian and a two-time football All-American—and Columbia Law School, Robeson left the legal profession in 1924 to establish his acting career. Most famous for starring as the title character in *Othello* and for singing “Ol’ Man River” in the play and movie *Show Boat*, Robeson earned international acclaim over a thirty year career in which he performed on stage, in film, and in concert throughout the United States and Europe. Speaking out against racial and economic injustice throughout his career, he often faced hostility as a consequence of his political views, especially in the years following World War II. In this 1944 painting, the artist has depicted Robeson playing *Othello* in a New York City production of Shakespeare’s play.



### DANNY LYON

In the summer of 1962, Danny Lyon left the University of Chicago, where he was studying history, and hitchhiked south to immerse himself in the civil rights movement. Upon arriving in segregated Albany, Georgia, he became the first photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was then led by James Forman. During his time in the South, Lyon documented SNCC protests and the harrowing conditions of African Americans; many of his images were used for posters and other materials meant to increase public awareness. Several of these documentary photographs are presented in a book, *Memoirs of the Southern Civil Rights Movement* (1990). Lyon notes, "I had the rare privilege to see history firsthand." This casual photograph, taken in Albany the morning after his arrival, shows him in front of the barbershop that served as the local SNCC office.



### SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Although Susan B. Anthony began her path to activism as an abolitionist and temperance advocate, she is remembered today for her role as reformer and organizer for the women’s suffrage movement. After being forbidden from speaking at a temperance rally because of her gender, Anthony realized women could have only a limited impact in society if they did not attain political equality with men. During the 1872 presidential election, Anthony attempted to vote in Rochester, New York and was quickly arrested and tried in court. Throughout the rest of her life Anthony continually fought for women’s political rights. In this portrait, Adelaide Johnson, captures the “tenderness and determination” of Anthony’s fight for women’s suffrage.

**ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING, GUIDE TO SITTERS**



**DANIEL INOUYE**

Daniel Inouye, a distinguished public servant, served the United States in many capacities throughout his lifetime. As a teenager during World War II, Inouye joined the all-Japanese American battalion, fighting with valor and losing his right arm in combat. He later was awarded a Medal of Honor, the nation's highest medal for sacrifice in war. Upon returning to his native Hawaii, he helped lead a movement that brought political power to the region's ethnic minorities. When Hawaii became a state in 1959, Inouye was elected to the House of Representatives, becoming the first Japanese American member of Congress. Having won a seat in the U.S. Senate in 1962, he became the Senate's senior member in 2010, making him the highest-ranking public official of Asian descent in American history. This photograph shows him in 1960, at the beginning of his long political career, which ended with his death in 2012.



**EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver was the creative force and organizer of Special Olympics, Inc., a nonprofit charitable organization that provides training and competition in Olympic-style sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. In 1962, she established a summer day camp at her home that became the basis for Special Olympics, and the First International Special Olympics Summer Games were held in Chicago in 1968. Currently, the Special Olympics serves more than 4.9 million children and adults from nearly 172 countries. David Lenz was commissioned to paint this portrait as part of the first prize in the museum's inaugural Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition. Lenz embraced the idea of making a portrait of Eunice Shriver that would also include five persons with intellectual disabilities who have been involved in Special Olympics and in the Best Buddies program: (left to right) Airika Straka, Katie Meade, Andy Leonard, Loretta Claiborne, and Martin "Marty" Sheets.



**CÉSAR CHÁVEZ**

Encouraged by victories of the black civil rights movement, labor organizer César Chávez began in the early 1960s to protest the unfair treatment of farm workers in California and the Southwest. In 1962 he and Dolores Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association, composed mainly of Mexican and Mexican American workers. In 1965, their union joined a Filipino-based union in a strike of grape field workers in Delano, California. Soon both unions merged under the United Farm Workers of America (UFW), the first effective national organization to represent agricultural workers and press for political reform. Farm workers sustained the strike for five years, and also engaged many sympathetic Americans in their struggle, "la causa," through a consumer boycott of table grapes. *Time* magazine published this portrait as its cover image in 1969, four years into the strike and boycott. An Aztec eagle, the symbol of the UFW, is emblazoned on Chávez's shirt.

**ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING, GUIDE TO SITTERS**



**RUSSELL MEANS**

Born on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Russell Means was Oglala Lakota Sioux. In 1968, he joined the American Indian Movement (AIM), a militant activist organization. When AIM occupied Wounded Knee, site of the infamous nineteenth-century massacre of the Sioux, in 1973, Means was the organization’s spokesperson. The siege grew into a seventy-one day confrontation between armed AIM members and the federal authorities. Means left the group in 1988. He acted in several films and television shows in the 1990s and 2000s. Artist Bob Coronato wanted to honor Means, who agreed to sit for him as long as the portrait conveyed that “Indians are not the idea of old Hollywood westerns or to be thought of as ‘in the past’ but a people very much of today, and with a rich history.” The artist and Means decided to include the upside-down flag, a sign used by the Navy as a symbol of distress and that AIM often displayed during protests.



**MARIAN ANDERSON**

One of the outstanding voices of the twentieth century, contralto Marian Anderson—like many African American artists of the time—first achieved success in Europe, because American segregation laws limited her opportunities to sing in the United States. Although the magnitude of her musical gifts ultimately won her recognition in the United States, in 1939 the Daughters of the American Revolution banned her from performing at its Constitution Hall because she was black. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt intervened and facilitated Anderson’s Easter Sunday outdoor concert at the Lincoln Memorial—an event witnessed by 75,000 and broadcast to a radio audience of millions. The affair, which is depicted in this painting, generated great sympathy for Anderson and became a defining moment in America’s civil rights movement.



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

Frederick Douglass became the first nationally known African American in U.S. history by turning his life into a testimony on the evils of slavery and the redemptive power of freedom. He had escaped from slavery in 1838 and subsequently became a powerful witness for abolitionism, speaking, writing, and organizing on behalf of the movement; he also founded a newspaper, the *North Star*. Douglass’s charisma derived from his ability to present himself as the author of his own destiny at a time when white America could barely conceive of the black man as a thinking and feeling human being. *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* is not only a gripping nonfiction account of one man’s struggle for freedom; it is also one of the greatest American autobiographies. This powerful portrait shows Douglass as he grew in prominence during the 1840s.

**ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING, GUIDE TO SITTERS**



**ALICE PAUL**

A vocal leader of the American women’s suffrage movement, Alice Paul advocated for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. Paul led the fight for women’s political rights in Washington D.C. by organizing protests that attracted massive media attention. In 1913, Paul directed nearly 8,000 suffragists with floats and banners in a non-violent march on Washington. Paul and her fellow suffragists picketed the White House in 1917 in an effort to urge President Woodrow Wilson to support women’s voting rights. Picketing women, including Paul, were arrested and imprisoned for their activism. While in prison, Paul continued to protest by leading hunger strikes. Their efforts were successful—American women were granted the right to vote in 1920. In this news bureau photograph, Paul stands determinedly, revealing her persistence in the continual fight for women’s equal rights.



**MARÍA HINOJOSA**

María Hinojosa, an Emmy Award-winning journalist, is among the leading figures in public media who offer insight into Latino communities in the United States. Born in Mexico City, she grew up in Chicago. Hinojosa recalls that as a girl, she did not see faces like her own in the media. “We were invisible,” she remarked. “I wanted to tell stories that others weren’t telling.” Since 1992, she has anchored and produced Latino USA, a nationally syndicated public radio program distributed by National Public Radio that provides a window onto the cultural, political, and social experiences of Latinos. In 2010, she founded the Futuro Media Group to create multimedia content about Americans who are often underrepresented in mainstream media. In this photograph, which is part of a series exploring what it means to be Latino in the twenty-first century, Hinojosa’s facial expression conveys a deep sense of resolve.



**ROGER SHIMOMURA**

As an artist, Roger Shimomura has focused particular attention on the experiences of Asian Americans and the challenges of being “different” in America. He knows well the pain and embarrassment associated with xenophobia (prejudice of people from different countries): as a small child during World War II, he and his family were relocated from their home in Seattle to a Japanese American internment camp in Idaho. This painting takes as its source Emanuel Leutze’s 1851 painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, which is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Shimomura presents himself in the place of America’s Founding Father; he replaces George Washington’s colonial troops with samurai warriors; and he remakes the body of water they cross to resemble San Francisco Harbor with Angel Island (the processing center for Asian immigrants) in the background. The work echoes the compositional format of traditional Japanese wood-block prints.



**ACTIVITY 2: MATCHING, GUIDE TO SITTERS**



**JESSE OWENS**

Track and field star Jesse Owens shined during the 1936 summer Olympics in Berlin, Germany, where he won four gold medals. This photo shows Owens competing in the Olympic stadium, where he broke or equaled nine Olympic records and set three world records. Adolph Hitler had intended for the 1936 Olympics to be a showcase for Aryan supremacy (Hitler's belief that white Germans were a superior race), but Jesse Owens, a grandson of enslaved individuals, proved to the world that Hitler's beliefs were wrong. In 1950 an Associated Press poll voted Jesse Owens the greatest track and field star of the first half of the twentieth century, and he was awarded a Medal of Freedom by President Gerald Ford in 1976.



John R. Lewis, b. 1940  
born Troy, AL

Advocating nonviolence “not just as a technique, but as a way of life,” activist John Lewis (now a longstanding member of Congress) endured repeated beatings and arrests while leading civil rights protests during the 1960s. A founder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) when he was just nineteen, Lewis took the lead in organizing the freedom rides, sit-ins, marches, and other demonstrations that were part of the SNCC’s drive to end racial segregation and secure voting rights for millions of disenfranchised African Americans. In the summer of 1962, he initiated a direct-action campaign challenging segregation in the community of Cairo, Illinois. As Lewis (far left) and other demonstrators knelt in prayer during a vigil outside the city’s “whites only” swimming pool, Danny Lyon captured this compelling image. A University of Chicago student, Lyon soon became SNCC’s official photographer and documented the organization’s civil rights efforts for several years.<sup>1</sup>

Danny Lyon, b. 1942  
Photograph, gelatin silver print 1962  
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; Gift of the artist and the Jan Kesner Gallery, Los Angeles



<sup>1</sup> In 1963, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) issued this poster featuring Danny Lyon’s evocative photograph, along with the appeal to “Come Let Us Build a New World Together.” Priced at a dollar, it was the first in a series of such posters designed to raise funds for SNCC’s civil rights initiatives and to carry the organization’s message to a wide and largely youthful audience. Offered for sale at rallies and through SNCC’s newspaper, *The Student Voice*, the print run of 10,000 posters sold out quickly. Rather than depicting the action of a single individual, the poster’s image celebrates group-centered leadership in which everyone works and struggles together, side by side.

In the United States, young people have often been at the forefront of movements to gain civil rights for marginalized groups in our society. The National Portrait Gallery (NPG) has many works of art that highlight young people’s quests for social justice, including this one of John R. Lewis taken by student photographer Danny Lyons.

**I. Complete the following table by writing what you see when you observe each element of portrayal in this portrait.**

<b>Facial Expression</b>	
<b>Pose</b>	
<b>Clothing</b>	
<b>Hairstyle</b>	
<b>Setting</b>	
<b>Objects</b>	
<b>Color</b>	
<b>Medium</b>	
<b>Scale</b>	
<b>Artistic Style</b>	



**IV. Working in a team of four: Create a short story, from different points of view, about the moment when the image was created.**

- a. **Assign** roles for each person in your team. Three students should take on the roles of the three most visible sitters and one person should take on the role of the photographer.
- b. **Recreate** the event.<sup>2</sup> The sitters will all assume the poses and facial expressions of their assigned sitters. The photographer will be positioned at a reasonable distance and pretend to snap a photo. If the teacher has access to a camera, snap a real photo.
- c. **Discuss**, as a team, how each of you feels when you put yourselves in the shoes of the artist and sitters.
- d. **Write** a short piece of historical fiction—from the point of view of the person you portrayed in the re-creation—to document how it feels to be a part of this movement for social justice. Topics to consider could include:
  - Why are you participating as a demonstrator (if you are one of the sitters) or as a photojournalist (if you are the artist)?
  - How does the practice of having the photo taken impact you?
  - What are your hopes and dreams for the movement?
  - How will this photograph help you achieve them?
- e. **Share** your write-ups with others in your group to see if you have a similar sensation of participating in a peaceful protest for social justice.

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<sup>2</sup> To help set the stage, read John Lewis's recollection of his experience as written in his book, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of a Movement* (1998): "My path took me that summer to a tiny town called Cairo, at the southernmost tip of Illinois, where the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers come together. Though Illinois is considered a Northern state, Cairo, bordered by Kentucky and Missouri, was Southern in every way—very small, very rural, very segregated. ...Theaters, restaurants, hotels, bus station, the city swimming pool—they were all segregated, and I spent that summer getting to know them all very well. I also became familiar with the interior of the Cairo city jail. What we faced in Cairo that summer was more harassment than outright brutality. It was nothing like what was happening in Mississippi... [or] surging in Albany [Georgia]" (p. 190).

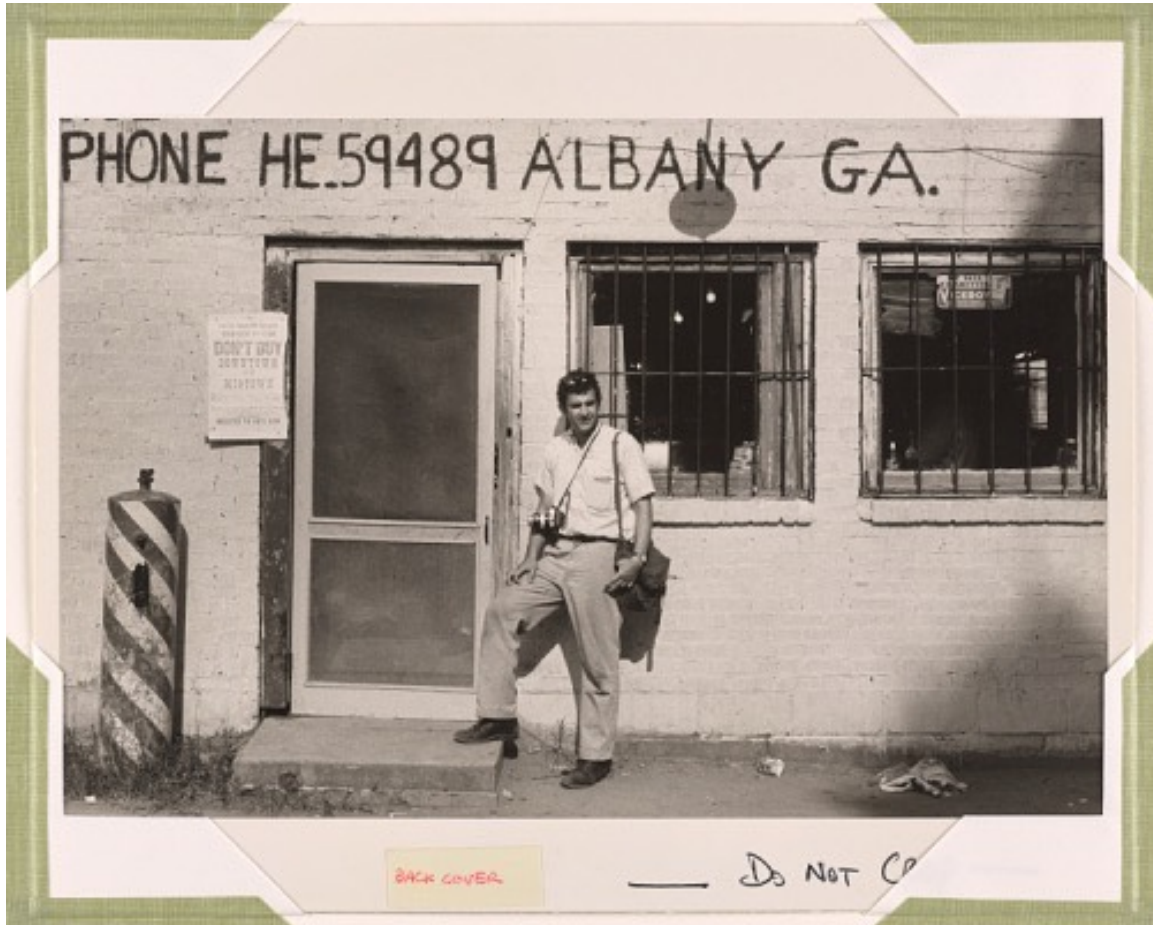
"Near the end of that summer, an enduring image of our pleas for federal help came out of Cairo, where I was leading a demonstration of students and young children one afternoon at the city's swimming pool, which had remained segregated despite our weeks of protest. During this particular vigil outside the pool, I gathered our group and we knelt to pray in support of our brothers and sisters in Albany. Danny Lyon, a new staff photographer for SNCC—we called him Dandelion—was there that day... outside the swimming pool, and as we knelt and prayed, he snapped a photograph. That picture, captioned 'COME LET US BUILD A NEW WORLD TOGETHER,' became probably the most popular poster of the movement. Ten thousand copies were printed and put on sale for a dollar apiece, and they sold out" (p. 191-192).

Lewis, J. & Dorso, M. (1998). *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of a Movement*. New York. Simon & Schuster.

**ACTIVITY 4: BE AN ACTIVIST**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

During the Civil Rights Movement, many young people participated in peaceful protests to bring awareness to the injustices of segregation. Danny Lyon was one student who used his talent as a photographer to capture compelling images of members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). These images, which were reproduced in newspapers and on posters, provided visual evidence of the challenges faced by student protestors and the successes they made. Below is a self-portrait of the artist.



Danny Lyon, b. 1942  
*born Brooklyn, NY*

In the summer of 1962, Danny Lyon left the University of Chicago, where he was studying history, and hitchhiked south to immerse himself in the civil rights movement. Upon arriving in segregated Albany, Georgia, he became the first photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was then led by James Forman. During his time in the South, Lyon documented SNCC protests and the harrowing conditions of African Americans; many of his images were used for posters and other materials meant to increase public awareness. Several of these documentary photographs are presented in a book, *Memoirs of the Southern Civil Rights Movement* (1990). Lyon notes, "I had the rare privilege to see history firsthand." This casual photograph, taken in Albany the morning after his arrival, shows him in front of the barber-shop that served as the local SNCC office.

Danny Lyon, b. 1942  
Photograph, gelatin silver print 1962  
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

**I. What role do you believe students can play in the local, regional, and/or national conversations about civil rights?**

**II. Do you know of any young people (yourself included) who have been involved in a peaceful protest to support civil rights for themselves or other groups facing injustice? If yes, describe the situation.**

**III. Think about various ways that people have used their talents to raise awareness about social issues. What talents do you have? How can you use them to inform others about issues that are important to you?**