

Making Our Voices Heard

How a group of Tennessee teens took a stand against racism

About the Story

Lexile: 1020L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to the article's story page at [Scope Online](#).

Learning Objectives:

to read an article about teens who organized a Black Lives Matter protest and an infographic about teen activism; to synthesize information from the two texts to write an essay about how change happens

Key Skills: key ideas, cause and effect, interpreting text, author's purpose, central idea, supporting a claim, synthesis

Essential Questions:

- What is racism?
- How does history connect to the world we're living in today?
- What does it take to change society?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, R.9, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to the article's story page at [Scope Online](#).



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Author read-aloud
- Vocabulary
- Text to speech

Additional teaching support:

- Strategies and Resources for Teaching Black Lives Matter

Recommended pairings from the *Scope* archives:

- *The Girl Who Dared*
- *This Is What Courage Looks Like*
- *The Fight for What's Right*
- Special Collection: Taking a Stand

Literature Connections (see page 5 of this lesson plan)

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Preparing to Write: Making Our Voices Heard
- Vocabulary
- Choice Board
- Quiz*
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

5 minutes

Preview Teacher Resources

- Download and review our **Strategies and Resources for Teaching Black Lives Matter**. It will help you prepare to answer students' questions, facilitate meaningful class discussions, and find additional resources.
- In this article, you'll notice that the word *Black* (describing a group of people) is capitalized. [Click here](#) for an explanation of why Scholastic made this decision.

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Share **Vocabulary: Words and Definitions** and review the words as a class. Highlighted words: *blatant, demonstrations, disadvantage, march, protest, sit-ins, vigils*

2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

"Making Our Voices Heard"

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 25 in the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article once through as a class. Optionally, have students listen to author Mackenzie Carro read the article while they follow along. (The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.)
- Have students read the article again independently. Reconvene to discuss the following close-reading questions as a class.

Close-Reading Questions

(8 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Why were millions of Americans protesting this past summer?** (key ideas, cause and effect) *This past May, George Floyd, a Black man, was killed in Minneapolis by a white police officer who knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes. A video of his death spurred millions of people around the world to protest not only Floyd's death but also police violence, systemic racism, and other injustices faced by Black Americans.*
2. **What is Black Lives Matter? What is one of its goals?** (key ideas) *Black Lives Matter is a human rights movement that has been growing in the United States since 2013. One of its goals is to call attention to racism in the criminal justice system. (Answers will vary.)*
3. **The author writes that the protesters in Nashville held up signs that said, "No Justice, No Peace!" What do you think this means?** (interpreting text) *The phrase means that until justice (fairness and equality) is the norm, peace isn't possible.*
4. **According to the article, in what ways are recent protests affecting Americans?** (cause and effect) *In recent years, and especially in recent months, protests are causing more Americans to become aware of racism in our society. As a result, some cities are changing the way they police, and some political leaders are having discussions about systemic racism within education, health care, criminal justice, and other systems. Additionally, individuals and businesses are reflecting on racism in our culture and rethinking symbols such as flags, monuments, and brand images.*

"How to Be a Changemaker"

Note to teachers: The pronoun *their* is used in the blurb about Sameer Jha. Explain that some people identify as having no gender, or a gender in between (or beyond) male and female. They may have a preferred pronoun or set of pronouns that they would like others to use when referring to them. Sameer prefers the gender-neutral pronouns *they*, *them*, and *theirs*.

- Read the infographic as a class. Optionally, have students listen to author Mackenzie Carro read the infographic while they follow along. (The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.)
- Discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions, some of which draw on both articles.

Close-Reading Questions

(6 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **What is the purpose of this infographic? What is the author's main message?** (author's purpose, central idea) *The purpose of this infographic is to highlight the advocacy of teens today, the strategies they use, and the changes that have come about because of their actions. The main message is that young people can and do make a difference, and that you can make a difference too by using the strategies listed.*
2. **How does the author support the claim that protest can lead to change in both the article and infographic?** (supporting a claim, cause and effect) *The author supports the idea that protest can lead to change by outlining, in the sections "People Are Listening" and "A Deeper Look," the effects that Black Lives Matter protests have had on the U.S. She also includes multiple examples of historic protests that led to progress in the sidebar "Teens & Protest Through Time." In the infographic, she provides examples of strategies that teens have used in their activism and shares the positive results of those actions.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **In what ways, if any, do you think differently about racism after reading these articles?**
Answers will vary.
2. **In what ways, if any, do you think differently about protests and protesting after reading these articles?** *Answers will vary.*
3. **Are there any issues discussed in the paired texts that you feel passionately about? Any strategies you read about that you've tried or would like to try?** *Answers will vary.*

3. Skill Building and Writing

20 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Making Our Voices Heard**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 31 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, which includes a range of ideas and difficulty levels.

Recommended pairings from the *Scope* archives:

Scope plays about teens who stood up to racial injustice:

[Drama: *The Girl Who Dared*](#) (February 2019)

[Drama: *This Is What Courage Looks Like*](#) (November 2016)

[Drama: *The Fight for What's Right*](#) (December 2017/January 2018)

[Special Collection from the *Scope* Archives: *Taking a Stand*](#)

Literature Connections:

This Book Is Anti-Racist by Tiffany Jewell

We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson

Raise Your Voice: 12 Protests That Shaped America by Jeffrey Kluger

A Good Kind of Trouble by Lisa Moore Ramée

The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson

Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes

One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

Midnight Without a Moon by Linda Williams Jackson