



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 8, WEBISODE 15

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., unleashed waves of violence in disenfranchised urban communities tired of seeing their favorite sons gunned down. With King's death, nonviolence lost not only its most eloquent and effective leader but its primacy in the civil rights movement. Over one hundred American cities erupted in rioting, looting, arson, and shooting. Only the presence of tens of thousands of armed troops restored order.

Senator Robert Kennedy, brother of the slain president and former attorney general, hoped to address the inequality underlying the poverty in America's inner cities. His campaign for president brought together young voters, people against the Vietnam War, the disenfranchised, minorities, and farm workers. But two months after King's funeral, the nation again faced the tragic loss of a young, charismatic leader. After winning the Democratic primary in California and South Dakota, Kennedy was shot by an assassin.

The 1960s, a decade that had begun with idealism, ended in disillusion and turmoil. The nation reeled from the tragic, violent loss of several strong voices in the American pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

Teacher Directions

1. Display the following quotation on the chalkboard, chart paper, or on a transparency.

Like life, racial understanding is not something that we find, but something we must create.

~~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Discuss with the students what Dr. King means in this statement. Check students' understanding by asking them to paraphrase the quotation.

Teacher Directions

Note to the Teacher: Activities for this segment are based on the play "A Party on Potus." The script for this play and directions for presentation are in Segment 6.

1. After the presentation, distribute one copy of the Student Sheet: *Pinpointing More Points of the Potus Play*. Working in teams, students discuss the questions and record their answers.
2. Students share their answers in a class discussion. Make sure that the discussion includes the following understandings.



Let's Discuss



History Sleuth

History Sleuth, Cont.



What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom

John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X all died violent deaths by assassination.

Martin Luther King, Jr., used nonviolent protest to bring about civil rights goals. He learned this approach in part from reading Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*. Stanton and Thoreau would agree with him. Kennedy and Johns would agree with him in principle, but both resorted to violence in war.

Malcolm X initially preached violence and separation from the white race. The other characters would disagree with this approach.

Johnson wanted the Great Society to become a reality, but spent much of his power and resources in fighting the war in Vietnam.

Teacher Directions

1. Display a transparency of the Student Sheet: *More Pronouncements from Potus*. Help students identify each speaker and interpret his/her words.
2. Ask students how the quotations apply to issues that our country continues to face today.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *What If All People Were Purple?* Students follow the directions on the sheet.
2. After students have shared their poems, ask them if life in a world like the one described in their poem would be better or freer than life in the United States
3. Students illustrate their poems and display their poems and illustrations in the classroom.



Connections

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Language Arts — Students locate and read poetry by Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes in the library or on the web site Langston Hughes @ <http://www.hollischool.org/holiday/langston/#cultural>.

History/Research — Students using library resources or the Internet research how many presidents of the United States were assassinated. Over what issue did each president lose his life? Did the president's death solve the issue?



Pinpointing More Points of the Potus Play



Which characters in the play died violently?



What methods did Martin Luther King, Jr., use in trying to achieve civil right goals?



What methods did Malcolm X use in trying to achieve civil right goals?



Which of the other characters would have agreed with Martin Luther King, Jr.? Why?

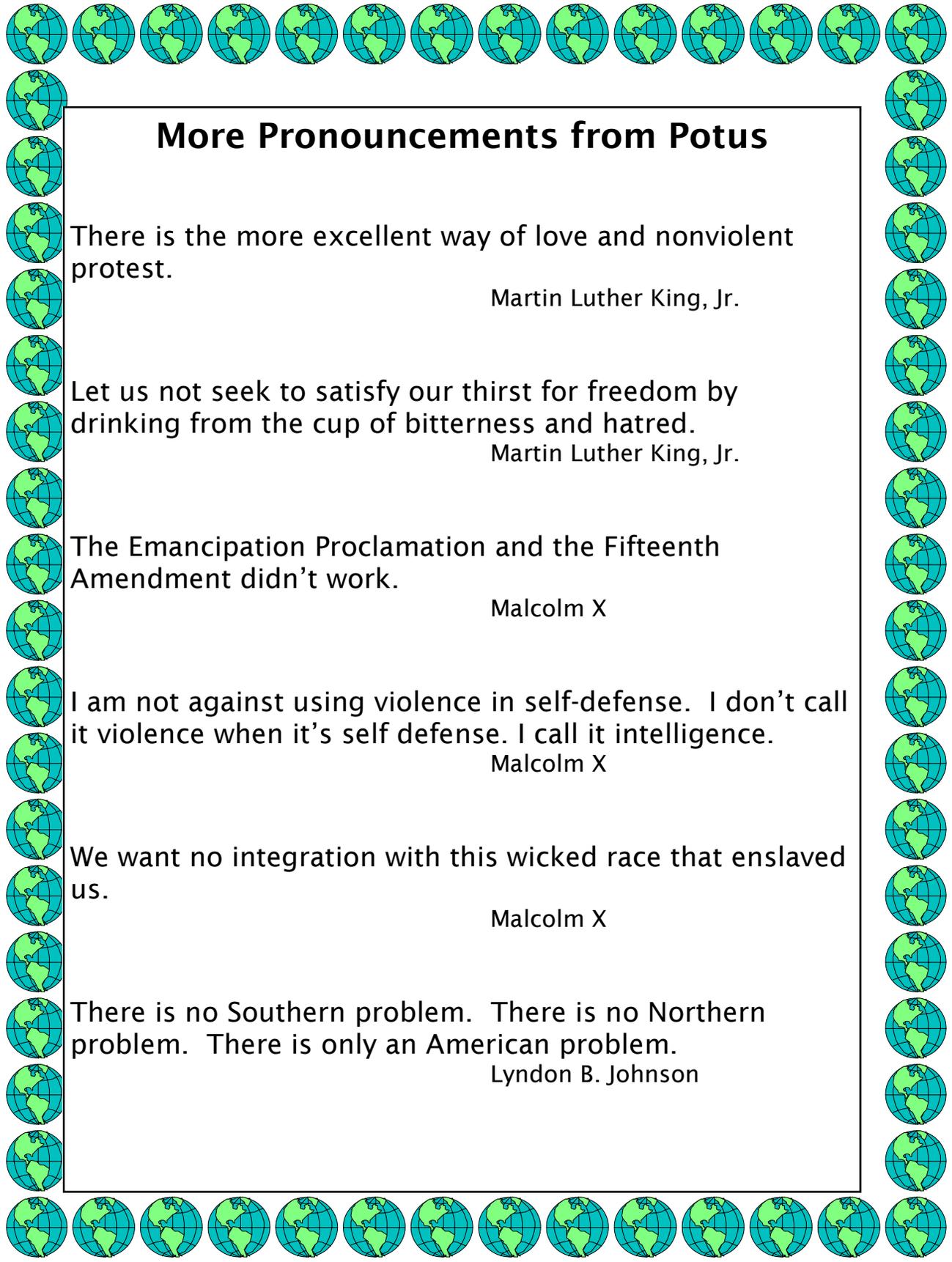


Which of the other characters would have agreed with Malcolm X? Why?



Lyndon Johnson says “Violence strikes from our hands the very thing that we seek – progress.” How does he know this is true?





More Pronouncements from Potus

There is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Emancipation Proclamation and the Fifteenth Amendment didn't work.

Malcolm X

I am not against using violence in self-defense. I don't call it violence when it's self defense. I call it intelligence.

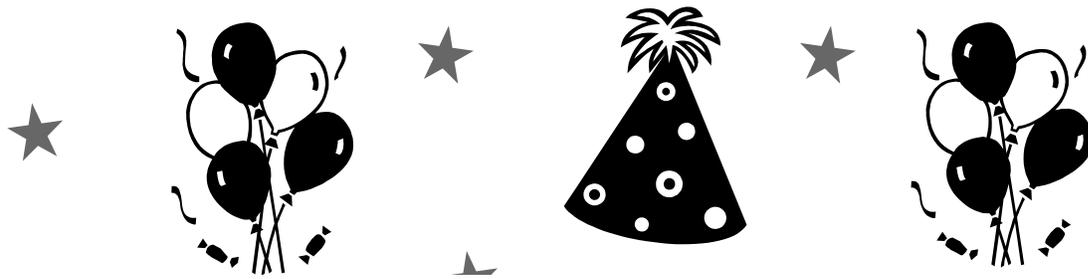
Malcolm X

We want no integration with this wicked race that enslaved us.

Malcolm X

There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem.

Lyndon B. Johnson



A Party On Potus

Potus, an imaginary planet, is located in a galaxy far, far away. A great sun-sized star called Sphinx warms Potus. On this planet, where former presidents of the United States meet to discuss present, past, and future problems affecting the country. They often invite other guests who arrive by space taxis.

The Cast

President Lyndon B. Johnson (**LBJ**)
President John F. Kennedy (**JFK**)
Henry David Thoreau (**HDT**)
Dr. Martin Luther King (**MLK**)

Malcolm X (**MX**)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton (**ECS**)
Peter—a Potean waiter

LBJ: Welcome to Potus, the planet for former presidents. Y'all probably know that Potus stands for President Of The United States. This party opens our semi-annual meeting.

JFK: Lyndon, you and I are the only presidents here. Where are the others?

LBJ: Quite a few of our group are missing, like Harry and Ike and FDR. Abe drops in once in awhile when his wife lets him, and so does Teddy Roosevelt.

JFK: Maybe you better explain a little bit about Potus to our guests.

LBJ: We're mighty glad to have all you here. Pretty soon, Peter, our Potean waiter, will take your orders. Let me tell you right off that most Potean words start with "p", so pay attention. All those "p's" can pose a problem. Now! John! What's our topic tonight?

JFK: Civil Rights, the war against poverty, and the 1960s. I once said, many years ago, that change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or to the present are certain to miss the future. But I think today, we need to look to the past to get some answers for the future of the United States. Whenever I drop in on the present Congress, I remember that song, "The Times They Are A-Changin'." Remember the lines: "Come senators, congressmen — Please heed the call. Don't stand in the doorway; don't block up the hall." There is still a lot of work to be done on Earth.

LBJ: How'd you do that? How'd you just "drop in" on the present Congress? How'd you just sneak into the White House and the Capitol?

JFK: Peter provides me with a special Potean parka, Lyndon. I attended my own funeral in 1963. Pretty impressive. I was even standing right next to you on the plane when you took the oath of office on Air Force One. You held up pretty well, Lyndon. And I kept a close eye on you. That was me pushing you to push through all that legislation.

LBJ: How do I get one of those parkas?

JFK: Ask Peter. I guess you want to check on President Bush.

LBJ: Actually, I just want to go to his ranch and eat some good ol' Texas barbecue.

HDT: Gentlemen. I have said that time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I have lots of time on my hands now—but could we get back to the discussion?

JFK: In 1963, I made a very strong statement to the American people. I said that it ought to be possible for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children be treated.

LBJ: I thought I said that.

MLK: No. I said that.

MX: I said that, too.

ECS: So did I.

HDT: I think I said it first. I also said, "Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after." What did the people really want in the 1960s?

MX: Freedom from white oppression.

ECS: Freedom from male oppression.

MLK: The right to vote and to peaceably protest injustices.

HDT: What you all are talking about are the rights of man— natural rights — and the rights of man include creating a society and a government that commands his respect.

ECS: The rights of man, Henry? Of man? What about the rights of women? As all of you know, in the 1840s, I fought very hard for the rights of women — not just to vote— but to be as free as man is free. And, Lyndon! You even passed the Manpower Act? How dare you call it that? Why didn't you call it the Person Power Act?

LBJ: Excuse me, little lady, but I had a few other things on my mind in the 1960s — like the war on poverty, civil rights issues, and the war in Vietnam. And, the Manpower Act did a lot to help people get back to work. It helped families. That means that the Manpower Act helped women, too.

ECS: Lyndon — do not call me a little lady. Haven't you learned anything about women's issues?

JFK: Martin. You gave your "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963. Before you were assassinated in 1968, did any of your dreams come true?

MLK: The Voting Rights Act of 1965. Lyndon signed it. During that speech, I said that we cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote, and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing to vote for.

Peter: Pardon me. I am Peter from Potus, proud to provide pervice por you. Your porder, please?

LBJ: I told you he speaks in "p's". He wants your order.

JFK: I'll have the pickled pippas with piftie sauce, and a glass of iced pinda.

MLK: The same.

MX: I have become a vegetarian.

Peter: Perhaps the pusca punga, perfectly prepared with a pepper sauce.

MX: Why do you Poteans speak in "p's"?

Peter: P is the post important, because it stands for peace. Pardon my pronunciation of Penglish.

LBJ: Got any Texas barbecue, Peter?

Peter: Only prilled prisca.

LBJ: That again? Isn't there a McDonald's anywhere near here?

ECS: I'll have the pish dish.

HDT: Me, too.

Peter: Pumm Pumm.

ECS: Lyndon, what does that mean?

LBJ: It means, "Coming up!"

MX: Let's discuss some real issues here. Martin said that he and Lyndon got the Voting Rights Act passed, but that took a long, long time. The Emancipation Proclamation and the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment didn't work.

ECS: They did work, but not fast enough to suit you men. Look at how long we women had to wait to accomplish our goal, and we never used violence.

MX: I don't advocate violence, but at the same time, I am not against using violence in self-defense. I don't call it violence when it's self-defense. I call it intelligence. We have to stand up against tyranny and oppression, Martin, not just sit down in the streets or ride buses or march on Washington and give speeches.

HDT: I certainly fought for your rights although I wouldn't use the term fought. Malcolm, if you and Martin had just worked together, think what you both might have accomplished! You divided the civil rights movement. You both believed in the same principles. In fact, all of you worked to eliminate poverty and racism and bigotry. What if all four of you had worked together?

MLK: You might be right, Henry. Malcolm and I had the same goals, but our ideas about how to make civil rights happen were very different.

HDT: What if you had read what Elizabeth wrote about women's rights — and included women in the struggle?

ECS: I certainly agree with that.

HDT: Lyndon, What if you had used the powers of speech to negotiate the problems in Vietnam? Perhaps we would not have lost 58,000 young men in a violent and unproductive war. Why can't people talk to one another to resolve problems? Why must we resort to violence? Even today? Communication counts.

MX: Sometimes the only answer is violence.

MLK: And it was violence that got both of us killed— as well as John and his brother Robert. Henry is right. Think what might have happened if all of us survived to see our dreams realized. Lyndon, what was it you once said?

LBJ: I said that there is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem.

MLK: We made some mistakes. We should have worked together.

LBJ: Violence strikes from our hands the very thing that we seek — progress.

MLK: I am still dreaming of a better world. One nation, and liberty and justice for all.

JFK: In the final analysis, our basic common link is that we all inhabited that small planet called Earth. We were all mortal. Now we must work to help those who have followed us learn how to live in peace.

Peter: Potus provendor

LBJ: Dinner is served. (All turn over their scripts and lower their heads in unison.)

The End