



Children protesting: Duty or Danger?

GETTING ORIENTED

Here is some information that might be helpful to students less familiar with the issues raised.

After the Civil War

After the Civil War was over, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution made slavery illegal. However, many southerners did not want to let former slaves have equality, so some states passed laws that kept African Americans from having the same rights and opportunities as whites. These laws, known as Jim Crow laws, kept black people from voting, owning properties in certain areas, going to the same schools, eating in the same section at restaurants, or even using the same beaches as white people. These “separate but equal” laws were designed to keep whites in control of the economy and politics, while making African Americans second-class citizens.

1963

This was an important year for advancing the Civil Rights Movement. People protested in marches, attended boycotts, and staged sit-ins (where protestors would gather and just sit, waiting for those in power to listen). In 1963, there was the Children's Crusade and the famous March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Additionally, in June, President Kennedy first announced that he

wanted to pass laws requiring states to treat everyone equally. In September 1963, four girls were murdered after an African American church was bombed in Birmingham, Alabama. In November that year, President Kennedy was assassinated, and Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson became president.



Civil Rights Act

In 1964, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, enacting the laws that President Kennedy had spoken about the year before. The laws were designed to keep states from discriminating against people because of race, color, country of origin, or religion. Even though this bill passed, a year later more legislation had to be passed to specifically stop states from discriminating against black voters.



Freedom of Assembly

The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the right for people to come together to protest and ask the government to respond to their demands for change. This freedom of assembly is also seen as a basic human right by the United Nations.





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EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
Parents	Some parents believe that those who let their children attend protests are placing their children in danger. If there is even the smallest chance that a protest could turn violent, not only could the children be injured like in the Children’s Crusade, but the parents could also lose track of them in a giant crowd. By allowing children to attend protests, some parents worry they are suggesting that it is right to openly challenge authority.	Other parents believe that letting their children attend protests teaches them about civic duty. If children are to grow up to be active citizens, they need to embrace their rights and learn how to stand up for what they believe. These parents think, if they keep their children from participating in protests out of fear, then they are teaching their children to focus on themselves, instead of actively participating in reform that benefits others and society as a whole.
Children	Some children may think that, at first it could seem fun, but in the end things could go badly, and they could be put in physical danger. There are other ways that children can challenge something they believe to be wrong, like writing letters to the editor or starting petitions for others to sign. Some children may also think it is best to let the adults fix society’s problems and to let kids be kids.	Some children may think it is an excellent learning opportunity to participate in protests. They want to demand change on issues that they care about. Actively assembling with others allows children to hear discussions and debates about the best way to effect change and teaches them they are part of the democratic process. When protesting, children might hope to meet other children with similar beliefs who could work together to fight injustice.
Police	Some police may say that children make a protest more dangerous because the police will be reluctant to disperse a crowd with tear gas if the crowd includes children. Police would have to find other ways to control rowdy crowds, and that could make their job harder. They may also worry that children will be hurt during a protest.	Other police may say it is better to have children protesting with adults because the adults would try to model better behavior to make sure that the children are safe. Most people don’t want to see a child hurt, so everyone would behave in a calmer manner to ensure that the protest remains peaceful.

Additional Information

- In 1963, more than 1,000 children walked out of school in Birmingham, Alabama to protest segregation.
- During the Children’s Crusade, pictures showing small children being arrested, beaten, and attacked by police dogs and fire hoses were published around the world and caused mass outrage. These photos prompted the U.S. Justice Department to intervene.
- Non-violent protests are twice as likely to cause change as protests that turn violent.
- Political scientists have shown that, if 5% of the population unites to actively protest something, then those in power must respond. (In the U.S., 5% of the population would be almost 16 million people.)
- During the Ferguson protests, a Missouri senator pointed out that militarization of the police appeared threatening, increasing the protesters’ anger.

Ferguson Protesters

<http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-runner-up-ferguson-protesters/>

Video and Lesson Plans on the Children’s Crusade from Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org/kit/mighty-times-childrens-march>

Bill of Rights and Freedom of Assembly

<http://billofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/headlines/assembly-and-petition/>

The Jim Crow Museum

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/>



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ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Features of Academic Writing: *Discourse Structure*

This Word Generation text is slightly more difficult than others. Phrases highlighted in the same color are co-referential, meaning they refer to the same person or thing. Ask students to examine the text and see if they can identify co-references.

In the third paragraph, the word “even” is highlighted. This signals contrast. This paragraph discusses how people supported protestors but not children protesting. Ask students to identify the phrases around “even” that relay this idea.

Freeman Hrabowski III was 12 years old in 1963 when he was arrested and jailed for five days. He had participated with thousands of other students in the **Children’s Crusade** in Birmingham, Alabama. During the **non-violent protest**, **police dogs, water cannons, and police batons** were used to **disperse** the children. Pictures of **police brutality** against children demanding equality helped **catalyze** President Kennedy’s proposal of the Civil Rights Act, which ended legalized **segregation**. Hrabowski is now president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He attributes his success partly to what he learned during the Children’s Crusade.

In August 2014, protests erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, after **Michael Brown was shot** by a police officer. Brown was unarmed. Some witnesses reported that he said, “Don’t shoot!” with his hands up. Protesters expressed their anger about **Brown’s death** and about many previous cases when unarmed black men were shot by police. They called for broad **reform** of police procedures. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said that **events like Ferguson** highlight a “real racial problem” in the U.S. Police spokespersons responded that the police do a dangerous job and are just trying to protect all citizens.

The Ferguson protests were mostly peaceful, but there were pockets of violence. Police responded with tear gas, smoke, armored vehicles, and arrests. In both 1963 and 2014, parents of children and teenagers who protested were criticized, **even** by some people who believed that the police actions were an **injustice**. Similarly, Malcom X, an African American leader who sometimes

advocated violence, commented on the 1963 Children’s Crusade, “Real men don’t put their children on the firing line.” But Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the champion of non-violence, told parents, “Don’t worry about your children; they’re going to be all right. Don’t hold them back if they want to go to jail, for they are doing a job not only for themselves, but for all of America and for all mankind.”

In Ferguson, many parents took young children along to the protests, to learn about their right as U.S. citizens to assemble and speak freely against injustices. Additionally, parents said their children had the right to defend their beliefs. Critics argued that these parents were placing their children in danger, since even peaceful protests can end in violence.

Are the parents of child protesters acting recklessly? Or are they providing their children important lessons about civic rights and obligations?



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GENERATING WORDS

In this week's *Word Generation* unit, you have discussed and thought about children as protestors. Protests happen when a group of people decides they want to work together to change something. Sometimes, all it takes is a single person to start a protest to demand reform.

Reform is made up of a Latin prefix and root word:

re - back, again + **form** - shape = **reform** - to change something (generally for the better)

So, basically, you are trying to change the shape of something. **Reform** is a simple, small yet powerful word.

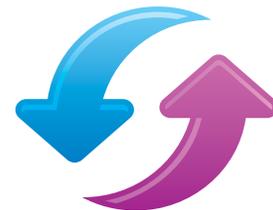
When you add prefixes before Latin roots, it changes the whole meaning of the word.

Work with a partner to complete the charts below by combining prefixes with root words. Then try to figure out what each word means and fill in the definition.

Original Verb	Add 're' prefix	Define
count		
play		
call		
union		

Prefix	Add 'form' root word	Define
con - together, with	conform	shape with others, i.e., adapt or match
de - from, away		
mal - bad		
trans - across		

 What would be two things that could **reform** your study habits?



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DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

Opinion Continuum

Procedure:

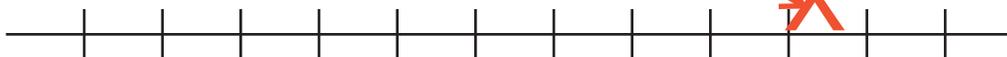
1. Ask 3-4 of your classmates to place their name on the opinion continuum below. Ask them to place an "X" on the continuum to represent where they stand on the issue for discussion and then write their name below the "X." Do not allow anyone to choose the middle.
2. Ask your classmates to explain why they placed their names where they did. You can ask them to elaborate if you don't understand. You might want to take a few notes under their names to remember the important reasons and evidence they use.
3. Be prepared to give your opinion to several of your classmates, as well.



example

Thinks that parents need to model for their children how to stand up for what they believe in.

Parents who let their children attend protests are being reckless.



Parents who let their children attend protests are teaching them important lessons about their democratic rights.



Class or small group discussion:

With a large or small group, share what you learned from talking to a few classmates.

Words and phrases you might use in today's discussion:

- why do you think this?
- Can you give me an example?
- Can you use other words to explain that?
- Let me see if I understand correctly, are you saying that...
- _____ believes that _____. According to her/him, _____.