

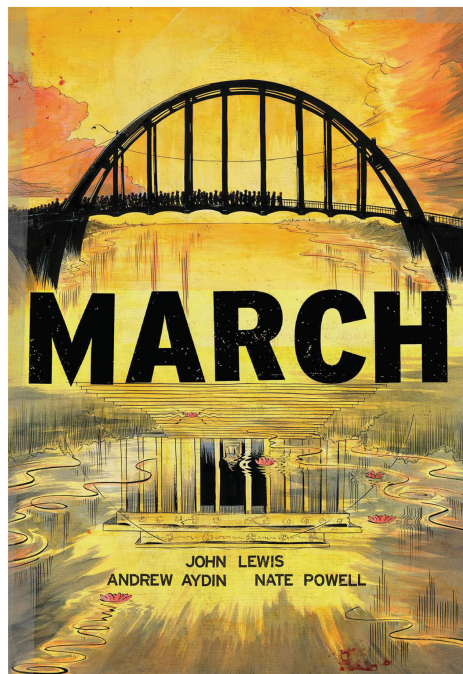
# Reading <sup>with</sup> Relevance

Building INDEPENDENT READERS and THINKERS

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

## *The March Trilogy*

A graphic novel series by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell



Recommended for:  
Grade Levels  
9th-12th

# A tool to inspire change

This literacy curriculum is constructed around a content-rich trilogy of graphic memoirs that builds students' literacy skills and supports their character development and self-confidence. Students are motivated to read because they relate to the strong, diverse, and resilient characters featured in our selected books and because each session gives them the opportunity to connect what they've read to their own lives.

Developed, field-tested, and refined in our own tutoring and mentoring programs, this Common Core Standards curriculum has inspired persistently low-performing students to engage with literature, make meaning in their lives, and improve their English language arts skills. Now, *Reading with Relevance* is available to help you dig deep into the social, emotional, and academic needs of your students, whether in your classroom, after-school program, or youth development agency!



## Why *March*

This graphic memoir tells the story of John Lewis, a strong, passionate, resilient young man who rises to the center of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and eventually becomes a U.S. Congressman. This book is John's story, but it is also the story of the movement. We chose this book for its careful exploration of timely social and emotional themes: resilience in the face of oppression, perseverance, activism, racism, violence, and solidarity. This curriculum will inspire students to build connections between John's quest for social justice and their own role as citizens today.

### This teacher's guide includes:

- A facilitator's guide with tips and resources for implementing the curriculum.
- A map of Common Core Standards addressed through this program.
- Fourteen individual lesson plans, including vocabulary, discussion questions, journal prompts, extension activities, and all handouts.
- Two assessments to monitor student progress throughout the program.
- Regular checkpoints to help teachers assess their students' progress on ELA standards.
- A culminating essay-writing unit.
- An appendix with additional teaching resources and activities to continue exploring this text.

# Session 2

Book 1, Pages 47-83

## Vocabulary

**desegregation** (pg. 53): n., ending the policy or practice of segregation

**segregation** (pg. 54): n., the forced separation of people based on racial group

**unconstitutional** (pg. 54): adj., not in accordance with a political constitution, especially the U.S. Constitution

**defiance** (pg. 56): n., open resistance or bold disobedience

**instigator** (pg. 80): n., someone who provokes or causes an action

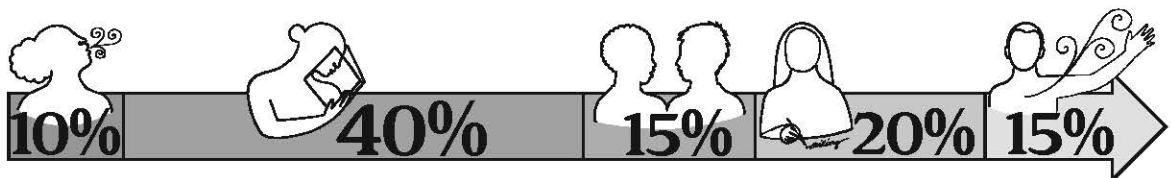
## Today's Theme

Today's theme is **taking action**. This session finds John feeling restless in the face of inequality; he began to think like an activist, and receives training on non-violent protest. Talk with your students about what makes someone an activist, and why this work is important. Activists see injustice in our world, speak out against it, and work to drive change. Lead a discussion with students about what they would like to change about their community, state, nation, and world. Ask: What issues do you care about? What do you feel you currently cannot do or become because of your race, gender, sexuality, religion, class, immigration status, or other identifying characteristic? How might you prepare yourself to work against the injustices you've identified?

**Note:** The N-word appears in this session. Before you read the session, you should establish clear rules for your class about how you will deal with the appearance of this racial slur throughout the text. (See "Racial Slurs" on page 19 of this guide.)

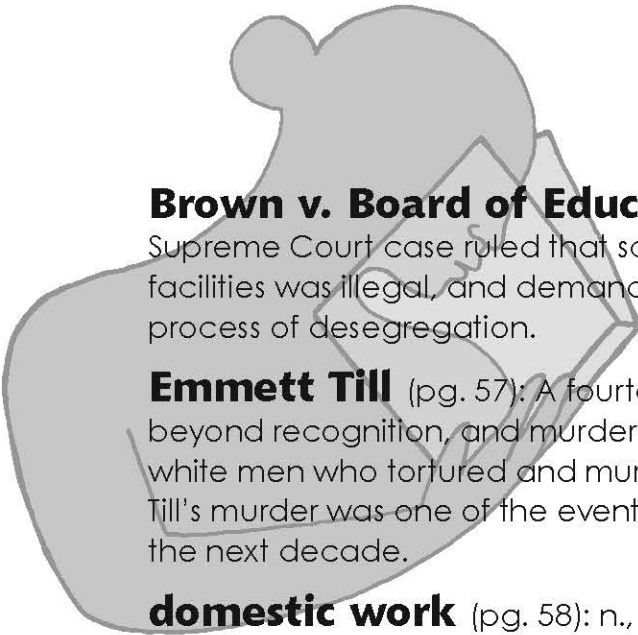
## Session 1 Recap

In the previous session, Congressman John Lewis prepares to attend President Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009. He has visitors — young Jacob and Esau, and their mother. John begins to tell his visitors about his childhood — how he raised chickens in rural Alabama and took a life changing trip to New York state.





## During Reading



**Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka** (pg. 53): This historic 1954 Supreme Court case ruled that school segregation into “separate but equal” facilities was illegal, and demanded that schools across the country begin the process of desegregation.

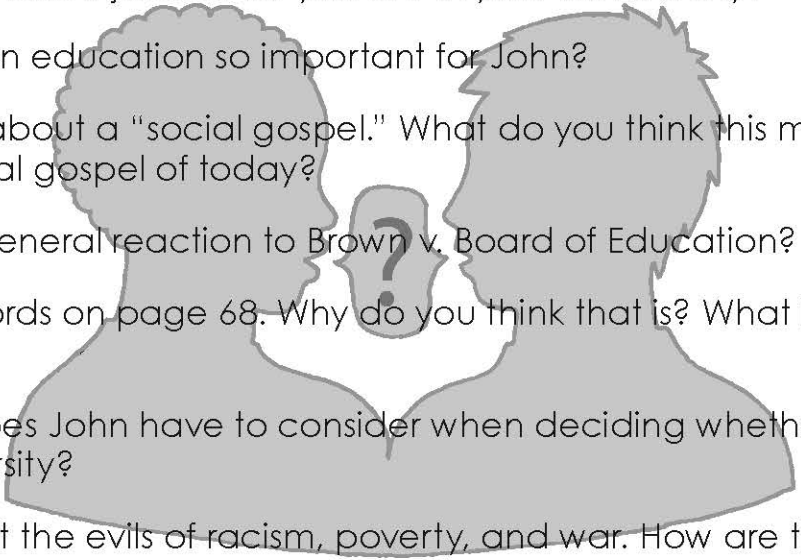
**Emmett Till** (pg. 57): A fourteen-year-old boy who was beaten, tortured beyond recognition, and murdered for allegedly speaking to a white woman. The white men who tortured and murdered him were acquitted by an all-white jury. Till's murder was one of the events that helped fueled the Civil Rights Movement of the next decade.

**domestic work** (pg. 58): n., work cleaning and maintaining a house

**Fellowship of Reconciliation** (pg. 76): An organization started in 1915 by a group of pacifists, committed from its beginning to nonviolent activism.

**Gandhi** (pg. 77): Mahatma Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known by his last name, Gandhi) was a leader of the Indian Independence movement against British colonial rule. He led India to independence through nonviolent civil disobedience and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom worldwide. He was assassinated in 1948.

## Discussion Questions

- 
- John describes the injustice in his community he sees every day on his way to school. What injustices do you see in your community?
  - Why is getting an education so important for John?
  - Dr. King talked about a “social gospel.” What do you think this means? What is the social gospel of today?
  - What was the general reaction to Brown v. Board of Education?
  - There are no words on page 68. Why do you think that is? What is the tone of the page?
  - What factors does John have to consider when deciding whether to go to Troy State University?
  - John talks about the evils of racism, poverty, and war. How are these related?
  - How does John's activist training impact his ability to fight racism?

LOVE

- During his training in nonviolence, John reflects, "But the hardest part to learn — to truly understand deep in your heart — was how to find love for your attacker." The protesters practice disarming their attackers by connecting with their humanity.

**What do you think it means to love your enemy? What does this look like?**

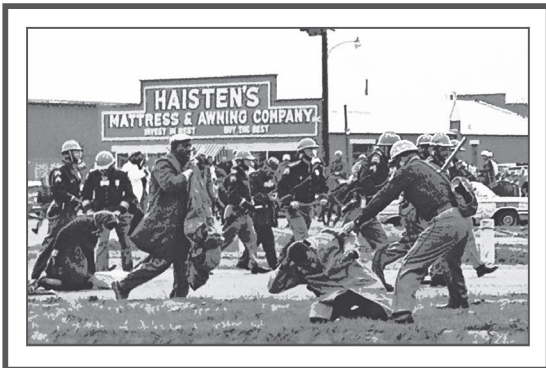
- » Put yourself in John's shoes. What would make it difficult to treat attackers with love?
- » How does this quote relate to the principles of nonviolence?
- » Why was this approach such an important part of the civil rights strategy?

EDUCATION

- From an early age, education is incredibly important to John. He and his family make sacrifices to ensure that John is able to access learning opportunities that help him to grow.

**How does John's education, both inside and outside of school, impact his development?**

- » What critical lessons does John learn through his education?
- » How does his learning inside and outside of school differ?
- » Write about an important lesson you've taken from your own education.



**Extension Activity**

In the first two reading sessions of March, we have seen how John is impacted by his upbringing, education, and other people in the movement. Have students think about who and what has had a positive impact on their own development. Support them to also think about who they may impact, and how they can be sure their impact is positive.

**Materials:**

- » Impact Handout

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

## Impact on Me

- 1) Name one person who has impacted you in an important way. What has that impact been? What did you learn from them?
- 2) Name one event that has had an important impact on you. What has that impact been? What did you learn about yourself from this event?
- 3) Name one larger idea or institution that has impacted you. How has this institution or larger idea shaped your thinking about a specific topic?

## My Impact

- 1) Name one person that you have had a positive impact on. How have you have shaped this person?
- 2) What are opportunities you have to impact more people?
- 3) What are important lessons you have to share with others?

In the first two reading sessions in *March*, we have seen how John is impacted by his upbringing, education, and other people in the movement. Take a few minutes today to think about the people and experiences that have positively impacted your development. Then, think about how you can have an impact on others. How can you be sure that impact is positive?

# Impact

# Appendix

## Additional Activities

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### Get to Know MFI

**Moving Forward Institute** is a nonprofit publisher of social justice educational materials. The organization was created by the founders and staff of Moving Forward Education, a multi-generational tutoring and mentoring organization aimed at fostering academic and emotional success for underserved students in California. Since our founding in 2003, MFE has provided tutoring and mentoring services to thousands of students and has trained hundreds of young adults to enter careers in the educational field. This reading curriculum was developed by our leadership team and its advisory group, including credentialed teachers and college professors. This program has been successfully facilitated throughout California by achieving powerful and measurable results for students and schools. To learn more about our organization, or our research and data, please contact us today.

### Our Purpose

*At Moving Forward Institute, we know that students can be successful learners when their social and emotional needs are met.*

*We empower educators to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students by using culturally-relevant and gender-responsive reading curricula.*

### Training and Professional Development Services

*While lesson plans are designed to be easily facilitated by classroom teachers and after-school staff alike, our in-person training and professional development services will ensure fully effective implementation of the literacy curricula.*

*Additionally, we offer technical support, classroom observation, and program evaluation services to help your program be successful. Contact us for more information about these services!*

### Contact Us

*Contact us today to learn more about how the Moving Forward Institute can support your students and staff!*

**Online:** [www.movingforwardinstitute.org](http://www.movingforwardinstitute.org)  
**By Email:** [info@movingforwardinstitute.org](mailto:info@movingforwardinstitute.org)  
**By Phone:** 510-658-4475  
**By Mail:** 1425 Park Ave  
Emeryville, CA 94608

### If your students liked March. . .

*...they might love some of our other book selections! We suggest that you check out *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, *The Hate U Give*, or *Warriors Don't Cry*. Please visit our website today to browse our full selection of socially and emotionally rich novel-based curricula!*