

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Voting Rights Act & Selma March

“And We Shall Overcome”

After the Sit Ins, the Freedom Rides, the March on Washington and the Civil Rights Act of the 1960s, there was still strong, often violent resistance to African-Americans’ right to vote. Many Southern states passed laws to keep them from being able to vote. There were poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses. But African-Americans continued to fight for their right to vote.

Throughout the South, tensions were high,  
For African-Americans, the right to vote did not apply.  
Peaceful protesters were met with violence,  
Oppressed by whites who kept black voices silenced.  
From citizens to police to the Ku Klux Klan,  
Blacks didn’t back down, they went to take a stand.  
Many went to register but were arrested,  
So they organized, and a plan was suggested.  
A peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery,  
So they could tell the government what they want from them.  
The first March of 600 made it six blocks,  
Before they were beaten with clubs by the cops,  
And a mounted up posse deputized by the sheriff.  
But this was an event America was made aware of,  
’Cause the news cameras were there to capture  
The violence, like the skull of John Lewis getting fractured.  
Bloody Sunday is what it was called,  
Much of the nation was outraged and appalled.  
But when the victims emerged from the hospital,  
They would march again, their dream was unstoppable.

The black community marched,  
For freedom and equality, they marched.  
To fight for the right to vote, they marched  
From Selma, and they didn't look back,  
Until they were protected by the Voting Rights Act.

"Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote."

- President Lyndon B. Johnson

March 15, 1965,  
President Johnson is on TV live  
To address the US and Congress,  
About a voting rights act that would go into effect.  
On August 6 it was signed into law,  
And LBJ's words for us all:  
"We shall overcome,"  
Meaning the injustice of the system.  
Now, the right to vote would be guaranteed,  
For all citizens of any color and creed.  
Literacy tests and policies that disenfranchised  
African-Americans were banned, and the grand prize?  
Places known for discrimination,  
If they take their voting processes and try to change them,  
First they've got to get approval from the government.  
Finally the right to vote was protected by a covenant,  
And the number of black voters increased  
By hundreds of thousands throughout the southeast.  
And the march from Selma lead the way,  
But it's clear we have work to do here still today.

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For freedom and equality, they marched.  
To fight for the right to vote, they marched  
From Selma, and they didn't look back,  
Until they were protected by the Voting Rights Act.

"There is no moral issue. It is wrong—deadly wrong—to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country."

- President Lyndon B. Johnson