

GREENSBORO FOUR LESSON



You're In Charge®

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE

The School Board has announced a new plan to be implemented by the administration that will increase the time of the school day. Students will be required to come to school one hour earlier and stay one hour later every day. This is being done to better prepare students for required standardized testing.

1. How does this make you feel?
2. What steps can be taken to get the School Board to change this new policy?

LIFE IN THE SOUTH – QUICK REVIEW

1. The Reality of Segregation

- Jim Crow Laws
- Separate But Equal – Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896)
- De facto vs. De jure segregation

2. Legal Challenges to Segregation - NAACP

- Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)
- Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955)
- The Little Rock Nine (1957)

3. Getting Involved...The Greensboro Sit Ins (1960)

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE: THE GREENSBORO SIT-INS

Four college freshmen from North Carolina A&T were frustrated with reality of life in the South for African Americans and decided to take action.

– (Ezell Blair Jr., Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond)



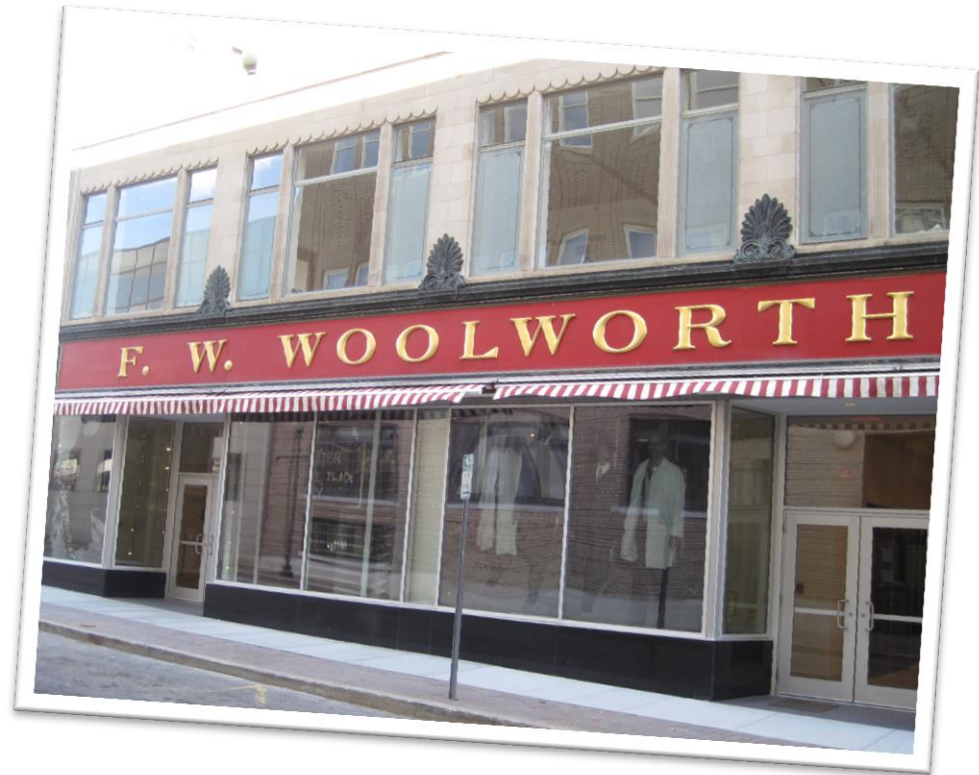
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE: THE GREENSBORO SIT-INS

The Target – F. W. Woolworth Department Store

- Woolworth’s traditionally denied service to African Americans with their “whites only” lunch counter.

The Strategy – Civil Disobedience

- Begin a movement where they would go to the store and peacefully “sit in” the lunch counter, asking for service, and attempting to integrate the facility.



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Day One - February 1, 1960 – The Movement Begins

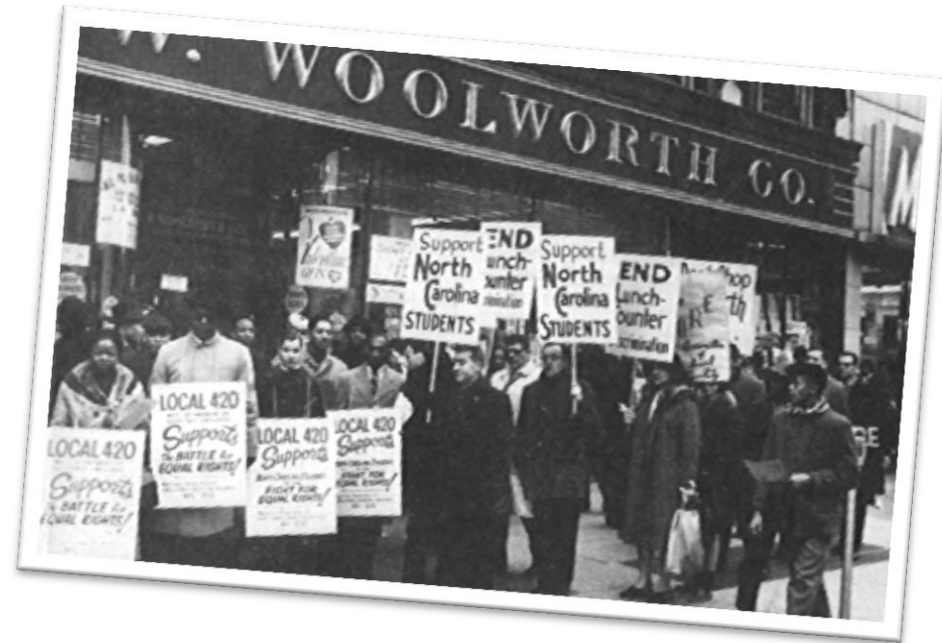
- The four students entered the Greensboro Woolworths and asked to be served.
- They were denied service and asked to leave, the students remained seated until the store closed.



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A Movement Grows

- The students realized they were having an impact and recruited others to follow. The next day, 25 students returned to the store and sat undaunted as they were heckled by white patrons. Police stood by to monitor the situation. As new coverage reported on the scene, more students embraced the movement and decided to join in.
- By the end of February 1960, the movement had spread to 30 cities in eight states. By the end of March 1960, it had grown to 55 cities in thirteen states.



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The Reaction

- Many white southerners opposed the push for integration. Many participated in counter protests, often times heightening tensions by verbally and physically confronting the sit-in protesters.
- Most business owners refused to integrate.
- However, some white residents supported the push for change.
- Edward Zane, a member of the Greensboro City Council worked with the community to reach a compromise. Zane led the Greensboro Advisory Committee on Community Relations representing the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Merchants Association in an effort to push for integration.

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The Result

- As the protests continued into the summer months, change was at hand.
- July 21, 1960 – Woolworth’s informed Chairman Zane and the Advisory Committee that they would begin serving all properly dressed and well behaved people.
- Monday June 25, 1960 – Woolworth’s was desegregated. Four Woolworth employees (Charles Bess, Mattie Long, Susie Morrison, and Jamie Robinson) became the first African Americans to eat at the lunch counter.
- By August 1961, more than 70,000 people had participated in sit-ins. The sit-in movement and technique inspired many other similar protests at public and private facilities. America would never be the same.

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE: THE GREENSBORO SIT-INS

Please watch the following interviews with two individuals who participated in the sit-in movement, Dr. Franklin McCain and Mr. Julian Bond.

Answer the following questions:

1. Why did Dr. McCain and Mr. Bond decide to take action?
2. What expectations do they have for current and future generations of young people in America?

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE: DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

Groups: Break the students into 5 groups. Choose a leader for each group.

Scenario: Each group will be given a different scenario involving some kind of injustice. Possible scenarios can be found on the Scenarios for Application (PDF). Or, feel free to create your own based on issues in your school, community, or state.

Analyze: Instruct the group to read and discuss its scenario together. Use the following questions to fuel group discussions: How do you feel about this? Is this wrong or unjust? Why or why not? What actions could be taken to correct it? What would the Greensboro Four have done? What steps should be taken? What are the risks of those steps?

Create an Action Plan: Based on this discussion, each group should create an action plan to share with the class. The plan should summarize the situation and detail what actions should be taken.

Present: As a class, review each group's scenario and plan. Allow students to offer feedback and suggestions. Draw connections to the Greensboro Four.

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE: REFLECTION

Reflecting on today's lesson, please answer the following prompt using complete sentences in one well written paragraph.

What does it take to make a change in America?