

The Civil Rights Movement: Mississippi Freedom
“Mississippi: Is This America?” (1962-1964) from *Eyes on the Prize* (55 minutes)

Mississippi Activists- Note the actions of each of the following activists as you view this segment.

Bob Moses

Unita Blackwell

Lawrence Guyot

Medgar Evers

Rev. Robert L. Smith

Roy Wilkins

Dave Dennis

Jim Forman

James Chaney

Andrew Goodman

Michael Schwerner

Rita Schwerner

Ella Baker

Victoria Gray-Adams

Fannie Lou Hamer

1. Describe the purpose and impact of the White Citizens' Council in the state of Mississippi.
2. How were African Americans prevented from voting in Mississippi?
3. Note the actions of the NAACP led by State Field Secretary Medgar Evers in the capitol city of Jackson.
4. How did government officials react to the NAACP campaign in Jackson?
5. On June 11, 1963 President John F. Kennedy gave a nationally televised speech on civil rights. What happened on that same night in Jackson, Mississippi?

6. Describe the SNCC program known as Freedom Summer that began in June 1964. Determine its effectiveness.

7. What happened to Freedom Summer activists Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner the night of June 21, 1964? How did each of the following respond to the incident? President Johnson, FBI Director Hoover, the students.

8. Describe the goals, methods and effects of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) in the summer of 1964.

9. Discuss white resistance to Freedom Summer and the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

10. How did the deaths of Goodman, Cheney, and Schwerner wake up the nation to the dangers faced by those seeking the right to vote in Mississippi?

11. Assess the effectiveness of women leaders such as Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer during Freedom Summer.

12. Determine the role music played in the fight for civil rights.

Key Questions

Taken from the *Eyes on the Prize Study Guide* (page 67) written by Facing History and Ourselves. Register for *free* access to the guide *and* its primary sources at

<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resources/eyes-prize-study-guide>

1. Why do you think this episode is titled “Mississippi: Is This America?” How were the challenges in Mississippi similar to those in other Southern states? How did the situation in Mississippi highlight the racial barriers and attitudes faced by the nation as a whole?
2. Why did activists focus on voter registration in their efforts to dismantle segregation in the South? What obstacles did blacks face as they tried to exercise this basic freedom?
3. What was the role of white activists in a movement that focused on black freedom? What leverage did they bring? Why did some activists challenge their participation? What do you think about their involvement?
4. What strategies were employed during Freedom Summer to reverse years of intimidation, segregation, and discrimination in Mississippi? How did the various components of the program connect?
5. What tensions and conflicts in the mid-twentieth century democratic process did the MFDP expose in its struggle for recognition by the Democratic Party?