

# **Differentiating Instructions for Joanna and Rose: Civil Rights Movement Lesson Plan**

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## **Differentiating Instruction for Joanna and Rose: Civil Rights Movement Lesson Plan**

Effective teaching requires meeting the diverse needs of all students. In the provided lesson plan on the Civil Rights Movement (see Appendix A), two students with exceptionalities, Joanna and Rose, require intentional differentiation to ensure access, engagement, and appropriate challenge. This paper outlines the differentiation strategies for each student, grounded in research-based practices.

### **Differentiation for Joanna**

Joanna is a student in the Gifted and Talented (GT) program with an orthopedic impairment that requires her to use a wheelchair. She is non-verbal and communicates through an iPad. Her reading ability is two grade levels above her current placement, and she demonstrates exceptional memory skills. Differentiating for Joanna involves both enriching the content and providing alternative means of expression.

First, Joanna will be offered an opportunity to conduct an advanced research task. Instead of only participating in the Kerner Commission role-play, she will analyze primary source excerpts from the Kerner Report and related speeches. She will synthesize her findings into a visual infographic or timeline, utilizing technology to present her ideas (Tomlinson, 2014). This approach respects her intellectual abilities while acknowledging her communication needs.

Second, Joanna will use her iPad to contribute to group discussions, providing written responses or pre-programmed inputs. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles advocate for multiple means of action and expression, especially for students with physical or communication impairments (CAST, 2018).

Lastly, ensuring wheelchair accessibility during group work and allowing flexible participation options are necessary accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

## **Differentiation for Rose**

Rose is a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who reads on grade level but struggles with sustained attention, particularly when not medicated. She prefers working while seated on the floor and benefits from movement opportunities.

For Rose, differentiation includes allowing flexible seating. She will be permitted to sit on the floor during lessons and activities. Providing options for seating has been shown to improve focus and engagement for students with ADHD (Merrill, 2017).

Additionally, the lesson tasks will be "chunked" into smaller, manageable segments with visual checklists to help her track her progress. Breaking tasks into clear, short steps supports executive functioning and helps students with ADHD complete assignments successfully (DuPaul & Stoner, 2014).

Rose will also be given the option to complete a mind map or bullet-point list rather than a full written report. This reduces the cognitive load without compromising the learning objectives. Allowing students to demonstrate understanding through alternative formats aligns with UDL guidelines (CAST, 2018).

Finally, providing short, structured movement breaks throughout the lesson will support Rose's need for physical activity, helping her to maintain attention and reduce restlessness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019).

## **Conclusion**

Differentiating instruction for Joanna and Rose requires thoughtful planning that considers their strengths and

needs. By enriching tasks, offering alternative means of communication, providing flexible seating, chunking tasks, and allowing movement breaks, the Civil Rights Movement lesson can be accessible, engaging, and appropriately challenging for both students. Applying evidence-based practices ensures that all students have the opportunity to succeed and meaningfully participate.

## **References**

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- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2020). Protecting students with disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions about Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities.  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

## Appendix A

Understanding by Design Professional Development Workbook

### Sample 2-Page Template, Page 1

Modern U.S. History, Grades 11–12

Templates  
Stage 1  
Stage 2  
Stage 3  
Peer review  
Exercises  
Process sheets  
Glossary

Title: A Society Erupts      Subject/Course: Modern American History	
Topic: Civil Rights Movement      Grades: 11–12      Designers: Mark Williams	
<b>Stage 1—Desired Results</b>	
<b>Established Goals:</b> TEKS U.S. History, Standard No. 7—The student understands the effects of the civil rights movement. <span style="float: right;">G</span>	
<b>Understandings:</b> <i>Students will understand that . . .</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Race was (and continues to be) a crucial element in U.S. life and politics.</li><li>We have a difficult time honestly reconciling our beliefs with the record on civil rights.</li><li>Racial, cultural, and socioeconomic differences can lead to misunderstanding, prejudice, oppression, and violence.</li></ul>	<b>Essential Questions:</b> <span style="float: right;">Q</span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do our stated ideals cause progress or mask hypocrisy?</li><li>What caused the race riots of the late 1960s?</li><li>Could they happen again?</li><li>Can the racial divisions that have plagued U.S. society be erased?</li></ul>
<b>Students will know . . .</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>History of the modern civil rights movement.</li><li>Key leaders of the civil rights movement.</li><li>Political strategies used to achieve civil rights.</li><li>Government efforts to promote equality.</li><li>Impact of changes in laws on opportunity.</li></ul>	<b>Students will be able to . . .</b> <span style="float: right;">S</span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interpret historical documents.</li><li>Evaluate the effectiveness of government efforts to promote equality.</li><li>Role-play historical figures.</li></ul>
<b>Stage 2—Assessment Evidence</b>	
<b>Performance Tasks:</b> Summary in GRASPS form <span style="float: right;">T</span> <b>Kerner Commission Role-Play</b> Students role-play being members of LBJ's Kerner Commission to determine the causes of urban rioting in the '60s. (Your goal is to determine why the urban riots happened. You must report to the president and the country on why the violence happened and what can be done about it. As a group, produce a collective report that must be thoughtful, thorough, and clearly presented. Your personal contribution will be judged through journal entries, observations of work and discussion, and sections of writing you produce.)	
<b>Key Criteria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Historically accurate</li><li>Clear and complete explanation</li><li>Sound reasoning based on evidence</li><li>Correct grammar and mechanics in writing</li></ul>	
<b>Other Evidence</b> Quiz on readings: key events, leaders and strategies of the civil rights movement Essay: Did the Kerner Commission reveal or sidestep the issue of race relations? <span style="float: right;">OE</span>	