

**BECAUSE
OF THEM
WE CAN**

BOX

JUST FOR KIDS

BECAUSE OF FANNIE LOU HAMER

AGES 9-12



BOTWC MINI POSING AS
FANNIE LOU HAMER


**NOBODY'S FREE
UNTIL
EVERYBODY'S FREE**
FANNIE LOU HAMER

FANNIE LOU HAMER'S FIGHT!

Fannie Lou Hamer was a powerful voice in the Civil Rights Movement for her work with voter registration, Black representation in politics, and **community organizing** but many people don't know she was first recognized by **SNCC** (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) for her singing voice. Read the song below, which is in the tune of Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" to learn more about Fannie Lou Hamer. Then answer the questions using the text to help you. (*You may choose to record yourself singing this version of the song on your tape recorder!*)



I was born in the Delta
Worked on the Cottonfield
Oh saw the souls of my people
Getting killed

It's been a long
A long time comin', but I know
A change gon' come
Oh, yes it will

Then I go to my people
And I say "Let me help you
please"
We try and get to vote
But can't pass the **literacy test**

It's been a long
A long time comin', but I know
A change gon' come
Oh, yes it will

I go to the county
And I go downtown
They say I can't to vote and get
on now

There been times we were
close
Victory didn't last for long
Police stopped to harass us
On our way home

They told me I couldn't vote
But I had to try
Cause we gotta make a way
For our rights

It's been a long
A long time comin', but I know
A change gon' come
Oh, yes it will

It's been a long
A long time comin', but I know
A change gon' come
Oh, yes it will

GLOSSARY

SNCC: The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. It was an organization started in 1960 to give young Blacks more of a voice that was a huge part of the Civil Rights Movement.

Community Organizing: The process of involving people in identifying and then taking action to solve problems as a group.

Literacy Test: A Reading/Writing test that was given to people that they had to pass in order to vote.

Co-Found: To help begin or create something (that is meant to last for a long time).

Political Party: A group of people with similar ideas who work to try and get people elected to office. The two major political parties in the U.S are the Democrats and Republicans.

Integrated: Allowing all different types of people to be included/participate; especially Black people. (The opposite of segregation).

Ballot: A ticket or a piece of paper used to vote in an election.

READ & RESPOND



For each of your responses, answer the question and explain how you know providing evidence from the text.

1. What do you know and what can you guess about Fannie Lou Hamer's childhood?

2. What was Fannie Lou Hamer fighting for?



3. What barriers stood in the way of what she was trying to accomplish?

THE POWER OF '64

1964 was a very important year for Fannie Lou Hamer. However, there were a lot of very powerful events that happened in 1964 that changed the lives of African Americans. A fun fact is the Sam Cooke song "A Change is Gonna Come" that you learned about in the previous activity was released in 1964!

Directions: Review the timeline below of important events that happened in 1964. Once you have learned about some important events you will research one of your own and add it to the timeline in the empty slot. You can also add an image to go along with it!

Event #1 (April 1964)

Fannie Lou Hamer co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. This was a political party that was formed and welcomed all people regardless of the color of their skin.

At that time, parties were majority white and not **integrated**. The goal of the party was to help give Blacks a voice in politics.



Event #2 (August 1964)

The Democratic National Convention was held in New Jersey, which is an event where the President and Vice President candidates are chosen. At that time all the members who could vote for the candidates were white. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (also known as the MFDP) protested and ask that they be included. There was a compromise to give them two seats but they still would not be able to vote for the candidates. The MFDP would not agree. Although their goal was not met, Fannie Lou Hamer delivered a powerful speech that reached many people.



Event #3 (Summer 1964)

The Mississippi Summer Project was a movement to help get Black people registered to vote. At that time Mississippi had the lowest Black voter eligibility in the county. Fannie Lou Hamer and other members helped to get Black people registered to vote and educate them about the importance of voting and how to do it.



Event #4 (November 1964)

Fannie Lou Hamer ran for congress against a white Democrat named Jamie Whitton who held that position for many years. Hamer knew that it would be hard for her to win especially since there were about 5% of Blacks eligible to vote but she did it anyway because she wanted to show Black people that they could run

for office. They refused to put her name on the **ballot** but they held mock elections and many Black voters showed up.

Event #5

1964



HARD TO VOTE



Below are some questions from the application to register to vote in Mississippi in 1955. Circle or highlight all of the questions you do not understand or would not be able to do on your own. Think about this form as a grade. Using the number of questions you highlighted, what would your grade be?

1. Write the date of this application:
2. What is your full name?
3. State your age and date of birth:
4. What is your occupation?
5. Where is your business carried on?
6. By whom are you employed?
7. Are you a citizen of the United States and an inhabitant of Mississippi?
8. For how long have you resided in Mississippi?
9. Where is your place of residence in the district?
10. Specify the date when such residence began:
11. What is your prior place of residence if any?
12. Check which oath you desire to take:
 - (1) General _____
 - (2) Minister's _____
 - (3) Minister's Wife _____
 - (4) If you are under 21 years at present, but 21 years at date of general election _____
13. If there is more than one person with the same name in the precinct, by which name do you wish to be called?
14. Have you ever been convicted of any of the following crimes: bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretences, perjury, forgery, embezzlement or bigamy?
15. If your answer to question 14 is "yes", name the crime or crimes which you have been convicted, and the date and place of such conviction or convictions:
16. Are you a minister of the gospel in charge of an organized church, or the wife of such a minister?
17. If your answer to question 16 is "yes," state the length of your residence in the election district:
18. Sign and attach hereto the oath or affirmation named in question 12.

Do not be alarmed! It may be surprising but most adults would have the same grade as you. Most Blacks could not read or write or if they could they were reading and writing on an elementary school level. These literacy tests included in the application were put there on purpose to keep Blacks from being able to register to vote. Use the questions below to explain how you were thinking and feeling during this activity so you can understand what Blacks also felt at this time. You may also choose to write your reflection in your flip notebook.

HARD TO VOTE

1. How did you feel when trying to complete this application?

2. What do you think were two of the hardest questions?

3. What do you think Blacks who were trying to register to vote thought or did after seeing this application?

4. What are the qualifications to vote today? What do you think about these?
(If you are not sure ask an adult supporter to help you find out about what you need to register to vote in your state.)

TAKE THE PLEDGE

I WILL HONOR
THE SACRIFICES OF
MY ANCESTORS.

I WILL BELIEVE
IN ME.

I WILL PURSUE
MY DREAMS.

I WILL HELP
OTHERS ALONG
THE WAY.