



Module 1, Unit 2, Lesson Plan 5

The Chicago Campaign (Grades 6-12)

Learning Targets/Objectives:

- Define and compare de jure segregation and de facto segregation
- Describe residential segregation as a fundamental cause for the denial of capital, geographic concentration of poverty, health disparities, and de facto segregation of public schools
- Discuss why Martin Luther King Jr. and his family moved to Chicago in 1966 and the implications of the Chicago Campaign's "Operation Breadbasket"

Success Criteria:

- Create a video essay reconstructing the key historical moments of Dr. King's Chicago Movement.

Anchor Text:

- [Excerpt] King, Martin Luther, Jr. "The Chicago Plan." January 7, 1966.
- 60 Minutes Overtime. "MLK – A riot is the language of the unheard." September 27, 1966. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOBWXjv5se>
- Loom Video Messaging. <https://www.loom.com/>

Supplemental Resources:

- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. "Operation Breadbasket." Retrieved from <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/operation-breadbasket>
- *Pittsburgh Courier* "Operation Breadbasket Scores Biggest Success." December 10, 1966. 2.

Lesson Content Overview:

As pervasive as segregation was in the South, the subtle and hidden racism of the North was just as horrendous, if not worse, on Black Americans' emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. In an effort to attack the covert racism of the North, King and the SCLC developed the Chicago Campaign to address educational, housing, and economic inequalities.

In January 1966, King moved his family into a Chicago slum to begin a protest for better housing and economic conditions. King selected an apartment resembling a "typical West Side ghetto apartment." One SCLC division, Operation Breadbasket, had been negotiating with employers in Chicago for more and better jobs for Black workers. King's other plans for the city included rehabilitating rundown apartment buildings in the Chicago Dwellings Association, job training by the Cook County

Welfare Department, and teaching preschool children in the Head Start project of the Office of Economic Opportunity.¹

On July 10, 1966, Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed a crowd of more than 50,000 at Chicago's Soldier Field during the effort to end slums in Chicago. King was joined by CORE leader, Floyd McKissick and James Meredith on the list of speakers. Just a month earlier, Meredith had been shot while attempting to march from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi (Meredith had dubbed that march the "March Against Fear"). At the end of his freedom rally, which exceeded 100-degree temperatures, King led 38,000 of his followers on a two-mile march from Soldier Field to City Hall, where he posted demands of the Nonviolent Freedom Fighters on Mayor Richard J. Daley's door. This echoed the actions of his namesake, Martin Luther, the German theologian, who nailed his ninety-five theses (statements for debate) on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517.

As mentioned, the Chicago Campaign included Operation Breadbasket, a program to pressure local businesses to hire African American workers from the community. It began in 1962 in Atlanta, Georgia, under the directorship of Rev. Fred Bennett, Jr.; however, the tactic was used throughout the urban South—particularly when challenging unjust practices of department stores and other downtown retailers. A group of African American ministers, under SCLC, typically visited local businesses to negotiate hiring African American workers, especially in job categories from which African Americans had been traditionally excluded. When negotiations failed, the ministers encouraged their congregations to boycott the firms until owners and the SCLC reached an agreement over fair hiring.

While in Chicago, King encountered the unrest, impatience, and frustration of Black youth – some of whom booed him during a weekly Chicago Campaign meeting. Although initially hurt and disappointed by their reaction, King understood their frustration. Later some of the youth joined the campaign.

Also in July 1966, riots started in Chicago's "West Side" (Ogden to Pulaski to Lake to Cermak) when police forcibly shut off a fire hydrant that area residents were using to beat the heat. Commenting on the Chicago riot or "social eruption," King concluded:

*Riots grow out of intolerable conditions. Violent revolts are generated by revolting conditions and there is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people who feel they have no stake in it, who feel they have nothing to lose. To the young victims of the slums, this society has so limited the alternatives of his life that expression of his manhood is reduced to the ability to defend himself physically. No wonder it appears logical to him to strike out, resorting to violence against oppression. That is the only way he thinks he gets recognition.*²

King's keen understanding of man-made instruments of oppression, coupled with his faith in nonviolence and reconciliation as a proven method of conflict resolution, helped keep him focused as the media, white liberals, and racist whites tried to blame his organization for the hatred and anger of some Northern whites.

The final wave of the "Chicago Campaign" was Operation Breadbasket. Operation Breadbasket was a radical economic philosophy that demanded white retailers and merchants respect black purchasing power. The philosophy was simple, "If you respect my dollar, you must respect my person."

¹ *The Anniston Star*. "King Set to View Backing." July 10, 1966. 5D.

² Editor: Clayborne Carson. *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* 2001. Chapter 28: Chicago Campaign.

This meant that white retailers would not be allowed to profit from sales to the Black community and not invest in the community (by providing jobs through fair hiring programs).

The results of Operation Breadbasket were awesome, and it was one of the SCLC's most successful programs. "The net results added up to approximately eight hundred new and upgraded jobs for Negro employees, worth a little over \$7 million in new annual income for Negro families."³

Throughout the summer of 1966, King led other marches into white neighborhoods demanding that housing be opened to Blacks. The governor gave the national guard a "shoot to kill" order to put down violent demonstrations. To defuse tension in the city when King planned to march into Cicero, Mayor Richard Daley called a "summit meeting" with King and 70 civic leaders on Friday, August 26, 1966 at the Palmer House in Chicago. An accord was met, which announced an open housing agreement allowing Blacks to move into all-white areas as long as King postponed his march on Cicero. "The total eradication of housing discrimination has been made possible," King said. Mayor Daley agreed: "We will go ahead to eliminate slums, provide better schools, and more jobs in our city."⁴

The SCLC poverty and unemployment program called Operation Breadbasket was later put under the leadership of Jesse Jackson. Overall, the Chicago Campaign helped lay the foundation for The Fair Housing Act. The Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq., prohibits discrimination by direct providers of housing, such as landlords and real estate companies as well as other entities, such as municipalities, banks or other lending institutions and homeowners' insurance companies whose discriminatory practices make housing unavailable to persons because of 1) race or color 2) religion 3) sex 4) national origin 5) familial status and 6) disability.

Instructional Sequence:

Opener, 3-2-1 Activity:

After reading an excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "The Chicago Plan," January 7, 1966, students will write down three problems of the Chicago slums, two solutions to fix the Chicago slums, and one question for class discussion.

Class Discussion:

Using the Lesson Content Overview, the teacher will facilitate a discussion about Dr. King's relocation to Chicago, the Chicago Movement, and the SCLC's economic plan, "Operation Breadbasket" and the Chicago leader, Jesse Jackson.

Small Group Collaboration:

Students will read Stanford University's The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute article describing "Operation Breadbasket" and the *Pittsburgh Courier* report, "Operation Breadbasket Scores Biggest Success." Students will create a Secondary Source / Primary Source Graphic Organizer after completing the reading.

Class Discussion:

The teacher will lead a discussion on student responses in the graphic organizer. Teacher will discuss a dark moment of the Chicago Movement – the Chicago West Side Riots.

³ Martin Luther King, Jr. *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* 1967.

⁴ *Chicago Tribune*. "Pact Provides Equal Access to Housing Loans." August 27, 1966. 1; *Birmingham Post-Herald*. "King March on Cicero Called Off." August 27, 1966. 1.

Small Group Collaboration:

After watching the video of Dr. King's [interview](#) with Mike Wallace when he calls a riot "the language of the unheard," students will discuss the following prompt.

- o "To what extent do you agree with Martin Luther King, Jr. that urban 'social eruption' like the West Side Riot is the language of the unheard."

Formative Assessment:

- Using Loom, students will create a video essay responding to the following questions:
 - o What was "Operation Breadbasket"? Do you think it was an effective way to change the system of segregation and racism in the North?
 - o Although Dr. King never condoned riots, he recognized certain conditions create an atmosphere for them to flourish. In Chicago and the North, what did he identify as the condition?
 - o How did the protestors want retail merchants to respect Black purchasing power?
 - o Who later became the leader of Operation Breadbasket?
 - o The Chicago Campaign laid the foundation for what federal legislation?

Adaptations for Student Needs

IEP:

- Sizes of student groups range
- Students team up with a peer partner, while others would prefer to work individually.
- There is a variety of small-group work
- Chunking information
- Visual cues and wait time
- Visual supports (maps, images, PowerPoint slides, handouts)
- Assessments will be modified, and students given extra time

ELD

- Modified/simplified reading material
- Content-related lists/handouts of key terms
- Text is supported by visuals and connected to real-life experiences