



HEROES

**A Look at People, Organizations and
Ideas for Social Change**

Introduction

This is a booklet on social change, and the people, organizations and ideas that were, and are, instrumental in generating forward movement. Our class voted on topics. Some of the information was well known to us, but other information was not familiar at all. This booklet also served as a typography assignment, in which we learned how to create paragraph styles, character styles, and Parent pages while researching images and creating layouts using a grid with consistent design elements.

It was not easy!

The design training for this booklet took place over several weeks. We viewed demonstrations in the classroom. We participated in critiques. We asked questions, took notes, offered feedback, and worked hard. We hope you enjoy the results.

Graphic design by **Jonathan Rodriguez**

PEOPLE



Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist minister and activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his death by assassination in 1968. His leadership was fundamental to ending the legal segregation of African Americans in the South. King rose to national prominence as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which promoted nonviolent tactics, such as the massive March on Washington 1963. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

The FBI monitored Martin Luther King, Jr., in December 1955, during the Montgomery bus boycott, and continued throughout the 1960s. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover was personally hostile toward King, believing that the civil rights leader was influenced by Communists. This animosity increased after 1964, when King called the FBI “completely ineffectual in

resolving the continued mayhem and brutality inflicted upon the Negro in the deep South.” FBI surveillance produced alleged evidence of extramarital affairs, though no evidence of Communist influence. On April 4, 1968, where he was to lead a march in Memphis, TN with striking garbage workers, he was assassinated.

King’s most significant contribution to the modern African American freedom struggle was to link Black aspirations to transcendent, widely shared democratic and Christian ideals. While helping grassroots leaders mobilize African Americans for sustained mass struggles, he inspired participants to believe that their cause was just and consistent with traditional American egalitarian values. King appealed to the consciences of all Americans, thus building popular support for civil rights reform.

MLK was awarded five honorary degrees and was named Man of the Year by Time magazine in 1963. He became the symbolic leader not only of American Blacks, but also of people across the world.



James Baldwin

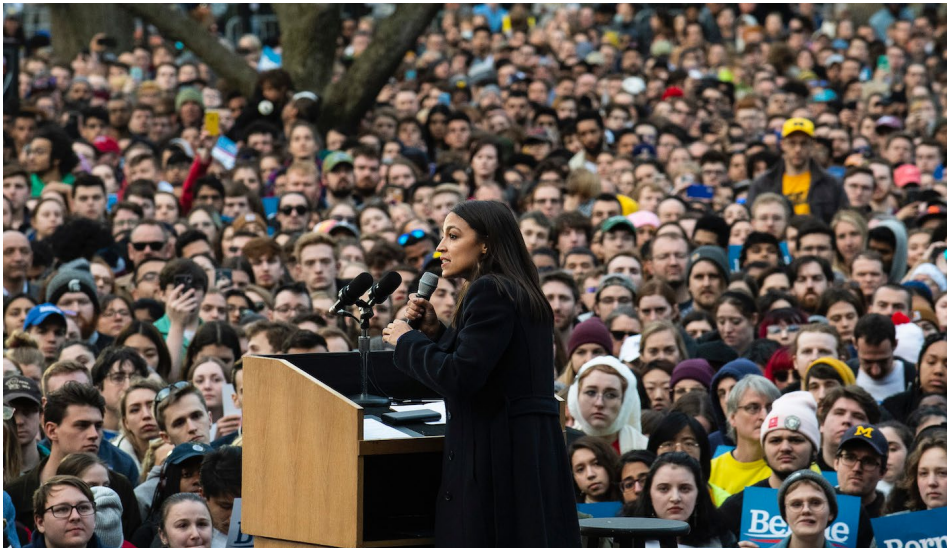
Born to a single mother, James Baldwin developed a passion for reading at an early age and demonstrated a gift for writing in his school years. At high school in the Bronx, he worked on the school’s magazine with future photographer Richard Avedon. After graduating, he put plans for college on hold to support his family, including seven younger children. He took whatever work he could find, frequently encountering discrimination.

In 1943, Baldwin moved to Greenwich Village, a neighborhood of artists and writers. He started publishing essays and short stories in national periodicals such as *The Nation*, *Partisan Review* and *Commentary*. He moved to Paris on a fellowship, writing about his personal and racial background. He published his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, and in 1954 received a Guggenheim Fellowship. His novel *Giovanni’s Room* broke new ground for its complex depiction of homosexuality. His essays established Baldwin as one of the top writers, providing an unflinching look at the Black experience in America through such works as *Notes of a Native Son* which sold more than a million copies. Baldwin was featured on the

cover of *Time magazine*, and he published *Nothing Personal* with friend Avedon as a tribute to slain civil rights movement leader Medgar Evers.

By the early 1970s, Baldwin had witnessed so much violence — the assassinations of Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. — caused by racial hatred. He remained an astute observer of race and American culture, sharing his views as a professor at the University of Massachusetts and Hampshire College.

“Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does. Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up.”



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a third-generation Bronxite, educator, and organizer serving the 14th district of New York in the Bronx and Queens. Ocasio-Cortez grew up experiencing the reality of New York's rising income inequality, inspiring her to organize her community and run for office on a progressive platform with a campaign that rejects corporate PAC funds.

Alexandria attended Boston University and graduated with degrees in Economics and International Relations. She worked in the office of the late Senator Ted Kennedy, providing a first-hand view of the heartbreak families endured after being separated by ICE. These experiences led the Congresswoman to organize Latinx youth in the Bronx and across the United States. Following the financial crisis of 2008, trage-

dy struck when her father, Sergio Ocasio-Roman, passed away, forcing her family to sell their Westchester home. Alexandria pulled extra shifts to work as a waitress and bartender to support her family during this time, deepening her commitment to issues impacting working-class people. Since her swearing-in to Congress in 2019, Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez has remained committed to serving working-class people and advocating for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

During the 2016 presidential election, AOC worked as an organizer for Bernie Sanders, expanding her activism that has taken her across the country to Standing Rock, South Dakota to stand with indigenous communities, then to New York's 14th Congressional District to launch her people-funded, grassroots campaign for Congress.

ORGANIZATIONS

Earth Justice

Because the Earth needs a good lawyer

Earthjustice wields the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change. The most powerful tool for change is the law. Our work has saved irreplaceable wildlands, cleaned up the air, and fueled the rise of 100% clean energy. It has protected countless species on the brink of extinction, and secured limits on our nation's worst polluting industries. When we go to court, we get results.



OUR GOALS:

End the extraction and burning of fossil fuels

We expose the true costs of the main driver of climate change and public health ills by enforcing pollution control requirements, blocking new fossil fuel infrastructure.

Power everything with 100% clean energy

We are cultivating a zero carbon emissions, pollution-free electricity grid by phasing out fossil-fuel power generation, eliminating barriers to renewable energy.

Secure clean air and water as rights for all

We clean up the air we breathe and the water we drink, by enforcing science-driven laws, compelling agencies to regulate the cumulative impacts of pollution.

Build a justice-centered environmental movement

We support our partners in their pursuit of intersectional justice by enforcing emission control requirements from industrial facilities.

Remove toxic chemicals and products from our daily lives

We enforce chemical regulations to limit exposure to toxic chemicals, litigate to force public disclosure of health and safety information.

Farm sustainably for healthy lives, lands, climate.

We make our nation's food system safer and cleaner by enforcing laws to support climate-friendly and sustainable agriculture, challenging the worst abuses of industrial agriculture.

Safeguard lands and waters

We reduce and prevent unsustainable development and resource extraction, support Tribal sovereignty and stewardship of lands and water.

Protect species biodiversity

We are confronting the drivers of the decline in nature and protecting imperiled species and their ecosystems.



March for Our Lives

Our Story: Not One More

After the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, we had to make sure that what happened to our community never happens again. We cannot allow one more person to be killed by senseless gun violence. We cannot allow one more person to experience the pain of losing a loved one. We cannot allow one more family to wait for a call or a text that never comes. We cannot allow the normalization of gun violence to continue. We must create a safe and compassionate nation for all of us.

After the shooting on February 14, we organized the largest single day of protest against gun violence in history. Millions came together to protest our political leaders' inaction. Inspired by the Freedom Riders of the 1960s, we toured the country on the Road To Change. Along the way, we registered over 50,000 new voters and met with family members, community leaders, and survivors of gun violence across the country. This allowed us to expand our understanding of gun violence and how it affects each community differently. We'll never forget each story we heard and each ally we made in this fight for justice.

We spurred a historic youth turnout in the 2018 midterm elections, with a 47% increase over the last midterm election and the highest percentage of youth voter turnout ever. Voters made it clear that the status quo was no longer acceptable—a record 46 NRA-backed candidates lost their elections that November. It will take all of us advocating for sensible gun violence prevention reforms to make it happen.

Our Mission

Born out of a tragic school shooting, **March For Our Lives** is a courageous youth-led movement dedicated to promoting civic engagement, education, and direct action by youth to eliminate the epidemic of gun violence. We aim to create safe and healthy communities and livelihoods where gun violence is obsolete.



Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a partnership, not a giveaway program. Habitat's homeowner families buy the houses that Habitat builds and renovates, and invest hundreds of hours of their own labor working alongside volunteers. As a result, Habitat for Humanity houses are affordable to low-income families around the world. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage, achieving the strength, stability and independence to build a better life for themselves and for their families.

The idea that became Habitat for Humanity first grew from a community farm outside of Americus, Georgia. Habitat's founders Millard and Linda Fuller developed the concept of "partnership housing." The concept centered on those in need of adequate shelter

working side by side with volunteers to build decent, affordable houses. The houses would be built at no profit. New homeowners' house payments would be combined with no-interest loans provided by supporters and money earned by, which would then be used to build more homes. The concept next moved to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). After three years of hard work to launch a successful house building program there, a group of supporters discussed the future of their dream: Habitat for Humanity International, founded in 1976. Thanks to the personal involvement of U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn, Habitat now works in all 50 states in the U.S. and in more than 70 countries and has helped more than 39 million people achieve strength, stability and independence through safe, decent and affordable shelter.

3D-printed homes: New trend or lasting solution?

With new 3D-printed homes hitting the market from Virginia to India, esteemed shelter journalist Miriam Axel-Lute and experts from the housing sector explore the advancements and challenges of 3D-printing technology as part of Habitat's ongoing You series. [Watch on YouTube](#)

IDEAS



Women's Suffrage

The women's suffrage movement was a decades-long fight to win the right to vote for women in the United States. It took activists and reformers nearly 100 years to win that right, and the campaign was not easy: Disagreements over strategy threatened to cripple the movement more than once. But on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally ratified, enfranchising all American women and declaring for the first time that they, like men, deserve all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The campaign for women's suffrage began in earnest in the decades before the Civil War. During the 1820s and 30s, most states had extended the franchise to all white men, regardless of how much money or property they had. In 1848, a group of abolitionist activists gathered in Seneca Falls, New York to discuss the problem of women's rights. The delegates to

the Seneca Falls Convention agreed: American women were autonomous individuals who deserved their own political identities.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident," proclaimed the Declaration of Sentiments that the delegates produced, "that all men and women are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." What this meant, among other things, was that they believed women should have the right to vote. Finally, on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. And on November 2 of that year, more than 8 million women across the United States voted in elections for the first time.

In 1923, the National Woman's Party proposed an amendment to the Constitution that prohibited all discrimination on the basis of sex. The so-called Equal Rights Amendment has never been ratified.



Black Lives Matter

BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives.

The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. Members organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

As organizers who work with everyday people, BLM members see and understand significant gaps in movement spaces and leadership. Black

liberation movements in this country have created room, space, and leadership mostly for Black heterosexual, cisgender men — leaving women, queer and transgender people, and others either out of the movement or in the background to move the work forward with little or no recognition. As a network, we have always recognized the need to center the leadership of women and queer and trans people. To maximize our movement muscle, and to be intentional about not replicating harmful practices that excluded so many in past movements for liberation, we made a commitment to placing those at the margins closer to the center.

For generations, we've celebrated Juneteenth with family gatherings, cookouts, domino and card-playing, music, laughter, and an overall feeling of Black freedom and joy. Juneteenth celebrates our Blackness by honoring our Ancestors, affirming ourselves and our people, creating space for Black joy, and struggling unceasingly for freedom and justice.



The Green New Deal

The term Green New Deal has been used to describe various sets of policies that aim to make systemic change. For instance, the United Nations announced a Global Green New Deal in 2008. Former President Barack Obama added one to his platform when he ran for election in 2008, and Green Party candidates, such as Jill Stein and Howie Hawkins, did the same. While it isn't a brand new concept, the Green New Deal has become a big part of policy debates in the country today, largely due to the remarkable ascent of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), the youngest woman to be elected to the House of Representatives and already a favorite to run for president in 2024.

Her ambitious and wide-ranging proposal was a centerpiece of her campaign that addresses an issue that 60% of Americans say already

affects their local community. As it stands, the deal promises to tackle economic inequality by creating high-quality union jobs.

History of the Green New Deal

The term Green New Deal was first used by Pulitzer Prize-winner Thomas Friedman in 2007. At that point, America experienced its hottest year on record (although there have been five hotter since). Friedman recognized the easy solution to climate change politicians hoped for wasn't possible. It was going to take money, effort, and upsetting an industry that is always generous with campaign contributions. Transitioning away from fossil fuels, he argued in a New York Times column, would require the government to raise prices on them, introduce higher energy standards, and undertake a massive industrial project to scale up green technology.

The Green New Deal promises to create millions of jobs by tackling economic inequality. Americans would be guaranteed high-quality jobs backed by unions by shifting money from the fossil fuel industry to green technology. The deal supports the inclusion of traditionally marginalized individuals, such as migrant, indigenous, and racially diverse communities.

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