

Grade  
Level:  
Adaptable,  
grades 3-5

# Finding Fannie Lou

Social Studies, Literacy, English/Language Arts, Black History, Women's History, US History

*This is a two-part lesson plan that can be adapted depending on grade level and available instruction time.*

## Learning Objectives:

- To explain what the Civil Rights Movement was and how it impacts the lives of people today
- To identify who Fannie Lou Hamer was and why she was a significant historical figure during the Civil Rights Movement
- To enhance reading and writing skills through guided writing prompts and close reading activities
- To practice posing and responding to substantive questions

## Necessary Materials:

- Fannie Lou Hamer BrainPOP episode, available for free on the Find Your Voice website
- Finding Fannie Lou by Danielle Creel (forthcoming)
- Finding Fannie Lou Discussion Questions
- [Songs My Mother Taught Me](#), album produced by Smithsonian Folkways. Selected songs available on YouTube.
- "Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou, Who are You?" Poem by Valerie D. Fairley
- Character Study Outline (you can create your own or use any free or purchasable resources available on [Teacher's Pay Teachers](#))
- Discussion Questions for Finding Fannie Lou
- Several small bags with vocabulary words for students to define in small groups
- Question strips (strips of paper cut large enough for a student to pose a question, two per student)

## Background Knowledge:

You may wish to enhance/refresh your own knowledge by consulting this [Biographical Sketch of Fannie Lou Hamer](#) before introducing the "Finding Fannie Lou" lesson.

## Day One

### Instruction Steps:

#### Anticipatory Set

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**Step One:** Start this lesson by listing other relevant Social Studies topics discussed or by reviewing other Civil Rights leaders that students are familiar with.

**Step Two:** Narrow the lens to focus on Fannie Lou Hamer's contribution to the movement by playing the BrainPOP Fannie Lou Hamer episode. After viewing the episode, ask students to reflect on what stood out to them about Mrs. Hamer. This will lay the groundwork for the character outlines they will complete. Students may also read the poem "Fannie Lou, Fannie Lou, Who Are You?" by Valerie D. Fairley to learn more about Mrs. Hamer.

#### Guided Practice

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**Step Three:** Read Finding Fannie Lou and ask students to focus specifically on the questions below.

**Step Four:** Work through each question as a class and return to the text when needed for specific examples and evidence.

#### Group Activity

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**Step Five:** Divide the class into groups of four or five. Each group will receive a bag of core vocabulary words used in the book. The words will be written on the front of cards and students will work to collaboratively define the words on the back, with the help of the book Finding Fannie Lou (understanding the word in context), internet sources, or dictionaries. Taking turns, each group will explain their bag's words and definitions with the other groups.

Word/phrase suggestions from the story: segregation, voting rights, "sick and tired of being sick and tired"

## Independent Practice/Closure

**Step Six:** Students will work independently to list three things that they learned about Fannie Lou Hamer, two questions they have about her (written on individual strips of paper), and one favorite part of the story, Finding Fannie Lou.

Collect the question strips and identify several core themes that span the questions. Rephrase (if necessary) enough research questions to divide the class into groups of four or five the following day.

### Day Two

#### Anticipatory Set

**Step Seven:** Review the previous lesson by asking several students to share one of the things they learned about Fannie Lou Hamer and one of their favorite parts of the book, Finding Fannie Lou.

#### Group Work

**Step Eight:** Distribute the research questions you created by reviewing the students' question strips. Divide students into teams of four or five to discuss answers to the questions, with reference to the story Finding Fannie Lou.

## Independent Practice

**Step Nine:** Students should then work independently, responding to the question they discussed with their peers in an essay format. Gather these responses and select one from each group to read aloud during the following class period.

#### Closure

**Step Ten:** Read the book, Finding Fannie Lou, an additional time and lead the students in a discussion of any questions that remain.

#### Assessment of Student Learning:

Students will answer guided reading questions and create a character outline. They will also define core vocabulary terms and gather their insights into three lessons learned, two questions, and one notable aspect of a book. They will discuss answers to central student questions with their peers and they will write individual essays responding in depth to a particular question.

### Find Your Voice Highlights

Students will learn more about Fannie Lou Hamer's contributions to her community and to the larger country. They will also gain practice posing and responding to substantive questions about Hamer's life and legacy.

### Lesson Plan Author: Danielle Creel Martin

Danielle Creel Martin is an elementary teacher from Yazoo City, Mississippi. Ms. Martin began her journey with Mrs. Hamer through a history workshop where she found herself surrounded by wonderful educators discussing Mrs. Hamer. Ms. Martin began to research Mrs. Hamer and developed a passion for spreading the word about Mrs. Hamer's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, her hometown in the Mississippi Delta, and to the young college age students she encountered from all over the country. Ms. Martin has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education as well as a Master's degree in Reading Literacy from Belhaven University. She lives in Pearl, Mississippi with her two dogs and husband to whom she is newly married.





# Reading Comprehension and Discussion Questions

**1. What did Anthony learn about Fannie Lou Hamer?**

**2. How do you think that Fannie Lou Hamer was important to the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement?**

**3. What do you think Anthony could do to make Fannie Lou Hamer more well-known?**

**4. What can we learn from Anthony's character?**

**5. What can we learn from Fannie Lou Hamer?**