

# Lesson Plan: There's Nothing New About Youth-Led Movements

By Rachel Roberson

## Featured resources

The Lowdown: [Too Young to Vote but Old Enough to Act: A Brief History of Powerful Youth-Led Movements](#)

## Opening quick write prompt:

What is an issue you feel strongly about? Would you speak out publicly about this issue? What about if it meant you might be criticized or attacked online for your opinion? Explain your answer.

*A quick write allows students to write down their thoughts before discussing the opening question in order to increase participation and make the discussion more accessible to English Language Learners.*

## Objective

- Students will analyze historic youth-led political movements in light of the recent Never Again movement started by school-shooting survivors at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.
- Students will evaluate and reflect on circumstances or issues that would prompt them to join a movement for political or social change.

## Essential Question and Lesson Context

### What are examples of youth-led movements and how have they shaped public opinion and policy?

School shooting survivors from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida took to the airwaves after 17 of their classmates and teachers were killed by a former student armed with a military-style rifle. Their movement, Never Again, prompted a wave of action nationwide, breathing new life into the gun control debate. Soon, the teen activists were on news programs, questioning political leaders and lobbying in the halls of power. While the Never Again leaders are articulate and social-media savvy, they are not the first teenagers to capture the nation's attention. Youth-led movements have a long history, focusing on issues from civil rights to freedom of speech. In this lesson, students explore the role of youth-led activism and reflect on issues that would inspire them to join a movement.



College students protesting in 2009/Wikimedia Commons

## Key vocabulary

*Pre-teach key vocabulary before students do the activity, especially if you have English Language Learners. After going over the simple definition, consider providing a visual aid or having students draw one. More ideas for how to pre-teach vocabulary can be found [here](#).*

Word	Simple definition
<b>feat</b> (n.)	<p>An act or achievement that shows courage, strength or skill.</p> <p><i>Organizing a successful political movement is quite a <b>feat</b> for anyone, youth or adult.</i></p>
<b>front lines</b> (n.)	<p>An area of potential conflict or struggle</p> <p><i>Young people were on the <b>front lines</b> of the Civil Rights Movement, often participating in sit-ins and protests along with adults.</i></p>
<b>landmark</b> (n.)	<p>A very important event or achievement</p> <p><i>Brown v. Board of Education was a <b>landmark</b> ruling brought about, in part, when 16-year-old Barbara Johns led a walkout at her segregated high school.</i></p>
<b>nascent</b> (adj.)	<p>Just beginning to exist, recently formed or developed</p> <p><i>The #neveragain movement started by school shooting survivors from Parkland, Florida, is in its <b>nascent</b> stages. But it has already gained national attention.</i></p>
<b>notorious</b> (adj.)	<p>Well known or famous for a bad characteristic</p> <p><i>The United States is <b>notorious</b> for gun laws that are much more lax than those of other developed nations.</i></p>

## Investigate

- Discuss the quick-write prompt to gauge what, if anything, would prompt students to speak out. There may be a variety of issues. Reinforce classroom norms for a respectful discussion, if needed.
- **Ask:** Who has been following the Never Again movement started by the students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Florida who survived the school shooting? What is the latest on that movement? Call on a few students to bring the class up to speed, if needed. If it doesn't come up, remind students about both the [praise](#) and [attacks](#) Parkland survivors encountered.
- **Explain** that this latest youth-led movement is not the first time teenagers have led public movements for change—and stood up against public criticism. If you have studied youth-led movements in class, ask students to share what they remember from previous lessons.

- Individually or in small groups, students read [the article and interactive timeline](#) about current and historic youth-led movements.
- **Check for understanding** after reading: Which historic youth-led movement most inspired you? Why? Ask students to use evidence based on the timeline.
- **Transition to the Make and Share:** As a class, watch the [Student Reporting Labs video](#) from post.

## Make and Share

- The students in the video all spoke out about gun control issues, and there are many other important issues. Ask your students to revisit the quick-write prompt, but now think in terms of the change they'd like to see: **What issue would inspire you to start or join a movement for change? What change do you want to see happen?**
- Call on students to share their issue and what they would like to see changed. If students don't feel strongly about one particular issue, they can respond to the prompt using the historic youth-led movement that most inspired them.
- **Students make their voices heard:**
  - Record a video response on [Flipgrid](#), a free video discussion website. Students can record a video response on [KQED's grid](#) on this topic. They can also respond to a video comment already on the grid. Only classrooms have access. It is not open to the public.
  - Write an email or call local representative and share your opinion on this issue. (For a list of how to contact local officials in your area, check out [KQED Learning's Local Election Toolkit](#).)
  - Post a comment about the issue on social media or in response to an article you have read about this issue.

## Assessment/Reflection

- Students reflect on what they have learned either through a class discussion or by sharing their voice publically:
  - What was it like to post your responses publically? If you chose not to post publically, why did you make that choice?

*[Circle chats](#), small-group discussions and [think-pair-share](#) provide a safer space for students to practice speaking and listening, and also boost participation during whole-class discussions.*

Common Core, NGSS and C3 standards

<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1</a>	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7</a>	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
<a href="#">CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W1</a>	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
<a href="#">NGSS.SEP.7</a>	Engaging in argument from evidence
<a href="#">NGSS.SEP.8</a>	Obtaining, evaluating and communicating information