

Lesson Five: Mississippi in 1964, A Turning Point

Objective:

Students will learn about the struggle of African Americans in Mississippi to gain the vote as well as those who helped them secure it, including the Freedom Summer Workers and Fannie Lou Hamer. Using a voter registration form from the 1950s, students will experience the difficulties of registering to vote as an African American in the 1960s.

Materials: *Mississippi in 1964, A Turning Point*; *Mississippi Literacy Test*; *Literacy Test Teacher’s Guide*; *Securing a Voice*; *Fannie Lou in Review*; *Mississippi Civil Rights Map and Timeline*; *Journal Five: Ask Yourself*.

Procedures:

Activity One: Registering to Vote

1. Distribute and read *Mississippi in 1964, A Turning Point*, discussing with students that in addition to ending segregation, there was a major push to secure the vote for African Americans across the state. The purpose of Freedom Summer was to help African Americans gain the right to vote without being forced to complete a biased literacy test.
2. Print out a copy of the *Mississippi Literacy Test* (voter registration form) and distribute it to students.
3. Using the *Literacy Test Teacher’s Guide*, choose one section of the Constitution for students to copy and interpret.
4. Tell students that it was only African Americans who had to interpret difficult sections of the Constitution such as these. Discuss with your students if this is fair or not? Why?
5. Also discuss the question regarding criminal records. Many African Americans were charged with crimes on very little evidence (such as Clyde Kennard who had been accused of possession of liquor, reckless driving, and conspiracy for theft when he had done nothing wrong). Is this a fair question to ask a potential voter? Why or why not?
6. Finally, discuss with students the consequences of attempting to register to vote. African Americans had to be prepared to face harassment that could include intimidation and physical harm. Would your students be ready to face this today?

Activity Two: Promote the Vote

1. Have students create picket signs or advertisements supporting voter registration or integration. Include at least one of the following sound devices and figurative language in each:
 - a. **Alliteration:** The repetition of initial consonant sounds, ex. “Victory in Voting”
 - b. **Onomatopoeia:** Words that are spelled like they sound, ex. “Bam,” “Zip,” “Pow”
 - c. **Rhyme:** Echoing sounds, ex. “Promote the Vote”
 - d. **Simile:** Comparing unlike things with *like* or *as*, ex. “Not being able to vote is like not being able to speak.”
 - e. **Metaphor:** Comparing unlike things as equals, ex. “The right to vote is a powerful weapon.”
 - f. **Personification:** Giving human characteristics to a non-human thing.
2. Have students display their posters in the classroom or school and explain them when necessary.

Activity Three: Fannie Lou on Capitol Hill

1. Distribute and read *Securing a Voice*.
2. Play the audio of Fannie Lou Hamer’s speech at the 1964 Democratic Convention while students read along.
 - a. The audio can be found at <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/sayitplain/flhamer.html> or by Googling “Fannie Lou Hamer 1964 Democratic Convention.”
 - b. Remind students that this was a speech to Congress, made under oath, about what Hamer had personally experienced.
3. Distribute *Fannie Lou in Review* to students and have them fill in the missing blanks about Hamer’s speech to Congress. If time allows, facilitate a close reading of the speech as a class and discuss its effectiveness.
4. Give students the opportunity to label their *Mississippi Civil Rights Map and Timeline* with locations and events covered during the class activities and discussions.
5. Students will answer the questions in *Journal Five: Ask Yourself* individually before discussing them aloud.

Extension Activity: Facts Brought to Film

Watch *Murder in Mississippi* with your students. This film revolves around three people – a Mississippi African American, and two Northern Jewish students participating in the 1964 Freedom Summer. Their efforts to help African Americans to register to vote made them targets in the fight for civil rights in Mississippi. The film climaxes with the death of the three workers in Neshoba County at the hands of white supremacists. Their disappearance and deaths brought the FBI to Mississippi and put the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi on the National Stage. Produced by Warner Brothers Entertainment Inc., 2008. Color, 97 minutes. High school to adult.

This film can be borrowed free of charge from the Mississippi History on Loan Collection. Go to <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/mississippi-history-on-loan-film-collection/> or contact the Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997. Go to <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/> to access an accompanying film activity packet which includes additional activities and primary source documents related to Freedom Summer.

Extension Activity: Everyday Battle

View *Fannie Lou Hamer: Everyday Battle* with your students. Fannie Lou Hamer, a Mississippi civil rights activist, was famous for the phrase, “I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.” Hamer, from Ruleville, Mississippi decided to stand up and make a change by registering to vote. The struggle began for Hamer and many others whereas she began to fight for human rights and became interested in understanding the political process of America. This led to the creation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Produced by History On Video Inc. Color/black and white, 35 minutes. Middle school to adult.

This film can be borrowed free of charge from the Mississippi History on Loan Collection. Go to <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/mississippi-history-on-loan-film-collection/> or contact the Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997.

Extension Activity: The Voice of a Freedom Summer Worker

Use the Foner Freedom Summer Papers lesson plan available at <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/> Students will look at the different ways the events of 1964 were described in letters from participants, articles covering the event, and Foner’s own report. They will also consider Eudora Welty’s story, “The Demonstrators” in order to look at the way attitudes towards civil responsibility have changed since the civil rights era and how technology has impacted these attitudes. Adaptable for grades nine to twelve.

Extension Activity: Legally Speaking

Look at Freedom Summer, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and voting rights through the eyes of the legal experts associated with Mississippi’s 1964 Freedom Summer with the documentary *Mississippi, America*. Produced by WSIU Carbondale. Color/black and white, 57 minutes. Middle school to adult.

This film can be borrowed free of charge from the Mississippi History on Loan Collection. Go to <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/mississippi-history-on-loan-film-collection/> or contact the Outreach Programs Coordinator at 601-576-6997.

Extension Activity: Read About It

Read *The Freedom Summer Murders* by Don Mitchell, a non-fictional account of the events of 1964 through the 2005 conviction of Edgar Ray Killen. Written for young adults, the book draws heavily upon primary source documents (all of which are cited) and is well-illustrated with photographs depicting the people and events related to the 1964 murders.

Mississippi in 1964, A Turning Point

In 1962, a coalition of major civil rights organizations had been formed with the goal of gaining African Americans the right to vote. Together, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and others formed the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO).

In June of 1964, COFO launched the Mississippi Freedom Summer, a campaign to register as many African American voters as possible in the state where voting was the lowest in the country at 6.7%. COFO also set up freedom houses, freedom schools, and community centers in small towns to assist African American citizens. More than 3,500 students (including children and adults) attended over thirty Freedom Schools which taught lessons in black history and constitutional rights as well as standard classroom curriculum.

The student program that paired native Mississippians with northern (predominantly white) civil rights activists faced many challenges during its ten-week course: four workers and three Mississippians were killed; eighty workers were beaten and 1,062 arrested; and thirty-seven churches and thirty homes or businesses were bombed or burned.

On June 24, the Freedom Summer Project made national news due to the disappearance of three young civil rights workers, James Chaney, an African American Mississippian, and Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman (northerners of Jewish descent). The FBI found their bodies buried beneath an earthen dam approximately six weeks later. During the course of the investigation, the bodies of eight other African American men were found, three of whom were known civil rights activists; the remaining five have never been identified.

Although the Freedom Summer Project failed to register the number of African American voters it had hoped to, the publicity gained from the disappearance and murder of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman, helped propel the troubles of Mississippi into the national spotlight. It also helped raise the profile of the newly formed Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party (MFDP), a political party designed to challenge the seats held by Mississippi Democrats with segregationist agendas.

At the 1964 Democratic Convention, held in August in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the MFDP claimed that because African Americans were not allowed to vote in Mississippi, the state's politicians had been elected illegally and they asked to be seated in their place. The MFDP failed to gain any official recognition of their delegates but moving testimony from Fannie Lou Hamer, broadcast on national television, continued to help publicize the discrimination faced by African Americans throughout the South and raise public support for the Civil Rights Movement.



MFDP State Convention in Jackson Mississippi, August 1964. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.

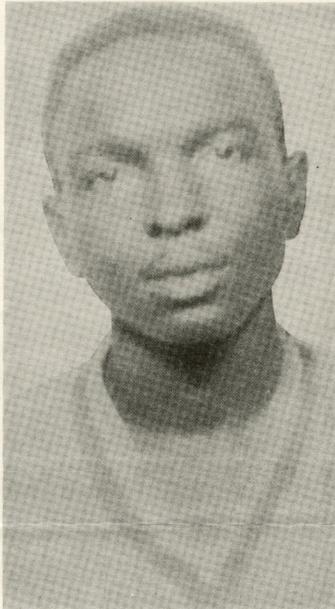
MISSING CALL FBI

THE FBI IS SEEKING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISAPPEARANCE AT PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI, OF THESE THREE INDIVIDUALS ON JUNE 21, 1964. EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED TO LOCATE GOODMAN, CHANEY, AND SCHWERNER, WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

ANDREW GOODMAN



JAMES EARL CHANEY



MICHAEL HENRY SCHWERNER



RACE:	White	Negro	White
SEX:	Male	Male	Male
DOB:	November 23, 1943	May 30, 1943	November 6, 1939
POB:	New York City	Meridian, Mississippi	New York City
AGE:	20 years	21 years	24 years
HEIGHT:	5'10"	5'7"	5'9" to 5'10"
WEIGHT:	150 pounds	135 to 140 pounds	170 to 180 pounds
HAIR:	Dark brown; wavy	Black	Brown
EYES:	Brown	Brown	Light blue
TEETH:		Good: none missing	
SCARS AND MARKS:		1 inch cut scar 2 inches above left ear.	Pock mark center of forehead, slight scar on bridge of nose, appendectomy scar, broken leg scar.

SHOULD YOU HAVE OR IN THE FUTURE RECEIVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, YOU ARE REQUESTED TO NOTIFY ME OR THE NEAREST OFFICE OF THE FBI. TELEPHONE NUMBER IS LISTED BELOW.



J. Edgar Hoover
 DIRECTOR
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535
 TELEPHONE, NATIONAL 8-7117

June 29, 1964

FBI/DOJ

Reproduced below is a facsimile
of the form currently in use for
registration:

4/18/55
GNB:gnb

SWORN WRITTEN APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

(By reason of the provisions of Section 244 of the Constitution of Mississippi and House Bill No. 95, approved March 24, 1955, the applicant for registration, if not physically disabled, is required to fill in this form in his own handwriting in the presence of the registrar and without assistance or suggestion of any other person or memorandum.)

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. State 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 under 21 years at present, but 21 years by date of general election _____
13. If there is more than one person of your same name in the precinct, by what 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 pretenses, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, or bigamy? _____
15. If your answer to Question 14 is "Yes", name the crime or crimes of 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. Write and copy in the space below, Section _____ of the Constitution of Mississippi:
 (Instruction to Registrar: You will designate the section of the Constitution and point out same to applicant.)
19. Write in the space below a reasonable interpretation (the meaning) of the section of the Constitution of Mississippi which you have just copied:
20. Write in the space below a statement setting forth your understanding of the duties and obligations of citizenship under a constitutional form of government.
21. Sign and attach hereto the oath or affirmation named in Question 12.

 The applicant will sign his name here.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me by the within named _____

_____ on this the _____ day of _____

19____.

 COUNTY REGISTRAR

Literacy Test Teacher's Guide

Use the following excerpts of the Mississippi State Constitution to conduct a Literacy Test with students, similar to that conducted with African Americans before and during the 1960s.

Article 14, Section 269

Every devise or bequest of lands, tenements or hereditaments, or any interest therein, of freehold, or less than freehold, either present or future, vested or contingent, or of any money directed to be raised by the sale thereof, contained in any last will and testament, or codicil, or other testamentary writing, in favor of any religious or ecclesiastical corporation, sole or aggregate, or any religious or ecclesiastical society, or to any religious denomination, or association of persons, or to any person or body politic, in trust, either expressed or implied, secret or resulting, either for the use and benefit of such religious corporation, society, denomination or association, or for the purpose of being given or appropriated to charitable uses or purposes, shall be null and void, and the heir-at-law shall take the same property so devised or bequeathed, as though no testamentary disposition had been made.

Please read and interpret this section of the Constitution.

Article 7, Section 182

The power to tax corporations and their property shall never be surrendered or abridged by any contract or grant to which the state or any political subdivision thereof may be a party, except that the Legislature may grant exemption from taxation in the encouragement of manufactures and other new enterprises of public utility extending for a period of not exceeding ten (10) years on each such enterprise hereafter constructed, and may grant exemptions not exceeding ten (10) years on each addition thereto or expansion thereof, and may grant exemptions not exceeding ten (10) years on future additions to or expansions of existing manufactures and other enterprises of public utility. The time of each exemption shall commence from the date of completion of the new enterprise, and from the date of completion of each addition or expansion, for which an exemption is granted. When the Legislature grants such exemptions for a period of ten (10) years or less, it shall be done by general laws, which shall distinctly enumerate the classes of manufactures and other new enterprises of public utility, entitled to such exemptions, and shall prescribe the mode and manner in which the right to such exemptions shall be determined.

Please read and interpret this section of the Constitution.

On the other hand, a white applicant may be asked to copy and interpret something similar to:

Article 12, Section 240

All elections by the people shall be by ballot.

Securing a Voice

In 1964, African American and white Mississippians formed the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to counter the segregationist controlled Democratic Party in Mississippi. Despite not being able to vote legally, 80,000 cast “Freedom Ballots” under the name of the MFDP. Sixty-eight elected delegates (four white) traveled to the 1964 Democratic National convention in New Jersey. Hopes were that the MFDP would replace the regular Democratic Party of Mississippi. At the convention, they claimed that the Mississippi regulars (those currently holding delegation seats) had been illegally elected and had no intention of supporting President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 election.

Southern Democratic delegates from other states threatened to leave the party if the Mississippi delegates were removed. Fearing he would lose the South, President Johnson chose to uphold the regulars. Eventually, the MFDP was offered two at-large seats where they would be allowed to sit-in but not participate in the convention.

Aaron Henry, MDFP leader and NAACP President responded,

“Now, Lyndon made the typical white man’s mistake: Not only did he say ‘You’ve got two votes,’ which was too little, but he told us to whom the two votes would go. He’d give me one and Ed King one; that would satisfy. But, you see, he didn’t realize that sixty-four of us came up from Mississippi on a Greyhound bus, eating cheese and crackers and bologna all the way there; we didn’t have no money. We got to Atlantic City; we put up in a little hotel, three or four of us in a bed, four or five of us on the floor. You know, we suffered a common kind of experience, the whole thing. But now what kind of fool am I, or what kind of fool would Ed have been, to accept gratuities for ourselves? You say, Ed and Aaron can get in but the other sixty-two can’t. This is typical white man picking black folks’ leaders, and that day is just gone.”

Fannie Lou Hamer added, “We didn’t come all this way for no two seats, ‘cause all of us is tired!”

In the end, the Mississippi regulars did leave in protest of Johnson’s civil rights plans, just as the MFDP had predicted. Many of the MFDP delegates secured passes from northern sympathizers and sat in the Mississippi seats, but they were removed and resorted to singing freedom songs outside. In 1972, the MFDP and the Mississippi Democratic Party finally merged.

Fannie Lou Hamer’s Speech at the 1964 Democratic National Convention

Mr. Chairman, and to the Credentials Committee, my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and I live at 626 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi, Sunflower County, the home of Senator James O. Eastland, and Senator Stennis.

It was the 31st of August in 1962 that eighteen of us traveled twenty-six miles to the county courthouse in Indianola to try to register to become first-class citizens. We was met in Indianola by policemen, Highway Patrolmen, and they only allowed two of us in to take the literacy test at the time. After we had taken this test and started back to Ruleville, we was held up by the City Police and the State Highway Patrolmen and carried back to

Indianola where the bus driver was charged that day with driving a bus the wrong color.

After we paid the fine among us, we continued on to Ruleville, and Reverend Jeff Sunny carried me four miles in the rural area where I had worked as a timekeeper and sharecropper for eighteen years. I was met there by my children, who told me that the plantation owner was angry because I had gone down to try to register. After they told me, my husband came, and said the plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tried to register. Before he quit talking the plantation owner came and said, "Fannie Lou, do you know - did Pap tell you what I said?"

And I said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "Well I mean that." He said, "If you don't go down and withdraw your registration, you will have to leave." Said, "Then if you go down and withdraw," said, "you still might have to go because we are not ready for that in Mississippi."

And I addressed him and told him and said, "I didn't try to register for you. I tried to register for myself."

I had to leave that same night.

On the 10th of September 1962, sixteen bullets was fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also Mr. Joe McDonald's house was shot in. And June the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop; was returning back to Mississippi. Ten of us was traveling by the Continental Trailway bus. When we got to Winona, Mississippi, which is Montgomery County, four of the people got off to use the washroom, and two of the people - to use the restaurant - two of the people wanted to use the washroom. The four people that had gone in to use the restaurant was ordered out. During this time I was on the bus. But when I looked through the window and saw they had rushed out I got off of the bus to see what had happened. And one of the ladies said, "It was a State Highway Patrolman and a Chief of Police ordered us out."

I got back on the bus and one of the persons had used the washroom got back on the bus, too.

As soon as I was seated on the bus, I saw when they began to get the five people in a highway patrolman's car. I stepped off of the bus to see what was happening and somebody screamed from the car that the five workers was in and said, "Get that one there." When I went to get in the car, when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail and put in the booking room. They left some of the people in the booking room and began to place us in cells. I was placed in a cell with a young woman called Miss Ivesta Simpson. After I was placed in the cell I began to hear sounds of licks and screams, I could hear the sounds of licks and horrible screams. And I could hear somebody say, "Can you say, 'yes, sir,' n---r? Can you say 'yes, sir'?"

And they would say other horrible names.

She would say, "Yes, I can say 'yes, sir.'"

"So, well, say it."

She said, "I don't know you well enough."

They beat her, I don't know how long. And after a while she began to pray, and asked God to have mercy on those people.

And it wasn't too long before three white men came to my cell. One of these men was a State Highway Patrolman and he asked me where I was from. I told him Ruleville and he said, "We are going to check this." They left my cell and it wasn't too long before they came back. He said, "You are from Ruleville all right," and he used a curse word. And he said, "We are going to make you wish you was dead."

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack.

The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolman, for me to lay down on a bunk bed on my face. I laid on my face and the first Negro began to beat. I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted. I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side, because I suffered from polio when I was six years old.

After the first Negro had beat until he was exhausted, the State Highway Patrolman ordered the second Negro to take the blackjack. The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat me to sit on my feet - to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat me in my head and tell me to hush.

One white man - my dress had worked up high - he walked over and pulled my dress - I pulled my dress down and he pulled my dress back up. I was in jail when Medgar Evers was murdered.

All of this is on account of we want to register, to become first-class citizens. And if the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off the hooks because our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?

Thank you.



Fannie Lou Hamer testifies at the Democratic National Convention, 1964. MDAH, Museum Division.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Fannie Lou in Review

Now that you have listened to the speech, go back through the text and answer the following questions.

1. Fannie Lou Hamer states she is from the same county as Mississippi Senators Eastland and Stennis. That county is _____.
2. On _____, 19____ she traveled with _____ people to the courthouse in _____, Mississippi, to register to vote.
3. Only _____ people were allowed to take the literacy test.
4. They were stopped by the Highway Patrol and the bus driver was charged with _____.
5. The plantation owner she worked for said that if she wanted to continue working she'd have to _____.
6. On September 10, 1962, _____ homes were fired into and _____ girls were shot.
7. Hamer was again arrested in _____, Mississippi, when trying to enter a restaurant and washroom.
8. The police ordered two other black men to _____ her.
9. She was in jail on the day that _____.
10. All of this happened because she wanted to _____.
11. President Johnson suggested a sort of compromise to the MFDP, offering them two at-large seats to sit-in but not participate in the convention; the MFDP refused. Do you think the MFDP made the right decision? Why or why not? _____

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

12. Explain the plantation owner's phrase "we are not ready for that Mississippi." _____

13. Hamer says "I question America" towards the end of her testimony. How do you think these words were received in 1964? Would they have been interpreted differently by whites and African Americans?

14. After all the discussions, speeches, and demonstrations, the three major television networks ran Hamer's address at the Democratic Convention. The nation was moved. What do you think might have made Hamer so interesting after more formally educated people, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., had already spoken on these issues? _____

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Fannie Lou in Review ***Answer Key***

Now that you have listened to the speech, go back through the text and answer the following questions.

1. Fannie Lou Hamer states she is from the same county as Mississippi Senators Eastland and Stennis. That county is Sunflower.
2. On August 31, 1962 she traveled with 18 people to the courthouse in Indianola, Mississippi, to register to vote.
3. Only 2 people were allowed to take the literacy test.
4. They were stopped by the Highway Patrol and the bus driver was charged with driving a bus the wrong color.
5. The plantation owner she worked for said that if she wanted to continue working she'd have to withdraw her registration.
6. On September 10, 1962, 2 homes were fired into and 2 girls were shot.
7. Hamer was again arrested in Winona, Mississippi, when trying to enter a restaurant and washroom.
8. The police ordered two other black men to beat her.
9. She was in jail on the day that Medgar Evers was murdered.
10. All of this happened because she wanted to register to vote and become a first-class citizen.

Questions 11-14: Answers will vary.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Journal Five: Ask Yourself

1. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Acts, voting has required only a simple registration in the county where one lives. Some worry that with no identification required, anyone could lie and vote in multiple precincts as different people. Recently, some states, including Mississippi have passed laws requiring voters to have some form of picture ID. Supporters claim this protects the vote while opponents say it is a return to the days of voter discrimination. What do you think? How could requiring an ID lead to voter discrimination?
2. Regarding the cases of civil rights murders (such as Medgar Evers, Vernon Dahmer, Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman), some have said that there is no reason to go back and bring an elderly man to trial forty years later. Do you believe justice should be served regardless of how much time has passed since the crime? Explain.
3. Beginning with the Emmett Till trial, some men accused were found innocent who later admitted to the crime. In the cases of Beckwith, Killen, and Bowers, the all-white juries never said “innocent.” Killen was only saved by one female who said she couldn’t convict a preacher. This doesn’t appear to be a sign of the majority wanting to free him. Does this say something about the state of racial relations in Mississippi at the time? Were things changing? Did the national media possibly open the eyes of some?
4. What do you think about national politicians catering to Southern politicians? How effective are federal laws and rulings to help African Americans in the South when they barely enforce them?