**The Black Fists Protest**

Author’s Name: Luke Zelich

Lesson Title: The Black Fists Protest

Grade Level: 9-10

Compelling Question: Are Black Athlete protests effective at accomplishing social change?

**Lesson Foundations**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Content Standards | OLS.AH.27: Following World War II, the United States experienced a struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil rights.  OLS.AH.23: The United States followed a policy of containment during the Cold War in response to the spread of Communism. | | |
| Learning Objective(s) | [LO1] SWBAT identify the domestic and foreign policy reasons that made American policymakers concerned about black athlete protests.  [LO2] SWBAT evaluate the effectiveness of the black fists protest at accomplishing social change. | Assessment(s)  Include LO being addressed | [LO1] A1: Free-write  [LO2] A2: Observation of student work.  [LO1 & LO2 & LO3] A3: Discussion  [LO1 & LO2 & LO3] A4: Exit Ticket |
| Materials & Resources | Black Fists Article from Picturing Black History website: <https://www.picturingblackhistory.org/the-black-fists-protest>  **Suggested Additional Resources:** <https://origins.osu.edu/connecting-history/top-ten-origins-sports-protests>   and this podcast: <https://origins.osu.edu/historytalk/long-view-sports-protests>  “We Won’t Shut Up and Dribble” <https://origins.osu.edu/article/we-won-t-shut-and-dribble-short-history-black-athletic-protest>  *Quora Post:* <https://www.quora.com/What-was-the-international-reaction-to-the-Black-Power-salute-in-the-1968-Olympics>  Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aoEVgJ-jqg>  Pictures of Kaepernick and the Black Fists Protest.  PowerPoint.  Pens & Pencils.  Chromebooks are recommended but not necessary. | | |

**Instructional Procedures/Steps**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Opening  5 Minutes | Lay out the agenda for the day.  [Opener, Think-Pair-Share] Ask the question “Do you think that athlete protests are effective at accomplishing social change?”   * Students will answer the question in small groups or with a partner. We will then check-in as a class and share our thoughts on the question. * A: Wait until the end of the class to answer this question. |
| Instruction  35 Minutes | [Interactive Lecture, 15 minutes] Review the major themes of the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement that we’ve gone over so far: containment, trying to win over the third world, the popular idea that the United States beat racism. Teacher will also go over a short history of black protests up until this point if it hadn’t been covered previously. Analyze with students the “myth of the Black Athlete.”   * Questions to guide instruction:  1. “What were some major events that occurred during the late 1960s? How do these important events tie into the Cold War and American insecurity about racism?” A: Vietnam, assassination of MLK, 1968 Democratic National Convention, rise of Black Panther Party, etc. 2. “How did the rise of the Black Panther Party reflect a change in the Civil Rights Movement?” A: It represented a shift towards grassroots activism and more militant acts of resistance. 3. “What examples of Black Athlete protests do we see today?” A: Colin Kaepernick. 4. “Did the rise of black athletes during theCivil Rights period reflect racial progress in the United States?? Why or why not?” A: No. Black athletes were becoming more prominent internationally but domestic racism was still active and deeply entrenched in our institutions.  * A1: Free Write. After the interactive lecture, students will answer the following prompt: “Why might US policymakers have been very concerned about how the country was perceived during this time?” Students will write their responses and share with the class.   [Stations. 20 minutes] Students will break out into groups of 4. Each group will fill out their stations worksheet as they analyze different sources. Students should only spend around 6 minutes at each station.   * Station 1:  1. Students will watch the following video and answer questions on their handouts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aoEVgJ-jqg>.  * Station 2  1. Students will analyze the quotes and the picture and answer associated questions on their handouts.  * Station 3:  1. Students will examine pictures and answer related questions on their worksheets. The pictures are linked from two articles, but students will not be reading the articles. They will just be looking at the pictures.  * A2: Teacher will walk around to each group and assess responses to the worksheets. If there is anything amiss, the teacher will correct the students. * Questions to ask: “What was the goal of the Black Fists Protest? How do you know?” “What was the reaction of the American population? Was it positive? Negative?” “How were the protesters received at the time? Do you think they would have been received the same way today?” “Has the public perception of black athlete protesters changed much since then?” |
| Closure  10 Minutes | [Discussion] Class will reconvene and discuss findings from the stations activity. Teacher will also ask some supplemental discussion questions:   1. Why was US leadership so concerned about its public image during this time?   A: the US wanted its citizens to believe that it was past racism, and it wanted third world leadership to believe that it was past racism. This was crucial for the Cold War effort.   1. How did the United States want to be perceived by the rest of the world?   A: the US wanted to present capitalism as moral, economic, and political superior to over the communist Soviet Union, thus making it a more appealing political system for emerging countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.   1. How did the Black Fists Protest challenge the image that the United States was projecting during this era?   A: The Black Fists Protest asserted that the Black Panther Party’s challenge to American racism was alive and well in the United States.   1. What was the immediate reaction to the Black Fists Protest like? How did it change over time?   A: White Americans viewed it with disdain, and the IOC banned both athletes from the Olympics. Eventually, their political activism inspired modern athlete protests.   1. Which modern black athlete protests were inspired by the Black Fists Protest?   A: Colin Kaepernick’s kneeling was directly inspired by it.   1. Based on the state of race relations today, do we think that the black fist protest accomplished social change? Why or why not?   A: It’s debatable. There are still athletic protests against racial inequality in this country so it’s questionable how effective its long term impact was.   1. Are athlete protests effective? In what ways specifically?   A: I’ll be looking for opinions, but a good student answer could look like this: “Yes, but only at changing public attitudes. Of course, athlete protests don’t literally change policy, as the most they can do is draw attention to issues. So yes, but it depends on what you deem as *effective*.”  A3: Teacher will assess student responses to discussion questions.  A4, Exit Ticket:   1. Students will answer the following question: “Have black athlete protests been effective in the past? In what ways specifically? How has the perception of black athlete protest changed over time?” |
| Accommodations/ Enrichment | PowerPoint, readings, and guided notes all accommodated for students with attention deficiencies.  Multiple perspectives presented regarding the issue.  Connections to current black athlete protests. |