

Traditional Narrative	Historically Accurate Narrative
Traditionally, relationships between the races in the South were oppressive.	
The Movement began in 1954.	
Martin Luther King Jr. led the Civil Rights Movement.	
The federal government was the champion of civil rights.	
The primary goal of the Civil Rights Movement was integration.	
Men were the leaders and were responsible for the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement.	
The Movement ended in 1970.	
Inexplicably, just as civil rights victories were piling up, many Black Americans, under the banner of Black Power, turned their backs on American society.	
African Americans were the only group fighting for civil rights and self-determination in the 1950s-1970s.	

What Are Children Learning from the Civil Rights Movement?

	Traditional Narrative	Historically Accurate Narrative	
The Movement began in 1954.	<i>Prior to 1954, African Americans accepted slavery and Jim Crow. Social change begins from the top with legal cases and congressional decisions.</i>	African Americans have been fighting for civil rights since the beginning of slavery. The 1954 decision was preceded by many, many years of grassroots organizing and strategizing.	<i>Wherever there is injustice, there is resistance.</i>
Martin Luther King Jr. led the Civil Rights Movement alone.	<i>We have to wait for an extraordinary leader, a savior.</i>	The Movement consisted of many leaders and hundreds of thousands of activists. Martin Luther King Jr. played a critically important role as a powerful spokesperson, but he was not the leader nor the initiator of the Movement.	<i>Real change depends on the collective effort of regular people. We all have a role to play, and a responsibility.</i>
The federal government was the champion of civil rights.	<i>We can rely on the federal government to take care of us.</i>		
The primary goal of the Civil Rights Movement was integration.		The federal government only sporadically fulfilled its legal obligations and most often left citizens vulnerable to extreme violence. When the government acted, it was in response to overwhelming public pressure.	<i>A democracy only works if the people continually hold their public institu-</i>
Men were the leaders and were responsible for the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement.	<i>Men lead, women follow.</i>		
The Movement ended in 1970.	<i>A problem that has existed for hundreds of years can be solved in a discrete block of time and require no further attention.</i>	Women played a critical role in the success of the Movement.	
		The struggle for civil rights and an end to institutional racism continues.	