

student activity 1

Empowered People Empower People

Name _____ Date _____

John Lewis spent a lifetime on the front lines of effecting growth and change for America. As one of the “Big Six” Civil Rights leaders, his life’s work was about empowering people. Born in the South in 1941, the path to empowerment was heavily impeded with obstacles.

In the “I want” box below, identify something you want for your life, community or society at large. Look to the column on the left for inspiration from John Lewis’s journey as you explore ways to empower yourself and in turn, empower others

I Want:

John Lewis’s Path

Disempowered...

by Jim Crow laws of the South, John Lewis was motivated to break/change the oppressive rules. He was encouraged by his parents who feared for his safety: “Don’t get in trouble.”

Disempowerments

Examples:
Oppression,
Bullying, Pandemics,
Condition, Stigmas,
Status, Barriers,
Stressors

John Lewis followed MLK on the radio and studied the Montgomery bus boycott. He was inspired and compelled to act in the fight against oppression.

Look
Listen
Learn

My Path

What disempowerments do you experience?

Make a list of resources to learn from. Include books, films, singers, artists, public figures, social media stars – whatever inspires you.

1958- Seeking guidance and support (empowerment), he wrote a letter to his hero, MLK, and met with him in person. In the same year, John Lewis enrolled in college and connected with local activists and clergy and gained **mentors** and **teachers**.

Guidance
Support
Mentors
Teachers

Who are your supporters now? Who would you like to support you? Who could your mentors be?

Joined committees and organizations, participated in Freedom Rides and peaceful demonstrations. They faced violent retaliation, attacks and arrests. The unity of the group helped them to keep moving forward.

Connect with those who share your vision.
Empower and encourage each other.

What organization could you join to support your “want”? Do you need to start one?

Leadership:

At the age of 22, Lewis became Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, he registered Black voters in Selma and helped plan the March on Washington.

Empowering others is an act of **leadership**.

What leadership positions would you like to have?

After years of work in activism, John Lewis won a seat in the House of Representatives in 1986. He carried out 16 consecutive terms advocating and fighting for the empowerment of all through legislation.

Empower People
Mission + Career

How can you empower others?
What careers or hobbies could align with your “want”?

student activity 2

Letter to Congressperson

1. Use this form to outline a letter to congress.
2. Write the first draft Seek empowering feedback for your draft.
3. Write a final draft.
4. Send via email or adjust the format for email.

Issue, topic, or bill: _____

Your Name, Grade: _____

School Name, Teacher: _____

School Street Address: _____

City, State Zip Code: _____

Student Email Address: _____

Legislator Name: _____
The Honorable

Congressional Office: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Introductory line: _____
Dear Representative/Senator _____,

Introductory Paragraph: who you are and why the issue matters

First name, grade, relation to legislator: _____

Reason for writing: _____

Why is the issue important to you? _____

Personal/community/family connection to issue: _____

Why do you need the legislator's help? _____

Facts Paragraph: site research, examples, statistics

General idea about importance of issue/bill: _____

Specific example: _____

Researched evidence: _____

Statistics: _____

What's at stake? _____

student activity 2

Letter to Congressperson

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Call to Action Paragraph: what you want the legislator to do

I urge/ask you to... _____

Benefits of being attentive to the issue: _____

Best possible outcome if legislator supports: _____

Closing: _____
Sincerely,

Signature: _____

Your name: _____