

# “What Is Your Life’s Blueprint?”

## Ernest Green

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2007-2008 School Year  
Utilizing 2006 Arkansas Social Studies Frameworks  
Plus Other Curriculum Frameworks Including 2007 School Library Media Frameworks

The May Section from 2008 *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture Calendar* features a photograph of “[Ernest Green](#)” as he prepares for his high school graduation from Little Rock Central High School. Calendars can be ordered annually by emailing [info@encyclopeidaofarkansas.net](mailto:info@encyclopeidaofarkansas.net)

See links from the AV/AR digital collection featuring audio clips from an interview with Ernest Green at <http://www.butlercenter.org/online-collections/index.html>.

Students will analyze primary source documents to understand the Jim Crow south and the role it played in Arkansas education. Students will take this information and see how it connects with the teachings of Martin Luther King Jr. and the influence he had on individuals, such as Ernest Green.

**Grades:** 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to analyze primary source documents to understand relations in Arkansas during the Civil Rights Movement.
2. Students will be able to connect prior information and relate it to understand a specific time in history and change throughout time.
3. Students will be able to discuss new information and format it into a written argument.

### **Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks:**

#### **Arkansas History Student Learning Expectations:**

**WWP.9.AH.9-12.4** - Analyze the civil rights movement in Arkansas using primary and secondary sources

#### **Social Studies Student Learning Expectations:**

Civics/American Government

**C.1.CAG.5** - Explain and apply citizenship concepts to everyday life

**C.2.CAG.2** - Distinguish between rights and privileges of citizenship

**USC.7.CAG.4** - Analyze court cases that demonstrate how the United States Constitution protects the rights of individuals

**USC.7.CAG.5** - Examine changes in civil rights legislation

**English Language Arts Student Learning Expectations:**

**OV.1.10.2** - Prepare and participate in informal discussions and activities, such as presentations, group discussions/work teams, and debates...

**OV.3.9.2** - Articulate personal response to such media as editorials, news stories and advertisements

**W.4.9.1** - Generate, gather and organize ideas for writing

**School Library Media Student Learning Expectations:**

**I.1.9.9, I.1.10.9, I.1.11.10, I.1.12.10** – Distinguish between *primary* and *secondary sources*

**I.2.9.2, I.2.10.2, I.2.11.2, I.2.12.2** – Evaluate *primary* and *secondary sources*

**A.4.9.1, A.4.10.1, A.4.11.1, A.4.12.1** – Use resources and/or technology tools for a predetermined task

**NCSS Thematic Standards:**

Culture

Time, Continuity and Change

People, Places and Environment

Individual Development and Identity

Power, Authority and Governance

Individuals, Groups and Institutions

Civic Ideals and Practices

**Related Encyclopedia of Arkansas Entries:**

[Civil Rights Movement \(Twentieth Century\)](#); [Ernest Gideon Green](#); [Jim Crow Laws](#); [Segregation and Desegregation](#)

**Related AV/AR Selected Materials:**

[Ernest Green audio clip 03](#) – He discusses why he wanted to go to Central High School.

[Ernest Green audio clip 04](#) – He discusses the harassment at Central High School.

[Ernest Green audio clip 11](#) – He discusses what it was like inside Central High School.

[Ernest Green audio clip 17](#) – He talks about segregation and why he thought he should be allowed to attend Central High School.

**Introduction:**

The teacher will select the appropriate student learning expectations for his or her class, review key terms/people, and make copies of attached worksheet or primary source document as needed. Collaboration with the school library media specialist for assistance in the utilization of the technology resource tool for Arkansas History is suggested. See above links or visit the online Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>.

**Key Terms/People:**

<b>Civil Rights Movement</b>	<b>Jim Crow Laws</b>	<b>Segregation</b>	<b>Ernest Green</b>	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr.</b>
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## **Key Terms/People:**

**Civil Rights Movement** -The movement for racial equality in the United States that broke the pattern of racial segregation and achieved political equality among races.

**Jim Crow Laws** - A system of laws used in the southern United States to restrict the rights of African Americans, in both, the private and political sphere.

**Segregation** - A lawful means of separating races.

**Ernest Green** - One of the Little Rock Nine, who broke boundaries by helping to speed up the desegregation of Arkansas schools.

**Martin Luther King Jr.**- Leader of the Civil Rights Movement, who spoke for peace and equality among people.

## **Materials Needed:**

Writing Utensils

Notebook

(Discussion questions may be entered in notebooks as answers to journal questions)

Jim Crow in Arkansas Analysis Sheet

Internet Access (Ernest Green Describes Experience at Central High)

“What is Your Life’s Blueprint?”

## **Suggested Timeline:**

Two 50 minute class periods

## **Procedure:**

Students will begin by answering the discussion question:

- *What was life like for African Americans before segregation?*

Students should brainstorm as a class and create a list on the board of issues.

Students will then be placed into groups (2-4 per group), according to class size.

Next, the teacher will hand out Jim Crow in Arkansas Analysis Sheet.

After the groups have completed their analysis, ask them to share some of their answers with the class. This will allow for a well rounded discussion on the affect of Jim Crow in Arkansas.

## **Activity:**

Have students read:

Ernest Green Describes Experience at Central High

Special to the Arkansas News

[http://www.oldstatehouse.com/educational\\_programs/classroom/arkansas\\_news/detail.asp?id+46&issue\\_id=5&page=4](http://www.oldstatehouse.com/educational_programs/classroom/arkansas_news/detail.asp?id+46&issue_id=5&page=4)

As students are reading the article, ask them to underline the various instances

in which Green writes of Martin Luther King Jr. and the influence he had in his life.

Next, allow students to answer the following discussion questions:

- *How did Jim Crow laws personally affect the life of Ernest Green?*
- *Why did Green make the decision to become one of the Little Rock Nine?*
- *How did Dr. King inspire the actions of Green?*

After students have discussed various answers, assign them the task of writing a thank you letter from Ernest Green to Dr. King. Ask students to cite examples from Green's writing in their work.

### **Evaluation:**

As a closing, ask students to examine the "What is Your Life's Blueprint?" sheet. As students read, have them answer the questions found within the text and finish by completing the paragraph and/or diagram mentioned in the last bulletin. As students finish, ask them the discussion question:

- *How is each individual responsible for their own blueprint?*

### **Extended Activity:**

Ask students to draw a line down the center of their paper. On the left side have students create a list of five people who motivate them, this list may include parents, teachers, celebrities, etc. On the other side of their line, have students list the positive characteristics of the previous individuals (i.e. giving, responsible, intelligent, etc.). At the bottom of this page ask students to list one issue that they are concerned with ( i.e. grades, college, global warming, etc.). Students should then create a paragraph identifying how the people and characteristics listed above can motivate them towards a solution.

Have students answer the following discussion question:

- *How do the people within our lives influence our blueprint?*

For assistance with gathering and using oral history, contact the Butler Center Oral History Coordinator at [arkin@cal.org](mailto:arkin@cal.org).

**For Further Reading:** See *Race Relations in the Natural State* by Grif Stockley. The textbook has been adopted by the ADE as social studies resource. Order information is available at <http://www.butlercenter.org/publication/books.html> Mr. Stockley has written several articles for the online *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Students can use the advanced search feature in the online encyclopedia to access these articles.

**The Taylor Foundation** (Little Rock, Arkansas) makes Butler Center lesson plans possible. Contact the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, 100 Rock St., Little Rock, AR, 72201. 501-918-3056 [www.butlercenter.org](http://www.butlercenter.org) and [www.cals.lib.ar.us](http://www.cals.lib.ar.us)



## **Jim Crow in Arkansas Analysis Sheet**

The Jim Crow laws were a system of laws used in the southern United States to restrict the rights of African Americans, in both, the private and political sphere. From the 1880s to the 1960s these laws were used as a means to justify the segregation of races.

- Listed below are examples of Jim Crow laws in Arkansas relative to education:

### **1866**

No Negro or mulatto would be allowed to attend any public school except one reserved for “colored persons.”

### **1897**

Separate colleges for teachers to be established for each race.

### **1947**

Required segregation of races in public schools.

### **1957**

No child required to enroll in a racially mixed school.

### **1958**

Governor may close schools by election with ballot to read: “For racial integration of all schools within the ...school district,” or “Against racial integration of all schools within the school district.”

- How did Jim Crow laws affect:

School Children of Both Races?

Teachers of Both Races?

School Districts?

After reading the laws listed above, continue by finishing the “because” statement listed below. A “because” statement is one that states an opinion based on fact.

The Jim Crow laws placed on society were unjust to African Americans because...

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- Next, read the following quotes and circle the one that best fits your “because” statement:

“I hope that people will finally come to realize that there is only one ‘race’- the human race- and that we are all members of it.” -Margaret Atwood

“Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men’s skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact.”- Lyndon B. Johnson

“A fully functional multiracial society cannot be achieved without a sense of history and open, honest dialogue.”- Cornel West

“The race advances only by the extra achievements of the individual. You are the individual.”-Charles Towne

“In this worldwide civil war, race prejudice is our most dangerous enemy, for it is a disease at the very root of our democratic life.”- Mordicai Wyatt Johnson

- How does this quote relate to your statement?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- On the opposite side of this paper, create a poster as though you were marching in a rally opposing Jim Crow laws in Arkansas. This poster should align with your “because” statement, and may include a visual and/or slogan.

# ***What is Your Life's Blueprint?***

## **Martin Luther King Jr.**

Primary Source Document

*Directions:* Read the following speech given by Dr. King on October 26, 1967. As you read, answer the questions provided within the text.

"I want to ask you a question, and that is: What is your life's blueprint?"

"Whenever a building is constructed, you usually have an architect who draws a blueprint, and that blueprint serves as the pattern, as the guide, and a building is not well erected without a good, solid blueprint."

- **What is a blueprint?**
- **Why is it important to have a solid blueprint?**

"Now each of you is in the process of building the structure of your lives, and the question is whether you have a proper, a solid and a sound blueprint.

I want to suggest some of the things that should begin your life's blueprint. Number one in your life's blueprint should be a deep belief in your own dignity, your worth and your own homebodies. Don't allow anybody to make you feel that you're nobody. Always feel that you count. Always feel that you have worth, and always feel that your life has ultimate significance."

- **Why should this be the first step in a solid blueprint?**

"Secondly, in your life's blueprint you must have as the basic principle the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of endeavor. You're going to be deciding as the days, as the years, unfold what you will do in life- what your life's work will be. Set out to do it well."

- **Why is determination vital to success?**

"And I say to you, my young friends, doors are opening to you- doors of opportunities that were not open to your mothers and your fathers- and the great challenge facing you is to be ready to face these doors as they open."

- **What doors are open to you that may not have been open to generations before you?**
- **Why might it be difficult to face these doors?**

"Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great essayist, said in a lecture in 1871. *If a man can write a*

*better book or preach a better sermon or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, even if he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door.”*

- **What does this mean?**

“This hasn’t always been true-but it will become increasingly true, and so I would urge you to study hard, to burn the midnight oil; I would say to you, don’t drop out of school. I understand all the sociological reasons, but I urge you that in spite of your economic plight, in spite of the situation that you’re forced to live in- stay in school.”

- **What are some reasons someone might drop out of school?**
- **What are some ways that they might overcome these obstacles?**

“And when you discover what you will be in your life, set out to do it as if God Almighty called you at this particular moment in history to do it. Don’t just set out to do a good job. Set out to do such a good job that the living, the dead or the unborn couldn’t do it any better.”

- **List three examples of people who have lived their life this way:**

“If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, sweep streets like Beethoven composed music, sweep streets like Leontyne Price sings before the Metropolitan Opera. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will have to pause and say: Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well. If you can’t be a pine at the top of the hill, be a shrub in the valley. Be the best little shrub on the side of the hill.

Be a bush if you can’t be a tree. If you can’t be a highway, just be a trail. If you can’t be a sun, be a star. For it isn’t by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.”

- **How is each individual ultimately responsible for their own blueprint?**
- **On a separate sheet of paper, create a blueprint for your life. This blueprint may be in the form of a paragraph or diagram, list where you are now and the steps needed to achieve “what your life’s work will be.”**