

## **"The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters: A Journey Through African American Labor History"**

### **Goals:**

- Understand the historical significance of the African American Pullman porters and their role in the labor rights movement.
- Learn about A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' impact on civil rights and labor unions.
- Develop skills in research, critical analysis, and empathy by exploring historical contexts.
- Enhance literacy through reading, discussion, and reflection.

### **Scenario:**

You will dive into the world of the Pullman porters – these were African American workers who had some pretty tough challenges but made a huge impact on history.

We'll be exploring everything they went through. Imagine having to work super hard in those fancy Pullman train cars, but not getting the respect or the pay you deserve. That's what these guys dealt with every day. But here's the cool part – they didn't just take it. They stood up for their rights, and in doing so, they helped kickstart some major changes in labor rights and even the civil rights movement.

So, as we go through this journey, we'll get to understand what life was like for them, the kind of struggles they faced, and how they fought back. It's not just about the past, though. We'll also be looking at how their fight ties into the bigger picture of civil rights and what it means for us today.

### **Resources:**

- Access to computers or tablets for research.
- Library resources including books and articles on African American history, labor rights, and the Pullman porters.

- Children's books: "Riding to Washington" by Gwenyth Swain, "A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter" by Patricia C. McKissack and Fredrick L. McKissack.
- Documentaries and online videos about the Pullman porters and A. Philip Randolph.
- Art supplies for creative projects.

### **Call to Action:**

Students will engage in a multi-faceted project that includes research, creative expression, and critical discussion. They will explore the lives and struggles of the Pullman porters and their significant role in shaping labor and civil rights movements.

### **Activities:**

#### **Research and Presentation:**

- Students will research the history of the Pullman porters, the formation of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the role of A. Philip Randolph.
- They will create presentations to share their findings, focusing on different aspects like working conditions, the fight for labor rights, and the union's impact on civil rights.

#### **Literary Exploration:**

- Read "A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter" and "Riding to Washington" to understand the personal and social aspects of the porters' lives.
- Conduct a class discussion to analyze and reflect on the stories.

#### **Role-Play Activity:**

- Students will enact scenarios faced by the Pullman porters, engaging in role-play to understand the challenges and decisions they encountered.
- Discuss scenarios like negotiations, daily work life, and family dynamics.

**Creative Project:**

- Students will create a visual or performance art piece (e.g., a mural, play, or dance) that captures the essence of the Pullman porters' experiences and their fight for rights.

**Reflection:**

- **Group Discussions:** After each activity, facilitate discussions to reflect on the insights gained and the relevance of these historical events in today's context.
- **Journaling:** Encourage students to keep a journal throughout the lesson, documenting their thoughts, learnings, and emotional responses.
- **Final Presentation:** Groups or individuals will present their research and creative projects to the class.
- **Reflective Essay:** A final essay where students express their understanding of the importance of the Pullman porters in American history and labor rights movements.

**Assessment:**

- Evaluate presentations for historical accuracy and depth of understanding.
- Assess creative projects for their representation of the Pullman porters' experiences and historical context.
- Reflective essays will be assessed for literacy skills, critical thinking, and the ability to connect historical events to contemporary issues.