

**Television's Role in the Civil Rights Movement:  
Shedding Light On Unseen Problems  
and Causing Social Change**

Senior Group Website Division  
Student Composed Word Count: 1200  
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Process Paper: 497

### Process Paper:

Attending class one day in what our school calls "Alumni Hall" we saw a bust. This bust was of Michael Schwerner. Upon first inspection, none of us knew who he was, while we recognized his name. We read the plaque under his name and saw that he was a victim of the Mississippi Burning when he went down to Mississippi to increase voter registration with the African American community. We all thought that it was horrible, and it was worth looking into. When we heard this year's theme, we knew that we had to tie Communication in History with the civil rights movement to honor his death along with Goodman's and Chaney's deaths.

We started the research process by gathering background information about the history of the Jim Crow laws and previous civil rights breakthroughs. This included looking at court cases such as Plessy v. Ferguson, previous laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1875, and more general topics such as the Jim Crow laws. Then, we made our topics and subtopics to make our future research more efficient. Then we made our research more narrowed down into the different subtopics, such as the growth of the television, the Mississippi Burning, and the Selma march. After our research was firm, we found our images that would respect our research best and found our multimedia that emphasized how television demonstrated abuse and discrimination.

We chose our project type by thinking about this theme and our personal topic. We chose a website because this is the best way to show our project. The combination of allowing the multimedia to show live footage of news broadcasts from the 60s, the website allowing the pictures from the time, and the accessibility to include more information through writing was the perfect combination. Also, all members of the group had experience with website creation, so this suited more to our skills.

Our project relates to the theme of Communication in History: The Key to Understanding because through the communication of the television, the understanding was increased. Television improved communication because the news was more effective. Seeing is believing, and nowhere is that more true with the news. Events have a much harder impact if videos of them can be seen. Events such as the Selma march would still be heard about with the use of newspapers, which only had text and maybe one picture. However, with television, it is much easier for people to understand how much of a problem this is because they can see everyone get beaten on the street, and they can hear the sounds of the cries, and they can hear the sounds of the clubs hitting flesh. Also, messages were sent by interrupting programs for these news segments. When the networks were interrupting their scheduled shows, they were communicating to their viewers that these events are much more important than entertainment, and their viewers were able to understand the magnitude of what was happening much more important.