

TEACHING TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
TOLERANCE.ORG

EARLY & MIDDLE GRADES ACTIVITY

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Postcards From the Past

Choose a role and audience for your postcard writing. Below are five suggested prompts. Each prompt includes suggestions to accommodate a range of interests and readiness levels (mild, medium, spicy). Choose only one of the three range choices (mild, medium, spicy).

Prompt A

Imagine you are a young person growing up in a place and time on the civil rights map. Write a postcard to a friend or relative living in another part of the country during that time.

MILD What is happening in your state and how do you feel about it? What might you ask your friend or relative?

MEDIUM What is happening in your state and how do you feel about it? Include historically accurate facts or details about that event. What help might you ask for from your friend or relative?

SPICY What is happening in your state and how do you feel about it? Make a connection to something that's happened in your friend or relative's state during that same time period. Include historically accurate facts or details.

Prompt B

Imagine you have traveled back to a place and time on the civil rights map. Write a postcard from that place and time to your present-day self.

MILD What did you witness and how did you feel about it? Describe the people, places and events you saw.

MEDIUM What did you witness and how did you feel about it? Share how you think things have changed since this time in American history.

SPICY What did you witness and how did you feel about it? Connect an issue of equity or social justice from today to a person or event you witnessed on your trip to the civil rights past.

Prompt C

Imagine you have opened your mailbox and found a postcard from the past. A person your age from a place and time on the civil rights map has written to you.

MILD What does the person from the past tell you about the events happening in her state? What does he want to know about the future?

MEDIUM What is that person's opinion of the events happening in his state? What concerns does she express about the future? What advice does he give to you based on what she experienced?

SPICY What is that person's perspective on the events happening in his state? What questions and concerns would she express about the future? What request does he make of you and your generation?

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Prompt D

Imagine you are a young person growing up in a place and time on the civil rights map. Write a postcard to your grandchildren living in the future.

MILD

What do you want your grandchildren to learn about this time in history?

MEDIUM

What do you ask your grandchildren to remember? What lessons can you offer to them for their lifetime?

SPICY

What do you want your grandchildren to learn and remember about this time in history. What wisdom do you offer them? What is their inherited responsibility from the struggle for civil rights?

Prompt E

Imagine you are a young person growing up in a place and time on the civil rights map. Write a postcard to a public official living at that time, such as civil rights leaders, community figures, mayor, governor, judge, President.

MILD

What do you think they should do to help the people in your state?

MEDIUM

What is the main problem facing your state and what solution would you suggest?

SPICY

What specific action would you like to see leadership take in response to the problems happening in your state? How would you convince them?