

# Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution

## Ella Baker: Civil Rights Leadership

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**Grade Level:** Grades 6-12    **Estimated Time:** One class period

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### Introduction

This lesson introduces students to the life and times of civil rights activist Ella Baker (1903-1986). Baker put her theory that “strong people don’t need strong leaders” into action when she encouraged college students to create an autonomous organization free of established civil rights groups. The result was the founding of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960. Baker also played a key role in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which sought to integrate the all-white state delegation at the 1964 National Democratic Convention. Baker has been called a “midwife” and “mother” of the civil rights movement. More fitting perhaps is the word “mentor,” which captures her belief in “group centered leadership.”

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to demonstrate a broad understanding of the growth of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s and the role of Black women in the movement.
- Students will be able to differentiate between different types of leadership styles.
- Students will be able to chronologically locate key civil rights individuals, organizations, and events.

### Essential Questions

- What makes a good leader?
- What are the relationships between inequality and social injustice, and equality and justice?
- How do ideas of gender influence group and individual relationships?

### Materials

- Technology Needs: Computer with Speakers and Internet Access; Printer/Copier
- [KWL Chart](#) (PDF)
- [Document Analysis Worksheet](#) (PDF)
- Primary Document: [Ella Baker, “Bigger Than a Hamburger”](#) (PDF)
- Teacher’s Resource: [Background on Ella Baker](#) (PDF)

## Warm Up Activity: Quotation Analysis and Class Discussion

1. Write on the board the following quotation: “Strong people don’t need strong leaders.”
2. Ask students to think about what the quotation means to them.
3. Have students discuss the quotation with each other. (Alternatively, have the students provide written responses to the question.)
  - a. Open up the class discussion by asking students to share their answers to the question: “What does this statement reveal about the speaker?”
  - b. At the end of the discussion, explain that they will be studying the author of the quotation, Ella Baker.

## Main Activity: Jigsaw on Ella Baker

4. Show [a clip from the film Fundi](#) (11:31 min.) Note: Fundi is an African word honoring a person who is a skilled or expert teacher.
5. Divide the students into 4-person jigsaw groups.
  - a. Have the groups go to *Click* and read the essay “[Women in the Civil Rights Movement](#)” in the chapter Women & Social Movements.
  - b. When the students have finished reading the essay, have them click Ella Baker’s name (which appears at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph).
  - c. This will take them to the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.
  - d. Have them click on “About” and then “Who Was Ella Baker?”
  - e. Have all students read this essay.
6. Assign each student in the group to one segment of the essay. The segments are:
  - a. Early Life
  - b. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
  - c. Joining the Struggle Against Jim Crow
  - d. The Audacity to Dream Big
7. Have one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment in an expert group.
  - a. Have the expert groups discuss what they have learned from their reading of the essay segment and from the Click essay.
  - b. Give the students time to discuss the main points of their segment and to prepare the information they will share with their jigsaw group.

8. Have the students return to their jigsaw groups.
  - a. Have each student present their segment to the group.
  - b. Other students in the group should ask questions for clarification.
9. Complete the jigsaw exercise by having students fill in a KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) Worksheet (PDF).
  - a. Discuss other research opportunities for this important civil rights leader.

### **Extension Activity: Document Analysis**

1. Hand out Document Analysis Worksheet (PDF).
2. Hand out Baker's 1960 speech "Bigger than a Hamburger" (PDF).
  - a. Ask for a volunteer to read the entire speech or for volunteers to read sections to the class.
3. Have the students complete their Document Analysis Worksheet after the presentation.
4. Begin a discussion about Baker and her speech by having students share their responses to the section "Document Information." These can be written on the board.
5. Ask them to discuss the differences between "first class" and "second class" citizenship.
6. Ask them to consider what Baker meant by "group centered leadership."
7. Ask them to consider why Baker thought student autonomy was important.

### **Common Core Anchor Standards**

#### **Reading**

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10](#)

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### **Speaking and Listening**

##### [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.