

# TIME FOR CHANGE:

DREAM. ACT. CHANGE OUR WORLD.

Changemaking is a mindset and an approach to life that addresses today's pressing challenges and injustices through the application of four key abilities: conscious empathy, teamwork, changemaking leadership, and changemaking action.



## ABOUT THIS SERIES

Developed based on feedback from First Book educators, this series of tip sheets offers guidance about incorporating changemaking into various subjects and settings. Refer to the featured tips, booklists, and activities for cross-curricular connections that help students understand how the skills they're learning in the classroom can help them thrive as changemakers in their communities.



## ABOUT THIS TIP SHEET

This tip sheet offers practical guidance and strategies for incorporating the changemaking abilities and a changemaker mindset into social studies, history, and civics classes and lessons.

This guide includes:

- best practices
- booklists
- “sparks” to ignite changemaking
- lessons, activities & other educational resources
- media sources for inspiring stories

Whether you're just starting to integrate changemaking into your curriculum or you're a seasoned educator seeking fresh inspiration and content, this tip sheet is your catalyst for encouraging changemaking mindsets and civic engagement in your class or program.

### GRADE LEVEL

K-12

### SUBJECTS

Social studies, history  
& civics

### RATIONALE

A key component of social studies is civic education. Focusing on how individuals and movements can instigate social change reinforces social studies standards around civic ideals and practices. Sharing stories of changemakers whose vision and changemaking action led to positive social change encourages students to view democracy as a dynamic institution that benefits when everyone speaks up and takes action.

### College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

#### Standards

One of the goals of the Social Studies State Standards is to build the critical thinking, problem-solving, and civic engagement skills students need to become active citizens. The standards recognize that young people are naturally curious about the “complex and multifaceted world they inhabit” and want to learn how to apply content knowledge in meaningful ways in the real world. Changemaking action and civic engagement go hand in hand. Both require the ability to identify and analyze social problems, work as part of a team, and influence individuals and institutions.

## BEST PRACTICES: HOW TO INTEGRATE CHANGEMAKING INTO SOCIAL STUDIES, HISTORY & CIVICS

Below are strategies and best practices for incorporating changemaking into a social studies curriculum and empowering students to become active citizens and agents of positive change in their communities.

### CREATE INTERACTIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Design learning activities that actively engage students in exploring real-world issues and applying critical thinking skills to identify solutions.
- Incorporate role-playing, debates, simulations, and project-based learning to encourage students to collaborate, analyze complex problems, and develop innovative solutions.

### USE CASE STUDIES & ROLE MODELS

- Introduce students to real-life social entrepreneurs and their ventures through case studies or guest speakers. Share stories of young entrepreneurs, like [Ashoka's Young Changemakers](#).
- Highlight the stories of individuals or organizations that have successfully addressed social or environmental challenges through innovative business models.
- Encourage students to analyze these examples, identify key strategies for social impact, and consider how they can apply similar principles in their own entrepreneurial endeavors.

### INTEGRATE CURRENT EVENTS

- Keep the curriculum relevant by regularly integrating current events and contemporary issues into lesson plans. See the [Media section](#) for sources of positive news.
- Encourage students to analyze news articles, multimedia resources, and primary sources to understand the root causes of social problems and explore potential avenues for change.

### ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- Foster connections between the classroom and the community by inviting guest speakers, organizing field trips to local organizations or events, or facilitating service-learning projects.
- Provide opportunities for students to interact with community members, nonprofit organizations, and activists to gain firsthand insights into the challenges facing their communities and ways to address them.

### FOCUS ON EMPOWERMENT & AGENCY

- Create a classroom environment that fosters a sense of agency and empowerment among students. Encourage them to voice their opinions and take initiative in identifying and addressing issues they care about.
- Provide scaffolding and support as needed but empower students to lead their own changemaking initiatives.

### MAKE CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Explore topics such as sustainable development, ethical consumerism, fair trade, and corporate social responsibility through a social studies lens, and encourage students to apply these concepts in their entrepreneurial ventures.
- Collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines to create integrated learning experiences that reinforce key concepts and skills across subjects.

## USING BOOKS ABOUT CHANGEMAKERS TO COMPLEMENT SOCIAL STUDIES, HISTORY & CIVIC LESSONS

As outlined in another [tip sheet](#), books are a great way to introduce changemaking. Look for stories that highlight achievable techniques, like the peaceful protest in *Rocket Says Speak Up!* or the armband worn by Shay to indicate solidarity with *Black Lives Matter* in *A Good Kind of Trouble*. Nonfiction, like the *March* trilogy by Congressman John Lewis, or *Who Is Greta Thunberg?* will enthrall young readers looking for true stories.

### FOR YOUNG READERS AND PRE-READERS

*We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom  
This bold and lyrical picture book is a powerful call to action to defend Earth's natural resources.

*Rocket Says Speak Up!* By Nathan Bryon  
When Rocket finds out that her town's library is closing, she knows something must be done.

*When We Say Black Lives Matter*  
by Maxine Beneba Clarke  
An award-winning author-illustrator celebrates the meaning behind the words Black Lives Matter.

*Frankie and Friends #2: The Big Protest*  
by Christine Platt  
Young reporter Frankie and her news crew of beloved toys learn why and how people protest.

*Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race*  
(Board Book) by Megan Madison  
This read-aloud board book encourages important conversations with young children in a supported way.

### MIDDLE GRADE

*What is Climate Change?* by Gail Herman  
Learn more about what climate change means and how it's affecting our planet.

*A Seed in the Sun* by Aida Salazar  
A farm-working girl with big dreams meets activist Dolores Huerta and joins the 1965 protest for workers' rights.

*A Good Kind of Trouble* by Lisa Moore Ramée  
After experiencing a powerful protest, Shay starts wearing an armband to school in support of the Black Lives movement.

*The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora* by Pablo Cartaya  
Arturo refuses to let his family and community get steamrolled by a land developer without a fight.

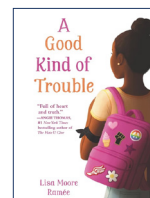
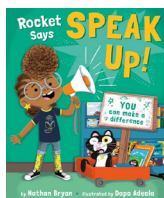
*Take Back the Block* by Chrystal Giles  
A 6th grader asks what it means to belong — to a place and a movement — and to fight for what you believe in.

### YOUNG ADULT

*Victory. Stand! Raising My Fist for Justice*  
by Tommie Smith and Derrick Barnes  
This groundbreaking graphic memoir tells the story of how raised fists at the 1968 Olympics became a powerful symbol in the fight for civil rights.

*Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Boy: Racism, Injustice, and How You Can Be a Changemaker* by Emmanuel Acho  
This engaging nonfiction book for young readers answers uncomfortable questions about racial bias and white supremacy.

*March* (trilogy) by John Lewis  
Graphic novels by American icon and congressman John Lewis describe his commitment to justice and nonviolence.



## SPARKS TO IGNITE CHANGEMAKING

The following 5-minute activities are designed to be engaging, hands-on, and thought-provoking. The goal of these activities is to inspire students to explore social studies concepts while fostering a sense of curiosity, creativity, and responsibility as changemakers in their communities and beyond.

### ETHICAL DILEMMA DISCUSSION

- Present students with a hypothetical ethical dilemma related to a global issue (e.g., balancing economic development with environmental conservation or addressing cultural differences in humanitarian aid).
- Give students five minutes to discuss the dilemma in small groups, considering different perspectives and potential solutions.
- Facilitate a brief class discussion, exploring the complexities of the dilemma and the ethical considerations involved.

### INTERACTIVE SIMULATION

- Introduce a brief interactive simulation or role-playing scenario related to a global problem (e.g., negotiating an international climate agreement or responding to a natural disaster).
- Give students five minutes to participate in the simulation by making decisions and taking actions to address the problem.
- Facilitate a debriefing discussion afterward, allowing students to reflect on the challenges they encountered and the effectiveness of their responses.

### PHOTO ANALYSIS

- Display photos depicting various scenes from the local community (e.g., from a local paper or a chamber of commerce website), including both positive aspects and challenges.
- Give students five minutes to analyze each photo and identify any local problems or issues they observe.
- Afterward, facilitate a class discussion in which students share their observations and insights, discussing the root causes and potential solutions to the identified problems.

### LOCAL NEWS REVIEW

- Provide students with a selection of recent local news articles or headlines.
- In pairs or small groups, ask students to identify and summarize one local problem or issue discussed in the articles.
- After five minutes, ask each group to share their summaries with the class, discussing the significance of the identified problems and possible actions that could be taken to address them.

### INTERVIEW REFLECTION

- Ask students to interview a family member, neighbor, or community member about their perceptions of local problems and challenges.
- After conducting the interview, give students five minutes to reflect on what they learned and jot down any new insights or perspectives they gained.
- Encourage students to share their reflections with a partner or small group, discussing common themes and differences in their interview responses.

### COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

- Distribute a blank map of the local community or town to each student, or use an online template such as [Design a Town Worksheet](#) or [Blank Town Map Template](#).
- Ask students to identify and label local assets, such as parks, schools, businesses, and community organizations, as well as any visible problems or challenges.
- After five minutes, invite students to share their completed maps with the class, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the local community.

## LESSONS, ACTIVITIES & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The following lessons and educator resources feature changemakers of all ages working collaboratively for social justice and a more equitable future.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

#### **Beyond Pocahontas - Women Changemakers**

When Shirley Chisholm (in 1972) and then Hillary Clinton (in 2008, and again in 2016) ran for president, there was excitement around electing the first US woman as president. Indigenous women, however, have long held positions of leadership, including President, Chairperson, and Chief within their Native nations. In this unit from the National Council for the Social Studies, students learn about Indigenous women changemakers and their professions, communities, and Native nations. **Grades 3-5.**

#### **Children Change Makers Cross Curricular Exploration for Social Studies Activism**

This 32-page resource from Teachers Pay Teachers inspires students to work toward a more equitable future through the stories of four young changemakers: Malala Yousafzai, Kid President, Greta Thunberg, and William Kamkwamba. This cross-curricular unit integrates reading comprehension, social studies, and writing. After learning about well-known changemakers, students are challenged to come up with a cause that is meaningful to them and draft a plan to make change. **Grades 2-5.**

### MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

#### **Changemakers: Legacies and Evidence of the Past**

This series of five inquiries from the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center explains how courage, cooperation, and perseverance were necessary for the success of the Underground Railroad. The adaptable lessons also explore the impact changemakers have during their lifetime and the legacy they leave behind. The final inquiry engages students in changemaking to identify and address a current problem in order to create a better tomorrow. **Grades 6-8.**

#### **10 Questions for Young Changemakers**

This unit from Facing History and Ourselves uses the 10 Questions Framework to engage students in two examples of youth-led changemaking action: the 1963 Chicago school boycott and the movement against gun violence started by Parkland students. **Grades 6-12.**

#### **Climate Project Extension Course**

Climate Project is a free, comprehensive, classroom-ready, three-week course that inspires students to raise awareness and take action about climate change. It's designed to fit into an AP or social studies curriculum post-exams. **Grades 9-12.**

### EDUCATOR RESOURCES

#### **Teaching Students to Become Change Agents through Social Studies Instruction**

This article on socialstudies.com describes tangible ways to incorporate changemaking into classrooms and schools, both within and beyond traditional social studies curricula. Examples include activities that give students a voice, like electing classroom leaders and sharing problems and solutions in "town hall" meetings.

#### **Project Zero's Thinking Routines Toolbox**

Project Zero offers research-based tools and resources to help educators incorporate thinking routines into their teaching. A thinking routine is a set of questions or steps to scaffold and support student thinking. The Core Thinking Routines include techniques that help instill a curious changemaking mindset, such as *Claim, support, question* and *I used to think, Now I think*. These strategies encourage flexibility and reflection, essential skills for changemakers seeking to address existing problems in new ways.

## CHANGEMAKING MEDIA RESOURCES

Changemaking, like positivity, can be contagious. Share uplifting stories and videos celebrating changemakers and their successes to inspire students to be agents of positive change.

### Empathy to Impact Podcast

**Empathy to Impact Podcast** elevates the stories and voices of students who own their learning and impact their communities.

### Good News Network

**Good News Network** shares stories about people making positive change.

### DailyGood

**DailyGood** offers straightforward pieces about interesting achievements with a focus on diverse perspectives.

### YES! Magazine

**YES! Magazine** covers people solving important problems with powerful ideas and practical actions.

### Positive News

**Positive News** offers stories about society, economics, science, the environment, lifestyle, and perspective.

### Kids Can Be Changemakers

**Kids Can Be Changemakers** explains that changemakers can be activists, non-profit workers, volunteers, and even kids.

## ABOUT TIME FOR CHANGE

**Time for Change: Dream, Act, Change Our World** is a joint initiative between Ashoka and First Book, made possible by Swiss Haute Horlogerie manufacturer Audemars Piguet.

In our world of accelerated change, everyone — regardless of geography, race, or socio-economic background — needs to respond to injustices and inefficiencies and take action to create change for the common good. The goal of the Time for Change initiative is to help educators incorporate a changemaking mindset into their schools and nurture the young changemakers in their classrooms and programs.

Explore the complete collection of Time for Change resources, including the [Inspiring Young Changemakers](#) video series, on the [First Book Marketplace](#).