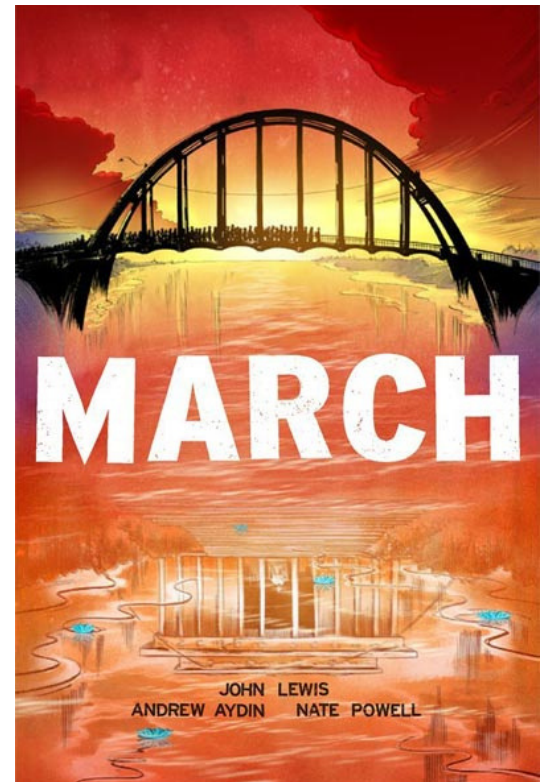


# TCU 2021 COMMON READING

The March trilogy, by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell, is John Lewis' first person account of the Civil Rights Movement of the early 1960s told through Graphic Novels. It tells the story of organizing, the relationship between the leaders of different Civil Rights groups, including their disagreements, and the fight by African Americans to exercise their right to vote and end segregation. John Lewis became chairperson of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1963; in this role he helped plan the 1963 March on Washington and became the youngest person to speak at the March. While the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964, African Americans continued to be denied the right to vote, particularly in the south. Book Three of March tells the story of planning and carrying out the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, including the events of March 7, 1965 on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. On that day, which would come to be known as Bloody Sunday, marchers were attacked and beaten as they attempted to cross the bridge. Two weeks later, the march to Montgomery began again, arriving on March 25.

John Lewis resigned as chairman of SNCC in 1966, though his activism never stopped. In the 1980s, he entered electoral politics, and was elected to Congress in 1986. He went on to serve in Congress for 33 years.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What does the title March suggest to you? How do the actions of Lewis and his colleagues in the civil rights movement relate to the various connotations of the word "march"?

Discuss the relevance of quoting Aretha Franklin's performance of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" as a transition from the May 20, 1961 attack on the Freedom Riders in Montgomery, AL (Book Two, pp. 71-79) to the 2009 presidential inauguration (pp. 80-81). What does the visual "overlap" of two different time periods communicate about those events?

**"YOU CANNOT BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE. YOU HAVE TO HAVE COURAGE, RAW COURAGE."**

**- JOHN LEWIS**

How does the book use flashback to connect important moments from the past to the present day?

(Book One, Pg. 36-47) John takes his first trip north. What were some of the differences in quality of life for African Americans in the North and the South? a. How did John's first trip North impact him? How did it change him and why?

**"FURY SPENDS ITSELF PRETTY QUICKLY WHEN THERE'S NOT FURY FACING IT." - JOHN LEWIS**

What do you see as the reasons why John Lewis and his compatriots felt it was important to remain nonviolent? What happens when you refuse to strike back? How might it be effective? How does it work in the book?

Trace the theme of wishes, dreams, and the "spirit of history" during the course of the book. When the alarm clock goes off on page 13 of Book One, in what ways might it signify the end of a nightmare, or the transition from a dream to a reality, in terms of race relations?

# CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TIMELINE

- MAY 17, 1954 - Supreme Court decision in Brown v Board of Education
- AUGUST 28, 1955 - Murder of Emmett Till
- DECEMBER 1, 1955 - Rosa Parks arrested for refusing to move seats on a bus
- SEPTEMBER 4, 1957 - "Little Rock Nine" - Nine Black students are blocked from integrating into Little Rock Central High School
- SEPTEMBER 9, 1957 - Civil Rights Act of 1957 signed into law by Dwight D. Eisenhower
- February 1, 1960 - Sitting for Justice - Lunch Counter Sit-in at Woolworth's
- NOVEMBER 14, 1960 - Ruby Bridges is first student to integrate William Frantz Elementary School
- AUGUST 28, 1963 - March on Washington - "I Have A Dream" speech by Martin Luther King, Jr
- SEPTEMBER 15, 1963 - Birmingham Church bombing that killed Four Little Girls
- NOVEMBER 22, 1963 - Assassination of John F. Kennedy
- JULY 2, 1964 - Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson
- FEBRUARY 21, 1965 - Black religious leader Malcolm X is assassinated
- MARCH 7, 1965 - March for voting rights in Selma, Alabama - known as Bloody Sunday
- AUGUST 6, 1965 - President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- APRIL 4, 1968 - Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- APRIL 11, 1968 - President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968 - Fair Housing Act

## CHARACTERS AND GROUPS

- Otis Carter - Lewis's uncle who encouraged him to join the civil rights movement
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - was a young minister who became the best-known leader in the Civil Rights Movement
- Rosa Parks - best known for her refusal to give up her bus seat, sparking the bus boycott.
- Fred Gray - a lawyer who represented Rosa Parks and then Lewis.
- Jim Lawson - a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Lawson trained students in nonviolent tactics.
- Alexander Looby - an early black lawyer, He represented the SNCC students during their sit-ins.
- Ralph Abernathy - co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- Greensboro Four - members of the Woolworth sit-in: Ezell Blair, Jr., David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil
- Nashville Group - members of the sit-in campaign in Nashville: Diane Nash, Marion Barry, Bernard Lafayette, James Bevel, Jim Lawson, Kelly Miller Smith, C.T. Vivian, Z. Alexander Looby, Robert Lillard, Avon Williams, Coyness Loyal Ennix, Sr.
- Freedom Riders - rode interstate buses to challenge local laws that enforced segregation
- Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee - committed to the registration and mobilization of black voters in the deep south