

Name _____

John Lewis: A Champion for Civil Rights

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. John Lewis's experiences growing up in the racially segregated South likely influenced his decision to become a civil rights leader because he personally witnessed the injustices and discrimination faced by African Americans. He saw the effects of segregation and inequality, and these experiences motivated him to stand up for what was right. Additionally, the courage and determination of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. inspired him to join the movement and fight for racial equality.
2. The Selma to Montgomery March was a pivotal moment in the fight for civil rights because it drew national attention to the struggle for voting rights, particularly in the South. It showcased the determination and peaceful resolve of civil rights activists and the brutality they faced from law enforcement. John Lewis played a critical role in the march by leading one of the marches and enduring violence from the police. His bravery and commitment, along with the efforts of others, helped shed light on the need for federal intervention to protect voting rights and ultimately led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
3. John Lewis's belief in nonviolent resistance and peaceful protest was important because it aligned with the principles of the Civil Rights Movement. By advocating for nonviolence, he sought to achieve change through peaceful means and moral persuasion rather than through violence and aggression. This approach not only resonated with the values of justice and equality but also garnered support from people across the nation. It allowed the movement to maintain the moral high ground, gain sympathy, and make a lasting impact on American society.
4. If I had the opportunity to meet John Lewis, I would ask him about the challenges he faced during the Civil Rights Movement and how he found the strength to persevere. I would also inquire about the specific moments or individuals that inspired him to become a civil rights leader. Additionally, I would ask him about the importance of youth involvement in social justice movements and how young people can make a difference today. Finally, I would be interested in hearing about any advice or lessons he would want to share with future generations of activists.

