



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2006 Volume I: Photographing America: A Cultural History, 1840-1970

---

## Photojournalists for Social Change

Guide for Curriculum Unit 06.01.05  
by Deborah Hare

This is a curriculum designed for high school journalism. We will view pictures by five photographers who worked to show us the world and to effect change. These particular people made a significant impact on the world through their exploration of social conditions, through the use of photojournalism.

This unit explores the plight of the poor, and the horrors of child labor, through the work of Lewis Hine. Dorothea Lange takes us on a journey of the hardship of migrant workers during the Depression. Through observing the work of Margaret Bourke-White, whose photograph of *Fort Peck Dam* was the first cover of *Life Magazine*, we will better understand the horrors of Buchenwald, and the glory of the Chrysler building. Gordon Parks, the first African American photographer hired by *Life Magazine*, will show us the sadness of racism in the 1950s and '60s with such photos as *American Gothic* and *Norman Jr. reading in bed*.

The rising black power movement is explored as well through his portraits of both Malcolm X and Muhammed Ali. The unit ends with a more contemporary photographer, Bruce Davidson, who photographed East Harlem, Central Park, and Brooklyn gangs, thereby reflecting back the beauty of teenagers and the city amidst the squalor and stereotypes.

In addition to seeing these photographs students will read about the photographers' lives and how they became interested in the subjects they chose. We will transition from looking at photographs to becoming photographers. Students will be given cameras and encouraged to go out and explore their city and neighborhoods closely, and through their knowledge of photojournalism partake in making change in their communities.

(Developed for Journalism, grades 9-12; recommended for Journalism, grades 9-12)

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2021 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University  
For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>