

LESSON TITLE: VIRGIN ISLANDS CHANGEMAKERS: VOICES FOR JUSTICE AND PROGRESS

This activity helps students see the connections among labor rights, press freedom, education, and civic engagement while highlighting the significant contributions of Virgin Islanders to local and national history.

Grade Level

Grades 8–12

Time

60–90 minutes

Essential Question

How did individuals from the U.S. Virgin Islands influence civil rights, labor rights, education, and community empowerment?

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze the contributions of four influential Virgin Islanders.
- Identify common themes among their work, including advocacy, leadership, and social change.
- Evaluate how historical figures can inspire civic engagement today.
- Present findings using evidence and collaboration.

Kallaloo Framework Standards Alignment

Aims & Objectives

- **CS.C.B.1** – Integrates Virgin Islands cultural education across core subject areas.
- **CS.C.B.2** – Provides students with an understanding of the dynamics of cultural systems as they change over time and are impacted by external forces.
- **CS.C.B.3** – Instills Virgin Islands pride within teachers and students.

Content

- **CS.C.C** – A culturally responsive curriculum integrates students' sense of cultural identity and awareness through the use of language, traditions, and environment.
- **CS.C.C.1** – Draws parallels between knowledge and history derived from oral tradition and from books.

Methods

- **CS.C.D.2** – Views students as stakeholders in the teaching-learning process.
- **CS.C.D.3** – Values social learning and the development of interpersonal skills.
- **CS.C.D.4** – Makes appropriate use of modern tools and technology to help document and transmit knowledge.

Evaluation & Expression

- **CS.C.E.1** – Provides opportunities for active learning and critical thinking.
- **CS.C.E.2** – Provides opportunities to preserve the history and advance the cultural customs of the Virgin Islands.
- **CS.C.E.3** – Recognizes the importance of civic engagement.

Lesson Alignment Rationale

This lesson aligns with the Kallaloo Framework by engaging students in the study of Virgin Islands leaders whose contributions shaped labor rights, freedom of the press, civil rights, education, and self-government. Through collaborative research, peer teaching, discussion, and reflection, students develop cultural awareness, critical-thinking skills, civic responsibility, and pride in Virgin Islands heritage while connecting historical events to contemporary community issues.

Featured Historical Figures

- Rothschild Francis — advocate for freedom of the press, citizenship rights, and self-government.
- David Hamilton Jackson — labor organizer and founder of *The Herald*, who fought for workers' rights and freedom of the press.
- Casper Holstein — businessman and philanthropist who supported education, civil rights organizations, and Virgin Islands self-determination.
- Ashley L. Totten — key organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first successful Black labor union in the United States.

Materials

- Short biographies of each figure
- Pens/Pencils
- Internet-enabled devices (optional)
- “Changemaker Graphic Organizer” Worksheet
- Changemakers Compare and Contrast Worksheet

Activity: Jigsaw Investigation

Step 1: Hook (10 minutes)

Display the quote:

"One person can create lasting change."

Ask students:

- What qualities make someone a changemaker?
- What problems in society require people to speak up?

Record responses.

Step 2: Expert Groups (20 minutes)

Divide students into groups. Assign one historical figure to each group.

Each group research:

- Early life
- Major accomplishments
- Challenges faced
- Lasting impact on the Virgin Islands or beyond

Students complete their graphic organizer worksheet.

Step 3: Students Teach Each Other (15 minutes)

Reorganize students into mixed groups with one representative from each expert group.

Each student teaches their classmates about their assigned figure.

Students complete their compare and contrast worksheet.

Step 4: Reflection (10 minutes)

Students respond to the question:

Which Virgin Islands changemaker inspired you the most and why?

Assessment

Students will be assessed on:

- Participation in group discussions
- Accuracy of research
- Reflection response

- Completion of Compare and Contrast Worksheet and "Changemaker Graphic Organizer" Worksheet