

# How do words shape history?



Unattributed Artists, Martin Luther King Square Park, Rochester, NY

## Supporting Questions

1. What happened in Rochester, NY on the weekend of July 24th, 1964?
2. How did words shape the story of what happened in Rochester, NY on the weekend of July 24th, 1964?

## 8th Grade Words Shape History Inquiry

How do words shape history?	
<b>New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea &amp; Practices</b>	<p><b>8.9 DOMESTIC POLITICS AND REFORM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8.9a The civil rights movement began in the postwar era in response to long-standing inequalities in American society, and eventually brought about equality under the law, but slower progress on economic improvements.</li> <li>- 8.9b The civil rights movement prompted renewed efforts for equality by women and other groups.</li> </ul> <p>✔ <b>Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence</b>   ✔ <b>Chronological Reasoning and Causation</b>                  ✔ <b>Comparison and Contextualization</b></p>
<b>Staging the Question</b>	Students will consider the concept of a “single story” and how language can influence historical interpretation.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2
What happened in Rochester, NY on the weekend of July 24th, 1964?	How did words shape the story of what happened in Rochester on the weekend of July 24th, 1964?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
<p><b>-Evidence Tracker &amp; Jigsaw:</b> students will collect evidence through source analysis on <a href="#">SQ1 Worksheet A</a>.</p> <p>Students record a historical summary of the events in Rochester on the weekend of July 24th, 1964.</p>	<p><b>-Identifying POV and Bias:</b> Students will analyze two articles regarding the events of July 24th, 1964.</p> <p><b>-Evaluating Source Reliability:</b> students will evaluate source’s reliability.</p>
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Source A: <a href="#">Rochester Riot Timeline</a></li> <li>● Source B: <a href="#">“18 Months of Racial Conflict...”</a></li> <li>● Source C: <a href="#">“The Spark and How it Flared”</a></li> <li>● Source D: <a href="#">“Damage, Looting Heavy”</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Source A: <a href="#">“Rochester Beset By New Rioting”</a></li> <li>● Source B: <a href="#">“Rochester Rebellion (July 1964)”</a></li> </ul>

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	Students will work in groups or independently to create a PSA addressing the compelling question.
	<p><b>EXTENSION</b></p> <p>Hold a competition for the PSAs and post the best in a more public venue, such as YouTube or the local library’s website. The best could also be entered into a national competition.</p>
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<p><b>UNDERSTAND, ASSESS, ACT</b></p> <p>Students will curate or develop an “AllSides” style collection of sources related to a school or community related issue that students care about such as the Black Lives Matter movement, dress codes, attending school in person during a pandemic, or funding for police and mental health services.</p>

## Supporting Question 1 -- Handout 1

### Evidence Tracker - What happened in Rochester, NY on the weekend of July 24th, 1964?

**Directions:** Use this chart to identify the evidence included in the different sources provided, to develop an understanding of the events that occurred on the weekend of July 24th, 1964 in Rochester, NY?

Source	GIST of the Source	According to the source, what were the short/long term causes?	According to the source, what were the short-term impacts?	What important details are provided in this source?
<a href="#"><u>SOURCE A</u></a> PBS Timeline				
<a href="#"><u>SOURCE B</u></a> <i>18 Months of Racial Conflict Preceded Riots in Rochester</i>				
<a href="#"><u>SOURCE C</u></a> <i>The Spark and How it Flared</i>				
<a href="#"><u>SOURCE D</u></a> <i>Damage, Looting Heavy</i>				

## Supporting Question 1 -- Handout 2

Exit Ticket - Record a historical summary of the events in Rochester on the weekend of July 24th, 1964 and include short term causes, sequence of events and short term impacts on the community.

What were the short-term causes of July 24th, 1964?

What was the sequence of events?

What were the short-term impacts on the community?

## Supporting Question 1 -- Source A

Rochester Riot Timeline excerpt from *PBS Independent Lens*. (<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/july64/timeline.html>)

Over the course of three days and two nights in July 1964, thousands of Rochester's African American residents rioted in the streets of the city's low-income neighborhoods. In the stifling summer heat, rioters smashed storefront windows, looted neighborhood merchants and clashed with police, exposing the city's long-simmering racial tensions. In the seven years following the Rochester riots, more than 750 race riots erupted in numerous American cities, leaving over 200 dead, injuring nearly 13,000 and leaving many African American urban neighborhoods in ruins.

**Read the timeline below to trace key moments in the Rochester Riots and other race riots that erupted in African American neighborhoods during the 1960s.**

### July 2, 1964

President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination of all kinds based on race, color, religion or national origin. The Act also provides the federal government with the powers to enforce desegregation.

### Harlem: July 18, 1964

Riots erupt in Harlem, New York after the fatal shooting of a 15-year-old African American male by a white police officer. One person is killed, more than 100 are injured and hundreds more are arrested.

### Rochester: Friday, July 24, 1964

#### 10:00 PM

Police arrest a 19-year-old male for public intoxication at a block party of about 200 people, on Nassau Street near Joseph Avenue in Rochester's Seventh Ward. Rumors spread, such as: a child attacked by a police dog and a pregnant woman slapped by an officer, leading the crowd to become violent.

#### 11:30 PM

About 400 people riot on Joseph Avenue; all available police officers are called to the scene. Bricks are thrown at police cars.

### Rochester: Saturday, July 25, 1964

#### 12:30 AM

Police Chief William Lombard urges crowd to disperse. Rioters throw stones, spit on Lombard and overturn his car.

#### 2:00 AM

Police Chief William Lombard instructs officers on use of riot weapons.

### **3:30 AM**

Crowd swells to more than 2,000; looting spreads down Joseph and Clinton Avenues; city police, state troopers and sheriff's deputies are called in.

### **4:24 AM**

State of emergency declared.

### **Daytime**

City Manager Porter Homer orders 8:00 PM curfew in the city of Rochester; closes the downtown and all liquor stores in Rochester and adjoining towns.

African American leaders go to the Public Safety Building, and volunteer to help quell disturbances planned in the Third Ward.

### **Nightfall**

Violence breaks out in the Third Ward; angry mobs swarm the streets; rioters toss Molotov cocktails, rocks and bottles from rooftops and store windows.

### **10 PM**

A white man is attacked and killed on Clarissa and Atkinson Streets.

### **Rochester: Sunday, July 26, 1964**

### **3 PM**

Helicopter surveying riot damage crashes into a Clarissa Street home, killing three.

National Guard called in to help "weary local and state police" control riot, marking the first time the National Guard is called out in a northern city.

### **Evening**

The Rochester riots end. Nearly 1,000 people are arrested; the majority, between 20 and 40 years old, employed, with no prior record. Fifteen percent are white.

## Supporting Question 1 -- Source B

*"18 Months of Racial Conflict Preceded Riots in Rochester"* from the *New York Times*, July 26, 1964

### ***18 Months of Racial Conflict Preceded Riots in Rochester***

Rochester, July 25 (AP)

This riot-torn city has been the scene of racial conflict for more than a year. The trouble was stemmed from Negro charges of police brutality, legal action involving members of Black Muslims, and plans to eliminate racial imbalance in the public schools.

Charges of police brutality were first made in February, 1963. A Negro who was hospitalized after his arrest on traffic and assault charges said he had been beaten by four policemen at the time of his arrest. The brutality accusations were withdrawn in March, 1963.

The Rochester City Council, which had been asked by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to create a citizens' review against two police, could not reach an agreement on such a board at the time.

### **15 Black Muslims Seized**

Earlier, 15 members of the Black Muslims had been arrested at a meeting in January, 1963. The police said they were attacked while trying to enter the meeting to investigate a report that a man there had a pistol. The Negroes contended the policeman intruded on a closed religious meeting.

Charges against two of the 15 Black Muslims were dropped, but the 13 others were involved in four trials over a year. The first, ended in a mistrial and juries failed to reach verdicts at two subsequent trials. Then the 13, plus two others, were convicted of two counts of third-degree assault and two counts of unlawful assembly, both misdemeanors.

The 15 were placed on probation last April after a judge had suspended four-year prison sentences.

### **School Plan Challenged**

An open enrollment program, inaugurated in February by the Board of Education, in which students from predominantly Negro schools have been transferred to predominantly white schools, has been challenged repeatedly in the courts.

Parents of white children argued that the plan was to end racial imbalance and was unconstitutional because it altered the neighborhood school pattern to promote integration. The school board said the shift was to alleviate overcrowding in the schools.

The appellate court ruled June 25 that the transfer was constitutional and that the Board of Education could continue its program pending the outcome of an appeal of a state Supreme Court justice's ruling that the program was illegal. The appeal is pending.

## Supporting Question 1 -- Source C

*"The Spark and How it Flared"* by John Omicinski from the *Democrat & Chronicle*, July 26, 1964

### *The Spark and How it Flared*

By John Omicinski

As the gray dawn broke, ending the night of violence and terror, the fire hoses still gushed brown, brackish water on the few stragglers at Joseph Avenue and the Inner Loop.

Many who had witnessed it wondered, "What happened here?"

Here is a chronology of Friday night's riots, as it was pieced together from eyewitnesses and police reports:

11:38 p.m. – The first call. The police dispatcher barks, "Joseph and Nassau, officer in trouble." Two or three patrol cars speed into the area. The Negro mob has already formed around policemen as they attempt to haul a young troublemaker away from a street dance.

11:40 p.m. – There is big trouble at Joseph and Nassau. An angry, bottle-throwing mob continues to gather in the streets.

11:50 p.m. – Every policeman in the city is speeding to the Joseph-Nassau-Kelly vicinity. Bottles are thrown. The angry mob, from the street dance and nearly every home in the area, lines the block-long area. Women, children, teenagers and drunken men taunt the police. Sporadic fights break out. Several K-9 Corps teams arrive, but only one or two dogs leave their kennels in the rear of the police station wagons.

12:05 a.m. – One teenaged Negro tough is grabbed by the scruff of the neck and walked toward the patrol wagon, parked in the middle of the block. He breaks and runs on Joseph toward Kelly. Five policemen run after him.

12:20 a.m. – Now the mob has reached fever pitch. A policeman steps into the crowd and tries to talk. The "pop" of a breaking bottle is heard, and the policeman whirls, his hand covering his face. Blood flows between his fingers. There is a deep gash below his right eye. Several Negroes in the back of the crowd toss rubbish cans over the heads of the rioters at the policemen. Police crowd in and wedge the mob apart.

12:30 a.m. – Some of the mob has grown tired of it, and groups of Negroes can be seen walking north on Joseph Avenue. The trouble now centers around Joseph Avenue and Kelly Street. Rioters toss bottles at police standing in the streets. Several hit the patrol cars, shattering windows. Now the policemen have donned helmets.

12:35 a.m. – Four or five cars roll down glass-covered Kelly Street near Chatham Gardens. The lead car stops, apparently because of engine trouble. The cars, hopelessly stymied behind the stalled car, are riddled with rocks and bottles.

12:45 a.m. – Fifteen persons have been arrested, and the reports of assaults upon men, women and children passing through the area begin to filter into police headquarters. A 61-year-old Bausch & Lomb employee walks into the plaza of the Public Safety Building, his face and shirt splattered with blood. He speaks with a heavy German accent. His eyes glazed, he asks wonderingly, "What is this, the Wehrmacht?"



1-1:30 a.m. – Police Chief William M. Lombard’s car has been turned over and set afire by angry Negroes. All the shops in the area are being looted. A rioter throws a stolen television set in front of a passing car. Police now retreat into the surrounding streets.

2:00 a.m. – Reports of widespread looting come in. Police have blocked off the main approaches into the area. But several cars manage to get in. They arrive at Joseph and Central battered, their occupants bloodied. Ambulances going into the area now take police along. Sheriff’s deputies arrive.

2-3:00 a.m. – Whites, attracted by radio reports of the melee, converge on the area between the New York Central Station and the U.S. Post Office. Two hundred whites and Negroes face each other from opposite sides of the street. Police stand between them, and the crowds grow restless. Two fire trucks stand by. Greece and Brighton Police arrive.

3:45 a.m. – Police attempt to arrest a white agitator, he runs, but is grabbed by police. The two mobs, Negro and white break up, but converge again. A policeman mutters, “Oh, no, not a race riot.” The agitator is arrested and taken to the wagon, but the crowd still mingles at Joseph and the Inner Loop. Reports of looting in Clinton Avenue North, Rauber Street and the Bull’s Head continue to come in.

4:10 a.m. – Fire hoses are broken out. The mob scatters to all corners of the intersection, then surges back again. The water slaps into the crowd. One Negro woman, dressed in an ankle-length flowing white gown, a prime agitator in the “staredown” of the past hours, is flattened. Others slip and slide as the torrent hits them. But the hoses are doing their job, the mob has lost its taste for a fight, but the spark has flared and things will never again be the same again.

## Supporting Question 1 -- Source D

*"Damage, Looting Heavy"* from the *Times Union*, July 25, 1964

### *Damage, Looting Heavy*

A battered Joseph Avenue neighborhood of several square blocks was cloaked in uneasy calm at midday today following more than eight hours of rioting and looting.

Scores of persons were injured, dozens were arrested and numerous store windows were smashed in a series of noisy battles between rioters and police which raged from shortly before midnight until after dawn today.

Deputy Police Chief Clarence DePrez estimated that more than 4,000 persons – many hurling bottles, cans and stones – battled with police. DePrez said nearly all of the rioters were Negroes.

DePrez said he believes the rioting was "well-organized."

At least four persons were charged with "inciting to riot."

Nearly all of the damage was to stores owned by white persons, DePrez said, "and someone had to point those places out."

Most of the damage was to stores, where articles ranging from canned food to television sets were stolen.

But windows were smashed also in about a dozen U.S. mail trucks parked outside the Main Post Office. There was no report of mail theft.

Police ordered all gun shops in Rochester closed until further notice. It was reported some of the rioters carried shotguns and other arms.

## Supporting Question 2-- Source A

**Source A:** excerpt from The New York Times article, “*Rochester Beset By New Rioting...*”, July 26, 1964

<https://www.nytimes.com/1964/07/26/archives/rochester-beset-by-new-rioting-white-man-dead-4-policemen-hurt-as.html>

***ROCHESTER BESET BY NEW RIOTING; WHITE MAN DEAD; 4 Policemen Hurt as Negro Bands Defy City Curfew—Scores Are Arrested; TEAR GAS USED ON MOBS; Stores Looted and Smashed by Marauders in Cars—Mayor Appears on TV***

ROCHESTER, Sunday, July 26 — Widespread rioting and looting by Negroes broke out here last night for the second time in 24 hours. An elderly white man was killed and a number of people were injured.

The fighting erupted shortly after an 8 P.M. citywide curfew ordered by city officials went into effect.

Seven hundred steel-helmeted policemen, including 100 state troopers, joined in trying to quell the violence. At least four policemen were reported to have been injured.

By 3 o'clock this morning, the fighting was still going on and was moving rapidly toward the main business district from the integrated residential area on the southwest side where it began.

A steady stream of prisoners arrived at police headquarters in radio cars. At least 100 were arrested.

Shortly before midnight, in the midst of the rioting, Mayor Frank Lamb said in a television broadcast that he would name a committee to study five Negro demands “as soon as order is restored in our community.”

As the Mayor spoke, the police were using tear gas and firing shots into the air to try to halt the violence. Small demonstrations erupted constantly in different sections of the city.

There were reports that Negroes were firing shotguns and pistols into the air.

Looting spread into white and other integrated neighborhoods. Merchandise was taken away in cars. Objects too heavy to carry were destroyed...

...The Mayor emphasized in his television statement that before any consideration could be given to the Negro demands “there must be an end to violence and disorder in our streets.” “I am assured,” he said, “that the spokesmen here tonight the six Negro leaders] will, with all other responsible citizens, do everything in their power to restore peace and calm to

Rochester so that reason and not violence will have its way.”

The Mayor said he favored at least four of the Negro demands. He told reporters, however, that he was against a Negro request that called for the deputizing of “responsible people” in the riot-torn areas to help keep the peace.

The demands acceptable to Mr. Lamb were those calling for the creation of a committee to study Negro problems, the enlargement of the police advisory board to include Negroes, the utilization of more Negro social workers and the encouragement of more Negro businesses...

...Potato chips, crushed cigars, watermelon rinds and shoes were strewn on the street around the heaps of glass.

“The people are mad, mad, mad,” said a Negro man who refused to give his name.

“What you see here is going to look like a Sunday school picnic after tonight. There are two sets of law, one for white and one for black. We just took enough of it.

“Police brutality, that's the name for it.”

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## Supporting Question 2--Source B

**Source B:** Full article from [www.blackpast.org](http://www.blackpast.org), "ROCHESTER REBELLION (JULY 1964)", DECEMBER 4, 2017 written by, Rachel Campbell

Rochester, New York's uprising began on July 24, 1964. It occurred less than a week after the Harlem Riot. The Rochester Rebellion came as a surprise to many white residents because of the city's history of progressive 19th century politics. A large part of that history revolved around the Underground Railroad, and resident abolitionist Fredrick Douglass as well as women's rights activist Susan B. Anthony. Both were buried in the city's Mount Hope cemetery.

Despite that historical legacy, African Americans in mid-20th century Rochester faced housing and employment discrimination. The schools were segregated and police-black community relations were as strained in Rochester as in any major city in the North.

Much of the tension was fueled by the rapid growth of Rochester's black population which increased from 7,845 in 1950 to around 32,000 in 1964. Most of these newcomers were funneled into dilapidated housing in Upper Falls Rochester, the site where the "riot" began. Black residents of Upper Falls had an unemployment rate six times higher than whites within the same community. Many of the migrants were publicly disparaged and humiliated. They were often called "bean pickers" by their white neighbors. Ironically, slum clearance and urban renewal policies designed to get rid of the dilapidated structures that housed these newcomers often ended up eliminating vast areas of housing without replacement dwellings for those forced to move. All of these factors created the atmosphere for rebellion in 1964.

Rochester's Rebellion began Friday night, July 24, on Nassau Street in Rochester's Seventh Ward. It started at a block party with 200 people present. At 10 p.m., Rochester police arrested Randy Manigault, a 19-year-old African American man, for public intoxication and harassing women at the party. Since the arrest was made in an atmosphere of tension, additional police were called to the scene. False rumors of an assault on a pregnant woman by a police officer and a child by a police dog spread through the crowd at the party and soon into the surrounding neighborhood.

By this point Rochester Police Chief William Lombard was on the scene personally directing his officers. When he ordered the crowd to move, many young blacks began throwing rocks at the police cars, and one police car was overturned. By 11:30 p.m. more than 400 people were battling the police and all available officers went to the streets. At 2:00 a.m. Chief Lombard ordered the police officers to use riot weapons on the crowd. By 3:30 a.m. the crowd had grown to 2,000 people and looting began on Clinton Avenue, the main thoroughfare through Upper Falls.

By 9:00 a.m. on July 25, the uprising was officially called a "riot" and a state of emergency was declared by New York governor Nelson Rockefeller. While the rioting calmed during the day on Saturday, by 10:00 p.m. Saturday night it resumed. By that point one white man had died. By Sunday night when the riot ended, approximately 250 stores were looted; five white people died (four men died in a helicopter crash blamed on the riot), and nearly 350 people were

injured. The police had arrested more than 900 people in connection with the uprising; the majority were employed black men between 20 and 40 years old with no prior records of violence. Only 15 percent of those arrested were white.

Through their actions, participants in the Rochester Rebellion debunked several local myths: first, that racial discrimination was mainly a Southern issue; second, that most whites in Rochester were progressive; and finally, that upstate New York African Americans had no issues with discrimination.

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