

# Education & Civil Rights

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*“Segregation shaped me;  
education liberated me.”*  
~ Maya Angelou

**Compare and contrast these two photographs. Write down words that describe feelings or emotions these pictures create in your mind. With a partner or at your table, decide on one word that you believe best summarizes the photographs. Write the word on a sticky note and post it on our discussion wall.**



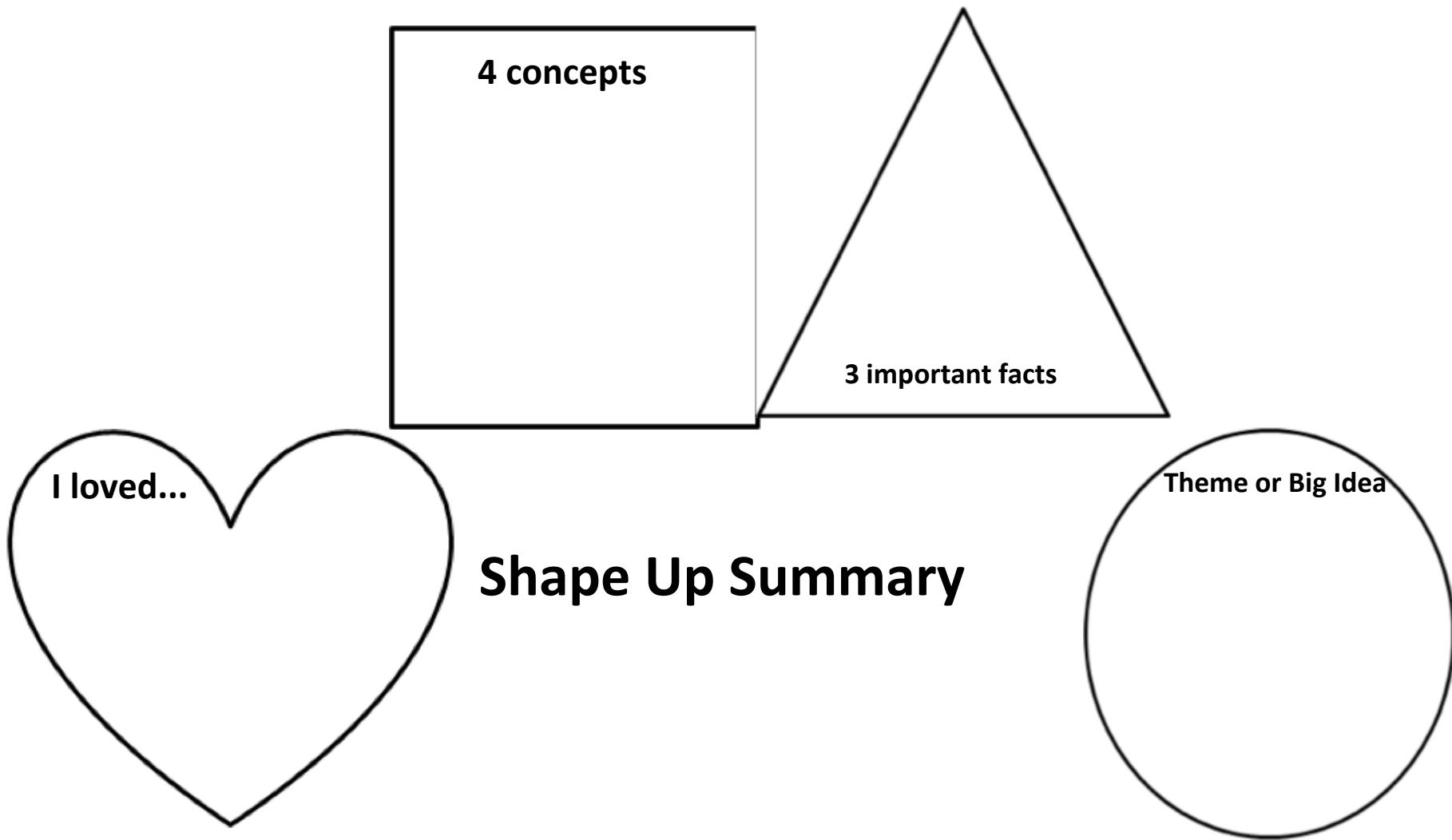
Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these broken wings and learn to fly  
All your life  
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see  
All your life  
You were only waiting for this moment to be free

Blackbird fly, blackbird fly  
Into the light of the dark black night

“Segregation shaped me; education  
liberated me.”

~Maya Angelou



# Mr. Benjamin Chavis Muhammad

## 1948 –

Excerpt 1: <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/education-1-benjamin-chavis-muhammad>

Excerpt 2: <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/education-2-benjamin-chavis-muhammad>



# Elijah Richardson

*"I had serious reservations about attending a white school."*

A native of Wilmington, N.C., Mr. Richardson discusses growing up in the Civil Rights era, including his experiences at high school and instances of racial conflict and misunderstanding.

<https://soundcloud.com/sohp/education-3-elijah-richardson>

# FREEDOM SCHOOLS (1964)



In 1964, more than forty Freedom Schools opened to thousands of young black Mississippi students.

Here they learned civics, politics, and history, curricula that helped them see beyond the degrading lessons supporting segregation and Jim Crow.

Freedom School students became some of the movement's youngest activists and experienced the liberating effects of participating in the movement.

At more than a dozen of these schools, students wrote, edited, printed, and published their own newspapers that captured these young people's

## FREEDOM SCHOOLS

Read the excerpt provided and discuss these questions with your partner.

- What does the excerpt you read tell you about life for African Americans during segregation and Jim Crow?
- What specific examples of inequality are highlighted?
- What impact do you think segregation and Jim Crow had on black students based on this writing?

# Warm-Up

Consider and answer  
the following questions  
in the next 4 minutes.

- Consider your future life and career. What would you like to become if you had no limitations?
- What do you see as your limitations (if any) and why? What could help you overcome your limitations?

Video clip from “*Hidden Figures*”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDV1sQcpJa4>



Mary Jackson (1921-2005) was a mathematician who was the first African American female aerospace engineer to work at NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)

Mary worked as a “human computer” and was instrumental in helping American astronauts orbit and land on the moon. She was not allowed to attend prerequisite classes for engineering at a local white high school, but petitioned the court for the opportunity to attend night classes at the segregated school.

# **Mrs. Margaret Walker (1915-1998)**

<https://soundcloud.com/sohp/education-4-margaret-walker>



**Mrs. Margaret Walker lived from 1915 - 1998, and was interviewed in 1991 by John Edgerton. Mrs. Walker lived in various places all over the United States. She was a teacher and an author, writing poetry and novels. Her novel Jubilee was perhaps her most famous work, but “For My People” is recognized as a landmark poem.**

**She was friends with several well-known authors and activists, including the Harlem Renaissance author Langston Hughes. Her interview clip reflects on her family’s attitude toward the value of education and how she viewed the American Dream.**

# Mr. Aaron Henry, 1922-1997

<https://soundcloud.com/sohp/education-5-aaron-henry>

*Mr. Aaron Henry lived from 1922 - 1997, and during the 1950's he served as the president of the Mississippi chapter of the NAACP. This interview was conducted in 1974, and in this clip Mr. Henry shares his concerns about segregated schools.*

*As you listen to the interview, record on your shape up summary any words, phrases, sketches, or sentences that will help you remember the key points of this clip.*

