

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Kamala Harris, Shirley Chisholm, and the Power of Representation



OVERVIEW

This slide deck contains both a 15-minute version and a 30-minute version of the Teaching Idea. The 15-minute version appears first. Skip to **slide 8** for the 30-minute version.

15-Minute Version

GET STARTED

The 15-minute version of this Teaching Idea contains the following activities:

Activity 1: Introduce Shirley Chisholm

Activity 2: Discuss Shirley Chisholm's Legacy

Activity 3: Reflect on the Significance of Kamala Harris's Election

Activity 1: Introduce Shirley Chisholm

Watch the video [Before Obama And Maxine Waters There Was Shirley Chisholm](#) (03:48) from *The Root*.

Complete the sentence:

Shirley Chisholm was _____ .

Use the wraparound strategy to share the word you used to complete the sentence.

Activity 2: Discuss Shirley Chisholm's Legacy

(Optional) Watch the ABC video [Kamala Harris: Everything you need to know about the new vice president](#) (01:30)

Reflect:

- How do you think Shirley Chisholm helped pave the way for Kamala Harris's election?
- Why do you think it took almost 50 years after Shirley Chisholm sought to be nominated as a presidential candidate for a woman to become vice president of the United States?

Activity 3: Reflect on the Significance of Kamala Harris's Election

Ashton Mayo-Beavers, a freshman at Mercer University in Georgia, said after Kamala Harris was elected vice president of the United States:

There already are so many great local leaders that are women of color, and that's amazing. But the fact is, we will have a woman vice president who is a person of color that's going to open the doors for so many people to envision themselves as our nation's future.¹

In your journal, reflect on the following questions:

- How do you think patterns from the past can shape how we imagine what is possible in the future?
- How do you think Kamala Harris's choice to run first for president and then for vice president helped to promote a vision for the future that breaks with the past? What choices did other people make that helped her to get where she is today?

1. Ashton Mayo-Beavers in Caroline Bauman and Gabrielle Birkner, [This is something I can do now: What Kamala Harris' ascension means for girls of color](#), *Chalkbeat*, January 19, 2021.

30-Minute Version

GET STARTED

The 30-minute version of this Teaching Idea contains the following activities:

Activity 1: Introduce Shirley Chisholm

Activity 2: Discuss the Significance of Kamala Harris's
Election

Activity 3: Reflect on Shirley Chisholm's Legacy

Activity 1: Introduce Shirley Chisholm

Watch the video [Before Obama And Maxine Waters There Was Shirley Chisholm](#) (03:48) from *The Root*.

Complete the sentence:

Shirley Chisholm was _____ .

Use the wraparound strategy to share the word you used to complete the sentence.

Activity 2: Discuss the Significance of Kamala Harris's Election

(Optional) Watch the ABC video [Kamala Harris: Everything you need to know about the new vice president](#) (1:30)

Activity 2: Discuss the Significance of Kamala Harris's Election

Vice President Kamala Harris said in her acceptance speech after being elected:

[W]hile I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last. Because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities. And to the children of our country, regardless of your gender, our country has sent you a clear message: dream with ambition, lead with conviction, and see yourselves in a way that others may not, simply because they've never seen it before.¹

1. ["Transcript of Vice President-elect Harris' victory speech"](#) (speech by Kamala Harris November 7, 2020, Wilmington, Delaware), the Associated Press.

Activity 2: Discuss the Significance of Kamala Harris's Election

Ashton Mayo-Beavers, a freshman at Mercer University in Georgia, said after Kamala Harris was elected vice president of the United States:

There already are so many great local leaders that are women of color, and that's amazing. But the fact is, we will have a woman vice president who is a person of color that's going to open the doors for so many people to envision themselves as our nation's future.¹

1. Ashton Mayo-Beavers in Caroline Bauman and Gabrielle Birkner, [This is something I can do now: What Kamala Harris' ascension means for girls of color](#), *Chalkbeat*, January 19, 2021.

Activity 2: Discuss the Significance of Kamala Harris's Election

Reflect:

- According to these two quotes, why is Kamala Harris's election significant?
- How do you think patterns from the past can shape how we imagine what is possible in the future?
- How do you think Kamala Harris's choice to run first for president and then for vice president helped to promote a vision for the future that breaks with the past? What choices did other people make that helped her to get where she is today?

Activity 3: Reflect on Shirley Chisholm's Legacy

Shirley Chisholm said in an interview:

I want history to remember me, not that I was the first Black woman to be elected to the congress, not as the first Black woman to have made a bid for the presidency of the United States, but as a Black woman who lived in the 20th century and who dared to be herself. I want to be remembered as a catalyst for change in America.

(For a video of the quote, play [Shirley Chisholm : Greatest Achievement / Strongest Regret](#) from 0:35- 01:13.)

1. Shirley Chisholm, interview by Camille Cosby (May 7, 2002), in *Shirley Chisholm: the Last Interview: And Other Conversations* (NY: Melville House Publishing, 2021), 119.

Activity 3: Reflect on Shirley Chisholm's Legacy

In your journal, reflect on one or more of the following questions:

- How do you think Shirley Chisholm was a “catalyst for change” in the United States?
- Why do you think it took almost 50 years after Shirley Chisholm sought to be nominated as a presidential candidate for a woman to become vice president of the United States?
- Why do you think Shirley Chisholm wanted to be remembered as a Black woman “who dared to be herself”? Why did being herself require bravery?