

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

Humanities February Break Homework

Directions:

1. Read and **annotate** the attached article to prepare for our next unit.
2. Answer the **multiple choice** questions.
3. **Summarize** the article in one full paragraph. Be sure to:
 - a. Include a **topic sentence**
 - b. Use two directly cited **quotes**
 - c. **Analyze** EACH quote
 - d. Include a **concluding sentence**

What we don't learn about the Black Panther Party — but should (NewsELA)

The Black Panther Party began in Oakland, California, in 1966. Its history holds important lessons for people today fighting racism and police violence. Yet textbooks either twist or minimize the Black Panthers.

The first issue of the Black Panther newspaper asked, "WHY WAS DENZIL DOWELL KILLED?" Denzil Dowell was an African-American man killed by California police in 1967. Police claimed it happened during a burglary attempt. One of the first major campaigns of the Black Panthers was to try to get Dowell's family justice. Today, unarmed African-American men and women are killed by the police. Their stories are similar to Dowell's. He was harassed by police before his killing, and his killer was freed. Some reports say that Dowell's hands were raised when he was killed.

These all eerily echo the police killings that led to the Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Panthers did their own investigation into Dowell's death. They helped mothers in the community organize against abuse at the local school. They also organized armed street rallies, where hundreds joined the party. Textbooks, however, are almost always silent about this.

Over time, the Panthers grew. They fought across the nation to give the poor access to decent housing, health care, education and much more. This is nowhere to be found in the textbooks either. Yet it is what won the Black Panthers widespread support. By 1970, a poll found that black people said the Panthers was the organization "most likely" to make the black liberation struggle more effective. Two-thirds admired the party. This support was remarkable, since the Panthers were attacked by the white press and police. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover claimed that the Panthers were "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country."

The Textbook Version Of The BPP

A few of the major textbooks don't even mention the Black Panthers. Most mention it in only a sentence or two. But even they do not give much information and twist their ideas.

Textbooks often say the Panthers were violent and anti-white. For example, "History Alive! The United States" says that the black power groups were aggressive and violent. It claims the Black Panthers rejected whites and wanted to build a separate black nation.

In reality, the Panthers believed in using violence only in self-defense. The textbook also tries to separate the Panthers from "nonviolent" civil rights groups. The Panthers didn't begin out of thin air, however. They grew from their relationships with other civil rights organizations.

"History Alive!" also claims the Panthers were anti-white. It ignores that they worked together with other ethnic groups. In Chicago, a Black Panther leader began the Rainbow Coalition. It included the Young Lords and the Young Patriots. The Young Lords was a Puerto Rican civil and human rights organization. The Young Patriots was a group of poor Southern white migrants. The Black Panthers helped the Young Lords and the Patriots set up their own community service programs.

Some textbooks also do not mention that the Black Panther Party was socialist. Holt McDougal's "The Americans," says the Black Panthers was started "to fight police brutality in the ghetto." In fact, the Panthers had larger goals. Capitalism made some people rich and others poor. The Panthers understood that black people were almost always part of the poor.

This was because of the legacy of slavery and racism in the United States. The Panthers wanted a revolution that would replace capitalism with socialism. They wanted to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor.

The Panthers understood that black people could not change the system on their own. They had to work together with other groups.

The FBI's Plan To Destroy The BPP

Several textbooks also blame the Panthers for the end of the civil rights movement. They ignore or downplay the role of the FBI. One of these textbooks is "The Americans." It says that support for the civil rights movement declined because some whites were frightened by the Black Panthers. Textbooks do not say, though, that another reason for the decline in support for the civil rights movement was the FBI.

Ward Churchill is the author of the book "Agents of Repression." He says that the FBI viciously tried to destroy the Panthers. The FBI worked with dozens of local police departments around the country to destroy the Panthers. Some Panthers were killed and many others imprisoned. The FBI sent undercover agents to join the Black Panthers and divide them.

The FBI planted fake news in the media about them. The Panthers lost support as a result.

History textbooks do not say much about the Black Panthers in history. What they do say isn't true. There are only a few materials for teachers and students who want to teach students about the history of the Black Panther Party.

For more resources on the Black Panther Party from the Zinn Education Project visit:

<https://www.zinnedproject.org/collection/black-panthers/>

Quiz

1 Read the following summary of the article's main ideas.

Most of the stories about how the Black Panthers tried to help make society better are not covered in textbooks. The books fail to include information that is accurate or thorough.

Which answer choice would complete the summary?

- (A) The Black Panthers had wide public support before the FBI began working with police and newspapers to destroy them.
- (B) Several textbooks also blame the Black Panthers for the loss of white support for the civil rights movement.
- (C) The Black Panther Party was socialist and believed that capitalism caused people to steal and compete for money.
- (D) Some people see similarities between the goals of the Black Panther Party and the Black Lives Matter Movement.

2 Which sentence from the article supports a main idea of the article?

- (A) Today, unarmed African-American men and women are killed by the police.
- (B) Holt McDougal's "The Americans" says the Black Panthers was started "to fight police brutality in the ghetto."
- (C) The Panthers understood that black people could not change the system on their own.
- (D) There are only a few materials for teachers who want to teach students about the history of the Black Panther Party.

3 Read the article's introduction [paragraphs 1-4].

Which sentence shows the author's point of view about the Black Panther Party?

- (A) Its history holds important lessons for people today fighting racism and police violence.
- (B) One of the first major campaigns of the Black Panthers was to try to get Dowell's family justice.
- (C) The Black Panthers did their own investigation into Dowell's death.
- (D) Yet it is what won the Black Panthers widespread support.

4 What do the author of this article and the authors of the textbooks that are cited AGREE on?

- (A) whether the Black Panthers were violent and anti-white
- (B) whether the Black Panthers had larger social goals
- (C) whether the FBI viewed the Black Panthers as a threat
- (D) whether the FBI was behind declining support for civil rights