

Songs of the Civil Rights Movement

[Source: Wikipedia](#)

1. Wade in the Water

Many internet sources and popular books claim that songs such as "Wade in the Water" contained instructions to fugitive slaves on how to avoid capture and the route to take to freedom. This song allegedly recommends leaving dry land and taking to the water to throw pursuing bloodhounds off one's trail.

Performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock

Refrain:

Wade in the Water

Wade in the Water

Children wade in the Water, God's gonna trouble the Water

Who's that young girl dressed in red

Wade in the Water

Must be the Children that Moses left

And God's gonna trouble the Water

Refrain

Who's that young girl dressed in white

Wade in the Water

Must be the Children of Israeli

God's gonna trouble the Water

Refrain

Who's that young girl dressed in blue

Wade in the Water

Must be Children coming true

And God's gonna trouble the Water

Refrain

If you don't believe I did begin to wade in the Water

Just see the holy ghost looking for me

God's gonna trouble the Water

Name two ways this song is similar to a poem:

2. Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Round

Civil Rights anthems are similar to protest songs, but can be specifically linked to the African-American Civil Rights Movement. The songs were often sung during protests or marches related to the movement. Participants in the Civil Rights Movement referred to these songs as "Freedom Songs".

Performed by The Roots

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round,
Turn me 'round, turn me 'round.
Ain't gonna let nobody, turn me 'round.
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin',
Marchin' on to freedom land

Ain't gonna let no jailhouse turn me 'round,
Turn me 'round, turn me 'round.
Ain't gonna let no jailhouse, turn me 'round.
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin',
Marchin' on to freedom land

Ain't let segregation turn me 'round,
Turn me 'round, turn me 'round.
Ain't gonna let segregation turn me 'round,
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin'.
Marchin' on to freedom land

Keep on a-walkin', keep on a-talkin',
Marchin' on to freedom land

Describe one way this song reflects the ideas of nonviolent protest.

In the book *Finding Langston*, the characters are walking their democracy. Daddy and Langston vote for the life they want using their feet. How does this song reflect the theme of walking democracy?

3. We Shall Overcome

We Shall Overcome is a protest song that became a key anthem of the African-American Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968). Since its rise to prominence, the song, and songs based on it, have been used in a variety of protests worldwide. In August 1963, 22-year old folk singer Joan Baez, led a crowd of 300,000 in singing "We Shall Overcome" at the Lincoln Memorial during A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington. President Lyndon Johnson, although himself a Southerner, used the phrase "we shall overcome" in addressing Congress on March 15, 1965, in a speech delivered after the violent, "bloody Sunday" attacks on civil rights demonstrators during the Selma to Montgomery marches, thus legitimizing the protest movement.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recited the words from "We Shall Overcome" in his final sermon delivered in Memphis on Sunday March 31, 1968, before his assassination. He had done so previously in 1965 in a similar sermon delivered before an interfaith congregation at Temple Israel in Hollywood, California. "We Shall Overcome" was sung days later by over fifty thousand attendees at Dr. King's funeral.

Deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome some day

We shall overcome
We shall overcome
We shall overcome
Some day

We'll walk hand in hand
Some day

We shall live in peace
Some day

We are not afraid
Today

Walking Democracy: The Power of Creativity During the Great Migration to the March on Washington

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The whole wide world around
Some day