



RAISE YOUR VOICE



When you feel strongly about something happening in the world, like racial injustice, that's a good time to let your feelings — and your voice — out.

One very powerful and creative way to share your voice is by making signs. In this project, we'll walk you through some steps for making a Black Lives Matter sign, but of course you can use these same steps to create signs for anything that you care about.

A MANIFESTO

BY PATRISSE CULLORS

10 RULES TO FIGHT FOR BLACK PEOPLE'S FREEDOM

SHOW UP IN DEFENSE OF BLACK PEOPLE.

IF YOU ARE A NON-BLACK PERSON OF COLOR, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CALL OUT ANTI-BLACKNESS AND WHITE SUPREMACY IN YOUR COMMUNITY. IF YOU ARE A WHITE PERSON, READ UP ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ACTIVELY ANTI-RACIST.

CENTER BLACK VOICES AND DEMANDS.

THE MEDIA IS GROSSLY MISREPRESENTING THE UPRISINGS AND IT IS CRITICAL FOR US TO UPLIFT THE DEMANDS OF BLACK PEOPLE AS THEY CALL OUT THE RACIST INSTITUTIONS THAT OPPRESS AND KILL BLACK PEOPLE. AFFIRM BLACK LIFE AND LIFT UP BLACK FUTURES.

JOIN AN ORGANIZATION.

THIS WORK IS HEAVY AND DIFFICULT - DON'T DO IT ALONE. DO YOUR RESEARCH AND FIND AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES THAT YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT.

BE WILLING TO BE WRONG, TO LEARN AND TO GROW.

BEING A FREEDOM FIGHTER IS A PRACTICE. WE ARE BORN INTO A WHITE SUPREMACIST, HETERO-PATRIARCHAL, CAPITALIST CULTURE AND IT WILL TAKE WORK TO UNLEARN THOSE THINGS. BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

LEARN YOUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY AND PREVENT IT FROM REPEATING ITSELF.

THE UNITED STATES HAS SEVERE HISTORICAL AMNESIA AND IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARN ABOUT THE SYSTEMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE BLACK COMMUNITIES HAVE EXPERIENCED FOR OVER 500 YEARS.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

IF YOU DECIDE TO PROTEST ON THE STREETS, MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT POLICE ARE ALLOWED TO DO AND NOT DO.

DEFUND THE POLICE.

HELP BUILD A DIFFERENT INFRASTRUCTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE POLICE. PRESSURE YOUR LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS TO REALLOCATE THOSE FUNDS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES, ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING, PUBLIC HEALTH CARE, AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES THAT MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE AND HEALTHY.

LEARN ABOUT THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT AND THE REPARATIONS MOVEMENT.

THEY HAVE BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF REIMAGINING A WORLD WHERE BLACK PEOPLE ARE LIBERATED.

WE ALL WE GOT! WE ALL WE NEED!

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY. NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE ARE INUNDATED WITH INFORMATION, BEING ATTACKED BY VIGILANTES/LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SO MANY EXTERNAL FACTORS THAT CAN BE OVERWHELMING TO PROCESS. CHECK IN ON YOUR BLACK LOVED ONES.

KEEP DREAMING.

KEEP HOPING.

KEEP GOING.

WHEN BLACK PEOPLE ARE FREE, WE WILL ALL BE FREE.

Patrisse Cullors, who co-founded Black Lives Matter, put her own strong feelings about racial injustice into a manifesto. Here is it for you to read, and we highly recommend that you read it all the way through.

Remember these two rules from Patrisse's "10 rules to fight for black people's freedom"?:

Show up in defense of black people

Be willing to be wrong, to learn and to grow.

By making a Black Lives Matter sign, we are doing both of those things.

So, with thanks to artist Kelsey Snook for sharing this project with us, let's get started!



Step 1 of 10

First you'll need to gather your supplies:

1. Cardboard or some other kind of sturdy surface you can draw or paint on. Maybe you can reuse something from the recycling bin—or even recycle an old sign. If you plan to leave your sign outside, you'll want your surface to be waterproof.
2. Markers or paint (waterproof markers or acrylic paint if your sign is going to be outside).
3. Paint brushes if you'll be painting.
4. A pencil and extra paper for sketching your ideas.

Step 2 of 10

Before you start, here's a short video that Kelsey created to show you all the steps.

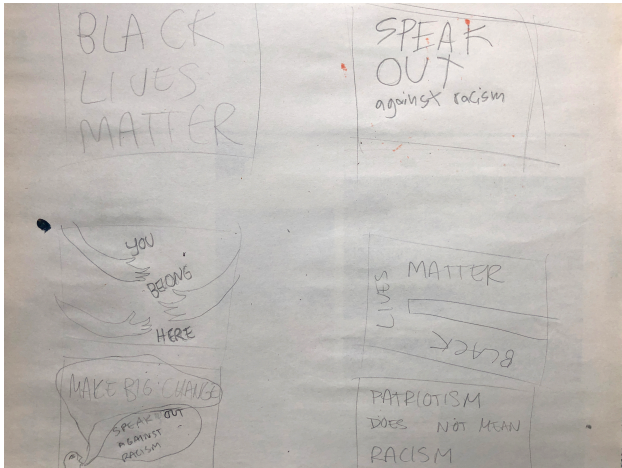
https://www.cmfl.okyou.org/wp-content/uploads/Making_a_Black_Lives_Matter_sign.mp4



Step 3 of 10

Ready to create your own sign?

Before starting, it can be helpful to look around at signs other people have made, like the ones below. Which ones do you like? What do you like about them? Are there ones that capture how you feel?



Step 4 of 10

Now it's your turn. On a piece of paper, write down some ideas of your own. Keep writing until you come to the words that feel right and true to you.

You'll know when you come up with the right words because they'll feel just like something you'd say in person to someone else.

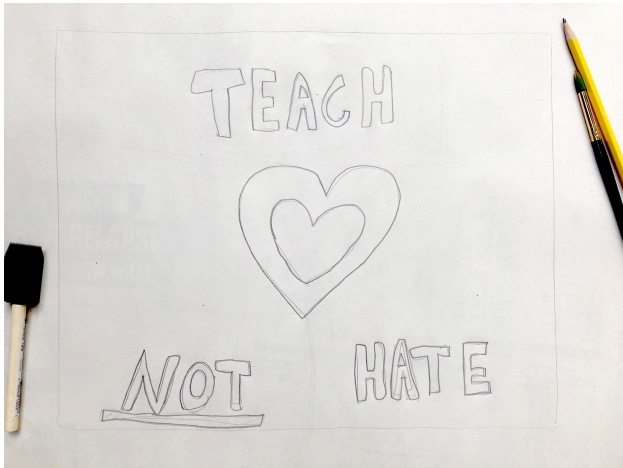


Step 5 of 10

When you have an idea or two you like, it's time to do some sketching. Most of the time, our first idea isn't the best one, so keep sketching until you have something you feel good about. It's helpful to try out many ideas so you can see what works best.

It's okay if it takes a while. Most artists spend a lot of time

thinking and experimenting.



Step 6 of 10

Pick one of your sketches and let's go ahead and make it bigger. If you have a big sheet of paper, you can trace the outline of your sign onto the paper so you can try out versions at the right size. You can also just sketch directly onto your sign board.

Use a pencil to sketch, erase, mess up, whatever. Don't worry about being perfect here, you'll paint or draw over it anyway.

This is important though: plan out your words to make sure they fit into the shape of your sign. If you plan to use paint, remember to leave enough space to write with a brush, which is a lot thicker than pencil :)



Step 7 of 10

And now for the big moment! It's time to add your color.

If you make a mistake, or you aren't crazy about the color you picked, that's okay! Just wait for it to dry then add a different layer on top.



Step 8 of 10

Once your sign is dry, you're ready to use it! It can go in your window, or outside your house or apartment. You can hang it on a telephone pole or attach it to a stick and put it in the ground. Or, if you are able to safely participate, you carry it proudly in a march!

Your sign can make a big difference to let others know that someone in the community is a supportive voice. Thank you for putting in the effort to make a message that comes especially from you.

Step 9 of 10

Remember what Patrisse said? "Be willing to be wrong, to learn and to grow." Your sign might be a way to have a conversation you never would have had before. It's a great time to learn and grow, and be open to hearing new perspectives.

To see what's happening now, and find other ways to support the Black Lives Matter movement, visit blacklivesmatter.com

Step 10 of 10

Is your sign on display? Have you held it up in a march? Please share it with us! It always helps for others to see your creative ideas, and by adding your sign to our gallery, you'll be spreading your message to even more people. Just click below to add your photo.