



Activity: Common Reading – *Just Mercy* – Alternative Timeline

Objective: To use background knowledge to promote inquiry and understanding by more deeply exploring ideas, locations, events, people, etc. mentioned in the common reading text and to use this information to speculate on ways an outcome could have been different.

Description: The Alternative Timeline is a way for students to explore how circumstances influence an individual's life. It gives students an opportunity to explore the events that lead a person down the path mentioned in the book. It also gives students the opportunity to speculate how the outcome may have been different by looking at specific points in the person's life and determining what could have happened that could have prevented a negative outcome.

Outcome/Assessment:

- *Civic Responsibility:* Analyze the results of actions and inactions with the likely effects on the larger local and/or global communities.
- *Critical/Creative Thinking:* Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to consider problems/ideas and transform them in innovative or imaginative ways.
- *Cultural Sensitivity:* Demonstrate sensitivity to the beliefs, views, values, and practices of cultures within and beyond the United States.

Materials:

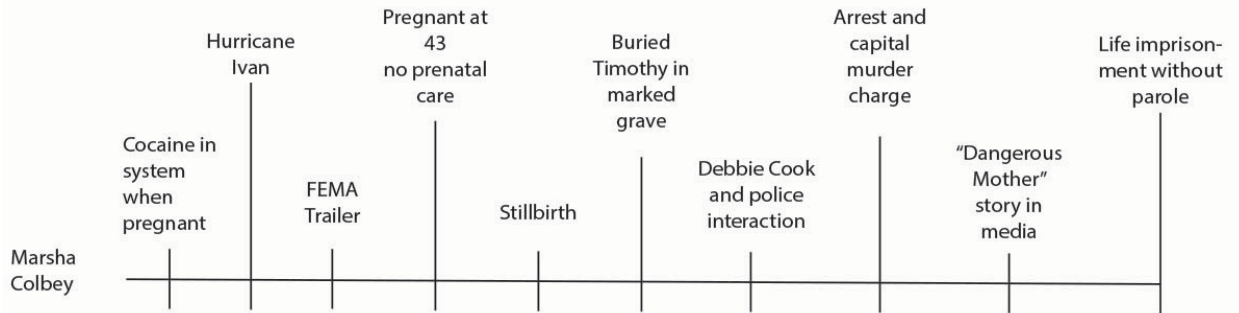
- *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson
- White boards

Design:

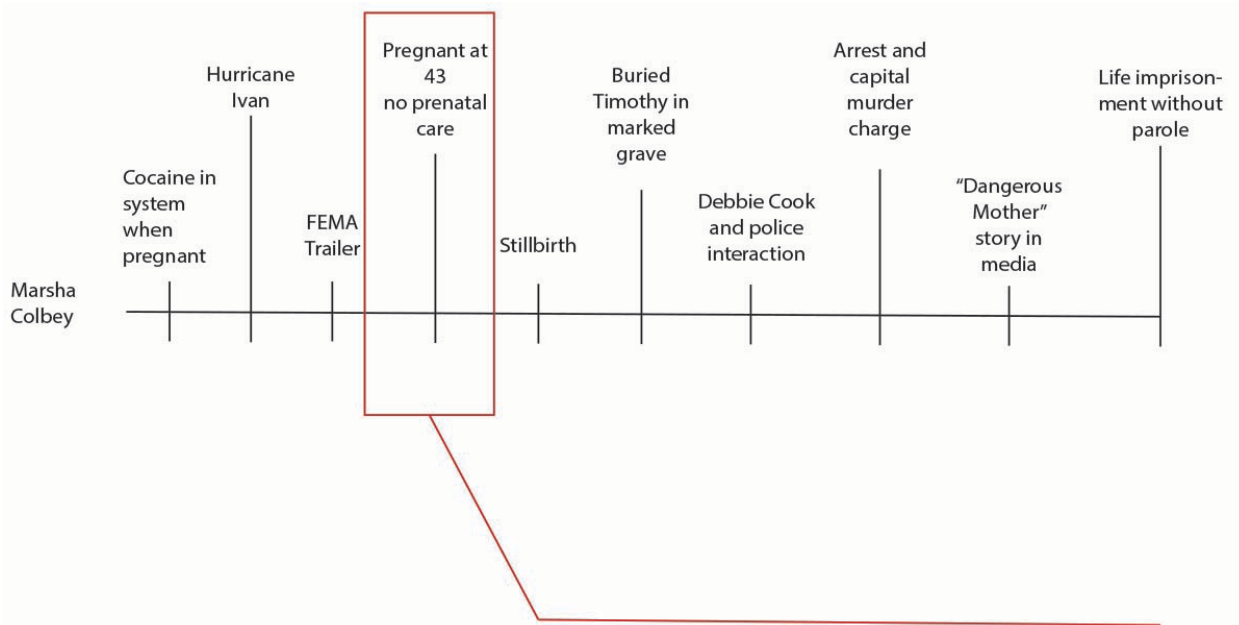
Here are the steps for this activity:

- 1) Pick a person(s) from a chapter that you have been assigned.

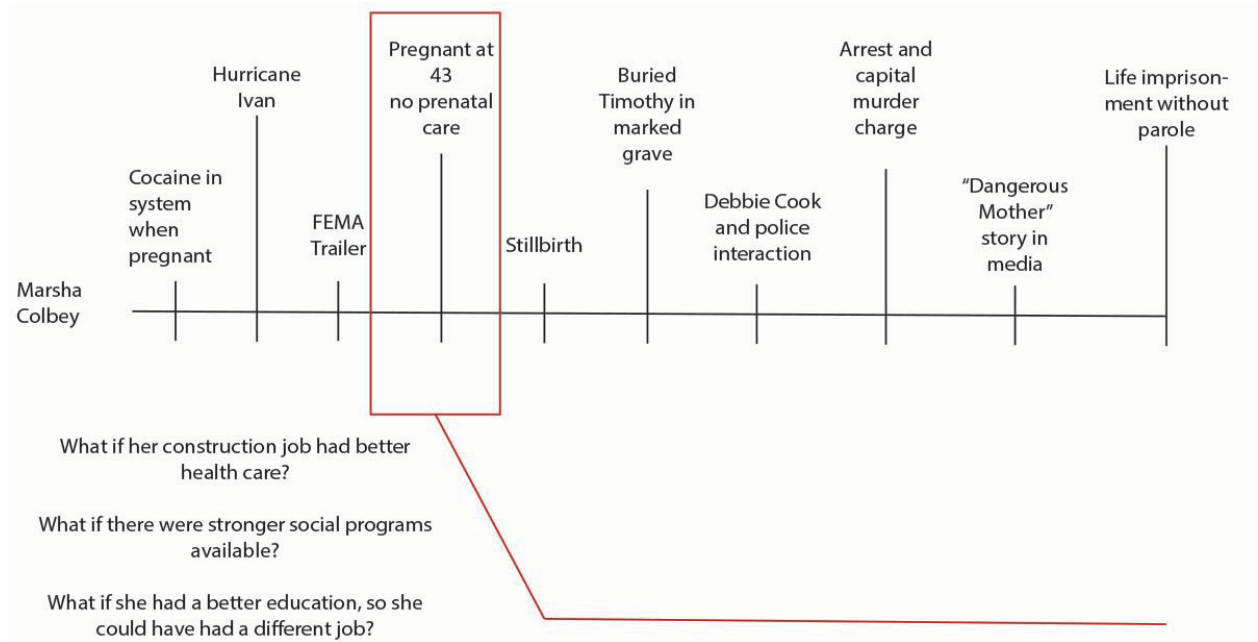
- 2) Create a timeline of the events in that person(s) life as mentioned in the book. For this example, we are using Marsha Colbey from Chapter 12.



- 3) Allow the students to discuss why they chose those particular events.
- 4) Tell the students to create an Alternative Timeline by picking one event on their timeline and branching off from it.

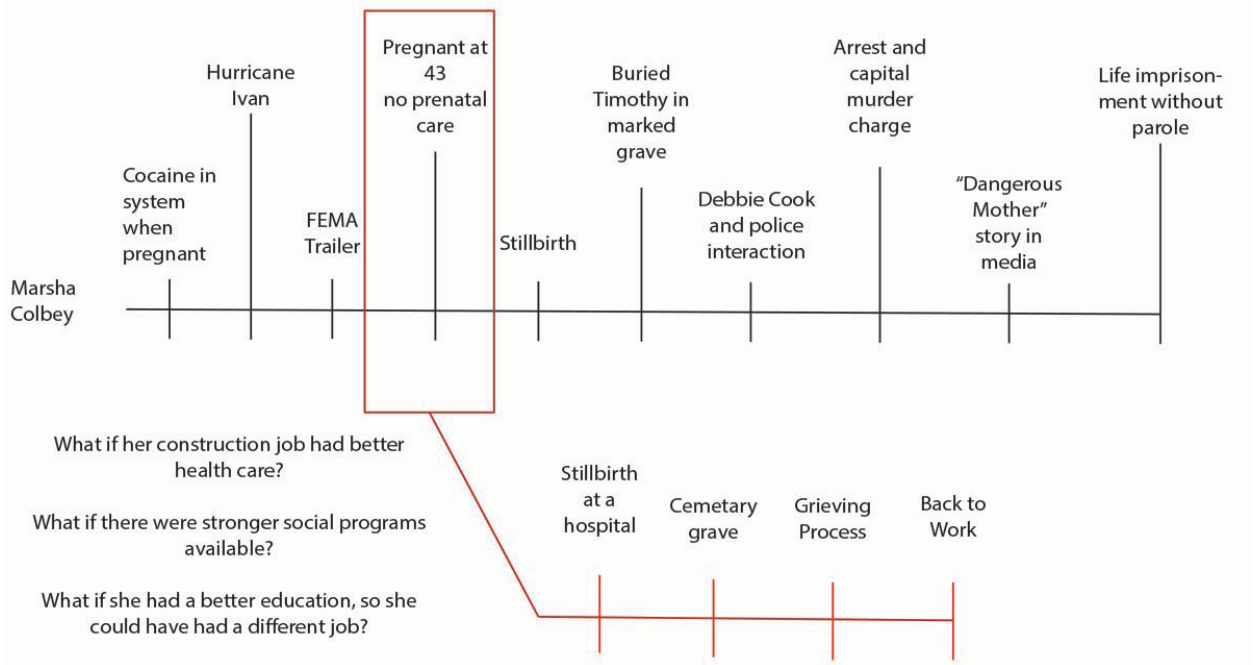


- 5) Have the students write “what if” questions near the timeline branch that they feel could have happened at that moment in the character’s life that could have changed the outcome.



- 6) Discuss some of those “What if” questions, allowing students to elaborate. For example, what type of social program could she have used?

7) Have the students create the Alternative Timeline as if the character received the answer to the “What if” question.



8) Have students discuss the new ending to the Timeline.

Possible Follow-up Activities:

- **Journal/Writing Assignments**