

CHAPTER

14

The Civil Rights Movement

1945–1975



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Human Chain of Freedom

In the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans intensified their efforts to gain equal rights. During civil rights marches, peaceful protesters had to find the strength to face taunts and violence. Often, they found that strength in music. Hand in hand, they would face their opponents and sing. In the stirring civil rights anthem “Eyes on the Prize,” they proclaimed:

“Freedom’s name is mighty sweet,
Soon one day we’re gonna meet. . . .
The only thing we did wrong,
Stayed in the wilderness a day too long.
But the one thing we did right,
Was the day we started to fight.”
—Alice Wine, “Eyes on the Prize”

Listen to the Witness History audio to hear more about the civil rights movement.

◀ Protesters hold hands and sing during a 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Alabama.

Chapter Preview

Chapter Focus Question: What were the causes, main events, and effects of the civil rights movement?

Section 1


Early Demands for Equality

Section 2

The Movement Gains Ground

Section 3

New Successes and Challenges

Use the  **Quick Study Timeline** at the end of this chapter to preview chapter events.



Sign protesting segregated restaurants




James Meredith,
first black student
at the University
of Mississippi



Button of a
militant African
American
organization

Note Taking Study Guide Online

For: Note Taking and American Issues Connector
Web Code: nee-8701


 ◀ Medgar Evers

WITNESS HISTORY  AUDIO

A Different Kind of Enemy

After serving in the army in Europe in World War II, Medgar Evers returned home to the South, where he faced a different kind of enemy: discrimination. When he and some other African American veterans tried to register to vote, a mob of armed whites blocked their way. "All we wanted to be was ordinary citizens," Evers later said, frustrated to find his life at risk in his own country. "We fought during the war for America, Mississippi included." Evers retreated that day, but he did not give up on his goal. He became an active member of the NAACP and a leader in the fight for civil rights.

▶ Sign at a segregated bus station

Early Demands for Equality

Objectives

- Describe efforts to end segregation in the 1940s and 1950s.
- Explain the importance of *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- Describe the controversy over school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Discuss the Montgomery bus boycott and its impact.

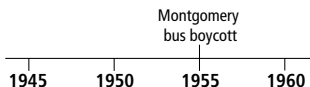
Terms and People

de jure segregation
de facto segregation
Thurgood Marshall
Earl Warren

Civil Rights Act of 1957
Rosa Parks
Montgomery bus boycott
Martin Luther King, Jr.

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Summarize Copy the timeline below and fill it in with events of the early civil rights movement. When you finish, write two sentences that summarize the information in your timeline.



Why It Matters The postwar period brought prosperity to many, but most African Americans were still treated as second-class citizens. The civil rights movement, a broad and diverse effort to attain racial equality, compelled the nation to live up to its ideal that all are created equal. The movement also demonstrated that ordinary men and women could perform extraordinary acts of courage and sacrifice to achieve social justice, a lesson that continues to inspire people around the world today. **Section Focus Question:** How did African Americans challenge segregation after World War II?

Segregation Divides America

African Americans had a long history of fighting for their rights. After World War II, the struggle intensified, as African Americans grew increasingly dissatisfied with their second-class status.

Jim Crow Laws Limit African Americans In the South, Jim Crow laws enforced strict separation of the races. Segregation that is imposed by law is known as **de jure segregation**. In 1896, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court had ruled that such segregation was constitutional as long as the facilities for blacks and whites were "separate but equal." But this was seldom the case. The facilities for African Americans were rarely, if ever, equal.

In the South and elsewhere, segregation extended to most areas of public life. Officials enforced segregation of schools, hospitals, transportation, restaurants, cemeteries, and beaches. One city even forbade blacks and whites from playing checkers together.

Segregation Prevails Around the Nation In the North, too, African Americans faced segregation and discrimination. Even where there were no explicit laws, **de facto segregation**, or segregation by

unwritten custom or tradition, was a fact of life. African Americans in the North were denied housing in many neighborhoods. They faced discrimination in employment and often could get only low-paying jobs.

Jim Crow laws and more subtle forms of discrimination had a widespread and severe impact on African Americans. Black Americans occupied the bottom rungs of the economic ladder. Compared to white Americans, they had significantly higher rates of poverty and illiteracy, as well as lower rates of homeownership and life expectancy. Although African Americans living in the North could vote, most who lived in the South could not. Very few African Americans held public office.

In the West and Southwest, Asian Americans and Mexican Americans, too, faced de facto segregation and, in some cases, legal restrictions. (Their struggle for equality will be discussed in a later chapter.)

The Civil Rights Movement Grows In many ways, World War II set the stage for the rise of the modern civil rights movement. President Roosevelt banned discrimination in defense industries in 1941. Gunnar Myrdal's publication in 1944 of *An American Dilemma* brought the issue of American prejudice to the forefront of public consciousness. Lastly, after risking their lives defending freedom abroad, African Americans were unwilling to accept discrimination at home.

In the 1940s, new efforts arose to try to bring an end to racial injustice. James Farmer and several others founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Its members were deeply influenced by Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi. They became convinced that African Americans could apply direct non-violent methods to gain civil rights. CORE organized protests against segregation in Chicago, Detroit, Denver, and other northern cities.

Success was limited, but one highly visible break in the wall of segregation did take place in 1947. Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers, becoming the first African American to play major league baseball. Robinson braved death threats and rough treatment, but throughout his career he won the hearts of millions and paved the way for integration of other sports.

Nevertheless, African Americans continued to face discrimination and felt that racial equality was long overdue.

African Americans Are Segregated

In some parts of the country, even drinking fountains were segregated (below, left). On public buses, African Americans had to sit in the back. *Were the separate facilities for African Americans shown here "equal"?*



number of lawyers. In the 1940s, a team of NAACP attorneys pursued a strategy to challenge in the courts the legality of segregation. **Thurgood Marshall**, an African American lawyer from Baltimore, Maryland, headed the legal team that mounted this challenge.

In 1950, the NAACP won a number of key cases. In *Sweatt v. Painter*, the Supreme Court ruled that the state of Texas had violated the Fourteenth Amendment by establishing a separate, but unequal, all-black law school. Similarly, in the *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, the Court ruled that the state of Oklahoma had violated George McLaurin's constitutional rights. Even though McLaurin had been admitted to the graduate school of the University of Oklahoma, he was denied equal access to the library, dining hall, and classrooms. According to the Supreme Court, a truly equal education involved more than simply admitting African Americans to previously all-white universities.

The Court Strikes Down Segregated Schools Not long after it won these cases, the NAACP mounted a much broader challenge to segregated public education at all grade levels. This challenge became known as *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Topeka, Kansas*. In the *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* cases, the NAACP had asserted that Texas and Oklahoma had failed to provide equal educational experiences. In the *Brown* case, however, the NAACP challenged the "separate but equal" principle itself, which had been established in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case.

The Supreme Court agreed with the NAACP's argument that segregated public education violated the U.S. Constitution. All nine of the Court's Justices supported the *Brown* decision, which was written by newly appointed Chief Justice **Earl Warren**. "Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race . . . deprive the children of the minority group equal education opportunities?" Warren asked in his decision. "We believe that it does." The Chief Justice and the Court declared, "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place."

In the same month as the *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court decided another civil rights case, this time involving Mexican Americans. In *Hernandez v. Texas*, the Court ended the exclusion of Mexican Americans from trial juries. The *Hernandez* decision was the first Supreme Court ruling against discrimination targeting a group other than African Americans.

Reaction to *Brown* The *Brown* decision was one of the most significant and controversial in American history. Because public education touched so many Americans, it had a much greater impact than cases involving only professional and graduate schools. Moreover, by overturning the principle of "separate but equal," the Court lent its support to the views of many civil rights advocates that all forms of segregation were wrong.

In a separate ruling, known as *Brown II*, the Court called for the implementation of its decision "with all deliberate speed" across the nation. However, most southerners had no intention of desegregating their schools without a fight. In 1956, about 100 southern members of Congress endorsed "The Southern Manifesto." They pledged to oppose the *Brown* ruling through all "lawful means," on the grounds that the Court had misinterpreted the Constitution.

More ominously, the Ku Klux Klan staged a revival. Many prominent white southerners and businessmen

HISTORY MAKERS

Thurgood Marshall (1908–1993)

An excellent student, Thurgood Marshall applied to the University of Maryland Law School but was turned down because he was an African American. He went to the law school at Howard University, an historically all-black school. The law school dean, Charles Hamilton Houston, trained the students to use the law to fight segregation, and in 1936, Marshall joined the NAACP legal team.

Brown v. Board of Education was just one victory among many that he won. From 1965 until 1991, Marshall himself was a Justice on the Supreme Court.



organized “White Citizens Councils” that declared that the South would not be integrated. The Citizens Councils imposed economic and political pressure against those who favored compliance with the Supreme Court’s decision.

✓ **Checkpoint** Why was the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision important?

Federal and State Governments Clash

Historically, education had been a state matter. States and local school boards ran the schools, and the federal government had little involvement. Local and state officials resisted the *Brown* decision’s order to desegregate, and clashes with the federal government resulted. The most famous battle took place in 1957 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

A Conflict Erupts in Little Rock The Little Rock school board had established a plan to gradually desegregate its schools, beginning with Central High School. Nine young African American students volunteered to enroll. But Arkansas governor Orval Faubus announced his opposition to integration and called out the Arkansas state National Guard. When the nine students arrived at Central High, the soldiers blocked their way.

One of the nine, Elizabeth Eckford, has described the scene. An angry white mob began to approach her, with some screaming, “Lynch her! Lynch her!” Eckford sought out a friendly face, someone who might help. “I looked into the face of an old woman and it seemed a kind face,” she recalled, “but when I looked at her again she spat on me.” Fortunately, another white woman whisked Eckford away on a public bus before the mob could have its way. None of the nine African American students gained entrance to the school that day.

Up until the Little Rock crisis, President Eisenhower had provided little leadership on the civil rights front. Following the *Brown* decision, he did not urge the nation to rapidly desegregate its schools. Privately, he expressed his misgivings

Integrating Little Rock Schools

Angry white students surrounded Elizabeth Eckford (below, right) as she tried to enter Central High in Little Rock. *How is Eckford responding to the white students?*




about the ruling. But when Governor Faubus resisted the will of the federal courts, Eisenhower realized he had to act. He sent federal troops to Little Rock to protect the students and to enforce the Court's decision. Eisenhower explained this action in a nationally televised address:

Primary Source “It is important that the reasons for my action be understood by all our citizens. . . . A foundation of our American way of life is our national respect for law. . . . If resistance to the federal court orders ceases at once, the further presence of federal troops will be unnecessary and the City of Little Rock will return to its normal habits of peace and order and a blot upon the fair name and high honor of our nation in the world will be removed.”

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Address on Little Rock,” 1957

For the entire school year, federal troops stayed in Little Rock, escorting the nine students to and from Central High and guarding them on the school-grounds. On the last day of class, Ernest Green, the one senior of the nine, became the first African American to graduate from Central High School. The showdown demonstrated that the President would not tolerate open defiance of the law. Still, most southern states found ways to resist full **compliance** with the Court's decision. Many years would pass before black and white children went to school together.

Congress Passes a Civil Rights Law Civil rights forces enjoyed a small victory when Congress passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1957** and President Eisenhower signed it into law. This law established the United States Civil Rights Commission, which had the power to investigate violations of civil rights. The law also gave the U.S. Attorney General greater power to protect the voting rights of African Americans. But overall, the law lacked teeth. Its main significance was that it was the first civil rights bill passed by Congress since Reconstruction.

 **Checkpoint** Why did President Eisenhower send federal troops to Little Rock?

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

In addition to legal efforts during this era, some civil rights activists took direct action to end segregation. On December 1, 1955, **Rosa Parks**, an African American seamstress, boarded a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and sat down in an empty seat. Several stops later, the bus driver requested that she give up her seat to a white passenger. Montgomery law required African American passengers to give up their seats to whites. After Rosa Parks refused to obey the law, she was arrested. “The [policemen] asked if the driver had asked me to stand up, and I said yes, and they wanted to know why I didn’t,” Parks later recalled. “I told them I didn’t think I should have to stand up. After I had paid my fare and occupied a seat, I didn’t think I should have to give it up.”

Rosa Parks Launches a Movement Parks's action set in motion a chain of events that transformed the civil rights movement. Over the next few days, a core of civil rights activists in Montgomery organized a one-day bus boycott. They called upon the black community

Vocabulary Builder
compliance—(kuhm PLĭ uhns) *n.*
the act of obeying a rule or law

HISTORY MAKERS

Rosa Parks (1913–2005)

On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. African Americans responded with a boycott of city buses that lasted more than a year. Parks later moved to Detroit and worked for many years for Representative John Conyers, an African American member of Congress. She founded a nonprofit institute whose goal was to help young people improve their school, work, and interpersonal skills. When she died in 2005, her body was laid in honor at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., making her the first woman ever to be recognized in this way.



to refuse to ride the buses as a way to express their opposition to Parks's arrest, in particular, and segregation, in general. Meanwhile, during the **Montgomery bus boycott**, the NAACP began preparing a legal challenge.

For a long while, many people thought that Parks had refused to give up her seat simply because she was tired after a long day of work. But, in reality, Parks had a record of fighting for civil rights. She had been active in the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP for years. This does not mean that she set out to get arrested and spark a movement. But Parks and other activists welcomed the chance to use the incident to protest bus segregation.

INFOGRAPHIC

King's Philosophy of NONVIOLENT PROTEST

For Martin Luther King, Jr., the strategy of nonviolent protest had diverse roots. As the son and grandson of Baptist preachers, King absorbed the teachings of Jesus at an early age. Later, a deep interest in philosophy led him to explore the writings of the American author Henry David Thoreau, who advocated civil disobedience, or refusing to obey unjust government or laws. Mohandas Gandhi was another critical influence on King. During India's struggle for independence from British rule, Gandhi expanded on Thoreau's approach, preaching nonviolence as the only way to achieve victory against much stronger foes.

King was a Baptist preacher with a deep faith in God and in the teachings of Jesus. ▼

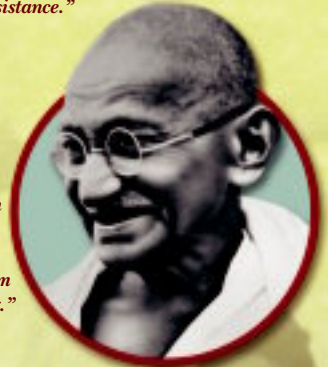
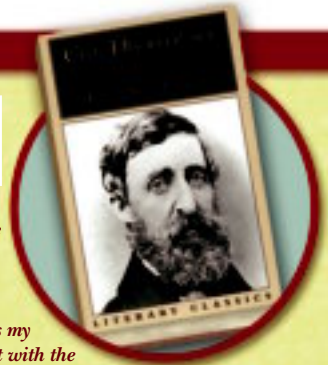
"In the midst of ... dangers I have felt an inner calm and known resources of strength that only God could give.... I have felt the power of God transforming the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope."

King read Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience*. ▶

"Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I reread the work several times. This was my first intellectual contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance."

Gandhi's tactics inspired King. ▶

"It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking."



Thinking Critically

- 1. Apply Information** How did King put his belief in nonviolence into practice in the Montgomery bus boycott?
- 2. Draw Conclusions** What are the advantages and disadvantages of nonviolent protest?

Martin Luther King Urges Nonviolence On the evening following the boycott, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), the organization that sponsored the bus boycott, held a meeting. Dr. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, a Baptist minister, addressed the group. Though he had had little time to prepare, King delivered an inspirational speech that brought the audience to its feet. Noting that African Americans were tired of segregation and oppression, King declared that there was no alternative but to protest. However, he called for the protest to be nonviolent. He urged them not to become resentful, which would lead to hatred toward whites, but rather to follow Christian doctrine and love them.

After King spoke, the MIA vowed to continue the boycott and chose King as its leader. For more than a year, African Americans in Montgomery maintained their boycott of the buses. They did so despite economic pressures from their employers and threats of violence by the Ku Klux Klan. King himself survived a bombing of his house. Fortunately, his wife and baby daughter were not home at the time. Finally, in 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that the Montgomery city law that segregated buses was unconstitutional. After more than a year, the MIA ended its boycott, and African Americans began to ride the buses again.

Ministers Form the SCLC The bus boycott represented a tremendous victory for African Americans in Montgomery and across the nation. The boycott revealed the power that African Americans could have if they joined together. The protest also elevated King and his philosophy of nonviolence into a prominent position within the civil rights movement.

After the boycott, King and another Montgomery minister, Ralph Abernathy, established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to continue the struggle for civil rights. Made up largely of southern African American ministers, the SCLC advocated nonviolent resistance to fight injustice. The SCLC went on to organize a series of protests, including a Prayer Pilgrimage in Washington, D.C., in 1957, which helped convince Congress to pass civil rights legislation. Still, discrimination and segregation remained widespread.

 **Checkpoint** What role did Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., play in the Montgomery bus boycott?

SECTION

1

Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-1403

Comprehension

1. Terms and People For each item below, write a sentence explaining its significance:

- de jure segregation
- de facto segregation
- Thurgood Marshall
- *Brown v. Board of Education*
- Earl Warren
- Civil Rights Act of 1957
- Rosa Parks
- Montgomery bus boycott
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:

Summarize Use your timeline to answer the Section Focus Question: How did African Americans challenge segregation after World War II?

Writing About History

3. Quick Write: Identify Questions

Historical research begins with identifying unanswered questions. Such questions often relate to the causes of an event or development. Reread this section and identify two events or developments that raise unanswered questions in your mind. Try to write questions that begin with *Why* or *How*.

Critical Thinking

4. Recognize Cause and Effect Why did the struggle for equal rights intensify after World War II?

5. Analyze Information How did the *Brown* decision lead to conflict between federal and state governments?

6. Synthesize Information Why is the Montgomery bus boycott considered a turning point in the civil rights movement?

How Does Segregation Affect Education?

Until the 1950s, public schools throughout the United States were segregated by race. This separation of students was legal because of the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, in which the Supreme Court ruled that “separate but equal” facilities did not violate the Constitution. However, many believed that segregated schools could never provide an equal education.

▼ Linda Brown

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

The Facts

- Linda Brown was an African American student in the segregated school district of Topeka, Kansas.
- Linda’s parents tried to enroll her in an all-white school closer to home, but school officials denied the application on the basis of race.
- The NAACP filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education on behalf of the Browns and several other black families.

The Issue

The NAACP argued that segregated schools deprived African American students the equal protection of the law required by the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Decision

The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that segregated schools were inherently unequal and violated the Fourteenth Amendment.



Why It Matters

Brown v. Board of Education was a major legal victory in the civil rights movement. This landmark decision brought America one step closer to securing equal rights for all. Chief Justice Earl Warren declared that segregation in education was unconstitutional because it prevented an equal education for all races:

“In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity . . . is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. . . . To separate them [children in grade and high schools] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority . . . that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to ever be undone. . . .”

▼ Students at a high school in Texas

Connect to Your World

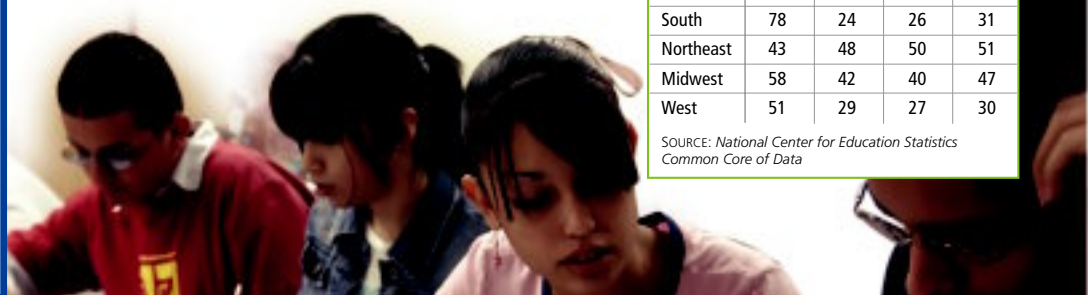
Use the data in the table to create a graph, and describe the trend that you see. Then, research school segregation today. Have schools become more or less segregated since 2001? What might explain this change?

School Desegregation After *Brown*

(Percentage of African American students in 90 percent minority schools)

	1968	1988	1991	2001
South	78	24	26	31
Northeast	43	48	50	51
Midwest	58	42	40	47
West	51	29	27	30

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics
Common Core of Data





▲ George Wallace (right) takes a stand against integration.



◀ Vivian Malone

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Blocking the Schoolhouse Door

Alabama governor George Wallace made it clear where he stood on civil rights: “I say segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!” Wallace vowed to stand “in the schoolhouse door” and personally block any attempt to integrate Alabama schools. On June 11, 1963, he got his chance. As federal marshals escorted two African American students to register at the University of Alabama, Wallace stood on the steps of the school. He proclaimed the right of states to regulate their own schools. One of the students later recalled:

“I didn’t feel I should sneak in. I didn’t feel I should go around the back door. If [Wallace] were standing in the door, I had every right in the world to face him and to go to school.”

—Vivian Malone Jones, 2003

The Movement Gains Ground

Objectives

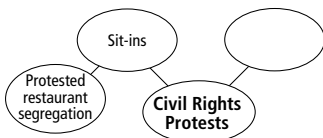
- Describe the sit-ins, freedom rides, and the actions of James Meredith in the early 1960s.
- Explain how the protests at Birmingham and the March on Washington were linked to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Summarize the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Terms and People

sit-in	Medgar Evers
SNCC	March on Washington
freedom ride	filibuster
James Meredith	Civil Rights Act of 1964

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Summarize Use a concept web like the one below to record information about the civil rights protests of the 1960s.



Why It Matters Despite the *Brown* decision and other civil rights victories, little changed in the everyday lives of most African Americans. Nonetheless, activists continued to struggle for civil rights. In the early 1960s, the movement experienced a groundswell of support. This surge produced a dramatic shift in race relations, led to the passage of landmark civil rights legislation in 1964, and set the stage for future reforms. **Section Focus Question:** How did the civil rights movement gain ground in the 1960s?

Student Activists Make a Difference

After the *Brown* decision, many black youths expected that their schools would integrate quickly and that other racial reforms would follow. Change was not quick to come, however. Disappointed by the lack of progress, young African Americans began to challenge segregation with new vigor and determination.

Sit-ins Challenge Segregation On February 1, 1960, four African American college students ordered doughnuts and coffee at a Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. As they expected, the white waitress refused to serve them. In the South, nearly all restaurants that served whites refused to serve blacks. To protest this discrimination, the four students sat down on the stools at the lunch counter, where they stayed until closing time.

Word of the Greensboro **sit-in** spread rapidly, sparking a wave of similar protests across the nation. In Nashville, Tennessee, for instance, students led by the Reverend James Lawson staged sit-ins



Protesting Segregation

Protesters challenged segregation at lunch counters by picketing (above, left). Later activists held sit-ins, like the one (above, right) in Jackson, Mississippi. Sit-in participants were trained not to react, even when hostile onlookers dumped food on them. *How would you describe the atmosphere at this lunch counter?*

and, later, marches to protest racial inequality. Elsewhere, protesters held “wade-ins” at public beaches and “read-ins” at public libraries, refusing to leave beaches or libraries reserved for whites only. Other activists carried picket signs in demonstrations and wrote letters to newspapers and government officials to express their support of the protests in the South.


SNCC Promotes Nonviolent Protest The sit-ins marked the birth of a new militancy, especially among young African Americans. To build on the momentum they had gained, about 175 students from 30 states met at Shaw University, in Raleigh, North Carolina. There, on Easter weekend in 1960, they listened to James Lawson deliver an inspiring address:

Primary Source

“We who are demonstrators are trying to raise what we call the ‘moral issue.’ That is, we are pointing to the viciousness of racial segregation and prejudice and calling it evil or sin. . . . [We are also] asserting, ‘get moving.’ The pace of change is too slow. At this rate it will be another generation before the major forms of segregation disappear. . . . Most of us will be grandparents before we can live normal human lives.”

—James Lawson, “From a Lunch Counter Stool,” 1960

Ella Baker, a veteran of the struggle for civil rights, had organized the meeting. The granddaughter of enslaved African Americans, Baker had been active in the NAACP and SCLC. She helped the young activists to establish a new civil rights organization, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee**, or **SNCC**. Its goal was to create a grass-roots movement that involved all classes of African Americans in the struggle to defeat white racism and to obtain equality.

 **Checkpoint** How did young people energize the civil rights movement in the 1960s?

Riding for Freedom

The next battleground was interstate transportation. Activists targeted this industry because they knew that travel between states was subject to federal rather than state regulation. In fact, the Supreme Court had recently ruled in *Boynton v. Virginia* (1960) that segregation on interstate buses and in waiting rooms was illegal. Civil rights activists were now going to test the federal government’s willingness to enforce the law.

Freedom Riders Face Angry Mobs In the spring of 1961, CORE staged a “freedom ride” through the Deep South. Riders set off in two separate buses from Washington, D.C., bound for New Orleans. En route, they defied segregationist codes. African Americans sat in the front of the bus and used “white” restrooms in bus stations.

In Alabama, the trip took a dangerous turn. After departing from Anniston, pro-segregationists firebombed one of the buses. When the second bus arrived in Birmingham, a white mob attacked the riders.

INFOGRAPHIC

Troops stand guard on the bus to Jackson. ▶

RIDING FOR FREEDOM

In 1961, a group of freedom riders set out to challenge segregation in buses and bus terminals in the South.

- A** May 4: Freedom riders depart. Six white and seven African American freedom riders leave Washington, D.C.
- B** May 14: Attacks in Alabama Riders travel in two groups through Alabama. Outside of Anniston, one bus is firebombed. A mob attacks the second bus in Birmingham.
- C** May 20: Federal marshals arrive. Riders meet more violence when they reach Montgomery. U.S. marshals are sent in.
- D** May 24: Mass arrests Troops escort riders to Jackson, where they are arrested and sent to jail.

New volunteers kept the freedom rides going. By the end of the summer, more than 300 had been arrested.

Freedom rider James Zwerg reels ▶ after being beaten in Montgomery.

Passengers watch as their bus burns near Anniston. ▼


Thinking Critically

- 1. Analyze Information** Why do you think the freedom riders chose the route that they did?
- 2. Draw Inferences** Do you think they anticipated the opposition they encountered?

President Kennedy Takes Action Photographs of the bombed-out bus and the injured riders appeared in newspapers and on television screens around the world, prodding President John F. Kennedy to intervene. Kennedy had intervened before. The previous year, when he was running for the presidency, Kennedy had helped to win Martin Luther King’s release from a Georgia prison after state officials had sentenced King to 6 months in jail for a traffic violation. King was freed and Kennedy, with the help of African American voters, went on to win the presidential election of 1960.

Kennedy now took action to stem the violence against the freedom riders. His administration worked out a deal with Mississippi’s leaders. Police and state troopers agreed to protect the riders. The Federal Transportation Commission also issued an order mandating the desegregation of interstate transportation. In exchange, the Kennedy administration agreed not to intervene when Mississippi authorities arrested the activists and sentenced them to jail for disturbing the peace.

The freedom riders achieved their immediate goal. They compelled a reluctant federal government to act. By refusing to allow violent mobs to deter them, the riders also displayed that intimidation would not defeat the movement.

 **Checkpoint** What did the freedom rides accomplish?

Integrating Ole Miss

Accompanied by federal marshals, James Meredith arrived at the University of Mississippi in 1962. He went on to graduate from the university in 1963.

Protests and Confrontations Intensify

In the fall of 1962 and spring of 1963, protests against racial discrimination intensified. The protesters put pressure on the federal government to help break down legal, or de jure, segregation.

Meredith Integrates the University of Mississippi

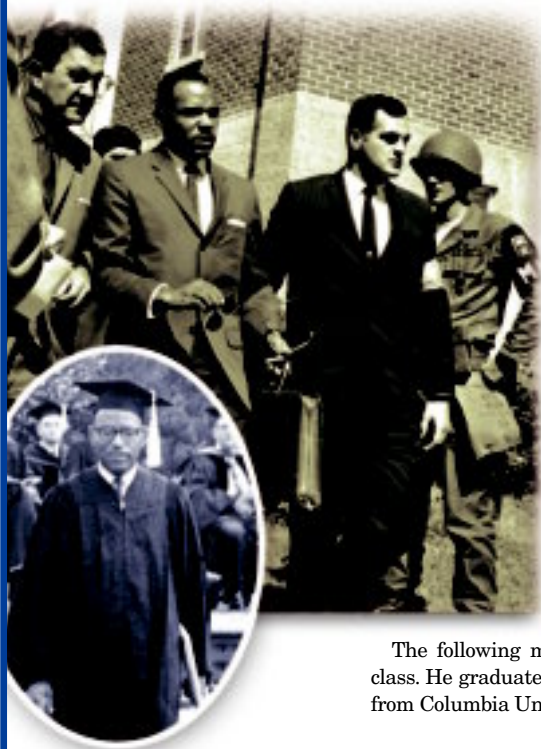
One struggle that gained international attention involved **James Meredith**. Meredith was an Air Force veteran who sought to enroll at the all-white University of Mississippi, known as “Ole Miss.” In September 1962, with the support of the NAACP, Meredith won a federal court case that ordered the university to desegregate. Civil rights activist **Medgar Evers** was instrumental in this effort.

Mississippi governor Ross Barnett was determined to prevent the integration of the university. The issue became a standoff between the governor and the federal government.

On September 30, rumors of Meredith’s arrival on the university’s campus began to spread. Federal marshals had been assigned to protect him. Over the course of the night, a full-scale riot erupted, with federal marshals battling white protestors intent on scaring Meredith away.

As the rioting took place, President Kennedy addressed the nation on television. “Americans are free . . . to disagree with the law but not to disobey it,” he declared. “For any government of laws . . . , no man, however prominent and powerful . . . is entitled to defy a court of law.” The rioting went on throughout the night. By the time it ended, 160 people had been injured and 2 men had been killed.

The following morning, Meredith registered as a student and took his first class. He graduated from Ole Miss in 1963 and went on to obtain his law degree from Columbia University in New York City. Tragically, Medgar Evers was assassinated



sinated, on his front doorstep, in June 1963. Three years later, Meredith himself was shot and nearly killed. Both shootings stand as historical reminders of the high costs of fighting racial discrimination.

King Campaigns in Birmingham In the spring of 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC targeted Birmingham, Alabama, for a major civil rights campaign. They chose Birmingham because of its reputation as the most segregated city in the South.

The campaign began nonviolently at first with protest marches and sit-ins. City officials got a court order prohibiting the demonstrations. On Good Friday, April 12, 1963, King decided to violate the order and join the demonstration personally, even though he knew it would lead to his arrest. From his jail cell, King wrote a letter explaining why he and other civil rights activists were tired of waiting for reform: “For years now I have heard the word ‘wait!’ It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This ‘Wait!’ has almost always meant ‘Never.’”

One of the most poignant passages of the letter describes King’s concern about the impact of discrimination on his children:

Primary Source


“Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, ‘Wait.’ But . . . when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can’t go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children. . . . Then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” 1963

After King was released from jail, the SCLC increased the frequency of the demonstrations. For the first time, schoolchildren joined the “freedom marches.” Finally, Birmingham’s Public Safety Commissioner, T. Eugene “Bull” Connor, would not tolerate the demonstrations any longer. He used police dogs and fire hoses on the protesters. Many Americans were shocked by photographs and news coverage of nonviolent protesters set upon by dogs and overwhelmed by the powerful jets of water from fire hoses. They sent telegrams and letters by the thousands to the White House, calling on the President to act.

Kennedy Backs Civil Rights In addition to the conflict in Birmingham, civil rights protests were taking place in cities from Jackson, Mississippi, to Cambridge, Maryland. President Kennedy became convinced that he had to take a more active role in promoting civil rights.

On June 11, 1963, Kennedy delivered a moving televised address. Calling civil rights a “moral issue,” he declared that the nation had an obligation to “fulfill its promise” of giving all Americans “equal rights and equal opportunities.” President Kennedy sent to Congress a proposal for sweeping civil rights legislation. His brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, led the charge for passage of the bill.

 **Checkpoint** How did James Meredith and Martin Luther King, Jr., prompt President Kennedy to promote civil rights?



Clash in Birmingham

Police in Birmingham, Alabama, used police dogs to break up civil rights marches in 1963. *How do you think Americans reacted when they saw images like these on television and in newspapers?*

Vocabulary Builder

tolerate—(TAHL er ayt) *v.* to allow or put up with

The Movement Marches on Washington

To put pressure on Congress to pass the new civil rights bill, supporters made plans for a massive demonstration in Washington, D.C. The event brought together the major civil rights groups—including the NAACP, SCLC, and SNCC—as well as labor unions and religious groups.

The **March on Washington** took place on August 28, 1963. Organizers had hoped for 100,000 demonstrators. More than double that number showed up, having made the journey to the capital from around the country. Before the march, there had been some concern about maintaining order at such a huge demonstration. Yet despite the massive numbers, the day was peaceful and even festive. Popular celebrities and entertainers were on hand to perform for the crowd.

The main rally took place in front of the Lincoln Memorial, where a distinguished roster of speakers addressed the crowd. The highlight of the day came

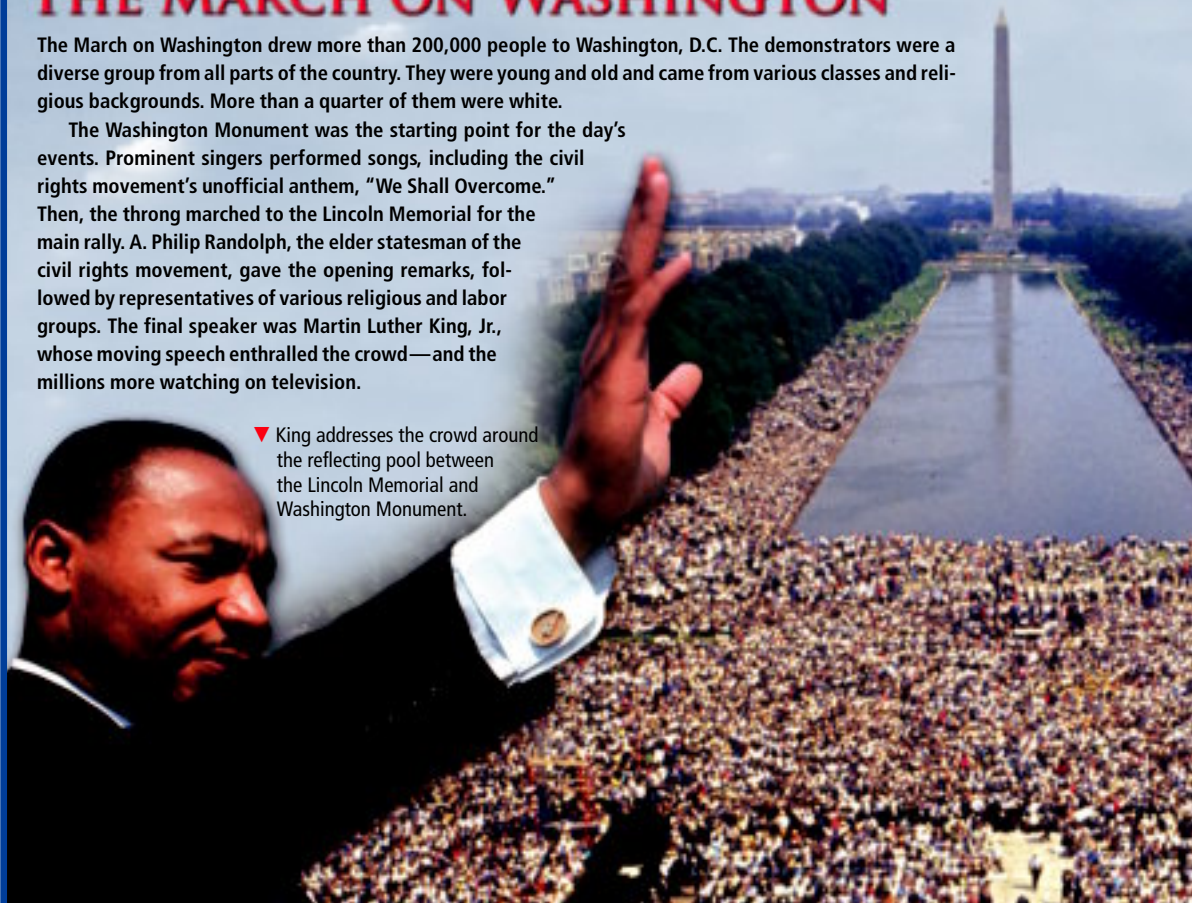
Events That Changed America

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

The March on Washington drew more than 200,000 people to Washington, D.C. The demonstrators were a diverse group from all parts of the country. They were young and old and came from various classes and religious backgrounds. More than a quarter of them were white.


The Washington Monument was the starting point for the day's events. Prominent singers performed songs, including the civil rights movement's unofficial anthem, "We Shall Overcome." Then, the throng marched to the Lincoln Memorial for the main rally. A. Philip Randolph, the elder statesman of the civil rights movement, gave the opening remarks, followed by representatives of various religious and labor groups. The final speaker was Martin Luther King, Jr., whose moving speech enthralled the crowd—and the millions more watching on television.

▼ King addresses the crowd around the reflecting pool between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument.



when Martin Luther King, Jr., took the podium. King held the audience spellbound as he described his dream of a colorblind society “when all God’s children” would be free and equal. Millions more watched King’s address live on television. This powerful and eloquent speech has come to be known as the “I Have a Dream” speech. (You will read an excerpt from the “I Have a Dream” speech later in this chapter.)

Behind the scenes, there was some tension between the organizations that had planned the March. SNCC, in particular, had wanted to stage a more militant protest, to show its dissatisfaction with the pace of change. Yet for the public at large and for most who took part, the March on Washington represented a magical moment in American history.

 **Checkpoint** What is considered the highlight of the March on Washington?



▲ Button from the march urging interracial cooperation

Why It Matters

The March on Washington was one of the largest political demonstrations in U.S. history. Widely covered in the media, the march increased awareness of the movement and built momentum for the passage of civil rights legislation. Despite the huge numbers and the emotional intensity of the day, the march remained orderly and is considered a model for peaceful protest. The March on Washington has come to symbolize the civil rights movement itself.

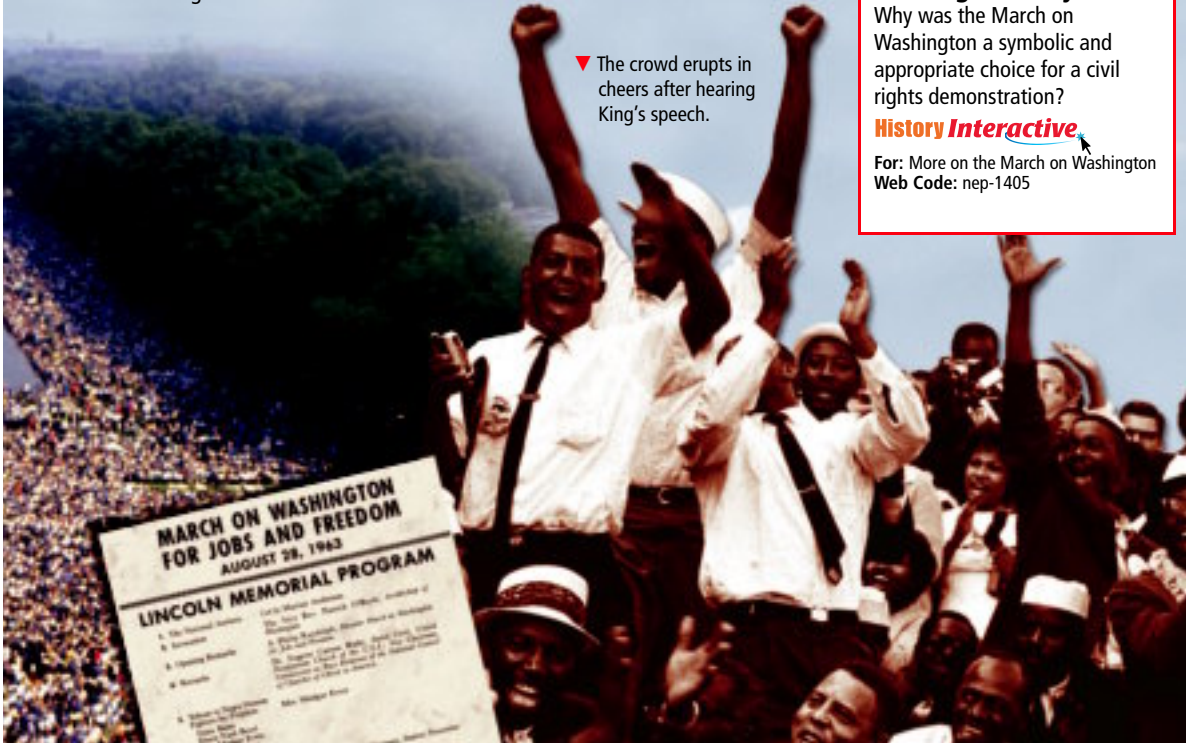
▼ The crowd erupts in cheers after hearing King’s speech.

Thinking Critically

Why was the March on Washington a symbolic and appropriate choice for a civil rights demonstration?

History Interactive

For: More on the March on Washington
Web Code: nep-1405



Congress Passes the Civil Rights Act of 1964

On September 15, 1963, less than three weeks after the march, a bomb exploded in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. The church had been the SCLC's headquarters earlier that spring. Four young African American girls, all dressed in their Sunday best, were killed in the bombing.

Two months later, on November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency.

Johnson was a southerner with an undistinguished record on racial matters. However, he surprised many Americans by immediately throwing his support behind the cause of civil rights. "No eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory," Johnson told Congress and the nation, "[than the] earliest passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long."

The civil rights bill faced strong opposition in Congress, but Johnson put his considerable political skills to work for its passage. The bill passed in the House of Representatives, but it faced a more difficult fight in the Senate, where a group of southern senators attempted to block it by means of a **filibuster**. This is a tactic by which senators give long speeches to hold up legislative business. The filibuster went on for more than 80 days until supporters finally put together enough votes to overcome it. In the end, the measure passed in the Senate, and President Johnson signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** into law in July.

The act banned segregation in public accommodations and gave the federal government the ability to compel state and local school boards to desegregate their schools. The act also allowed the Justice Department to prosecute individuals who violated people's civil rights and outlawed discrimination in employment on account of race, color, sex, or national origin. It also established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which is responsible for enforcing these provisions and investigating charges of job discrimination.

 **Checkpoint** How did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 try to end discrimination?

SECTION

2 Assessment

Progress Monitoring *Online*

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-1406

Comprehension

1. Terms and People For each item below, write a sentence explaining its significance:

- sit-in
- SNCC
- freedom ride
- James Meredith
- Medgar Evers
- March on Washington
- filibuster
- Civil Rights Act of 1964

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:

Summarize Use your concept web to answer the Section Focus Question: How did the civil rights movement gain ground in the 1960s?

Writing About History

3. Quick Write: Construct a

Hypothesis After identifying an unanswered question, a historian might form a hypothesis, an unproven answer to that question. Write a one-sentence hypothesis to answer the following question: Why was Johnson more successful than Truman in getting civil rights legislation passed? Remem-

ber, your statement is not a fact but a theory that might or might not be supported by further research. The sentence you write could later become the thesis statement for a research paper.

Critical Thinking

- 4. Draw Conclusions** Why were sit-ins often a successful tactic?
- 5. Analyze Information** Why did the freedom rides lead to violence?
- 6. Recognize Cause and Effect** What events led to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

Martin Luther King, Jr.: *I Have a Dream*

Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered the closing address at the March on Washington. For approximately 20 minutes, he mesmerized the crowd with one of the most powerful speeches ever delivered. In this excerpt, King speaks of his dream for America:

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed¹: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi . . . will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama . . . will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. . . .

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew² out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. . . .

This will be the day when all of God’s children will be able to sing with new meaning, “My country ’tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my father died, land of the Pilgrims’ pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.” . . .

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles³, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, “Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

1. **creed** (kreed) *n.* beliefs or principles
 2. **hew** (hyoo) *v.* carve
 3. **Gentiles** (JEHN tilz) *n.* non-Jews



▲ Martin Luther King, Jr., at the March on Washington

Thinking Critically

1. Identify Central Issues

What is the “American dream” to which King refers?

2. Draw Inferences

How well does King think the nation has lived up to its promises?

EXPERIENCE

NONVIOLENT PROTEST



College students held sit-ins at lunch counters. African Americans boycotted buses. Groups of demonstrators knelt in prayer. Protesters in the civil rights movement used many different nonviolent methods to make it clear that they would no longer tolerate segregation and voter discrimination. These protests eventually led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.

Since the 1960s, America has made great strides in truly embodying the Declaration of Independence statement that "All men are created equal." However, certain groups still struggle to have their rights recognized. For example, individuals with disabilities worked to gain passage of the landmark Americans With Disabilities Act. This law requires that people with disabilities have equal access to public facilities and equal employment opportunities.



Pickets ▲

A woman carries a picket sign outside a segregated lunch counter. Picketers tried to discourage people from patronizing businesses that did not treat black and white customers equally.





Prayerful Protests ▲

A group of demonstrators kneel in prayer during a hearing for arrested freedom riders in Albany, Georgia, in 1961. Nonviolent protests often took the form of prayer vigils like this.

Wade-ins ▼

Black protesters march onto a “whites only” public beach, ready to swim. Whites who did not want the beach desegregated face off against them as police stand guard.



Boycotts ▲

African American students at Florida A&M College jeer at a nearly empty city bus as it passes through the campus. Protesters in Tallahassee were boycotting the buses to protest segregation on the bus lines.



Thinking Critically

- Analyze Visuals** How did whites support or oppose black protesters?
- Draw Conclusions** Do you think the civil rights movement would have been as effective if protesters had not used peaceful protest methods?

Connect to Today Do research to learn about the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act. How were the methods and goals of that movement similar to and different from the movement for racial equality in the 1960s? Did the bill succeed in gaining equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities?

History Interactive*

For: Learn more about civil rights tactics
Web Code: nep-1407



▲ Button honoring Malcolm X

WITNESS HISTORY  AUDIO**Entering a New Era**

Although the Civil Rights movement was making headway, many black activists were impatient with King's nonviolent methods and his emphasis on integration. Some believed that integration was not the solution. Others felt that more needed to be done to remove what they saw as oppression by white society.

Malcolm X (also known by his religious name, el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz) became one of the most prominent voices for this faction. As a minister of the Nation of Islam, he preached a message of self-reliance and self-protection. He called for black pride and spread the idea of black nationalism, a belief in the separate identity and racial unity of the African American community. Malcolm was a "charismatic speaker who could play an audience as great musicians play instruments." His dynamic speeches won many adherents to his cause. The Civil Rights Movement had entered a new era.

New Successes and Challenges

Objectives

- Explain the significance of Freedom Summer, the march on Selma, and why violence erupted in some American cities in the 1960s.
- Compare the goals and methods of African American leaders.
- Describe the social and economic situation of African Americans by 1975.

Terms and People

Freedom Summer	Kerner Commission
Fannie Lou Hamer	Malcolm X
Voting Rights Act	Nation of Islam
Twenty-fourth Amendment	black power
	Black Panthers

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Summarize Complete an outline to summarize the contents of this section.

- I. Push for Voting Rights
A. Freedom Summer
- 1.
 - 2.

Why It Matters During the 1950s and 1960s, the civil rights movement made great strides forward. Yet racial injustice was not fully eradicated. Frustration with this situation led some African Americans to turn to more radical and sometimes violent methods. African Americans achieved further successes, but for some the radicalism of the times left a bitter legacy. **Section Focus Question: What successes and challenges faced the civil rights movement after 1964?**

The Push for Voting Rights

None of the federal court decisions or civil rights measures passed through 1964 fundamentally affected the right to vote. The problem was a southern political system that used literacy tests, poll taxes, and intimidation to keep blacks from voting. In Mississippi, in 1964, for instance, not a single African American person was registered to vote in five counties that had African American majorities. All of the major civil rights organizations sought to overcome these political injustices.

SNCC Stages Freedom Summer SNCC had spent several years organizing voter education projects in Mississippi. It met with little success and a great deal of violent opposition. But in 1964, it called for a major campaign, known as **Freedom Summer**. About 1,000 volunteers, mostly black and white students, were to flood Mississippi. They would focus on registering African Americans to

vote. They would also form the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), an alternative to the state’s all-white regular Democratic Party.

Even before most of the volunteers had arrived, three civil rights workers—Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman—disappeared. SNCC claimed that they had been murdered; state authorities denied these charges. President Johnson ordered a massive search for the three, which ended when their bodies were found buried in an earthen dam. All had been shot at point-blank range. Yet, despite the obvious dangers, almost all of the other volunteers remained in the state.

After Freedom Summer ended in August 1964, an MFDP delegation traveled to the Democratic Convention in New Jersey, seeking to be recognized as Mississippi’s only Democratic Party. At the convention, **Fannie Lou Hamer**, one of the MFDP’s leaders, gave powerful testimony. She described how she and other activists had been beaten, fired from their jobs, and displaced from their homes all because, as she put it, they wanted “to register” and “live as decent human beings.”

Despite Hamer’s testimony, the Democrats refused to seat the MFDP. Instead, party officials offered a compromise: They would seat two MFDP members as “at-large delegates” and reform the nomination rules to guarantee greater minority representation in the future. The MFDP rejected this offer. Ironically, Mississippi’s regular Democratic delegation left the convention in protest because the national party had made the offer to the MFDP.

Marching on Selma Early in 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC organized a major campaign in Selma, Alabama, to pressure the federal government to enact voting rights legislation. The protests climaxed in a series of confrontations on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, on the main route from Selma to Montgomery. The first of these confrontations took place on March 7, 1965, a day that became known as “Bloody Sunday.” Heavily armed state troopers and other authorities attacked the marchers as they tried to cross the bridge. Sheyann Webb, a six-year-old girl at the time, recalled the scene:

Primary Source “I heard all of this screaming and . . . somebody yelled, ‘Oh God, they’re killing us!’ . . . And I looked and I saw the troopers charging us . . . swinging their arms and throwing canisters of tear gas. . . . Some of them had clubs and others had ropes and whips. . . . It was like a nightmare. . . . I just knew then that I was going to die.”

—Sheyann Webb, *Selma, Lord, Selma*

Vocabulary Builder
confrontation—(kahn fruhn TAY shuhn) *n.* situation in which there is angry disagreement between opposing people or groups

Standoff in Selma
Police officers block the path of protesters attempting to march to Selma, Alabama.




Webb survived, but the rampage continued. Television coverage of the violence outraged the nation. On March 15, President Johnson went on national television and called for a strong federal voting rights law. Historically, regulation of voting rights had been left to the states, but Johnson argued that “it is wrong to deny any of your fellow citizens the right to vote.” He added, “Their cause is our cause too, because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And, *we shall overcome.*”

New Legislation Guarantees Voting Rights Spurred by the actions of protesters and the words of the President, Congress passed the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. The act banned literacy tests and empowered the federal government

to oversee voting registration and elections in states that had discriminated against minorities. In 1975, Congress extended coverage to Hispanic voters in the Southwest.

Another legal landmark was the **Twenty-fourth Amendment** to the Constitution, ratified in 1964. It banned the poll tax, which had been used to keep poor African Americans from voting. In addition, the federal courts handed down several important decisions. *Baker v. Carr* and *Reynolds v. Simms* limited racial gerrymandering, the practice of drawing election districts in such a way as to dilute the African American vote, and established the legal principle of “one man, one vote.”

These laws and decisions had a profound impact. Particularly in the Deep South, African American participation in politics skyrocketed. In Mississippi, the percentage of African Americans registered to vote jumped from just under 7 percent in 1964 to about 70 percent in 1986. Nationwide, the number of African American elected officials rose from fewer than 100 to more than 6,000 by the mid-1980s.

 **Checkpoint** What impact did the protests in Selma, Alabama, have on the nation?

Frustration Explodes Into Violence

Many celebrated the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Yet for some African Americans, things had not changed much. In many urban areas, there was anger and frustration over continuing discrimination and poverty. That anger exploded into violence in several cities.

Racial Violence Plagues Cities Less than a week after Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, one of the worst race riots in American history erupted in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Watts in Los Angeles. Violence, looting, and arson spread for several days before National Guard troops restored order.

Watts was one of many race riots that erupted in the 1960s. The worst violence occurred in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan, in the summer of 1967. In Detroit, 43 people died, and property damage reached \$50 million. The outbursts frightened many white Americans. In most previous race riots, whites had used violence to keep African Americans “in their place.” But now, blacks were using violence against police and white business owners in black neighborhoods.



African American Voter Registration

(Percentage of voting-age African Americans)

State	1964	1968
Alabama	23.0	56.7
Louisiana	32.0	59.3
Mississippi	6.7	59.4
Texas	57.7	83.1
Virginia	45.7	58.4

SOURCE: Stanley, Harold W. *Voter Mobilization and the Politics of Race: The South and Universal Suffrage, 1952–1984*

Voting Rights Legislation Takes Effect

The table shows voter registration rates in some southern states before and after the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The women shown above are learning how to mark the ballot at a voter education class in Alabama in 1966. Which state listed in the table had the greatest increase in voter registration between 1964 and 1968?

TRACK THE ISSUE



What should the government do to promote voting rights?

Although the right to vote is a cornerstone of American democracy, many restrictions have been placed on voting rights over the years. As the history of the civil rights movement shows, gaining full electoral rights has been a struggle. How can the government ensure fair and free suffrage in America? Use the timeline below to explore this enduring question.

- **1820s–1830s Age of Jackson**
States move toward universal white male suffrage.
- **1870 Fifteenth Amendment**
Vote is extended to African American men, but this right is often violated.
- **1920 Nineteenth Amendment**
Women’s suffrage becomes law.
- **1965 Voting Rights Act**
Law strengthens African American voting rights.
- **1971 Twenty-sixth Amendment**
Voting age is lowered from 21 to 18.
- **2000 Presidential Election**
Polling-place irregularities lead some states to reform voting process.



African Americans in Alabama voting for the first time after passage of the Voting Rights Act



A voter registration drive for ex-felons

DEBATE THE ISSUE

Voting Rights for Convicted Felons Most states do not allow felons to vote while they are in prison. In some states, this ban continues even after they are released. Should ex-convicts have their voting rights restored?

“About 4.7 million Americans, more than 2 percent of the adult population, are barred from voting because of a felony conviction. Denying the vote to ex-offenders is antidemocratic and undermines the nation’s commitment to rehabilitating people who have paid their debt to society.”

—*The New York Times*, editorial

“Individuals who have shown they are unwilling to follow the law cannot claim the right to make laws for the rest of us. We don’t let everyone vote—not children, for instance, or noncitizens. . . . We have . . . standards of trustworthiness before we let people participate in the serious business of self-government, and people who commit serious crimes don’t meet those standards.”

—Roger Clegg, General Counsel, Center for Economic Opportunity



TRANSFER Activities

1. **Compare** How do these two views of felon voting rights differ?
2. **Contrast** How does the issue of voting rights for felons differ from the issue of voting rights in the 1960s?
3. **Transfer** Use the following Web site to see a video, try a WebQuest, and write in your journal. **Web Code:** neh-8702



Increasing Militancy

Black Panthers (above) demonstrated outside the courthouse where Huey Newton was on trial, charged with killing a police officer.

The Kerner Commission Seeks the Cause To determine the causes of the riots, President Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the **Kerner Commission**. It concluded that long-term racial discrimination stood as the single most important cause of violence. The commission also recommended establishing and expanding federal programs aimed at overcoming the problems of America's urban ghettos.


Primary Source

“Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal. . . . Segregation and poverty have created the racial ghetto and a destructive environment totally unknown to most Americans.”

— National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, *Report*, 1967

The Kerner Commission's findings proved highly controversial. A number of conservative commentators argued against expanding federal spending. They said that this amounted to rewarding the rioters. Others noted that the black-white split that the report described ignored other minorities.

President Johnson did not follow up on the commission's recommendations, largely because the Vietnam War was consuming enormous sums of federal money. The riots also fueled a white backlash. Many whites opposed further reforms.

 **Checkpoint** Why was the Kerner Commission formed?

New Voices for African Americans

The racial rioting of the mid-1960s coincided with the radicalization of many African Americans, particularly young urban African Americans. Rather than advocating nonviolence and integration, they called for another approach.

Malcolm X Offers a Different Vision The most well-known African American radical was **Malcolm X**, who was born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925. He adopted the *X* to represent his lost African name. Little, he argued, was his slave name. Malcolm had a difficult childhood. In his teens, Malcolm moved to Boston and then to New York City, where he became involved in drugs and crime and landed in prison on burglary charges at age 21.

While in prison, Malcolm became a convert to the **Nation of Islam**, a religious sect headed by Elijah Muhammad. The group prescribed strict rules of behavior, including no drugs or alcohol, and demanded a separation of the races.



After his release from prison, Malcolm became the Nation of Islam's most prominent minister. In 1964, however, he broke away from the Nation of Islam and formed his own organization. He then made a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy city of Islam. Returning to the United States, he seemed willing to consider limited acceptance of whites. In February 1965, however, Malcolm X was shot and killed. Three members of the Nation of Islam were convicted of the murder.

Young Leaders Call for Black Power Many young African Americans saw themselves as heirs of the radical Malcolm X. They began to move away from the principle of nonviolence. They also began to question the goal of integration. As SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael put it:

Primary Source “Integration . . . has been based on complete acceptance of the fact that in order to have a decent house or education, blacks must move into a white neighborhood or send their children to a white school. This reinforces the notion . . . that ‘white’ is automatically better and ‘black’ is by definition inferior.”
—“What We Want,” 1966

Carmichael first used the term **“black power”** in 1966. In that year, James Meredith had set off on a “March Against Fear” across the state of Mississippi to encourage African Americans to register and vote. Meredith traveled only 20 miles before he was shot and left for dead by a white supremacist. SNCC, CORE, and SCLC members vowed to continue the march.

When they reached Greenwood, Mississippi, Carmichael and some other marchers were arrested. After his release, Carmichael told a crowd that African Americans needed “black power!” He later said that black power meant African Americans should collectively use their economic and political muscle to gain equality. Yet, many white Americans felt threatened. They believed that black power meant black violence.

Militants Form the Black Panthers Not long after Carmichael’s “black power” speech, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. Almost overnight, the **Black Panthers** became the symbol of young militant African Americans. The Black Panthers organized armed patrols of urban neighborhoods to protect people from police abuse. They also created antipoverty programs, such as free breakfasts for poor African American children. The Black Panthers gained national attention when they entered the state

Olympic Protest

At the 1968 Summer Olympics, U.S. athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised gloved fists in protest against discrimination.



● INFOGRAPHIC

Turbulent Times

The civil rights movement reached its peak in the 1960s but at a terrible cost. During the “long, hot summers” of 1965 to 1968, pent-up anger and frustration exploded into riots in African American communities across the nation. By the time the violence had subsided, hundreds of people had been killed, thousands were wounded, and neighborhoods lay in rubble. In addition to this heavy toll, assassins’ bullets claimed the lives of key figures in the civil rights movement. Malcolm X was slain in 1965. Three years later, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., shocked and grieved the nation.

King’s funeral procession in Atlanta (above).
A woman weeps as she pays her final respects. ▶

Long, Hot Summers

Six days of arson, looting, and rioting rock the Watts section of Los Angeles.

1965

Riots break out in Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities.

1966

Unrest continues. Riots occur in Detroit and Newark within a week of each other in July.

1967

King’s assassination triggers riots in more than 100 cities, the worst in Washington, D.C.

1968




A pall of smoke ▲ envelopes a city street during riots in Detroit in 1967.

Thinking Critically

- 1. Recognize Cause and Effect** What factors contributed to the outbreak of riots in the 1960s?
- 2. Predict Consequences** How do you think the events depicted here affected the civil rights movement?

capitol in Sacramento carrying shotguns and wearing black leather jackets and berets to protest attempts to restrict their right to bear arms.

The Panthers' style appealed to many young African Americans, who began to wear their hair in "Afros" and to refer to themselves as "black" rather than "Negro" or "colored." Some, following the lead of Malcolm X, changed their name and celebrated their African heritage. At the same time, the Panthers' militancy often led to violent confrontations with police. Each side accused the other of instigating the violence.

 **Checkpoint** What impact did Malcolm X have on the civil rights movement?

Martin Luther King's Final Days

Martin Luther King understood the anger and frustration of many urban African Americans whose lives had changed little despite the civil rights reforms of the 1960s. However, he disagreed with the call for "black power" and sought a nonviolent alternative to combat economic injustice. After spending about a year in Chicago's slums to protest conditions there, King made plans for a massive "Poor People's Campaign." The campaign's goal was to pressure the nation to do more to address the needs of the poor.

As part of this effort, King journeyed to Memphis, Tennessee, in early April 1968. There, he offered his assistance to sanitation workers who were striking for better wages and working conditions.

On April 3, King addressed his followers. He referred to threats that had been made against his life. "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life," King declared. "But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will."

The following day, as King stood on the balcony outside his motel room, he was struck by a shot from a high-powered rifle. He died at a hospital shortly afterward, at the age of 39. James Earl Ray, a white ex-convict, was later charged with King's murder.

Robert F. Kennedy was campaigning for the presidency in Indianapolis when he heard of King's death. RFK stopped his campaign speech to give the audience the sad news. He reminded them that he had lost his own brother to an assassin's bullet. Kennedy asked those assembled to honor King's memory by replacing their anger and desire for revenge "with an effort to understand with compassion and love." Despite Kennedy's plea, riots broke out in hundreds of cities after King's assassination. Two months later, Robert Kennedy's life, too, was cut short by an assassin.

 **Checkpoint** Why did King go to Memphis in 1968?

Significant Gains and Controversial Issues

King's assassination marked an important turning point. The protests for black freedom and racial equality that began in the mid-1950s crested in the late 1960s around the time of King's death. By then, the civil rights movement had made significant gains. Yet, white racism and the social and economic gap between many blacks and whites remained. New measures aimed at closing this gap tended to provoke more controversy than consensus in America.

Civil Rights Are Advanced The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s succeeded in eliminating legal, or de jure, segregation and knocking down barriers to African American voting and political participation. During the same period, African American poverty rates fell and the median income of African American men and women rose rapidly, as did the number of African

WITNESS HISTORY DVD

Watch *Civil Rights Martyrs* on the **United States Witness History DVD** to learn more about some of those who lost their lives in the struggle for equal rights.

Effects of the Civil Rights Movement

Quick Study

- End of legal segregation
- Passage of federal laws to protect civil rights
- End of legal barriers to African American voting and political participation
- Creation of affirmative action programs


Americans who graduated from high school. One symbol of the progress that had been made was the appointment of Thurgood Marshall as the first African American Supreme Court Justice in 1967. The following year, in the wake of King's murder, Congress passed one final civil rights measure, the Fair Housing Act, which banned discrimination in housing.

Controversial Issues Remain Attempts to increase the economic opportunities for African Americans and to integrate neighborhoods and schools encountered more difficulties. To achieve desegregated schools, the federal courts had ordered the use of forced busing. Richard Nixon, who succeeded Lyndon Johnson, criticized busing as a means of attaining racial balance.

At the same time, the Nixon administration formally established affirmative action as a means of closing the economic gap between blacks and whites. In a short period of time, colleges and universities, businesses, and local and state governments followed the federal government's lead and implemented their own affirmative action plans to increase African American representation in schools and the workforce.

Affirmative action proved controversial almost from the start. Some whites argued that it constituted reverse discrimination and violated the goal of creating a colorblind society. Justice Thurgood Marshall disagreed. "Three hundred and fifty years ago, the Negro was dragged to this country in chains to be sold into slavery," Marshall wrote. "The position of the Negro today in America is the tragic but inevitable consequence of centuries of unequal treatment."

Until the nation addressed the legacy of this unequal treatment, Marshall asserted, it would not fulfill its promise of providing equal rights and opportunities to all. This debate or controversy, as you will see in future chapters, remained unresolved.

 **Checkpoint** What gains did the civil rights movement make by the early 1970s?

SECTION

3 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-1409

Comprehension

1. Terms and People For each of the items below, write a sentence explaining its significance:

- Freedom Summer
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Voting Rights Act
- Twenty-fourth Amendment
- Kerner Commission
- Malcolm X
- Nation of Islam
- black power
- Black Panthers

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:

Summarize Use your outline to answer the Section Focus Question: What successes and challenges faced the civil rights movement after 1964?

Writing About History

3. Quick Write: Identify Sources

After constructing a hypothesis, historians look for evidence that might either prove or disprove the hypothesis. List three sources of information that you might use to test the following hypothesis: The drive for voting rights in the South could have succeeded without the involvement of the federal government.

Critical Thinking

4. Recognize Cause and Effect How did the Selma march help lead to the passage of civil rights legislation?

5. Make Comparisons How did Malcolm X's views differ from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s views?

6. Identify Points of View Why did Justice Thurgood Marshall support affirmative action?

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry

The 1940s and 1950s brought an explosion of literature that exposed the harsh discrimination African Americans faced. One of the most powerful writers of the period was the playwright Lorraine Hansberry. Her most famous work, *A Raisin in the Sun*, focuses on the struggles of a black family living in the South Side of Chicago.

In this excerpt, Lindner—a white man—tries to dissuade the family from moving into his neighborhood.

LINDNER: I am sure you people must be aware of some of the incidents which have happened in various parts of the city when colored people have moved into certain areas—Well—because we have what I think is going to be a unique type of organization in American community life—not only do we deplore that kind of thing—but we are trying to do something about it. We feel—we feel that most of the trouble in this world, . . . exists because people just don't sit down and talk to each other.

RUTH: You can say that again, mister.

LINDNER: That we don't try hard enough in this world to understand the other fellow's problems. The other guy's point of view.

RUTH: Now that's right.

LINDNER: Yes—that's the way we feel out in Clybourne Park. And that's why I was elected to come here this afternoon and talk to you people. Friendly like, you know, the way people should talk to each other. . . . As I say, the whole business is a matter of *caring* about the other fellow. Anybody can see that you are a nice family of folks, hard working and honest I'm sure. Today everybody knows what it means to be on the outside of *something*. And of course, there is always somebody who is out to take the advantage of people who don't always understand."

WALTER: What do you mean?

LINDNER: Well—you see our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens for years to build up that little community. They're not rich and fancy people; just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in. Now I don't say we are perfect and there is a lot wrong in some of the things they want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way. And at the moment the overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, when they share a common background. I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn't enter into it. It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their *own* communities.

BENETHEA: This, friends, is the Welcoming Committee!



▲ Scene from a production of *A Raisin in the Sun*

Thinking Critically

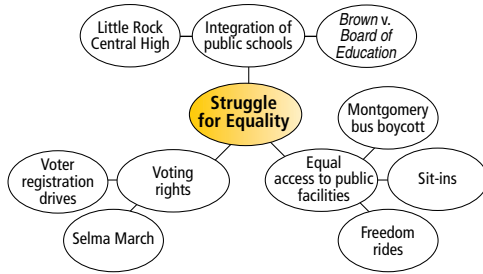
- 1. Synthesize Information** What reasons did Lindner give for not wanting the family to move into his neighborhood?
- 2. Make Inferences** What obstacles did African Americans face in gaining social equality in the 1950s?

Quick Study Guide

Progress Monitoring *Online*

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-1410

■ Struggle for Equality



■ Civil Rights Legislation

Civil Rights Act of 1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banned segregation in public accommodations Increased federal authority to enforce school desegregation Outlawed discrimination in employment on basis of race, color, and sex
Twenty-fourth Amendment (1964)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminated poll tax as voting requirement
Voting Rights Act of 1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banned literacy tests as voting requirement Empowered the federal government to supervise voter registration and elections
Fair Housing Act of 1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banned discrimination in housing

■ Civil Rights Organizations

Organization and Date Founded	Key People	Key Features
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) 1909	Thurgood Marshall	Focused on legal cases to end segregation and gain legal equality
Nation of Islam 1930	Elijah Muhammad; Malcolm X	Advocated separation of the races
Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) 1942	James Farmer	Organized peaceful protests to gain civil rights
Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) 1957	Martin Luther King, Jr.; Ralph Abernathy	Church-based group dedicated to nonviolent resistance; organized demonstrations and protest campaigns
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) 1960	James Lawson; Ella Baker; Stokely Carmichael	Grass-roots movement of young activists; organized voter education projects in the South
Black Panther Party 1966	Huey Newton; Bobby Seale	Militant group advocating armed confrontation; organized antipoverty programs

✓ Quick Study Timeline

In America

1954
Supreme Court rules school segregation unconstitutional



1955
Bus boycott begins in Montgomery, Alabama

1957
Desegregation of Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas



Presidential Terms Harry S. Truman 1945–1953 Dwight D. Eisenhower 1953–1961

1953

1956

1959

Around the World

1956
Crisis over Suez Canal

1959
Castro comes to power in Cuba

American Issues

Connector

By connecting prior knowledge with what you have learned in this chapter, you can gradually build your understanding of enduring questions that still affect America today. Answer the questions below. Then, use your American Issues Connector study guide (or go online: www.PHSchool.com **Web Code:** neh-8703).

Issues You Learned About

- **Voting Rights** Minority groups in America sometimes have had to fight for their political rights.
 1. Do you think the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did enough to ensure that African Americans would be allowed to exercise their voting rights? Consider the following:
 - the results of Freedom Summer
 - the number of African American elected officials before and after 1965
 - the percentage of southern African Americans registered to vote before and after 1965
 - the black power movement
- **Federal Power and States' Rights** The national government and the state governments sometimes disagree over the delegation of power.
 2. *Brown v. Board of Education* sparked a clash between the federal government and several southern state governments. Describe an earlier incident in which the federal government and state government disagreed over the authority of the federal government.
 3. How did Arkansas governor Orval Faubus attempt to assert his authority over that of the Supreme Court? How did President Eisenhower respond on behalf of the federal government?

- **Sectionalism and National Politics** Different regions of the country often respond to events in contradictory ways.
 4. Why was the civil rights movement centered in the South?
 5. How do you think the South and the North responded to the Voting Rights Act of 1965? Explain.

Connect to Your World

Activity

Expanding and Protecting Civil Rights As you have read, many people were injured or even lost their lives during the civil rights era, including some who were the victims of violent crimes. During the times these crimes were committed, few people were brought to justice for their actions. However, as the political climate changed over the decades, more people have been made to stand at a fair, unbiased trial. Go online or to your local library and find out about the efforts to convict those responsible for the murders of Medgar Evers, the three freedom riders, and the four young girls killed in the Birmingham Church bombing. Create a chart that contrasts the original law enforcement efforts with more recent ones.

History Interactive

For: Interactive timeline
Web Code: nep-1412

1960
Greensboro sit-ins



1963
King speaks at March on Washington



1965
Riots break out in Watts section of Los Angeles

1968
Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated

John F. Kennedy 1961–1963

Lyndon B. Johnson 1963–1969

1962

1965

1968

1961
East Germany builds the Berlin Wall

1962
Mandela is jailed in South Africa

1966
Cultural Revolution in China

Chapter Assessment

Terms and People

1. Who was **Martin Luther King, Jr.**? What did he achieve in his lifetime?
2. Define **sit-ins**. What response did the first sit-in of the civil rights movement—at a Woolworth's lunch counter in 1960—provoke throughout the South?
3. What did the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** accomplish? Who worked to push this bill through Congress?
4. What did the **Twenty-fourth Amendment** do? How did it help African Americans?
5. What was the **Kerner Commission**? What recommendations did it make?

Focus Questions

The focus question for this chapter is **What were the causes, main events, and effects of the civil rights movement?** Build an answer to this big question by answering the focus questions for Sections 1 through 3 and the Critical Thinking questions that follow.

Section 1

6. How did African Americans challenge segregation after World War II?

Section 2

7. How did the civil rights movement gain ground in the 1960s?

Section 3

8. What successes and challenges faced the civil rights movement after 1964?

Critical Thinking

9. **Decision Making** What reasoning did the Supreme Court apply in the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling?
10. **Analyze Maps** Study the map below. What civil rights campaign does this map show? Was this campaign successful?



11. **Categorize** In what general areas did civil rights activists focus their efforts? List at least three general categories along with their key victories.
12. **Analyze Information** What role did television play in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s? Do you think television contributed to the success of the movement? Explain.
13. **Comparing Points of View** How did Stokely Carmichael's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s attitudes toward the civil rights movement differ?
14. **Express Problems Clearly** Why was affirmative action begun? Explain the controversy surrounding it.

Writing About History

Writing a Research Paper Write a hypothesis about one of the following aspects of the civil rights movement: the growth of de facto segregation in the North; the Montgomery bus boycott; the role of northern volunteers in the southern civil rights movement; the urban riots of the 1960s; the conflict between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Use your hypothesis as the basis of an essay that tests the hypothesis.

Prewriting

- Identify an unanswered question about the topic you have chosen.
- Write a one-sentence hypothesis that provides a possible answer to the question.
- Use the library or Internet to find three different sources of information that can be used to support or disprove your hypothesis.

Drafting

- Write an introductory paragraph in which you identify the question you are trying to answer and propose one hypothesis. Use your hypothesis as a thesis statement for the paragraph.
- In separate paragraphs, explain how each piece of evidence you have found either supports or disproves your hypothesis.
- Write a concluding paragraph in which you restate, modify, or reject your original hypothesis.

Revising

- Use the guidelines on page SH14 of the Writing Handbook to revise your writing.



Document-Based Assessment

Civil Disobedience

During the 1960s, Martin Luther King, Jr., advocated the use of civil disobedience to end segregation in the South. What forms of civil disobedience were effective tools in ending segregation? Was nonviolence more effective than violence in achieving civil rights for African Americans? Use your knowledge of the civil rights movement and Documents A, B, C, and D to answer questions 1 through 4.

Document A

"... Unjust laws exist; shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy *is* worse than the evil. It makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and do better than it would have them?"

—Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*, 1849

Document B

"The only time I hear people talk about nonviolence is when black people move to defend themselves against white people. . . . White people beat up black people every day—Don't nobody talk about nonviolence. But as soon as black people start to move, the double standard comes into being. . . . We are on the move for our liberation. . . . We are concerned with getting the things we want, the things that we have to have to be able to function. . . . The question is, Will white people overcome their racism and allow for that to happen in this country? If that does not happen, brothers, and sisters, we have no choice but to say very clearly, 'Move over, or we're going to move on over you.'"

—Stokely Carmichael speech, 1966

Document C

Birmingham, 1963



Document D

"Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. . . . If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides—and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: 'Get rid of your discontent.' Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action."

—Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter From Birmingham Jail," 1963

- Which document advocates the use of violence if racism against African Americans is not ended?
A Document A
B Document B
C Document C
D Document D
- According to Document D, how does Martin Luther King, Jr., describe demonstrations such as freedom rides?
A unjust laws
B expression through violence
C nonviolent direct action
D discrimination
- According to Document A, what does Thoreau think about the role of government in addressing unjust laws?
A The government should listen only to the majority viewpoint.
B The government should listen to the minority viewpoint.
C Violence should be used as an option to end oppression.
D The public should be content with the laws.
- Writing Task** What do you think about the role of government depicted in Document C? How does that image contrast with the ideas of King, Thoreau, and Carmichael? Use your knowledge of the chapter content and evidence from the primary sources above to support your opinion.