

## Section 2

# Challenging Segregation

### Guide to Reading

#### Big Ideas

**Group Action** African American citizens created organizations that directed protests to demand full civil rights.

#### Content Vocabulary

- filibuster (p. 636)
- cloture (p. 636)

#### Academic Vocabulary

- register (p. 631)

#### People and Events to Identify

- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (p. 632)
- Freedom Riders (p. 634)
- James Meredith (p. 634)
- Civil Rights Act of 1964 (p. 637)
- Voting Rights Act of 1965 (p. 639)

#### Reading Strategy

**Organizing** Complete a graphic organizer about the challenges to segregation in the South.

Cause	Effect
Sit-In Movement	
Freedom Riders	

In the early 1960s, the struggle for civil rights intensified. African American citizens and white supporters created organizations that directed protests, targeted specific inequalities, and attracted the attention of the mass media and the government.

## The Sit-in Movement

**MAIN Idea** African American students staged sit-ins and formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to organize efforts for desegregation and voter registration throughout the South.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Would you risk your personal safety to participate in a sit-in? Read on to learn of the response of young people to the sit-in movement of the early 1960s.

In the fall of 1959, four young African Americans—Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair, Jr., David Richmond, and Franklin McCain—enrolled at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, an African American college in Greensboro. The four freshmen spent evenings talking about the civil rights movement. In January 1960, McNeil suggested a sit-in at the whites-only lunch counter in the nearby Woolworth's department store.

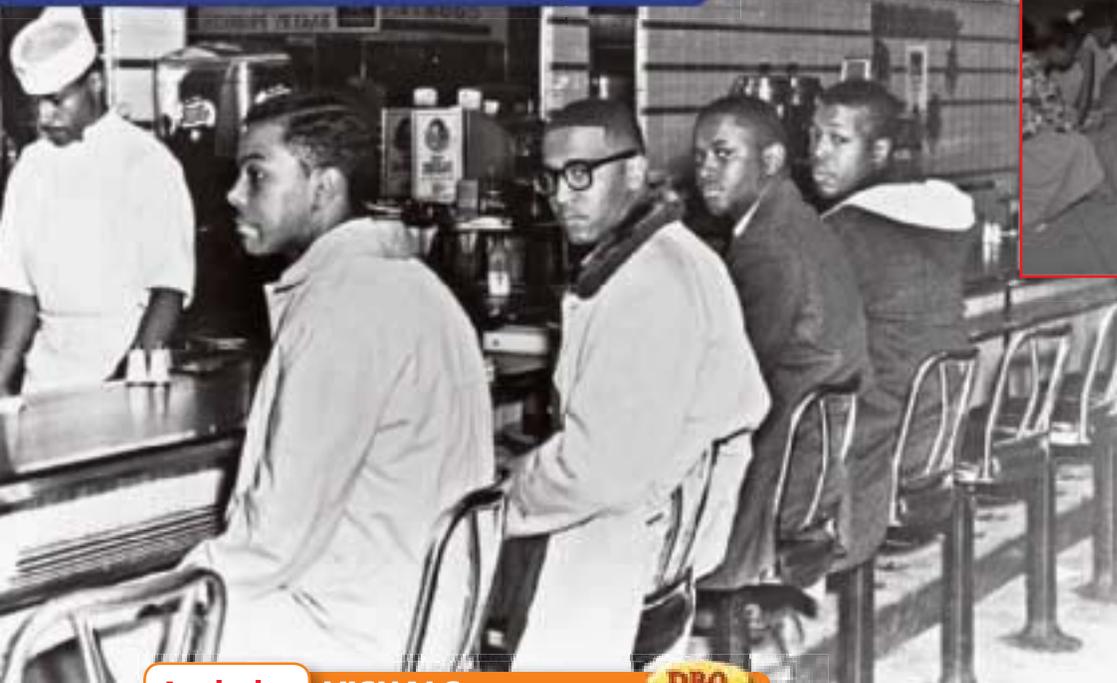
"All of us were afraid," Richmond later recalled, "but we went and did it." On February 1, 1960, the four friends entered the Woolworth's. They purchased school supplies and then sat at the lunch counter and ordered coffee. When they were refused service, Blair asked, "I beg your pardon, but you just served us at [the checkout] counter. Why can't we be served at the counter here?" The students stayed at the counter until it closed, and then announced that they would sit at the counter every day until they were given the same service as white customers.

As they left the store, the four were excited. McNeil recalled, "I just felt I had powers within me, a superhuman strength that would come forward." McCain was also energized, saying, "I probably felt better that day than I've ever felt in my life."

News of the daring sit-in at the Woolworth's store spread quickly across Greensboro. The following day, 29 African American students arrived at Woolworth's determined to sit at the counter until served. By the end of the week, over 300 students were taking part.

Starting with just four students, a new mass movement for civil rights had begun. Within two months, sit-ins had spread to 54 cities in nine states. They were staged at segregated stores, restaurants, hotels, and movie theaters. By 1961, sit-ins had been held in more than 100 cities.

## The Sit-ins Begin in Greensboro



▲ Nonviolent protests, such as this pray-in in Albany, Georgia, in 1962, spread across the nation as the civil rights movement gained momentum.

◀ Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, Billy Smith, and Clarence Henderson begin the second day of their sit-in at the whites-only Woolworth's counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960.

## Analyzing VISUALS

DBQ

- Explaining** Why did the four African American students begin the sit-in at the Woolworth's counter?
- Drawing Conclusions** Why was nonviolence so effective as a form of protest?

The sit-in movement brought large numbers of idealistic and energized college students into the civil rights struggle. Many African American students had become discouraged by the slow pace of desegregation. Students like Jesse Jackson, a student leader at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, wanted to see things change more quickly. The sit-in offered them a way to take matters into their own hands.

At first, the leaders of the NAACP and the SCLC were nervous about the sit-in campaign. They feared that students did not have the discipline to remain nonviolent if they were provoked enough. For the most part, the students proved them wrong. Those conducting sit-ins were heckled by bystanders, punched, kicked, beaten with clubs, and burned with cigarettes, hot coffee, and acid—but most did not fight back. Their heroic behavior grabbed the nation's attention.

As the sit-ins spread, student leaders in different states realized they needed to coordinate their efforts. The person who brought

them together was Ella Baker, a former NAACP official and the executive director of the SCLC. In April 1960 Baker invited student leaders to attend a convention at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. There she urged students to create their own organization instead of joining the NAACP or the SCLC. Students, she said, had “the right to direct their own affairs and even make their own mistakes.”

The students agreed with Baker and established the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**. Among SNCC's early leaders were Marion Barry, who later served as mayor of Washington, D.C., and John Lewis, who later became a member of Congress. African American college students from all across the South made up the majority of SNCC's members, although many whites also joined. Between 1960 and 1965, SNCC played a key role in desegregating public facilities in dozens of Southern communities. SNCC also began sending volunteers into rural areas of the Deep South to **register** African Americans to vote.

The idea for what came to be called the Voter Education Project began with Robert Moses, an SNCC volunteer from New York. Moses pointed out that the civil rights movement tended to focus on urban areas. He urged the SNCC to start helping rural African Americans, who often faced violence if they tried to register to vote. Despite the danger, many SNCC volunteers headed to the Deep South. Moses himself went to Mississippi. Several had their lives threatened; others were beaten, and in 1964, local officials brutally murdered three SNCC workers.

One SNCC organizer, a sharecropper named Fannie Lou Hamer, had been evicted from her farm after registering to vote. She was arrested in Mississippi for urging other African Americans to register. Police severely beat her while she was in jail. She then helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and challenged the legality of Mississippi's segregated Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

**Reading Check** **Explaining** What were the effects of the sit-in movement?

## The Freedom Riders

**MAIN Idea** Teams of African Americans and whites rode buses into the South to protest the continued illegal segregation on interstate bus lines.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Is it acceptable to risk provoking violence in order to advance a cause you support? Read to learn about the violence that erupted against the Freedom Riders and against Martin Luther King, Jr.'s march in Birmingham.

Despite rulings outlawing segregation in interstate bus service, bus travel remained segregated in much of the South. In 1961 CORE leader James Farmer asked teams of African American and white volunteers, many of whom were college students, to travel into the South to draw attention to its refusal to integrate bus terminals. The teams became known as the **Freedom Riders**.

In early May 1961, the first Freedom Riders boarded several southbound interstate buses. When the buses arrived in Anniston, Birmingham, and Montgomery, Alabama, angry white mobs attacked them. The mobs

## The Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1965

**May 1954**

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, Supreme Court declares segregated schools unconstitutional

**December 1956**

Supreme Court declares separate-but-equal doctrine is no longer constitutional

**January 1957**

Martin Luther King, Jr., and other Southern ministers create SCLC



**May 1961**

James Farmer organizes the first Freedom Riders to desegregate interstate bus travel

1955

**December 1955**

Rosa Parks is arrested and Montgomery Bus Boycott begins



1957

**September 1957**

Arkansas governor Faubus blocks desegregation of Little Rock High School, forcing Eisenhower to send troops to the school



1959

1961

**February 1960**

Students in Greensboro, North Carolina, stage a sit-in at a local lunch counter; as sit-ins spread, student leaders form SNCC in April

slit the bus tires and threw rocks at the windows. In Anniston, someone threw a firebomb into one bus, but fortunately no one was killed.

In Birmingham the riders emerged from a bus to face a gang of young men armed with baseball bats, chains, and lead pipes. The gang beat the riders viciously. One witness later reported, "You couldn't see their faces through the blood." The head of the police in Birmingham, Public Safety Commissioner Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Connor, explained that there had been no police at the bus station because it was Mother's Day, and he had given many of his officers the day off. FBI evidence later showed that Connor had contacted the local Ku Klux Klan and told them to beat the Freedom Riders until "it looked like a bulldog got a hold of them."

The violence in Alabama made national news, shocking many Americans. The attack on the Freedom Riders came less than four months after President John F. Kennedy took office. The new president felt compelled to get the violence under control.

## Kennedy and Civil Rights

While campaigning for the presidency in 1960, John F. Kennedy promised to actively support the civil rights movement if elected. His brother, Robert F. Kennedy, had used his influence to get Dr. King released from jail after a demonstration in Georgia. African Americans responded by voting overwhelmingly for Kennedy. Their votes helped him narrowly win several key states, including Illinois, which Kennedy carried by only 9,000 votes.

Once in office, however, Kennedy at first seemed as cautious as Eisenhower on civil rights, which disappointed many African Americans. Kennedy knew he needed the support of many Southern senators to get other programs through Congress and that any attempt to push through new civil rights legislation would anger them. Congressional Republicans repeatedly reminded the public of Kennedy's failure to follow through on his campaign promise to push for civil rights for African Americans.



**May 1963**  
Martin Luther King, Jr., leads protests in Birmingham, Alabama; police assault the protesters and King is jailed

**March 1965**  
King leads a march in Selma, Alabama, to build support for a new voting rights law; police brutally attack marchers



**August 3, 1965**  
Congress passes the Voting Rights Act of 1965

1963

1965



**September 1962**  
James Meredith tries to register at University of Mississippi; riots force Kennedy to send troops

**August 1963**  
King delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech during the March on Washington in support of new civil rights act

**July 1964**  
Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law

### Analyzing TIME LINES

- Identifying** According to the time line, what was the first major event in the civil rights movement?
- Analyzing** How many years were there between the *Brown* decision and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?
- Stating** When were the Freedom Riders organized?

Kennedy did, however, name approximately 40 African Americans to high-level positions in the government. He also appointed Thurgood Marshall to a federal judgeship on the Second Circuit Appeals Court in New York—one level below the Supreme Court and the highest judicial position an African American had attained to that point. Kennedy created the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity (CEEEO) to stop the federal bureaucracy from discriminating against African Americans in hiring and promotions.

### The Justice Department Takes Action

Although President Kennedy was unwilling to challenge Southern Democrats in Congress, he allowed the Justice Department, run by his brother Robert, to actively support the civil rights movement. Robert Kennedy tried to help African Americans register to vote by having the civil rights division of the Justice Department file lawsuits across the South.

When violence erupted against the Freedom Riders, the Kennedys came to their aid as well, although not at first. At the time the Freedom Riders took action, President Kennedy was preparing for a meeting with Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union. Kennedy did not want violence in the South to disrupt the meeting by giving the impression that his country was weak and divided.

After the Freedom Riders were attacked in Montgomery, the Kennedys publicly urged them to stop the rides and give everybody a “cooling off” period. James Farmer replied that African Americans “have been cooling off now for 350 years. If we cool off anymore, we’ll be in a deep freeze.” Instead, he announced that the Freedom Riders planned to head into Mississippi on their next trip.

To stop the violence, President Kennedy made a deal with Senator James Eastland of Mississippi, a strong supporter of segregation. If Eastland would use his influence in Mississippi to prevent violence, Kennedy would not object if the Mississippi police arrested the Freedom Riders. Eastland kept the deal. No violence occurred when the buses arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, but the riders were arrested.

The cost of bailing the Freedom Riders out of jail used up most of CORE’s funds, which meant that the rides would have to end unless

more money could be found. When Thurgood Marshall learned of the situation, he offered James Farmer the use of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund’s huge bail bond account to keep the rides going.

When President Kennedy returned from meeting with Khrushchev and found that the Freedom Riders were still active, he changed his approach. He ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to tighten its regulations against segregated bus terminals. In the meantime, Robert Kennedy ordered the Justice Department to take legal action against Southern cities that maintained segregated bus terminals. The actions of the ICC and the Justice Department finally produced results. By late 1962, segregation in interstate bus travel had come to an end.

**James Meredith** As the Freedom Riders were trying to desegregate interstate bus lines, efforts continued to integrate Southern schools. On the day John F. Kennedy was inaugurated, an African American air force veteran named **James Meredith** applied for a transfer to the University of Mississippi. Up to that point, the university had avoided complying with the Supreme Court ruling ending segregated education.

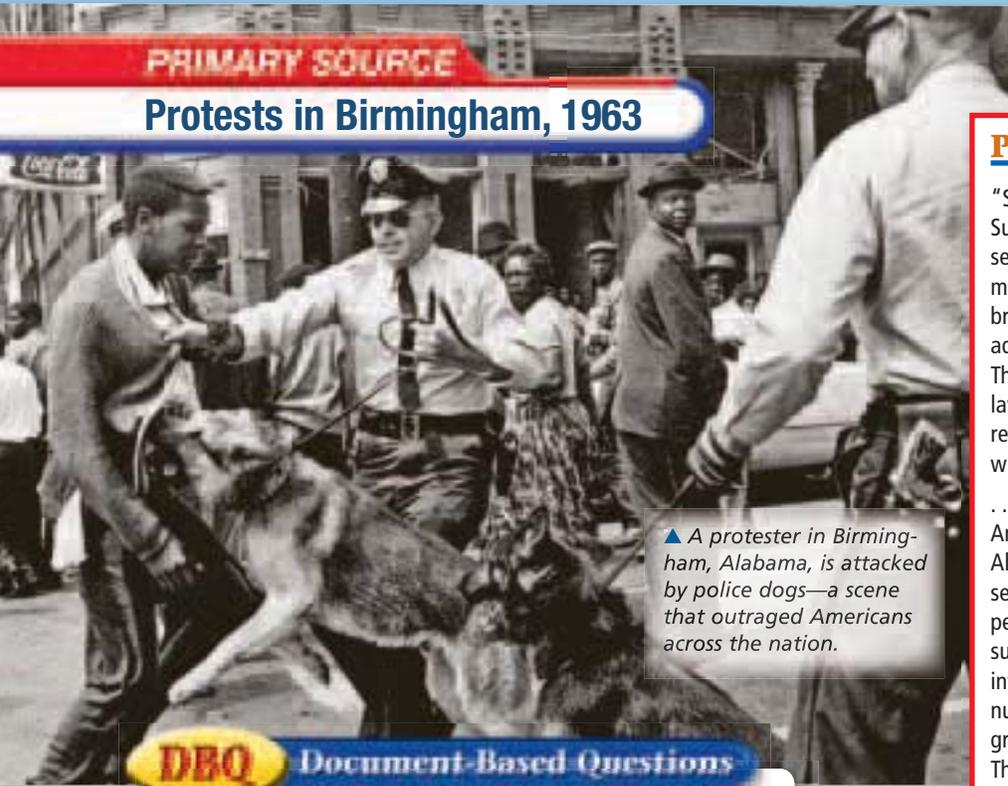
In September 1962, Meredith tried to register at the university’s admissions office, only to find Ross Barnett, the governor of Mississippi, blocking his path. Meredith had a court order directing the university to register him, but Governor Barnett stated emphatically, “Never! We will never surrender to the evil and illegal forces of tyranny.”

Frustrated, President Kennedy dispatched 500 federal marshals to escort Meredith to the campus. Shortly after Meredith and the marshals arrived, an angry white mob attacked the campus, and a full-scale riot erupted. The mob hurled rocks, bottles, bricks, and acid at the marshals. Some people fired shotguns at them. The marshals responded with tear gas, but they were under orders not to fire.

The fighting continued all night. By morning, 160 marshals had been wounded. Reluctantly, Kennedy ordered the army to send several thousand troops to the campus. For the rest of the year, Meredith attended classes at the University of Mississippi under federal guard. He graduated in August.

PRIMARY SOURCE

## Protests in Birmingham, 1963



▲ A protester in Birmingham, Alabama, is attacked by police dogs—a scene that outraged Americans across the nation.

DBQ

### Document-Based Questions

- 1. Classifying** According to Dr. King, what are the two types of laws? What is the difference between them?
- 2. Determining Cause and Effect** What does King say are the effects of segregation on the segregator? On the segregated?

### PRIMARY SOURCE

"Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. . . . [and] one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that 'an unjust law is no law at all.' . . . Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. . . . An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal."

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

## Violence in Birmingham

The events in Mississippi frustrated Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders. Although they were pleased that Kennedy had intervened, they were disappointed that the president had not seized the moment to push for a new civil rights law.

Reflecting on the problem, Dr. King came to a difficult decision. It seemed to him that only when violence got out of hand would the federal government intervene. "We've got to have a crisis to bargain with," one of his advisers observed. King agreed. In the spring of 1963, he decided to launch demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, knowing they would provoke a violent response. He believed it was the only way to get President Kennedy to actively support civil rights.

The situation in Birmingham was volatile. Public Safety Commissioner Bull Connor, who had arranged for the attack on the Freedom Riders, was now running for mayor. Eight days after the protests began, King was arrested. While in jail, King began writing on scraps of

paper that had been smuggled into his cell. The "Letter from Birmingham Jail" that he produced is one of the most eloquent defenses of nonviolent protest ever written.

In his letter, King explained that although the protesters were breaking the law, they were following a higher moral law based on divine justice. Injustice, he insisted, had to be exposed "to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured."

After King was released, the protests, which had been dwindling, began to grow again. Bull Connor responded with force. He ordered the Birmingham police to use clubs, police dogs, and high-pressure fire hoses on the demonstrators. Millions of Americans watched the graphic violence on the nightly news on television. Outraged by the brutality and worried that the government was losing control, Kennedy ordered his aides to prepare a new civil rights bill.



**Evaluating** How did President Kennedy help the civil rights movement?

# The Civil Rights Act of 1964

**MAIN Idea** President Johnson used his political expertise to get the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Do you remember the constitutional amendments that granted African Americans civil rights after the Civil War? Read on to learn about new legal steps taken during the 1960s.

Determined to introduce a civil rights bill, Kennedy now waited for a dramatic moment to address the nation on the issue. Alabama's governor, George Wallace, gave the president his chance. At his inauguration as governor, Wallace had stated, "I draw a line in the dust . . . and I say, Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!" On June 11, 1963, Wallace stood in front of the University of Alabama's admissions office to block two African Americans from enrolling. He stayed until federal marshals ordered him to move.

The next day a white segregationist murdered Medgar Evers, a civil rights activist in Mississippi. President Kennedy seized the moment to announce his civil rights bill. That evening, he spoke to Americans about a "moral issue . . . as old as the scriptures and as clear as the American Constitution":

## PRIMARY SOURCE

"The heart of the question is whether . . . we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him . . . then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place?

One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. . . . And this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free. . . . Now the time has come for this Nation to fulfill its promise."

—from Kennedy's White House address, June 11, 1963

## The March on Washington

Dr. King realized that Kennedy would have a very difficult time pushing his civil rights bill through Congress. Therefore, he searched for a way to lobby Congress and to build more public support. When A. Philip Randolph suggested a march on Washington, King agreed.

On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 demonstrators of all races flocked to the nation's capital. The audience heard speeches and sang hymns and songs as they gathered peacefully near the Lincoln Memorial. Dr. King then delivered a powerful speech outlining his dream of freedom and equality for all Americans.

King's speech and the peacefulness and dignity of the March on Washington built momentum for the civil rights bill. Opponents in Congress, however, continued to do what they could to slow the bill down, dragging out their committee investigations and using procedural rules to delay votes.

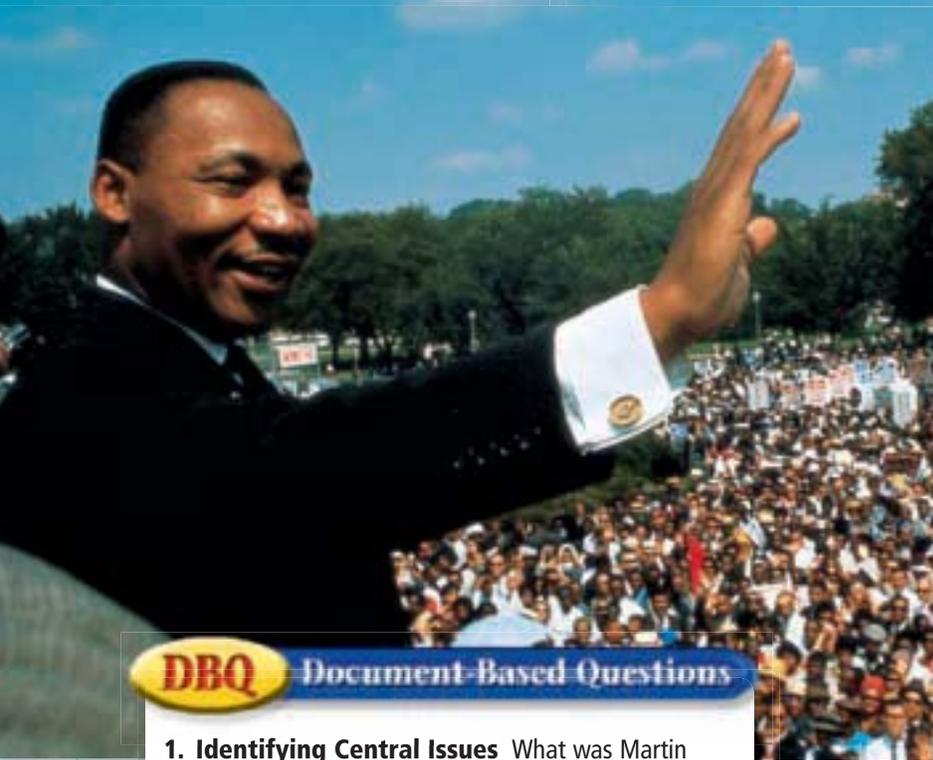
## The Bill Becomes Law

Although the civil rights bill was likely to pass the House of Representatives, where a majority of Republicans and Northern Democrats supported the measure, it faced a much more difficult time in the Senate. There, a small group of determined Southern senators would try to block the bill indefinitely.

In the U.S. Senate, senators are allowed to speak for as long as they like when a bill is being debated. The Senate cannot vote on a bill until all senators have finished speaking. A **filibuster** occurs when a small group of senators take turns speaking and refuse to stop the debate and allow a bill to come to a vote. Today a filibuster can be stopped if at least 60 senators vote for **cloture**, a motion that cuts off debate and forces a vote. In the 1960s, however, 67 senators had to vote for cloture to stop a filibuster. This meant that a minority of senators opposed to civil rights could easily prevent the majority from enacting a new civil rights law.

Worried that the bill would never pass, many African Americans became even more disheartened. Then, President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963, and his vice president, Lyndon Johnson, became president. Johnson was from Texas and

## Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Address, Washington, 1963


**DBQ** Document-Based Questions

- 1. Identifying Central Issues** What was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream?
- 2. Interpreting** What did King mean when he said that he hoped that one day the nation will "live out the true meaning of its creed"?

had been the leader of the Senate Democrats before becoming vice president. Although he had helped pass the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960, he had done so by weakening their provisions and by compromising with other Southern senators.

To the surprise of the civil rights movement, Johnson committed himself wholeheartedly to getting Kennedy's program, including the civil rights bill, through Congress. Johnson had served in Congress for many years and was adept at getting legislation enacted. He knew how to build public support, how to put pressure on Congress, and how to use the rules and procedures to get what he wanted.

In February 1964, President Johnson's leadership began to produce results. The civil rights bill passed the House of Representatives by a majority of 290 to 130. The debate then moved to the Senate. In June, after 87 days of filibuster, the Senate finally voted to end debate by a margin of 71 to 29—four votes over the two-thirds needed for cloture. The Senate then eas-

ily passed the bill. On July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** into law.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the most comprehensive civil rights law Congress had ever enacted. It gave the federal government broad power to prevent racial discrimination in a number of areas. The law made segregation illegal in most places of public accommodation, and it gave citizens of all races and nationalities equal access to public facilities. The law gave the U.S. attorney general more power to bring lawsuits to force school desegregation and required private employers to end discrimination in the workplace. It also established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as a permanent agency in the federal government. This commission monitors the ban on job discrimination by race, religion, gender, and national origin.

 **Examining** How did Dr. King lobby Congress to pass a new civil rights act?

## PRIMARY SOURCE

"And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, 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 creed: '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 slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. . . .

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!

. . . And when this happens, when we allow freedom to 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 Gentiles, 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!"

—Martin Luther King, Jr.,  
"Address in Washington," 1963



To read more of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, see page R56 in **Documents in American History**.

# The Struggle for Voting Rights

**MAIN Idea** President Johnson called for a new voting rights law after hostile crowds severely beat civil rights demonstrators.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Do you remember the tactics Southern states adopted to keep African Americans from voting? Read on to learn about the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Even after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, voting rights were far from secure. The act had focused on segregation and job discrimination, and it did little to address voting issues. The Twenty-fourth Amendment, ratified in 1964, helped somewhat by eliminating poll taxes, or fees paid in order to vote, in federal (but not state) elections. African Americans still faced hurdles, however, when they tried to vote. As the SCLC and SNCC stepped up their voter registration efforts in the South, their members were often attacked and beaten, and several were murdered.

Across the South, bombs exploded in African American businesses and churches. Between June and October 1964, arson and bombs destroyed 24 African American churches in Mississippi alone. Convinced that a new law was needed to protect African American voting rights, Dr. King decided to stage another dramatic protest.

## The Selma March

In January 1965, the SCLC and Dr. King selected Selma, Alabama, as the focal point for their campaign for voting rights. Although African Americans made up a majority of Selma's population, they comprised only 3 percent of registered voters. To prevent African Americans from registering to vote, Sheriff Jim Clark had deputized and armed dozens of white citizens. His posse terrorized African Americans and frequently attacked demonstrators with clubs and electric cattle prods.

In December 1964, Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, for his work in the civil rights movement. A few weeks

### PRIMARY SOURCE

## Marching for Freedom, Selma, 1965

### The Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Gave the federal government power to prevent racial discrimination and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
- Made segregation illegal in most places of public accommodation.
- Gave the U.S. attorney general more power to bring lawsuits to force school desegregation.
- Required employers to end workplace discrimination.

### The Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Authorized the U.S. attorney general to send federal examiners to register qualified voters.
- Suspended discriminatory devices, such as literacy tests, in counties where less than half of all adults had been allowed to vote.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Coretta Scott King,  
Dr. King's wife

### Analyzing VISUALS

- 1. Making Connections** How did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 work to end segregation?
- 2. Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think counties where less than half of all adults were allowed to vote were a focus of the Voting Rights Acts of 1965?

## Section 2 REVIEW

later, King announced, “We are not asking, we are demanding the ballot.” King’s demonstrations in Selma led to the arrest of approximately 2,000 African Americans, including schoolchildren, by Sheriff Clark. Clark’s men attacked and beat many of the demonstrators, and Selma quickly became a major story in the national news.

To keep pressure on the president and Congress to act, Dr. King joined with SNCC activists and organized a “march for freedom” from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery, a distance of about 50 miles (80 km). On Sunday, March 7, 1965, the march began. The SCLC’s Hosea Williams and SNCC’s John Lewis led 500 protesters toward U.S. Highway 80, the route that marchers had planned to follow to Montgomery.

As the protesters approached the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which led out of Selma, Sheriff Clark ordered them to disperse. While the marchers kneeled in prayer, more than 200 state troopers and deputized citizens rushed the demonstrators. Many were beaten in full view of television cameras. This brutal attack, known later as “Bloody Sunday,” left 70 African Americans hospitalized and many more injured.

The nation was stunned as it viewed the shocking footage of law enforcement officers beating peaceful demonstrators. Watching the events from the White House, President Johnson became furious. Eight days later, he appeared before a nationally televised joint session of the legislature to propose a new voting rights law.

### The Voting Rights Act of 1965

On August 3, 1965, the House of Representatives passed the voting rights bill by a wide margin. The following day, the Senate also passed the bill. The **Voting Rights Act of 1965** authorized the U.S. attorney general to send federal examiners to register qualified voters, bypassing local officials who often refused to register African Americans. The law also suspended discriminatory devices, such as literacy tests, in counties where less than half of all adults had been registered to vote.

The results were dramatic. By the end of the year, almost 250,000 African Americans had registered as new voters. The number of African American elected officials in the South also increased. In 1965, only about 100 African Americans held elected office; by 1990 more than 5,000 did.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 marked a turning point in the civil rights movement. The movement had now achieved its two major legislative goals. Segregation had been outlawed and new federal laws were in place to prevent discrimination and protect voting rights. After 1965, the movement began to shift its focus to the problem of achieving full social and economic equality for African Americans. As part of that effort, the movement turned its attention to the problems of African Americans trapped in poverty and living in ghettos in many of the nation’s major cities.

 **Summarizing** How did the Twenty-fourth Amendment affect African American voting rights?

### Vocabulary

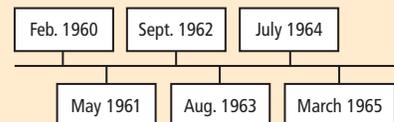
**1. Explain** the significance of: SNCC, Freedom Riders, James Meredith, filibuster, cloture, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965.

### Main Ideas

- 2. Describing** What was the purpose of the SNCC?
- 3. Summarizing** How did the Freedom Riders help the civil rights movement?
- 4. Explaining** Why did Dr. King lead the March on Washington in 1963?
- 5. Analyzing** What was “Bloody Sunday”? How did President Johnson respond?

### Critical Thinking

- 6. Big Ideas** How did television help the civil rights movement?
- 7. Sequencing** Use a time line similar to the one below to sequence the events in the civil rights movement.



- 8. Analyzing Visuals** Study the photographs in this section. What elements of the photographs show the sacrifices African Americans made in the civil rights movement?

### Writing About History

- 9. Descriptive Writing** Assume the role of a journalist working for a college newspaper in 1960. Write an article for the newspaper describing the sit-in movement, including its participants, goals, and achievements.

**History**  **ONLINE**

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# ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

## The Civil Rights Movement

Although major figures of the civil rights movement such as Martin Luther King, Jr., are widely remembered today, the movement drew its strength from the dedication of grass-roots supporters. In rural and urban areas across the South, ordinary individuals advanced the movement through their participation in marches, boycotts, and voter registration drives. Those who dared to make a stand against discrimination risked being fired from their job, evicted from their home, and becoming the target of physical violence.

*Study these primary sources and answer the questions that follow.*

### PRIMARY SOURCE 1

#### Public Testimony, 1964

In 1964, the “Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party” challenged the right of Mississippi’s established (all white) Democratic Party representatives to seats at the party’s national convention on the grounds that African Americans had been systematically denied the right to vote.

“[M]y husband came, and said the plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tried to register [to vote] and before he quit talking the plantation owner came, and said, ‘Fannie Lou, do you know—did Pap tell you what I said?’ And I said, ‘Yes sir.’ He said, ‘I mean that . . . If you don’t go down and withdraw . . . well—you might have to go because we are not ready for that.’ . . .

And I addressed him and told him and said, ‘I didn’t try to register for you. I tried to register for myself.’

I had to leave the same night.

On the 10th of September, 1962, 16 bullets was fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also Mr. Joe McDonald’s house was shot in.

And in June, the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop, was returning back to Mississippi. . . . I stepped off the bus . . . and somebody screamed . . . ‘Get that one there,’ and when I went to get in the car, when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail. . . . [The patrolmen] left my cell and it wasn’t too long before they came back. He said ‘You are from Ruleville all right,’ and he used a curse word, he said, ‘We are going to beat you until you wish you was dead.’ . . .

All of this on account we want to register, to become first-class citizens, and if the freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America, is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave where we have to sleep with our telephones off the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings in America?”

—Fannie Lou Hamer testifying before the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention, August 22, 1964

### PRIMARY SOURCE 2

#### Photograph, c. 1964

“Freedom Schools” taught literacy and African American history and encouraged voter registration.



### PRIMARY SOURCE 3

#### Strategy Memo, April 1960

“The choice of the non-violent method, ‘the sit-in,’ symbolizes both judgment and promise. It is a judgment upon middle-class conventional half-way efforts to deal with radical social evil. It is specifically a judgment upon contemporary civil rights attempts. As one high school student from Chattanooga exclaimed, ‘We started because we were tired of waiting for you to act. . . .’”

—James M. Lawson, Jr., “From a Lunch-Counter Stool,” April 1960, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers

### Autobiography, 1968

"[At Tougaloo College] I had become very friendly with my social science professor, John Salter, who was in charge of NAACP activities on campus. All during the year, while the NAACP conducted a boycott of the downtown stores in Jackson, I had been one of Salter's most faithful canvassers and church speakers. During the last week of school, he told me that sit-in demonstrations were about to start in Jackson and that he wanted me to be the spokesman for a team that would sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter. The two other demonstrators would be classmates of mine, Memphis and Pearlana. . . .

Seconds before 11:15 we were occupying three seats at the previously segregated Woolworth's lunch counter. In the beginning the waitresses seemed to ignore us, as if they really didn't know what was going on. Our waitress walked past us a couple of times before she noticed we had started to write our own orders down and realized we wanted service. She asked us what we wanted. We began to read to her from our order slips. She told us that we would be served at the back counter, which was for Negroes.

'We would like to be served here,' I said.

The waitress started to repeat what she had said, then stopped in the middle of the sentence. She turned the lights out behind the counter, and she and the other waitresses almost ran to the back of the store, deserting all their white customers. I guess they thought that violence would start immediately after the whites at the counter realized what was going on.

At noon, students from a nearby white high school started pouring in to Woolworth's. When they first saw us they were sort of surprised. . . . Then the white students started chanting all kinds of anti-Negro slogans. We were called a little bit of everything. . . .

Memphis suggested that we pray. We bowed our heads, and all hell broke loose. A man rushed forward, threw Memphis from his seat, and slapped my face. Then another man who worked in the store threw me against

### Photograph, 1963

▼ Lunch counter sit-in May 28, 1963, in Jackson, Mississippi. Seated (from left to right) are John Salter, Joan Trumpauer, and Anne Moody.



an adjoining counter. . . . The mob started smearing us with ketchup, mustard, sugar, pies, and everything on the counter. . . .

About ninety policemen were standing outside the store; they had been watching the whole thing through the windows, but had not come in to stop the mob or do anything. . . .

After the sit-in, all I could think of was how sick Mississippi whites were. They believed so much in the segregated Southern way of life, they would kill to preserve it. . . . Now I knew it was impossible for me to hate sickness. The whites had a disease, an incurable disease in its final stage. What were our chances against such a disease?"

—Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

### DBQ Document-Based Questions

- Identifying** In Source 1, what sorts of repercussions did Fannie Lou Hamer endure for daring to register to vote? How do you think such tactics affected the civil rights movement?
- Interpreting** Study the photograph in Source 2. Who seems to be teaching whom? Why do you think the civil rights movement attracted so many young people?
- Evaluating** Read the passage in Source 3 and study the photograph in Source 5. Why do you think nonviolent demonstrations were effective for the civil rights movement?
- Making Inferences** Read Source 4. Why do you think Anne Moody wanted to try to force integration of the lunch counter? Why would she risk physical harm to do so?