

The Struggle for Civil Rights

FL SS.912.A.7.5 Compare nonviolent and violent approaches utilized by groups (African Americans, women, Native Americans, Hispanics) to achieve civil rights.

Vocabulary Builder: **facilitate** (fah SIL i tate) *v.* to make something easy or easier to do;
grievance (GREEV ance) *n.* a cause for complaint or resentment

The 1960s and 1970s saw a number of minority groups using violent and nonviolent methods to promote public awareness of the social wrongs they suffered and to bring about change.

African American

Years of boycotts, sit-ins, and other nonviolent protests led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., inspired the March on Washington in 1963. The march was planned to pressure Congress to pass civil rights legislation. The March on Washington was one of the largest political demonstrations in U.S. history. Over 200,000 people took part in the march, yet it remained a peaceful protest. Standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr. King gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. His speech, along with the crowd of nonviolent demonstrators, influenced public opinion toward favoring civil rights legislation.

For all their progress, many African Americans were still prevented from voting in the South. Literacy tests, poll taxes, and intimidation continued to keep them from the voting booths. In the summer of 1964, a civil rights group called the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) turned its full attention to voting rights in the South. Freedom Summer, as they called it, met with massive resistance from both citizens and governments. Three SNCC volunteers were murdered, and there were several violent clashes. President Johnson was a vocal advocate for change and called for a federal voting rights law. As a result of the protest and the president’s call to action, the Voting Rights Act was passed by Congress in 1965. It outlawed literacy tests and allowed the federal government to oversee voter registration. Federal officials went to the South to register voters. Combined with the passage of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment in 1964, which outlawed the poll tax, the act caused African American voter registration to increase dramatically. In Mississippi, a center of civil rights protest and white resistance, African American voter registration rose from about 7 percent in 1964 to around 60 percent in 1968.

Women

Women’s rights groups became active and vocal in the early 1960s. Some were offshoots of other civil rights movements. Even in civil rights groups, women discovered that they were still subject to discriminatory attitudes. Women used a variety of nonviolent methods to gain support for women’s issues. They held marches and rallies, they lobbied government officials, and they filed lawsuits to facilitate change.

Native Americans

The Red Power or Native Americans civil rights movement reached public attention in 1961 in response to the termination movement. The termination movement was the government’s plan to develop “independence” for Native Americans by withdrawing assistance such as health care. Approximately 700 Native Americans representing 64 different Native American nations held a conference in Chicago to oppose the termination movement. The conference produced the Declaration of Indian Purpose, which condemned the termination movement and declared the determination of Native Americans to control their own lives. The Red Power movement became

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violent at times, including the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island, the 1972 takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters, and the 1973 standoff with Federal Marshalls at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.

Hispanics

In the 1960s farm workers became more vocal in their demands for better pay. César Chávez and the National Farm Workers Association drew attention to their grievances by taking their strike to the grocery stores and picketing in front of them. Numerous other Hispanic groups became active during the 1970s, including the Chicano movement which, like the Black Power movement, worked to instill ethnic pride. Some groups, such as the Brown Berets, were more militant and violent.

Check for Understanding What are examples of some nonviolent forms of protest used by civil rights groups in the 1960s?

Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement

FL **SS.912.A.7.6** Assess key figures and organizations in shaping the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement.

Vocabulary Builder: **boycott** (BOI cot) *v.* to refuse to deal with an organization or company as a protest against it; **encompass** (in COM pass) *v.* to include a wide range

Freedoms that Americans considered to be theirs by automatic right, guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, did not extend to everyone. In the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans became more vocal in demanding equal treatment as U. S. citizens. Several people and groups were important in shaping this Civil Rights Movement.

Rosa Parks

On December 1, 1955, a black woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. Since city law in Montgomery, Alabama required African Americans to surrender bus seats to white bus patrons, Rosa Parks was arrested for breaking this law. Her arrest led to the Montgomery bus boycott, a beginning of the post-World War II Civil Rights Movement.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

A Baptist minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., advocated nonviolent protest as demonstrated by India's Mohandas Gandhi. King and his followers were victims of threats and violence, but they continued to meet these threats with patience, prayer, and a refusal to back down. The bus boycott brought Dr. King to national attention. With another minister, King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to encourage and coordinate nonviolent protests.

SNCC

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was founded in 1960. Composed mostly of young African Americans, the SNCC worked to create a strong movement encompassing all classes of African Americans. In 1964 the SNCC staged what they called Freedom Summer to help African Americans across the state of Mississippi register to vote. Although the event began with the murder of three workers, the SNCC continued its efforts to register African American voters.

Malcolm X

The violence directed at African American protesters led some African Americans to take a more militant response. Malcolm X was one of the first. A Nation of Islam minister, Malcolm X preached self-reliance and self-protection for African Americans. Unlike Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X did not support integration. Rather, he sought separation of the races in order for African Americans to retain a unique identity and racial unity. He advocated black pride and black nationalism.

Stokely Carmichael

The term Black Power was first used in 1966 by Stokely Carmichael. Many whites understood the term to mean a violent, militant movement. Carmichael, however, said he meant that African Americans should use their collective power to achieve equality.

Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement (continued)

Black Panthers

The most militant organization, the Black Panthers, was formed in Oakland, California, in the mid-1960s. Black Panthers set up armed patrols in urban neighborhoods to protect African Americans from police brutality. They also provided free breakfasts for poor African American children. For much of white America, the Black Panthers symbolized the most militant side of the Civil Rights Movement.

Check for Understanding How did the views of Malcolm X differ from those of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?

The Ongoing Struggle for Civil Rights



SS.912.A.7.7 Assess the building of coalitions between African Americans, whites, and other groups in achieving integration and equal rights.

Vocabulary Builder: **prominent** (PRŌM I nent) *adj.* well known, distinguished

Prominent individuals such as Eleanor Roosevelt, President John F. Kennedy, and his brother Robert Kennedy were all outspoken in their support for civil rights. But other, less well-known people gave their time and efforts to build coalitions between various groups.

Sit-in Protests

In Jackson, Mississippi on May 28, 1963, three black students began a sit-in at a lunch counter that refused to serve blacks. In this nonviolent protest, they were assisted by white students, a white professor, and a Native American professor. Working together, they produced a solid, peaceful front even when treated harshly by those around them.

March on Washington

On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 people converged on Washington, D.C. They came from all walks of life and represented many different backgrounds, but they all came to support civil rights. Over one-fourth of the participants were white.

Freedom Summer

The summer of 1964 saw a push by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to help African Americans in Mississippi register to vote. The work was conducted by volunteers, most of whom were upper middle-class white students from northern states. These volunteers were trained by SNCC representatives who came from poor African American families.

Poor People's Campaign

Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated before he could see his dream of a unified protest against poverty take place. The Poor People's Campaign was held in May, 1968. The goal of the event was to demonstrate the diversity of the nation's poor. Poor African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and white Americans all came together and occupied the National Mall in Washington, D.C. They pitched their tents and prepared to stay. They called their tent village Resurrection City. Although the protest itself was a failure, it was an attempt to show the nation that poverty was not confined to any one ethnic group.

Check for Understanding How did African Americans and whites work together for civil rights during Freedom Summer?

Supreme Court Decisions and Civil Rights



SS.912.A.7.8 Analyze significant Supreme Court decisions relating to integration, busing, affirmative action, the rights of the accused, and reproductive rights.

Vocabulary Builder: reinforce (ree ihn FORS) *v.* to strengthen

Integration and Busing

The 1896 Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* reinforced segregation. The Court ruled that segregation was legal as long as “separate but equal” facilities were provided. In fact, separate schools and other facilities for African Americans were rarely, if ever, equal to those for whites.

In 1951, Oliver Brown sued the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. Under Topeka’s segregation laws, Brown’s daughter Linda had to travel a great distance to a rundown segregated school for African Americans. Brown wanted Linda to attend a school closer to her home, which had better facilities. But the principal refused, saying that the school was for whites only. When the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* reached the Supreme Court, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) provided legal help. Thurgood Marshall, who would later become a justice on the Supreme Court, led the NAACP’s legal team. Marshall argued that segregation made equal education impossible. The Supreme Court agreed. On May 17, 1954, all nine justices of the Supreme Court ruled that “in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place.” A year later, the Court ordered local school boards to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.”

The legal decision was only the first step in integrating schools. Urban schools were in effect segregated because neighborhoods themselves were segregated, and students attended their neighborhood school. Suburban areas tended to be white, so those schools were largely populated by white students. Busing was the method used to deal with this inequity. Various cities began busing urban students to suburban schools and suburban students to inner city schools. Students were also bused to different cities. This met with great resistance, and many cities were involved in legal battles over the issue.

Affirmative Action

The concept of affirmative action was to make education and jobs more available to women and minorities. With affirmative action, schools and companies were required to meet certain guidelines for minority employment or enrollment. Preference was given to minorities. This was challenged in 1978 with *Regents of the University of California v Bakke*. Alan Bakke had been denied enrollment in the U.C. Davis medical program even though he was more qualified than many minority students who had been accepted to the medical school. Under affirmative action, the medical school had reserved 16 of the 100 openings for minorities. Although the Supreme Court ruled that this policy was unconstitutional, the decision did say that race could be used as one factor in the admissions process.

Supreme Court Decisions and Civil Rights (continued)

Rights of the Accused

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed several major decisions regarding the rights of the accused. In *Mapp v. Ohio*, 1961, the Court ruled that illegally obtained evidence is not admissible in court. In *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 1963, the Court found that all accused have a right to a lawyer, even if they cannot afford one. Later rulings extended this to say that the accused had to be offered access to a lawyer before questioning. The best known case is *Miranda v. Arizona*, 1966. In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that accused criminals must be informed of their Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights before being questioned by the police.

Reproductive Rights

In the case *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, the court determined that abortions were no longer banned. This issue is still relevant today, with much of the United States divided between pro-life and pro-choice camps.

Check for Understanding What made the *Brown* decision important to the civil rights movement?

EOC Quiz 11: SS.912.A.7.1–SS.912.A.7.8**Directions**

Read each question carefully and choose the BEST answer. Then mark the space on your answer document for the answer you have chosen.

1 What was the GI Bill of Rights?

- A. Truman's order integrating the military
- B. Great Integration's declaration of rights
- C. long-term care for disabled veterans
- D. government loans and assistance for veterans

2 Which of the following was a victory for the National Organization for Women?

- F. Roe v. Wade
- G. ratification of the ERA
- H. establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- I. Title VII of the Equal Rights Act

3 Who headed the NAACP legal team that challenged the constitutionality of school segregation before the Supreme Court?

- A. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- B. Thurgood Marshall
- C. George McLaurin
- D. Earl Warren

Percentage of voting-age African Americans**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*

4 Which of the following BEST explains the increase in voter registration in 1968?

- F. The Fifteenth Amendment
- G. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment
- H. The Civil Rights Act of 1964
- I. The Voter Rights Act of 1965

5 Which group or individual was MOST militant in the Civil Rights Movement?

- A. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- B. SNCC
- C. Malcolm X
- D. SCLC