

# Key Individuals



## Martin Luther King Jr.

King was one of the major civil rights leaders and was active in the movement during the 1950s and 1960s. King came to the nation's attention when he spoke out against the arrest of Rosa Parks who would not give up her seat to a white man on public transport. King utilised peaceful protest as a political tool and was instrumental in forming the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).



## Rosa Parks:

Rosa Parks was instrumental in spurring on the civil rights movement in 1955. Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and refused to give up her seat to a white man because the "whites only" seating area was full. Her subsequent arrest led Martin Luther King Jr. to organise the Montgomery Bus boycott of public transport, which lasted for over a year.



## President John F. Kennedy

Kennedy at first did not fully support the civil rights movement for fear of alienating voters. However, he did plant the seeds for the Civil Rights Act 1964. After the riots in Birmingham Kennedy decided to support the movement fully, regardless of whether or not he would lose the next election. He supported the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and had plans to implement a stronger civil rights act. He would never see the Civil Rights Act 1964

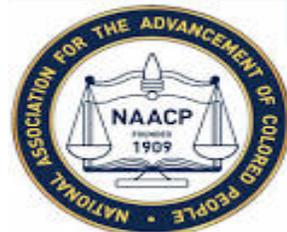


## Malcolm X:

Malcolm X was a major figure in the civil rights movement and a figurehead for the Nation of Islam during the 1950s. X was a passionate and inspiring speaker who fought for independence for African-Americans using violent methods if necessary. To some, such as Martin Luther King Jr. who preached of peace X was the flip side of the civil rights movement. If the American authorities did not want to deal with the peaceful protests of King then Malcolm X would be the alternative.

## Other Key Figures:

President Lyndon Johnson, pushed forward the Civil Rights Act 1964 despite great opposition  
 Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican activist who fought for Black Nationalism and influenced others such as Malcolm X  
 Booker T. Washington, fought for African-American rights to economic equality with whites  
 Thurgood Marshall, leader of the NAACP and the first African-American to sit in the Supreme Court  
 W.E.B. Du Bois, helped to develop black consciousness through art and history and helped form the NAACP



NAACP:  
National Association for the Advancement of coloured People.



Non-violent  
SCLC  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference..



CORE:  
Congress of Racial Equality.



Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

## Laws



Civil Rights Act of 1964: prohibiting discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, and national origin by federal and state governments as well as some public places.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965: This made it much easier for Black people to vote.

## Violent



KKK:  
Ku Klux Klan



The Black Panthers.

# 1954 – 1960

## Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision 1954:

Supreme Court reverses Plessy by stating that separate schools are by nature unequal. Schools are ordered to desegregate.



## Emmett Till 1955:

The murder of the 14 year old African-American Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi, was another key moment in the civil rights movement. Till was beaten and shot through the head before being dumped in a river for whistling at a white woman as a dare from his friends.

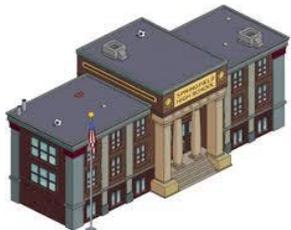
## Little Rock Central High School desegregated 1957:

After Little Rock school board votes to integrate schools, National Guard troops prevent black children from attending school. 1000 federal paratroopers are needed to escort black students and preserve peace. Arkansas Gov. Faubus responds by closing schools for 1958-59 school year.



## Montgomery bus boycott 1955-1957:

Rosa Parks ignites 381-day bus boycott organized by Martin Luther King, Jr.



# 1960 – 1965

## Sit-in Campaign: 1960:

The basis of sit-in campaigns resulted from students "sitting" at lunch counters until they were acknowledged and served food. Nashville, TN Sit-in Campaigns - African Americans would sit and wait at the lunch counters in a very polite, non-violent manner. If police arrested them for not leaving, a new group of African Americans would take their place.



## Freedom riders oppose segregation: 1961:

Blacks and whites take buses to the South to protest bus station segregation. Many are greeted with riots and beatings.



## James Meredith enrolls at the University of Mississippi: 1962:

5000 federal troops are sent by Pres. Kennedy to allow Meredith to register for classes. Riots result in 2 deaths and hundreds of injuries

## Desegregation drive in Birmingham: 1963:

King and SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) oppose local laws that support segregation. Riots, fire-bombing, and police are used against protestors



## March on Washington 1963:

More than 200,000 blacks and whites gather before Lincoln Memorial to hear speeches (including King's "I Have a Dream") and protest racial injustice



## Civil Rights Act passed 1964:

Congress passes law forbidding racial discrimination in many areas of life, including hotels, voting, employment, and schools



## Mississippi Summer Freedom Project: 1964:

Civil rights workers seek to register blacks to vote. 3 are killed and many black homes and churches are burned. National outrage helps pass civil rights legislation

# 1965 – 1970

## Selma to Montgomery march 1965:

King leads 54-mile march to support black voter registration. Despite attacks from police and interference from Gov. Wallace, marchers reach Montgomery. Pres. Johnson addresses nation in support of marchers.



## Voting Rights Act approved: 1965

After passage, southern black voter registration grows by over 50% and black officials are elected to various positions. In Mississippi, black voter registration grew from 7% to 67%.



## Watts Riots 1965:

In first of more than 100 riots, Los Angeles black suburb erupts in riots, burning, looting, and 34 deaths.

## Malcolm X assassinated 1965:

Rejecting integration and nonviolence, Malcolm splits off from Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslims and is killed by black opponents.

## King assassinated 1968 :

While supporting sanitation workers' strike which had been marred by violence in Memphis, King is shot by James Earl Ray. Riots result in 125 cities

