

CHAPTER
21

GUIDED READING *Taking on Segregation*

Section 1

As you read, answer questions about important events in the civil rights movement.

1875	Civil Rights Act is passed.	→	1. What did the Civil Rights Act of 1875 do?	
1883	Supreme Court rules 1875 Civil Rights Act unconstitutional.			
1896	<i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>	→	2. How did the Court rule in <i>Plessy</i> ?	
1945	World War II ends.	→	3. In what three ways did World War II help set the stage for the modern civil rights movement? a. b. c.	
1946	<i>Morgan v. Virginia</i> outlaws mandatory segregation on interstate buses.			
1950	<i>Sweat v. Painter</i> declares that state law schools must admit black applicants.			
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	→	4. Who argued <i>Brown's</i> case?	5. What did the <i>Brown</i> ruling declare?
1955	Supreme Court orders school desegregation. Emmett Till is murdered.			
1956	Rosa Parks is arrested. Supreme Court outlaws bus segregation.	→	6. What organization was formed to support Rosa Parks?	7. What did it do?
1957	Little Rock faces school desegregation crisis.	→	8. How did President Eisenhower respond to the Little Rock crisis?	
1960	Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is formed.	→	9. Who was the president of SCLC?	10. What was SCLC's purpose?
1960	Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) is formed.	→	11. What did SNCC accomplish, and how?	

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Section 1

SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Making Inferences*

In September 1957, Elizabeth Eckford made history as she forced her way through an angry crowd of whites in an effort to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Study the photo of Eckford on page 703 of the text and read the news article on this page. Consider what inferences you can make about the impact of this event. Then answer the questions that follow. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. R10.)

Hazel Bryan was part of the crowd that day [in September 1957]. Her face grimaced in hate, she shouted at Eckford, who clutched her books to her chest and walked on, her emotions hidden behind dark glasses.

When a photograph of the bitter meeting between the two 15-year-old girls appeared in newspapers around the country, Eckford became a symbol of the civil rights movement. Bryan's young face became an image of racial hatred.

Now 55, the women

met . . . for the first time since that troubled time. There were smiles and poses for pictures. They mostly let the past be.

"Thank you, Elizabeth, for agreeing to do this," Bryan, now Hazel Massery, said quietly as she greeted Eckford at her home.

Answered Eckford, before the two left for the school: "I think you're very brave to face the cameras again. . . ."

At the school, both black and white students recognized Eckford. "Miss Eckford, I just want you to

know how much I respect you," a black student said. A white junior high student gave Eckford a big hello; they talked briefly about taking classes at the high school.

Massery said that she had hoped others would know of her regret and her acknowledgment that intolerance was wrong.

"I just want to say, Elizabeth, I'm elated that you're doing this," she said. "I'd like for my children to be proud, to see that both of us are role models."

Peggy Harris, *Associated Press* writer, Tuesday, September 23, 1997

1. By studying the photo on page 703, what can you infer about the obstacles facing Eckford and the other African-American students who integrated Central High School?

2. By comparing the photo with the news story, what can you infer about reasons African Americans consider Little Rock a milestone in the civil rights movement?

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RETEACHING ACTIVITY *Taking on Segregation*

Finding Main Ideas

The following questions deal with the beginnings of the civil rights movement. Answer them in the space provided.

1. How were the Supreme Court cases *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* related?

2. How did President Eisenhower respond to the Little Rock school crisis?

3. How did the Montgomery Bus Boycott begin? What effect did it have?

4. What was significant about the Civil Rights Act of 1957? What did it accomplish?

5. What was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s approach to battling racial injustice?

6. How did the sit-in demonstrations throughout the South reflect King's approach?

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GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: REGION

The Brown Decision, Ten Years Later

Section 1

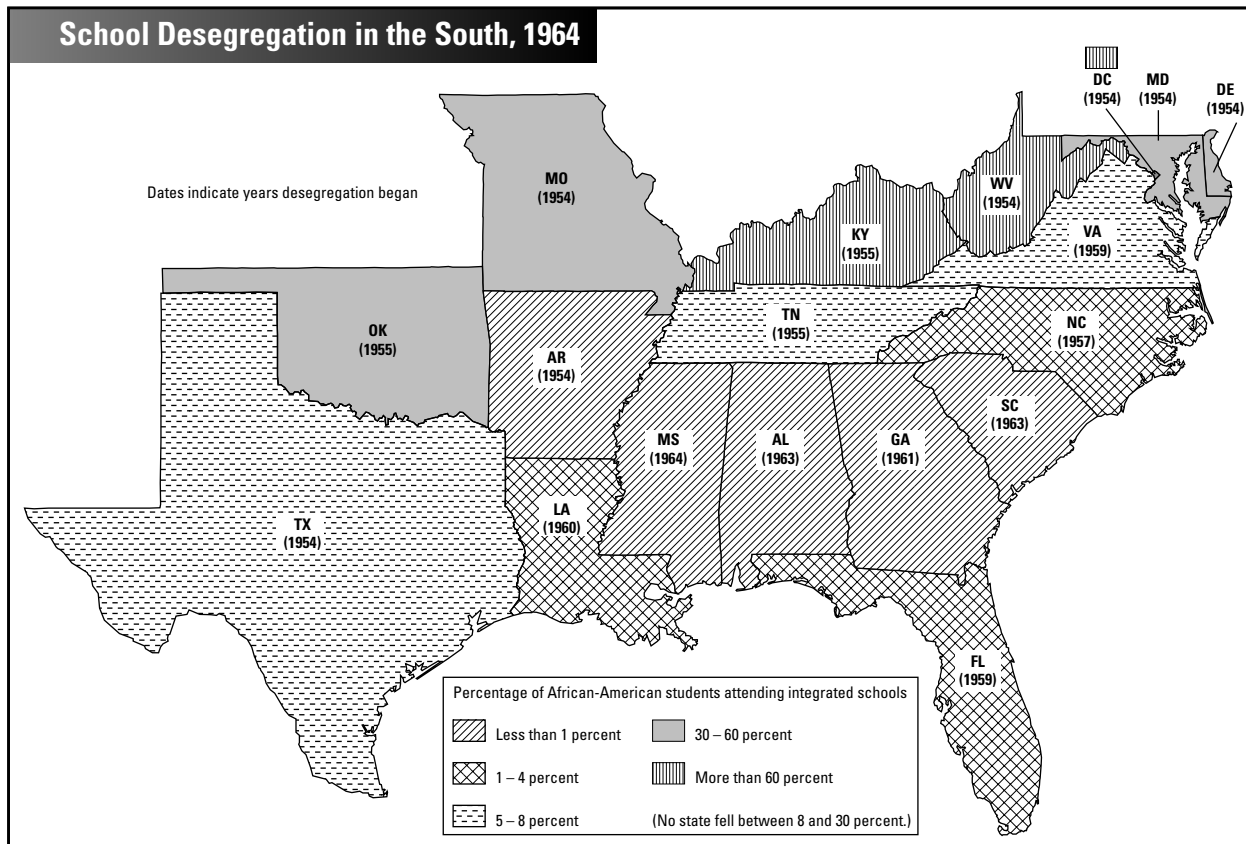
Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that to separate public-school students “solely on the basis of race” was unconstitutional. The Court had established a “separate but equal” doctrine in 1896, in its *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, but the 1954 decision reversed that ruling. Now, the court declared that “separate but equal” has no place” in public education.

The *Brown* decision, however, did not bring public-school segregation to an immediate end. The responsibility for implementing desegregation fell to local governments—to school officials who had to keep in mind state laws and regional customs. Thus, at times, the move toward statewide compliance took place slowly, almost one school at a time. When desegregation efforts lagged, the

Supreme Court issued a second *Brown* decision in 1955, directing lower courts to admit African-American students to public schools “with all deliberate speed.” Eventually, in some areas of the South, the federal government had to step in and enforce desegregation.

Still, even ten years after *Brown*, only about 380,000 African-American elementary and secondary students in 17 Southern states and the District of Columbia—less than 11 percent of the 3.5 million students in the region—were going to schools with white students. In Alabama only 94 out of 89,000 African-American students, and in Mississippi only 58 out of 22,000 African-American students, attended integrated schools.



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Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. Which states in the region shown on the map began to integrate their public schools in the year of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision? (Do not count the District of Columbia.) _____

2. In which states did school desegregation not begin until the 1960s? _____

3. What generalization can you make about the relationship between the time a state began the desegregation process and the degree of integration of its schools in 1964? _____

Which state is a glaring exception to that trend? _____

4. In which states were 30 to 60 percent of African-American students in integrated schools? _____

5. In which states was the percentage of African-American students in integrated schools less than the region's average? _____

6. Which five of the states you listed for question 5 had percentages the farthest below the regional average? _____

How might the economic and social history of those five states have led to a resistance to desegregation? _____

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PRIMARY SOURCE **Crisis in Little Rock**

When 16-year-old Elizabeth Eckford left for Little Rock's Central High School in September 1957, she did not know that the governor had ordered the National Guard to keep her and eight other black students from entering the all-white school. This is Eckford's account of her first day at an integrated school.

Before I left home Mother called us into the living room. She said we should have a word of prayer. Then I caught the bus and got off a block from the school. I saw a large crowd of people standing across the street from the soldiers guarding Central. As I walked on, the crowd suddenly got very quiet. Superintendent Blossom had told us to enter by the front door. I looked at all the people and thought, “Maybe I will be safer if I walk down the block to the front entrance behind the guards.”

At the corner I tried to pass through the long line of guards around the school so as to enter the grounds behind them. One of the guards pointed across the street. So I pointed in the same direction and asked whether he meant for me to cross the street and walk down. He nodded “yes.” So, I walked across the street conscious of the crowd that stood there, but they moved away from me.

For a moment all I could hear was the shuffling of their feet. Then someone shouted, “Here she comes, get ready!” I moved away from the crowd on the sidewalk and into the street. . . .

The crowd moved in closer and then began to follow me, calling me names. I still wasn't afraid. Just a little bit nervous. Then my knees started to shake all of a sudden and I wondered whether I could make it to the center entrance a block away. It was the longest block I ever walked in my whole life.

Even so, I still wasn't too scared because all the time I kept thinking that the guards would protect me.

When I got right in front of the school, I went up to a guard again. But this time he just looked straight ahead and didn't move to let me pass him. I didn't know what to do. Then I looked and saw that the path leading to the front entrance was a little further ahead. So I walked until I was right in front of the path to the front door.

I stood looking at the school—it looked so big! Just then the guards let some white students go through.

The crowd was quiet. I guess they were waiting to see what was going to happen. When I was able to steady my knees, I walked up to the guard who had

let the white students in. He too didn't move. When I tried to squeeze past him, he raised his bayonet and then the other guards closed in and they raised their bayonets.

They glared at me with a mean look and I was very frightened and didn't know what to do. I turned around and the crowd came toward me.

They moved closer and closer. Somebody started yelling, “Lynch her! Lynch her!”

I tried to see a friendly face somewhere in the mob—someone who maybe would help. I looked into the face of an old woman and it seemed a kind face, but when I looked at her again, she spat on me.

They came closer, shouting, “No nigger bitch is going to get in our school. Get out of here!”

I turned back to the guards but their faces told me I wouldn't get help from them. Then I looked down the block and saw a bench at the bus stop. I thought, “If I can only get there I will be safe.” I don't know why the bench seemed a safe place. . . .

When I finally got there, I don't think I could have gone another step. I sat down and the mob crowded up and began shouting all over again. Someone hollered, “Drag her over to this tree! Let's take care of the nigger.” Just then a white man sat down beside me, put his arm around me and patted my shoulder. He raised my chin and said, “Don't let them see you cry.”

Then, a white lady—she was very nice—she came over to me on the bench. She spoke to me but I don't remember now what she said. She put me on the bus and sat next to me. . . . [T]he next thing I remember I was standing in front of the School for the Blind, where Mother works.

from William Loren Katz, Eyewitness: The Negro in American History (New York: Pitman, 1967), 492–494.

Discussion Question

Why do you think Elizabeth Eckford encountered such a hostile reaction when she arrived at Central High School? Cite evidence from your textbook to support your opinion.

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Section 1

AMERICAN LIVES **Rosa Parks**
Taking a Historic Stand by Sitting

"I didn't have any special fear. It was more of a relief to know . . . that I wasn't alone. If I was going to be fearful, it would have been as far back as I can remember, not just that separate incident."—Rosa Parks, recalling her emotions during the Montgomery bus boycott, 1988

Rosa Parks (b. 1913) has been called the mother of the civil rights movement. Her quiet act of defiance against segregation on the buses of Montgomery, Alabama, started a wave of protest in the 1950s—and launched the career of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rosa McCauley had a difficult early life, as her parents separated and her small family struggled to live. She juggled school with work to help her family. At age 19, she married Raymond Parks, who had been active in efforts to register African Americans to vote. For the next 20 years, she worked a variety of jobs. Beginning in 1943, she was a secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). When she could, Parks protested segregation laws. She refused to use drinking fountains or elevators set aside for African Americans. She often walked home from work rather than take segregated buses.

However, on December 1, 1955, she was tired and took the bus. A white man got on the bus that day after the section reserved for whites was full. Parks and three other African Americans were told by the bus driver to give up their seats. Parks refused. "I don't think I should have to," she said. "Why do you push us around so?" The bus driver summoned police, and Parks was arrested.

Edgar Daniel Nixon—head of the local NAACP—and two lawyers paid a bond to secure Parks's release. Then Nixon asked if she would agree to appeal the case in order to challenge the segregation law. Her mother and husband feared for her safety, but she agreed to go ahead—if it will "do some good." Meanwhile, other activists in Montgomery seized on Parks's act of defiance. The Women's Political Council had been ready for months to call for a boycott of the city bus line for its segregation and rude treatment of African-American passengers. Notified of Parks's arrest, Jo Ann Robinson of the WPC issued thousands of fliers calling for the city's blacks to boycott the bus

line on December 5—the day of Parks's trial.

The boycott worked, and that night African Americans met to discuss whether to continue it. At the meeting, a newly arrived minister—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—spoke and energized the crowd. The people decided to continue the boycott and named King as their leader. The boycott lasted more than a year. It ended when the Supreme Court ruled that the segregated city buses violated the rights of African Americans. With this success, King had begun his brilliant career as America's chief civil rights leader.

Life for Parks became difficult, however. She lost her job, and her husband was unable to work after suffering a nervous breakdown. They were plagued by threatening phone calls. Even after the boycott ended, no one would hire Parks. A year after the boycott ended, the Parks family moved to Detroit, where they had family. Rosa Parks made a living as a seamstress and also helped the local office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 1965 she joined the staff of a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Detroit.

Over the years Parks has delivered speeches to raise money for the NAACP. In 1969 a street was named for her in Detroit. She has received many awards—most notably the 1984 Eleanor Roosevelt Women of Courage Award. In 1989 she attended the White House ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, where she was acknowledged by President Bush.

Questions

1. Why is Parks called the "mother of the civil rights movement"?
2. Jo Ann Robinson recalled later that Parks was "dignified" and had "strong morals and high character." Why did that make her a good symbol to promote the bus boycott?
3. Explain in your own words what Parks's action meant to American history.