

# Challenges and Changes in the Movement

## MAIN IDEA

Disagreements among civil rights groups and the rise of black nationalism created a violent period in the fight for civil rights.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

From the fight for equality came a resurgence of racial pride for African Americans, a legacy that influences today's generations.

## Terms & Names

- de facto segregation
- de jure segregation
- Malcolm X
- Nation of Islam
- Stokely Carmichael
- Black Power
- Black Panthers
- Kerner Commission
- Civil Rights Act of 1968
- affirmative action

## One American's Story

Alice Walker, the prize-winning novelist, became aware of the civil rights movement in 1960, when she was 16. Her mother had recently scraped together enough money to purchase a television.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ALICE WALKER

“Like a good omen for the future, the face of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the first black face I saw on our new television screen. And, as in a fairy tale, my soul was stirred by the meaning for me of his mission—at the time he was being rather ignominiously dumped into a police van for having led a protest march in Alabama—and I fell in love with the sober and determined face of the Movement.”

—*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*

The next year, Walker attended the all-black Spelman College. In 1963, Walker took part in the March on Washington and then traveled to Africa to discover her spiritual roots. After returning home in 1964, she worked on voter registration, taught African American history and writing, and wrote poetry and fiction.

Walker's interest in her heritage was part of a growing trend among African Americans in the mid-1960s. But millions of African Americans were still living in poverty. Angry and frustrated over the difficulty in finding jobs and decent housing, some participated in riots that broke out between 1964 and 1966.



▲ Alice Walker during an interview in New York's Central Park in August 1970

## African Americans Seek Greater Equality

What civil rights groups had in common in the early 1960s were their calls for a newfound pride in black identity and a commitment to change the social and economic structures that kept people in a life of poverty. However, by 1965, the

leading civil rights groups began to drift apart. New leaders emerged as the movement turned its attention to the North, where African Americans faced not legal segregation but deeply entrenched and oppressive racial prejudice.

**NORTHERN SEGREGATION** The problem facing African Americans in the North was **de facto segregation**—segregation that exists by practice and custom. De facto segregation can be harder to fight than **de jure** (dē jōōr'ē) **segregation**, or segregation by law, because eliminating it requires changing people's attitudes rather than repealing laws. Activists in the mid-1960s would find it much more difficult to convince whites to share economic and social power with African Americans than to convince them to share lunch counters and bus seats. **A**

De facto segregation intensified after African Americans migrated to Northern cities during and after World War II. This began a “white flight,” in which great numbers of whites moved out of the cities to the nearby suburbs. By the mid-1960s, most urban African Americans lived in decaying slums, paying rent to landlords who didn't comply with housing and health ordinances. The schools for African-American children deteriorated along with their neighborhoods. Unemployment rates were more than twice as high as those among whites.

In addition, many blacks were angry at the sometimes brutal treatment they received from the mostly white police forces in their communities. In 1966, King spearheaded a campaign in Chicago to end segregation there and create an “open city.” On July 10, he led about 30,000 African Americans in a march on City Hall.

In late July, when King led demonstrators through a Chicago neighborhood, angry whites threw rocks and bottles. On August 5, hostile whites stoned King as he led 600 marchers. King left Chicago without accomplishing what he wanted, yet pledging to return.

**URBAN VIOLENCE ERUPTS** In the mid 1960s, clashes between white authority and black civilians spread like wildfire. In New York City in July 1964, an encounter between white police and African-American teenagers ended in the death of a 15-year-old student. This sparked a race riot in central Harlem. On August 11, 1965, only five days after President Johnson signed the Voting

**MAIN IDEA**

**Comparing**

**A** How were civil rights problems in Northern cities similar to those in the South?



Between 1964 and 1968, more than 100 race riots erupted in major American cities. The worst included Watts in Los Angeles in 1965 (top) and Detroit in 1967 (right). In Detroit, 43 people were killed and property damage topped \$40 million.



Rights Act into law, one of the worst race riots in the nation's history raged through the streets of Watts, a predominantly African-American neighborhood in Los Angeles. Thirty-four people were killed, and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property was destroyed. The next year, 1966, saw even more racial disturbances, and in 1967 alone, riots and violent clashes took place in more than 100 cities.

The African-American rage baffled many whites. "Why would blacks turn to violence after winning so many victories in the South?" they wondered. Some realized that what African Americans wanted and needed was economic equality of opportunity in jobs, housing, and education. **B**

Even before the riots in 1964, President Johnson had announced his War on Poverty, a program to help impoverished Americans. But the flow of money needed to fund Johnson's Great Society was soon redirected to fund the war in Vietnam. In 1967, Dr. King proclaimed, "The Great Society has been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam."

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Causes

**B** What were some of the causes of urban rioting in the 1960s?

## New Leaders Voice Discontent

The anger that sent rioters into the streets stemmed in part from African-American leaders who urged their followers to take complete control of their communities, livelihoods, and culture. One such leader, **Malcolm X**, declared to a Harlem audience, "If you think we are here to tell you to love the white man, you have come to the wrong place."

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOLIDARITY** Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little, went to jail at age 20 for burglary. While in prison, he studied the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, the head of the **Nation of Islam**, or the Black Muslims. Malcolm changed his name to Malcolm X (dropping what he called his "slave name") and, after his release from prison in 1952, became an Islamic minister. As he gained a following, the brilliant thinker and engaging speaker openly preached Elijah Muhammad's views that whites were the cause of the black condition and that blacks should separate from white society.

Malcolm's message appealed to many African Americans and their growing racial pride. At a New York press conference in March 1964, he also advocated armed self-defense.

#### Background

See "Islam" on page 9.

### A PERSONAL VOICE MALCOLM X

**"Concerning nonviolence: it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle. We believe in obeying the law. . . . [T]he time has come for the American Negro to fight back in self-defense whenever and wherever he is being unjustly and unlawfully attacked."**

—quoted in *Eyewitness: The Negro in American History*

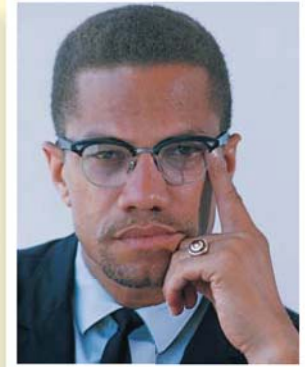
The press gave a great deal of publicity to Malcolm X because his controversial statements made dramatic news stories. This had two effects. First, his call for armed self-defense frightened most whites and many moderate African Americans. Second, reports of the attention Malcolm received awakened resentment in some other members of the Nation of Islam. **C**

### MAIN IDEA

#### Synthesizing

**C** Why did some Americans find Malcolm X's views alarming?

## KEY PLAYER



**MALCOLM X**  
1925–1965

Malcolm X's early life left him alienated from white society. His father was allegedly killed by white racists, and his mother had an emotional collapse, leaving Malcolm and his siblings in the care of the state. At the end of eighth grade, Malcolm quit school and was later jailed for criminal behavior. In 1946, while in prison, Malcolm joined the Nation of Islam. He developed a philosophy of black superiority and separatism from whites.

In the later years of his life, he urged African Americans to identify with Africa and to work with world organizations and even progressive whites to attain equality. Although silenced by gunmen, Malcolm X is a continuing inspiration for many Americans.

**BALLOTS OR BULLETS?** In March 1964, Malcolm broke with Elijah Muhammad over differences in strategy and doctrine and formed another Muslim organization. One month later, he embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, a trip required of followers of orthodox Islam. In Mecca, he learned that orthodox Islam preached racial equality, and he worshiped alongside people from many countries. Wrote Malcolm, “I have [prayed] . . . with fellow Muslims whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white.” When he returned to the United States, his attitude toward whites had changed radically. He explained his new slogan, “Ballots or bullets,” to a follower: “Well, if you and I don’t use the ballot, we’re going to be forced to use the bullet. So let us try the ballot.”

Because of his split with the Black Muslims, Malcolm believed his life might be in danger. “No one can get out without trouble,” he confided. On February 21, 1965, while giving a speech in Harlem, the 39-year-old Malcolm X was shot and killed.

**BLACK POWER** In early June of 1966, tensions that had been building between SNCC and the other civil rights groups finally erupted in Mississippi. Here, James Meredith, the man who had integrated the University of Mississippi, set out on a 225-mile “walk against fear.” Meredith planned to walk all the way from the Tennessee border to Jackson, but he was shot by a white racist and was too injured to continue.

Martin Luther King, Jr., of the SCLC, Floyd McKissick of CORE, and **Stokely Carmichael** of SNCC decided to lead their followers in a march to finish what Meredith had started. But it soon became apparent that SNCC and CORE members were quite militant, as they began to shout slogans similar to those of the black separatists who had followed Malcolm X. When King tried to rally the marchers with the refrain of “We Shall Overcome,” many SNCC workers—bitter over the violence they’d suffered during Freedom Summer—began singing, “We shall overrun.”

Police in Greenwood, Mississippi, arrested Carmichael for setting up a tent on the grounds of an all-black high school. When Carmichael showed up at a rally later, his face swollen from a beating, he electrified the crowd.

Stokely Carmichael (1968). The slogan “Black Power” became the battle-cry of militant civil rights activists.

### A PERSONAL VOICE STOKELY CARMICHAEL

“This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested—and I ain’t going to jail no more! . . . We been saying freedom for six years—and we ain’t got nothin’. What we’re gonna start saying now is **BLACK POWER**.”

—quoted in *The Civil Rights Movement: An Eyewitness History*

**Black Power**, Carmichael said, was a “call for black people to begin to define their own goals . . . [and] to lead their own organizations.” King urged him to stop using the phrase because he believed it would provoke African Americans to violence and antagonize whites. Carmichael refused and urged SNCC to stop recruiting whites and to focus on developing African-American pride. **D**

**BLACK PANTHERS** Later that year, another development demonstrated the growing radicalism of some segments of the African-American community. In Oakland, California, in October 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded a political party known as the **Black Panthers** to fight police brutality in the ghetto. The party advocated self-sufficiency for African-American communities, as well as full employment and decent housing. Members maintained that African Americans should be exempt from military service because an unfair number of black youths had been drafted to serve in Vietnam.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Motives

**D** Why did some leaders of SCLC disagree with SNCC tactics?



**MAIN IDEA****Making Inferences**

**E** Why was the public reaction to the Black Panthers mixed?

Dressed in black leather jackets, black berets, and sunglasses, the Panthers preached self-defense and sold copies of the writings of Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Communist revolution. Several police shootouts occurred between the Panthers and police, and the FBI conducted numerous investigations of group members (sometimes using illegal tactics). Even so, many of the Panthers' activities—the establishment of daycare centers, free breakfast programs, free medical clinics, assistance to the homeless, and other services—won support in the ghettos. **E**

## 1968—A Turning Point in Civil Rights

Martin Luther King, Jr., objected to the Black Power movement. He believed that preaching violence could only end in grief. King was planning to lead a Poor People's March on Washington, D.C. However, this time the people would have to march without him.

**KING'S DEATH** Dr. King seemed to sense that death was near. On April 3, 1968, he addressed a crowd in Memphis, where he had gone to support the city's striking garbage workers. "I may not get there with you but . . . we as a people will get to the Promised Land." He added, "I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." The next day as King stood on his hotel balcony, James Earl Ray thrust a high-powered rifle out of a window and squeezed the trigger. King crumpled to the floor.

**REACTIONS TO KING'S DEATH** The night King died, Robert F. Kennedy was campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination. Fearful that King's death would spark riots, Kennedy's advisers told him to cancel his appearance in an African-American neighborhood in Indianapolis. However, Kennedy attended anyway, making an impassioned plea for nonviolence.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ROBERT F. KENNEDY

**"For those of you who are black—considering the evidence . . . that there were white people who were responsible—you can be filled with bitterness, with hatred, and a desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in great polarization—black people amongst black, white people amongst white, filled with hatred toward one another.**

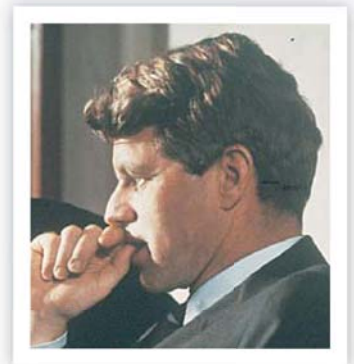
**Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and comprehend, and to replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand [with] compassion and love."**

—"A Eulogy for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

Despite Kennedy's plea, rage over King's death led to the worst urban rioting in United States history. Over 100 cities exploded in flames. The hardest-hit cities included Baltimore, Chicago, Kansas City, and Washington, D.C. Then in June 1968, Robert Kennedy himself was assassinated by a Jordanian immigrant who was angry over Kennedy's support of Israel.



(above) Coretta Scott King mourns her husband at his funeral service.  
(below) Robert F. Kennedy

**Vocabulary**

**polarization:** separation into opposite camps



## Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement

On March 1, 1968, the **Kerner Commission**, which President Johnson had appointed to study the causes of urban violence, issued its 200,000-word report. In it, the panel named one main cause: white racism. Said the report: “This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” The report called for the nation to create new jobs, construct new housing, and end de facto segregation in order to wipe out the destructive ghetto environment. However, the Johnson administration ignored many of the recommendations because of white opposition to such sweeping changes. So what had the civil rights movement accomplished?

**CIVIL RIGHTS GAINS** The civil rights movement ended de jure segregation by bringing about legal protection for the civil rights of all Americans. Congress passed the most important civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, including the **Civil Rights Act of 1968**, which ended discrimination in housing. After school segregation ended, the numbers of African Americans who finished high school and who went to college increased significantly. This in turn led to better jobs and business opportunities.

Another accomplishment of the civil rights movement was to give African Americans greater pride in their racial identity. Many African Americans adopted African-influenced styles and proudly displayed symbols of African history and culture. College students demanded new Black Studies programs so they could study African-American history and literature. In the entertainment world, the “color bar” was lowered as African Americans began to appear more frequently in movies and on television shows and commercials.

In addition, African Americans made substantial political gains. By 1970, an estimated two-thirds of eligible African Americans were registered to vote, and a significant increase in African-American elected officials resulted. The number of African Americans holding elected office grew from fewer than 100 in 1965 to more than 7,000 in 1992. Many civil rights activists went on to become political leaders, among them Reverend Jesse Jackson, who sought the Democratic nomination for president in 1984 and 1988; Vernon Jordan, who led voter-registration drives that enrolled about 2 million African Americans; and Andrew Young, who has served as UN ambassador and Atlanta’s mayor. **F**

**UNFINISHED WORK** The civil rights movement was successful in changing many discriminatory laws. Yet as the 1960s turned to the 1970s, the challenges for the movement changed. The issues it confronted—housing and job discrimination, educational inequality, poverty, and racism—involved the difficult task of changing people’s attitudes and behavior. Some of the proposed solutions, such as more tax monies spent in the inner cities and the forced busing of schoolchildren, angered some whites, who resisted further changes. Public support for the civil rights movement declined because some whites were frightened by the urban riots and the Black Panthers.

By 1990, the trend of whites fleeing the cities for the suburbs had reversed much of the progress toward school

### HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT



#### SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

African-American women such as Shirley Chisholm exemplified the advances won in the civil rights movement. In 1968, Chisholm became the first African-American woman in the United States House of Representatives.

In the mid-1960s, Chisholm served in the New York state assembly, representing a district in New York City. While there, she supported programs to establish public day-care centers and provide unemployment insurance to domestic workers.

In 1972, Chisholm gained national prominence by running for the Democratic presidential nomination. Despite the fact that she never won more than 10% of the vote in the primaries, she controlled 152 delegates at the Democratic convention in Miami.

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Evaluating

**F** What were some accomplishments of the civil rights movement?

integration. In 1996–1997, 28 percent of blacks in the South and 50 percent of blacks in the Northeast were attending schools with fewer than 10 percent whites. Lack of jobs also remained a serious problem for African Americans, who had a poverty rate three times that of whites.

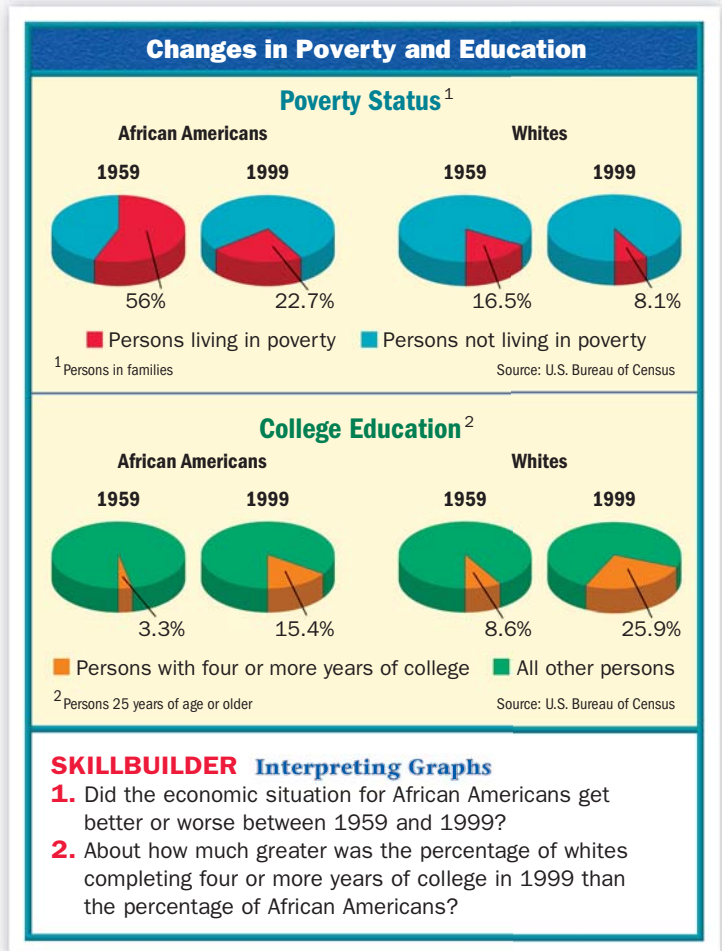
To help equalize education and job opportunities, the government in the 1960s began to promote **affirmative action**. Affirmative-action programs involve making special efforts to hire or enroll groups that have suffered discrimination. Many colleges and almost all companies that do business with the federal government adopted such programs. But in the late 1970s, some people began to criticize affirmative-action programs as “reverse discrimination” that set minority hiring or enrollment quotas and deprived whites of opportunities. In the 1980s, Republican administrations eased affirmative-action requirements for some government contractors. The fate of affirmative action is still to be decided.

Today, African Americans and whites interact in ways that could have only been imagined before the civil rights movement. In many respects, Dr. King’s dream has been realized—yet much remains to be done.

### Vocabulary

#### quota:

requirement that a certain number of positions are filled by minorities



## SECTION 3

### ASSESSMENT

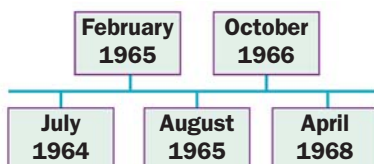
**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- |                        |                      |                     |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| • de facto segregation | • Nation of Islam    | • Black Panthers    | • Civil Rights Act of 1968 |
| • de jure segregation  | • Stokely Carmichael | • Kerner Commission | • affirmative action       |
| • Malcolm X            | • Black Power        |                     |                            |

### MAIN IDEA

#### 2. TAKING NOTES

Create a timeline of key events of the civil rights movement.



In your opinion, which event was most significant? Why?

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### 3. ANALYZING ISSUES

What factors contributed to the outbreak of violence in the fight for civil rights? **Think About:**

- different leaders’ approach to civil rights issues
- living conditions in urban areas
- de facto and de jure segregation

#### 4. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

Compare and contrast the civil rights strategies of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Whose strategies do you think were more effective? Explain and support your response.

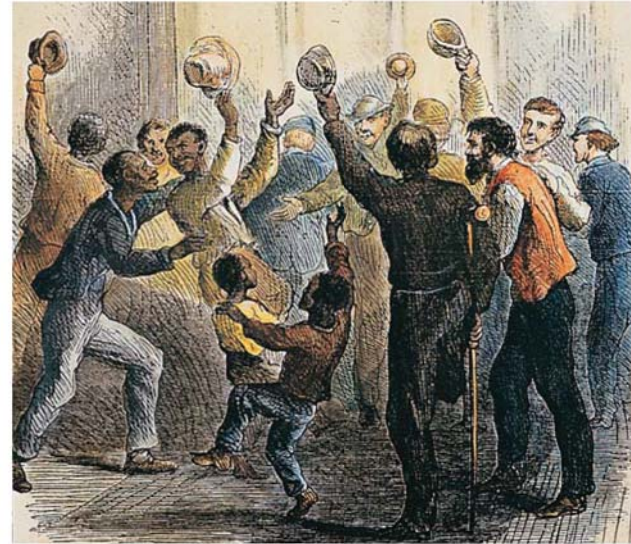


# Civil Rights

Thomas Jefferson asserted in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal” and are endowed with the “unalienable rights” of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” With these words, a new nation was founded on the principle that citizens have certain fundamental civil rights. These include the right to vote, the right to enjoy freedom of speech and religion, and others. For more than 200 years, the United States has stood as a worldwide example of a country committed to securing the rights of its people.

However, throughout the nation’s history, some Americans have had to struggle to obtain even the most basic civil rights. Laws or customs prevented certain people from voting freely, from speaking their minds on political issues, and from living and going where they wish. Over time, many of these barriers have been torn down.

In recent years, the United States has tried to promote human rights in other countries through its foreign policy. Even as it does so, the United States continues to struggle to fulfill for all Americans the lofty ideals established by the nation’s founders.

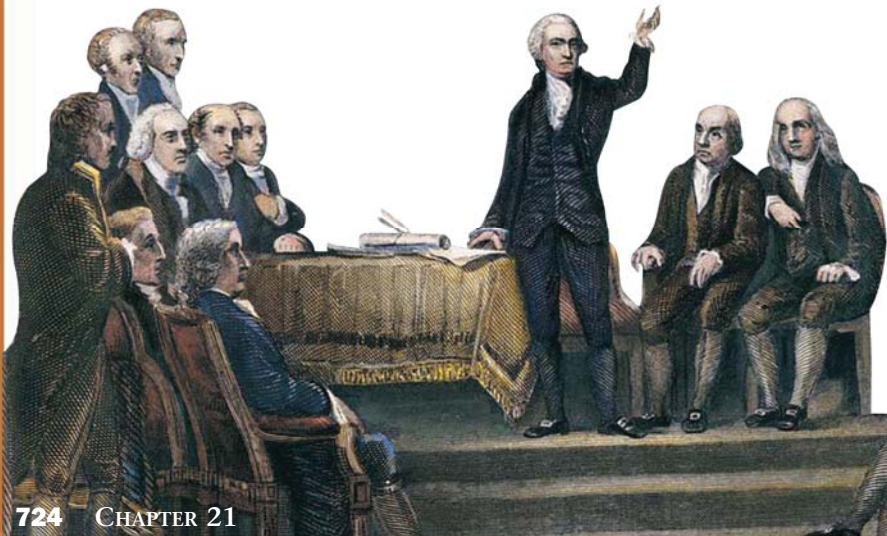


## 1791

### ▼ BILL OF RIGHTS

During the Constitutional Convention, the question of a bill of rights arose, but none was included. During the process of ratification, many people argued that the Constitution needed to list the basic civil rights and liberties that the federal government could not take away from the people.

Accordingly, the nation ratified ten amendments to the Constitution—the Bill of Rights. It establishes such rights as freedom of speech, religion, and assembly, freedom of the press, and the right to a trial by jury. While these rights have been subject to interpretation over the nation’s history, the Bill of Rights serves as the cornerstone of American democracy.



## 1868

### THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT ▲

In the engraving above, a crowd of black and white Americans celebrates the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866. This act recognized the citizenship of African Americans and granted the same civil rights to all people born in the United States except Native Americans.

The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified two years later, made these changes part of the Constitution. The Amendment declared that states cannot deny anyone “equal protection of the laws” and bolstered the voting rights of all 21-year-old males, including former slaves.

Despite these provisions, African Americans and other groups would still struggle to claim their full rights as U.S. citizens.

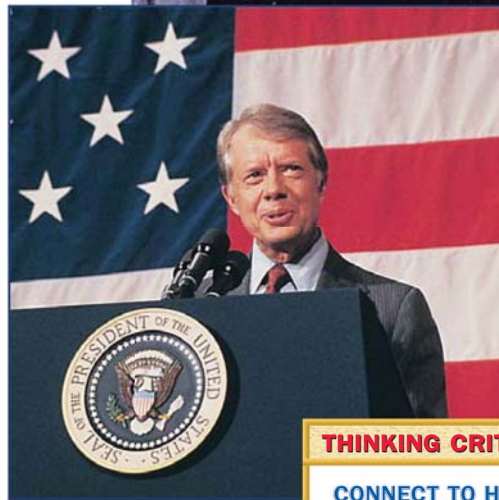
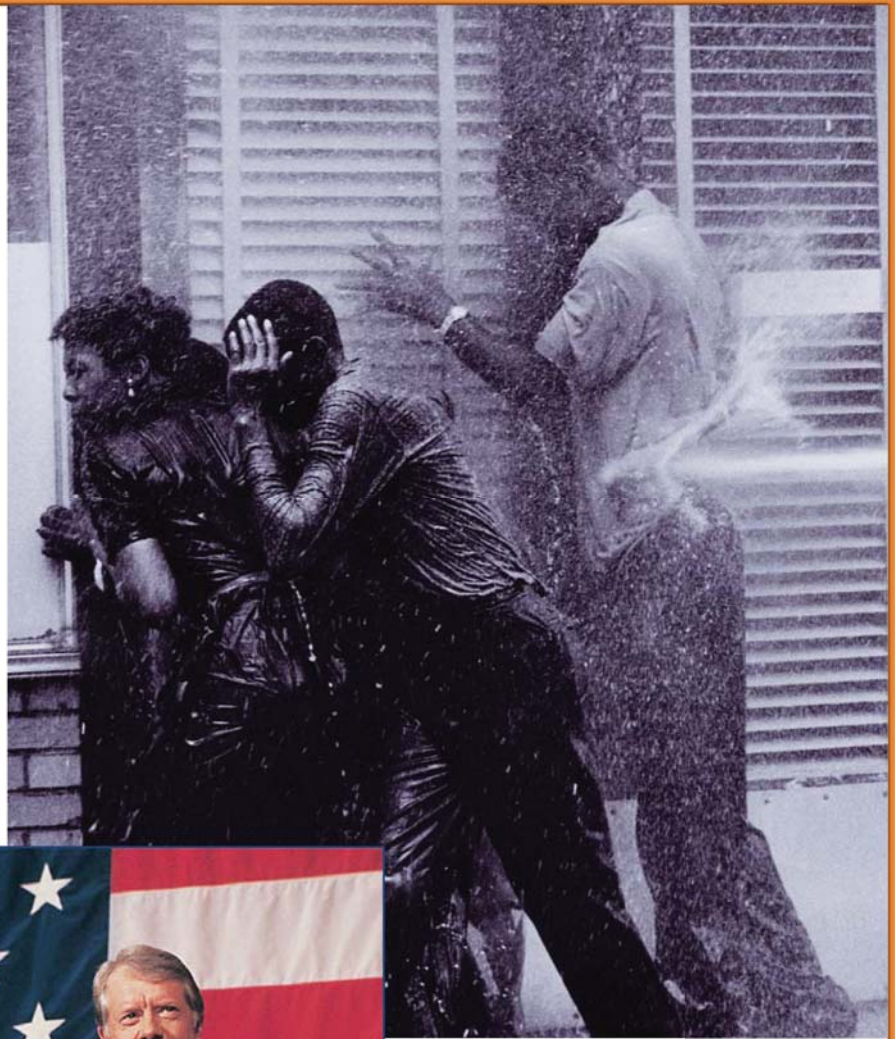


# 1950s & 1960s

## THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ►

Despite the Fourteenth Amendment and later the Fifteenth Amendment, which forbade states from denying anyone the right to vote on account of race, African Americans continued to live as second-class citizens, especially in the South.

During the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans and other Americans led a powerful movement to fight for racial equality. The movement often met with strong resistance, such as in Birmingham, Alabama, where police sprayed demonstrators with high-pressure fire hoses (*right*). Nevertheless, it succeeded in securing for African Americans the civil rights promised by the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. The civil rights movement has also been the basis for other groups gaining equal rights, including other minorities, women, and people with disabilities.



# 1970s

## HUMAN RIGHTS ►

President Jimmy Carter considered human rights an important foreign policy issue. Human rights are what Americans think of as their civil rights, including the right to vote and to receive a fair trial. The Carter administration tried to encourage greater freedom abroad by taking such steps as cutting off military aid to countries with poor human rights records.

While these efforts met with mixed results, the issue of human rights has continued to influence U.S. foreign policy. In the 1990s, for example, the U.S. government tried to push China toward increasing human rights while keeping alive its trade ties with that country.

As a private citizen, Jimmy Carter has also continued to champion human rights causes. In 1982, he and his wife, Rosalynn, founded the Carter Center, whose programs seek to end human rights abuses and promote democracy worldwide.

## THINKING CRITICALLY

### CONNECT TO HISTORY

- 1. Analyzing Issues** The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments both provided for the voting rights of African Americans. Based on what you have read in the chapter, how were these rights denied African Americans? How were they finally secured?

 **SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R14.**

### CONNECT TO TODAY

- 2. Writing About Rights** Have you or anyone you've known had their civil rights denied them in any way? Research a current-day instance of an alleged civil rights injustice. Write an account of the issue and share it with your class.



RESEARCH LINKS [CLASSZONE.COM](https://www.classzone.com)