

## Pathways Chapter 21 – Civil Rights Movement (1950 – 1968)

**Understanding Main Ideas - Study Questions**

1. What events and cultural trends led to a rise in African American influence in the twentieth century?

*The Great Migration of African Americans to northern cities in search of jobs created a demand for African American votes to support FDR's New Deal legislation. African Americans gained more influence with voting rights in the North while also gaining more positions in the Federal Government. The shortage of labor during WWII led to job opportunities for African Americans meanwhile organizations, such as the NAACP, began to challenge segregation laws throughout the United States.*

2. How did Americans respond to the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*?

*Many Americans, both white and African American, rejoiced at the Brown ruling. Others accepted the decision although they did not agree with it, hoping that desegregation could take place peacefully. Many southern whites, especially in the Deep South, vehemently opposed the ruling. Congressional representatives of states in the Deep South joined together to protest the decision, claiming that it violated states' rights.*

3. How did the Montgomery bus boycott affect the civil rights movement?

*Despite losing money, the bus company refused to change its policies. Finally, in 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that bus segregation was unconstitutional.*

4. How did other minorities begin to demand civil rights in the 1950s?

*Other minority groups demanded equal rights after World War II such as Mexican Americans and Native Americans. These groups participated in nonviolent protest organizations to bring about slow changes to social injustices for minorities.*

5. How did early groups lay the groundwork for the civil rights movement?

*Although the civil rights movement had no one central organization, several groups formed to share information and coordinate activities. One of these was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). During the 1920s and 1930s, the NAACP won many legal victories, especially in the areas of housing and education.*

6. What was the philosophy of nonviolence?

*Nonviolent protest was a peaceful way of protesting against restrictive racial policies. Nonviolent protesters were encouraged not to fight back even when attacked.*

7. How did SNCC give students a voice in the civil rights movement?

*SNCC soon became an independent civil rights organization. Its members sought immediate change, as opposed to the gradual change advocated by most older organizations.*

8. What were the goals of sit-ins and Freedom Rides?

*During a sit-in, protesters sat down in a segregated public place, such as a lunch counter, refusing to leave until they were served. In 1961, CORE and SNCC organized the Freedom Rides to test southern compliance with this ruling.*

9. What was the reaction to James Meredith's integration at the University of Mississippi?

*Meredith continued to face problems as he enrolled at Ole Miss. Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett personally blocked Meredith's way to the admissions office, and violence erupted on campus. The situation became a standoff between the governor and the Justice Department. President Kennedy sent federal marshals to escort Meredith around campus.*

10. How did the events in Birmingham, Alabama, affect the nation's attitudes toward the civil rights movement?

*Police attacked the marchers with high-pressure fire hoses, police dogs, and clubs. As television cameras captured the violence, Americans around the country were horrified as they seen firsthand the treatment of minorities in the Deep South.*

11. What was President Kennedy's approach to civil rights?

*Kennedy had voted for civil rights measures in the Senate but had not actively supported them. As President, he moved slowly on civil rights issues, not wanting to anger southern Democrats. After violence erupted in Birmingham in 1963, Kennedy introduced a stronger civil rights bill than he had originally planned. This bill called for an end to segregation in public places and in situations where federal funding was involved.*

12. Why did civil rights leaders propose a march on Washington?

*To focus national attention on Kennedy's bill more than 200,000 people came to the peaceful and orderly march, including musicians, religious leaders, and celebrities. At the march, Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered what was to become his best-known speech, "I Have a Dream." Despite the success of the march, Kennedy's civil rights bill remained stalled in Congress.*

13. What were the goals of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

*Provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*

- *Title I — Banned the use of different voter registration standards for blacks and whites*
- *Title II — Prohibited discrimination in public accommodations such as restaurants, hotels, and theaters*
- *Title VI — Allowed the withholding of federal funds from programs that practice discrimination*
- *Title VII — Banned discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin by employers and unions and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)*

14. How did African Americans fight to gain voting rights?

*In 1964, leaders of the major civil rights groups organized a voter registration drive in Mississippi in what would become known as **Freedom Summer**. Members of SNCC along with newly registered Mississippi voters organized the **Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party** (MFDP). The MFDP sent delegates to the 1964 Democratic national convention, insisting that they were the rightful representatives from Mississippi. Also,*

*To call attention to the issue of voting rights, King and other leaders decided to organize marchers to walk from **Selma**, Alabama, to Montgomery, about 50 miles away. Violence erupted at the start of the march. President Johnson sent military assistance to protect the marchers. When the march resumed, more people joined it, making a total of about 25,000 marchers.*

15. What was Malcolm X's approach to gaining civil rights?

*Malcolm X spread the ideas of Black Nationalism, a belief in the separate identity and racial unity of the African American community. In 1964, Malcolm X made a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holy city of Islam. Seeing Muslims of all races praying together changed his views on separatism, but he had only nine months to spread his new beliefs. In February 1965, he was shot to death.*

16. What were the major goals of the black power movement?

*The black power movement called upon African Americans to embrace their heritage, build communities, and lead their own organizations. Black power fostered racial pride but also led to a major split in the civil rights movement.*

17. Why did violent riots erupt in many urban streets?

*Frustration and anger over de facto segregation, especially in ghetto neighborhoods, led to riots in several cities. The worst of these occurred in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts, where an encounter between a black man and the police touched off six days of rioting that left many killed or injured. In response to these riots, the federal government set up a special National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. In 1968, the Commission concluded that the riots were caused by issues that had been smoldering in ghettos for many years.*

18. How did the tragic events of 1968 affect the nation?

*Martin Luther King was fatally shot on April 4, 1968 provoking violent riots in more than 120 cities. Following his death, many Americans lost faith in the idea of nonviolent change. Also, Robert F. Kennedy was shot in 1968 ending many people's hopes for an inspirational leader who could help heal the nation's wounds.*